



## **Peter Barron Stark President**

Peter and his team of expert negotiators train leaders, sales professionals and procurement specialists in the art of negotiation.

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## *Tactic #11 - Higher Authority*

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Summary: Consulting someone else before accepting an offer.

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The tactic of Higher Authority can work for either counterpart in a negotiation. Sometimes you cannot get a situation resolved by working with the counterpart assigned to you. Perhaps the counterpart has decided not to comply with your request, or she may not have the authority to fulfill your request. So you have to go to a Higher Authority to obtain a satisfactory outcome. On the other hand, lacking the final say in a situation can create a very powerful position for your counterpart, since it provides her with the opportunity to take your request to someone at a higher level in the organization. We have frequently seen experienced negotiators work the best deal they can, then run off to a Higher Authority and come back with instructions for an even better deal.

### Example

A real estate developer requests a line of credit from his local bank branch. The branch manager says that the loan has been denied by the loan committee (the Higher Authority) at the bank. The developer asks if there is anything he can do to have his loan reconsidered. The branch manager apologizes, but says there is nothing she can do once the committee has denied a loan.

### Counter

Since the branch manager is denying that she can do anything to help the developer, he could counter by going over her head, using the tactic of the Higher Authority himself. He could call the bank president or a member of the loan committee and ask that his loan be reconsidered. In the above example, the bank president might request that the branch manager repackage the real estate developer's loan so it could be approved.

The best way to keep the tactic of the Higher Authority from being used on you in the first place is to ask your counterpart in the very beginning whether she is the person who makes the final decision. If not, ask to make your presentation to the decision maker.

Do you have any negotiation questions? If so, then send them to us by hitting the "reply" button. We'll do our best to address them in upcoming issues.

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This tactic is one of 101 strategies and tactics featured in [The Only Negotiating Guide You'll Ever Need](#), by Peter Stark and Jane Flaherty.



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