

ARTICLE REPRINT

Beware Negotiating Tactics

Everyone uses negotiating tactics when they negotiate. People employ tactics in negotiations because they believe the tactics work for them. No matter how effective a particular negotiating tactic seems to work for you, however, there is a danger in being typecast as a devotee of that particular tactic. Even an effective negotiating tactic can become a two-edged sword.

I had a chance to meet with the general manager of a baseball team once who told me about a well known sports agent who acquired a nickname because of his favorite negotiating tactic. When a player's contract negotiations got down to a reasonable spread between the agent's money demands and the ball club's offer, the agent would invariably say to the general manager, "Let's split the difference and get this deal done."

Over the years the sports agent represented several of the ball club's players. Whenever the sports agent telephoned the general manager's office, whoever answered the phone would place the agent on hold, and announce the call, saying "Split The Difference is on the phone!"

In this case the sports agent's favorite negotiating tactic may have helped get some deals done, but being typecast as "Split The Difference" put him at a disadvantage with his negotiating partners. It was easy, in this case, for the general manager and his negotiating team to come up with a strategy to neutralize the agent's favorite negotiating tactic. The agent, because he was predictable, became vulnerable to counter-negotiating tactics. His negotiating tactic became a two-edged sword.

As you negotiate with customers, it's important to recognize the various tactics some customers employ to get what they want or need. Once you recognize a customer's favorite negotiating tactic, you can devise a strategy for neutralizing the tactic or maybe even using their tactic to your advantage.

Remember, everyone uses negotiating tactics when they negotiate. Do you employ a favorite negotiating tactic when you negotiate with customers? Someone once tried to convince me that they make a conscious effort *not* to use any tactics when they negotiate. I replied, "Congratulations! You get this month's Selling Up award for using the "*I don't use tactics*" negotiating tactic!"

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