

## Use Smart Tactics to Shape a Business Negotiation!

“Strategy requires thought, tactics require observation.”

**-Max Euwe** -Dutch Chess Grand Master

In one small quote Max Euwe has captured what many people who negotiate business deals truly misunderstand. Business negotiation tactics can be quite subtle and intellectual. They can be “carney like” reminding us of bad infomercials or captivating parlor tricks. In the right setting, tactics can be used to unbalance and or confuse the other side.

The challenge for many who engage in business negotiation is to truly understand the significance of using tactics. Tactics help shape a positive business negotiation relationship, environment and most importantly a solid strategy. Tactics are designed to close smart, fulfilling deals for both negotiation partners.

When I ask business people how they negotiate or more directly asking them to name their top two business negotiation tactics or strategies...more times than not I get vague answers.

This tells me that many business people who negotiate on behalf of their families and their company are in one of several camps;

- 1) They do not prepare enough for the negotiation
- 2) They are not well trained in business negotiation
- 3) They rely too much on gut instinct and situational analysis
- 4) They just lack confidence in their ability to negotiate

All of the above can be very costly over the long run.

Many people view business tactics as the strategy without realizing that tactics should be the lighting and sound effects around a great screen play whose ultimate goal is to bring the viewer and participant to moving and emotive crescendos resulting in a personal experience ending in fulfillment, approval and comfort.

Early in my career of selling and negotiating media contracts I worked with a newspaper colleague who used passionate negotiation tactics to gain the upper hand on negotiation partners. He was an Advertising Director at a large Canadian daily newspaper. He was revered by customers and colleagues for his ability to get tough deals done.

Without doubt one of the most flamboyant business negotiators in the media industry of his era. In one mercurial business negotiation he pulled out all stops.

A home renovation customer had a penchant for picking away at our newspaper run of press advertising yields. They made so many changes on their newspaper ad proofs that it was almost impossible to get the changes perfect. Weekly negotiations would take place on compensation to be paid to the home renovation customer.

Larger negotiations were required. A meeting was arranged. Three of us represented the

newspaper sales team. Three represented the home renovation customer. At this meeting the home renovation company owner was quietly engaged in convivial conversation with my manager. I was speaking to their advertising manager in positive tones.

My Advertising Director and the General Manager for the home renovation company who was famous for his voluminous ad proof changes sat staring at each other. This went on for many uncomfortable minutes. Finally, our Ad Director looked directly into the General Manager's eyes and said "I know you don't like me...and I want you to know I really don't like you...but before we leave you and I are going to get a deal done."

Our Advertising Director and the customer's General Manager were using both physical and verbal negotiation tactics to gain bargaining table image and to appear as the alpha negotiator. Both were using tactics to unbalance each other. Both were using tactics to show a test of will. To this day I honestly believe they both regaled in the experience!

Our Ad Director using speed tactics to impress with a huge big button calculator was punching away at what he believed was going to be a great deal to end the bickering. He wanted to grow our newspaper revenue and firmly reset the business relationship for both companies. As he slashed away at his calculator he came to an eye popping proposal and proudly presented it to the customer on the spot. Big smiles from both sides. Big handshakes from all involved. We left the meeting deal done.

Now back at the newspaper my phone rings...it's the Advertising Director. He said "Patty, Patty, Patty quick... come over to my office". He was sitting there re-crunching all the numbers in the home renovation proposal and shook his head back and forth. He couldn't believe it, the numbers didn't add up!

Unbelievably, the negotiation with the home renovation company had to start all over again. You to only imagine the negotiation tactics that ensued.

**Note to self, plan your negotiation tactics and always, always have a back-up plan!**

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