

THE MASTER NEGOTIATOR

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Tactic of the Week #56

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**Peter Barron Stark
President**

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Tactic #56 - The Puppy Dog

Summary: Offering a "trial" of a product or service to get the counterpart emotionally committed to the deal.

The power behind The Puppy Dog tactic lies in letting your counterpart use the object she is negotiating for before the deal is finalized. The name is derived from the tactic pet store owners use when they tell you to go ahead and hold the puppies and play with them while you consider buying one. I once ended up with a \$400 Old English Sheepdog because of this very tactic. With Sir Bentley licking me on the face, \$400 seemed quite reasonable!

Example

Michael wants to buy a used boat, but he and the owner are stuck on the price. The owner suggests that Michael take the boat to a nearby island for the weekend. The owner is convinced that at the end of the weekend, Michael will feel the boat is worth the full asking price. When Michael returns from a great weekend, he continues to try to get the owner to sell the boat for a lower price. But the owner says he is confident he can find another buyer who will pay the full price. The owner is a smart man. He knows that after a great weekend, Michael has already bought the boat in his mind. In fact, he would probably be willing to pay even more money if the owner raised the price.

Counter

The tactic of The Puppy Dog is so powerful that the only effective counter is [These Boots Are Made for Walking](#). If Michael wants to continue negotiating the price, he should remove himself from the picture and let a third party negotiate for him. Once his emotions have been committed and the boat owner knows it, Michael is in a very vulnerable position.

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

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858.451.3601

11417 West Bernardo Court
San Diego, California 92127

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.



11417 W. Bernardo Ct.
San Diego, CA 92127

Phone: 858.451.3601
FAX 858.451.3604

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