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Tactic of the Week #16

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Tactic #16 - The Ultimatum

Summary: Making a final, specific demand to force a counterpart to make a decision.

From time to time it may be in your best interest to "draw a line in the sand," or create a rule that allows you to hold your counterpart accountable. One tactic you can use is to tell your counterpart the actions you will take if your conditions are not met.

Example

A client calls a consulting firm and asks to tentatively reserve a date for a seminar to be presented at her company in approximately six months. Three months prior to the date in question, the consulting firm calls the client and asks her to confirm the reserved date or the firm will have to offer it to another client who has requested the same day. The client is told that a confirmation is needed within twenty-four hours, which makes the deadline her Ultimatum.

Counter

If you wish to complete a deal but need more time to get permissions or approvals, one of the most effective counters to the Ultimatum is postponement. In this specific example, the client might respond that she cannot get the date confirmed within the twenty-four-hour time frame, but she can have an answer within forty-eight hours, and ask if that would be acceptable.

If the deal outcome is not important to her and she needs more time to get approvals, she can simply walk away and find another seminar provider.

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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