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Tactic of the Week #79

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Peter Barron Stark President

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Tactic #79 - Standard Practice or Policy

Summary: Using the argument that "It has always been done this way."

Standard Practice or Policy is a tactic used to convince a counterpart to proceed in a certain way simply because that way is "policy." This tactic works well because it suggests that the way being proposed is the usual or customary procedure and, therefore, is probably the safest approach. The most common example is the standard contract. The party being asked to sign a standard contract will probably just assume that the contract does not need to be changed. However, questioning just how "standard" a contract really is usually produces good results.

Example

Fernando is renting some office space. The landlord hands Fernando a lease to sign, saying, "It's a standard commercial lease. Just initial it in two places and sign at the bottom."

Counter

Fernando has several options here. Using the tactic of the [Salami](#), he could start slicing away, ever so slightly, at what is considered "standard," agreeing to some terms of the lease but not others. He could use the tactic of the [Trade-Off Concession](#), agreeing to all the terms of the lease in return for one month's free rent. He could rewrite the contract to suit his own needs. Or, utilizing the tactic [These Boots Are Made for Walking](#), he could always leave and go rent space from someone else.

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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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.

858.451.3601

11417 West Bernardo Court
San Diego, California 92127



11417 W. Bernardo Ct.
San Diego, CA 92127

Phone: 858.451.3601
FAX 858.451.3604

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