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Tactic #12 - Good Guy/Bad Guy

Summary: Pretending to be on a counterpart's side while consulting another party who keeps vetoing deal points.

The Good Guy/Bad Guy technique is very similar to the tactic of the [Higher Authority](#) but is much more specific. With Good Guy/Bad Guy, one person pretends to be on your side and appears to help you make the deal. But every time you strike a deal, the good guy marches off to the bad guy for final approval. Naturally the bad guy will renegotiate the deal you have worked out with the good guy. Anytime you get into this scenario and do not expose the technique, you can end up with devastating consequences.

Example

If you have ever bought a new car, most likely you have experienced the frustration of being in a Good Guy/Bad Guy situation. After you have test-driven the car, the salesperson takes you into the closing room to draw up the initial deal. Since the salesperson cannot approve anything himself, he marches off to the sales manager to get the manager's input on the deal. Then the salesperson returns and says that you are close, but the original deal will not work. What is scary is that dealerships go through this process whether your offer is a good one or a bad one.

Counter

First, you can fight fire with fire. The last time I bought a new car, I took my wife. Every time the salesperson went to the sales manager, I took the deal to my wife (who was in the lobby) to review it. At one point, when the salesperson told me he would have to raise the price of the car five hundred dollars, I replied that we had a problem because my wife said I couldn't do the deal at the previous price unless I could get the interest rate down another point.

Second, you can expose the technique. Tell your counterpart that you do not appreciate the Good Guy/Bad Guy routine. I once told a salesperson that if he did not have enough authority to make the deal, he should bring in someone who did. I warned that the next time he left the room, I would also leave. Keep in mind that if the salesperson needs to get approval from the sales manager, he can make a phone call with you in the room.

Do you have any negotiation questions? If so, then send them

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to us by hitting the "reply" button. We'll do our best to address them in upcoming issues.

If you'd like to forward this issue to a friend or colleague, please click "forward email" below.

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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