

TACTICS and how to combat them

Frequently, tactics cannot be anticipated. You must respond to the tactics in real-time, being careful not to compromise your position without good reason. In the next exercise, you will have an opportunity to test your flexibility and responsiveness.

In your groups read the following situations and formulate your response. In doing so, consider the following questions:

- Why might the other party be using this tactic?
- What are the negative / positive consequences for you?
- What influence style and action can you use to counter the tactic and regain control?

Situation 1:

You arrive expecting at least a half-day meeting to begin negotiating an agreement, and the other party informs you that he must finish within one hour in order to attend an important meeting that will take him away for the rest of the day. You believe that it will take at least three or four hours to reach an agreement, and you suspect the other party has set an arbitrary deadline to put pressure on you.

Situation 2:

You arrive expecting to negotiate with one other person, only to find yourself with six people, including a stenographer, an accountant, and an attorney. You are well-prepared on all phases of the negotiation. However, the presence of the other people is a surprise, and you suspect it is a tactic to put you under pressure.

Situation 3:

You meet the other party's representatives on neutral ground in order to negotiate an agreement. You ask him if he has the authority to commit his department to any agreement that you reach. He tells you that he has full authority, but he is not very convincing. You suspect that he will tell you later that he must get higher level approval if anything unexpected happens to get introduced into the negotiation.

Situation 4:

You are anxious to build a strong relationship with the other party. To show your good faith, you make a very reasonable opening offer, close to your settlement expectation. You expect the other party to do the same by making a reasonable opening demand, opening the way for a short and friendly negotiation. Instead, the other party makes an extremely high opening demand.

Situation 5:

The negotiation has moved into the exploring phase. The negotiation objectives of the two parties are in direct conflict, but you believe that if you can get at underlying needs a settlement can be worked out. You have told him some of your needs and asked him some direct questions about his, but he has shown no inclination to provide you with any information other than to repeat and try to justify his opening position.

Situation 6:

The negotiation has gone very well for you. You have gained most of your objectives without giving up much currency. While the other party has been friendly, you detect a note of disappointment that he has given more than he gained. You attempt to bring the negotiation to a conclusion, and the other party tells you he would like to think about it before agreeing. He tells you he will give you an answer tomorrow.