

Dirty Tricks and What You Can Do About Them

Dirty Trick	Description / Example / Counter-Tactic
1. Phony Facts	Typically the numbers appear valid but the assumptions upon which the numbers or conclusions are based are dubious. Example: You need to buy an Airbus plane. We have far fewer planes crashes and accidents than Boeing does. Counter Tactic: Ask them to state their assumptions or explain how they derived their numbers.
2. Higher Authority	It is common for a negotiator to delay reaching an agreement by claiming that his or her authority is limited. The other party will become impatient and give in to the earlier demands. Alternatively, it gives the negotiator a out if the settlement is not desirable. Example: "Well, your proposal sound interesting but I will have to take it back to my boss for final approval." Counter Tactic: Find out who the person with authority is and negotiate with that person initially. Appeal to the person ego and say, "So you don't have any authority. And I thought you had some power."
3. Add-ons	A common tactic used in sales negotiations. Negotiator asks for a small concession and adds it on to the item already being negotiated. Example: ``I'll take the computer if you will throw in free maintenance for a year." Counter Tactic: Recognize the tactic for what it is. Give them the add on if you would have anyway. If not, say no.
4. Personal Attacks	A variety of tactics fall under the heading of personal attacks. They are all designed to make you feel uncomfortable and to make you forget about your real negotiation objectives. Example: They can attack your status, ignore you during a negotiation, fail to make eye contact, or comment negatively on your appearance, your intelligence , or integrity.

	Counter Tactic: Call it for what it is. Refocus the negotiation on the problem at hand.
5. Good Guy / Bad Guy	One person plays the good guy; the other the bad guy. Good guy tries to keep negotiation moving in desired direction. Bad guy imposes limits. Example: "Joe is really tough to deal with in these situation. Maybe if you can give in a little, I can talk some sense into him." Counter Tactic: Identify the tactic and discuss it openly.
6. Intimidation	A variety of influence tactics fall into this category including anger, fear, emotional ploys and guilt. They may also claim there are legitimate channels to go through. Example: "How dare you make such a low offer. You must know nothing about the airline industry." Counter tactic: Go to your balcony when you feel your emotions taking over for your reason. When you are calmer collect information to counter the intimidation.
7. Lock-in Tactics	Communication strategies which force the other party to make concessions. Example: A foreign national publicly announces that it will not withdraw its troops. Because the statement is public, the other side gives in. Counter Tactic: Recognize the ploy for what it is and publicly acknowledge it as a tactic. Proactively, state that such tactics will not be tolerated.
8. Take it or leave it	This is really not a negotiation approach. It is, however, an approach to conducting business which blocks negotiating. Example: "This is the salary we are offering for the position. If it is unacceptable, then we will have to select someone else for the position." Counter Tactic: Call their bluff. Ignore and keep on talking.
9. High Ball / Low Ball	Negotiator starts with an extremely high or low opening offer. Affects decision anchor point and adjustment from the opening offer is usually insufficient. Risk is that other party may consider negotiation is a waste of time. Example: "We will offer you \$100,000 for the house (when it is worth \$250,000)."

	Counter Tactic: Identify in advance your BATNA. Have objective information to counter their offer. Ask them to justify the offer.
10. Bogey	Negotiator pretends an important issue is not important. Later in the negotiation, the item of value can be traded. Useful if you can identify an issue that IS important to the other side but of little value to your side. Example: "Our budget only allows us to pay so much." Counter Tactic: Never accept the assumption on face value. Find out why the budget is fixed.
11. Chicken	Negotiator combine a bluff with a purported action. It is a high risk strategy. If the other side calls their bluff, they must be willing to carry through with the action. Example: "If you don't accept our offer, we will close the plant." Counter Tactic: Ignore the bluff and keep on talking or call their bluff.
12. Exaggerated Assertions	Negotiators may intentionally describe interests, time preference or needs one way when they want them to go another way. Example: "I've really got to have that item delivered by Friday." Counter Tactic: Call them on it. Give them what they want if it is of low value to you and then leverage that to help get what you want.
13. Threats	A useful tactic if one party has the power to inflict relatively large punishment on the other without substantial retaliation. The threat must be believed and you must be willing to follow through with the threat. Example: "If that assignment is not completed by Friday, I will fire you." Counter Tactic: Make the threat salient and discuss the ramifications.
14. Scoundrel	An unethical maneuver. The scoundrel lures an opponent into a deal by making an attractive offer. Once the other person is mentally committed, the scoundrel reneges on the deal and uses a variety of tactics to repudiate the deal (higher authority, legal delays, lost paperwork).

	Example: "Yes, we did have a deal but that was before I knew you needed A and B and C. Those, of course, will be additional costs." Counter Tactic: Run, don't walk away at the first indication that you are dealing with a scoundrel. If it is too late, get the best legal help possible.
15. Scrambled Eggs	The negotiator deliberately makes a deal complex to create confusion. Example: Car leasing agreements have come under attack recently for being so complex that individuals do not understand what they are really paying for the leased car. Counter Tactic: Admit the negotiation is becoming to complex and go to your balcony until you have time to analyze the situation.
16. Foot in the door	The negotiator gets you to make a small concession. He or she then builds from that base to get you to make more concessions. Example: "If the price is right, will you buy a car from me today?" Counter Tactics: Know what your negotiation latitude is in advance and stay within that range.
17. Deadlines	Imposing a time limit often sets the boundaries on a negotiation. Too often people accept another's time deadline as their own. Example: "I need to have your decision on this matter by Friday at 5 p.m." Counter tactic: Determine why this deadline is important. Explain and impose your own deadline.