

# 16

tactics buyers use in

## SALES NEGOTIATIONS

RAIN Group

Sometimes buyers use tactics to gain advantages in negotiation at the seller's expense. Even if your mindset and approach is win-win, you need to know how to counter any tactics that might be thrown your way.



### GOING, GOING, GONE

**Buyer Says:** "I'm talking to [name of your competitor] later, and I'm confident they'll go for this."

**Description:** A competitor-centric form of time pressure where "if you don't accept the agreement, somebody else will."

**Response Strategy:**

- Decide if it's a bluff or real—the buyer may be doing this with other vendors as well.
- Know your BATNA (best alt. to a negotiated agreement).
- Make a Best and Final offer, which may be one further value add or concession.
- Always be willing to walk.



### RED HERRING

**Buyer Says:** "We're really concerned about this huge issue..." (But, in reality, they're not.)

**Description:** Buyer distracts the negotiation by introducing an unimportant issue to the seller, but making it seem important, so they'll get a concession from you when they drop it. Then you are not inclined to stand firm on more important issues.

**Response Strategy:**

- Suggest dealing with issues separately.
- If something else is important, don't lose steam to negotiate when you get to it.



### PENCIL SHARPENING

**Buyer Says:** "You're going to have to do better than this. We need to get it for less."

**Description:** A common pushback to 'get you ready' to drop your price because 'they'll expect that.'

**Response Strategy:**

- Ask, "Why?"
- Respond quickly that it's not your expectation to simply drop price for no reason.
- Focus on differentiation.
- Have value-adds ready to bargain and help them save face. Add more vs. dropping price.



### GOOD COP, BAD COP

**Buyer Says:** "I've brought along our colleague, Darth CFO..."

**Description:** Buyer introduces a "bad cop" late in discussions to pressure price, change the agreement, and reopen closed issues.

**Response Strategy:**

- Bring your own bad cop.
- Don't blink or look intimidated.
- Stick to objectives, possibilities, requirements, and alternatives, and focus on outcomes.
- Wait it out, stay present, don't rush.



### SPLIT THE DIFFERENCE

**Buyer Says:** "Just meet me in the middle and let's call it a day..."

**Description:** Buyer asks you to meet them in the middle, even though the middle may not be fair for you.

**Response Strategy:**

- Beware of the emotional appeal of showing "good faith" by splitting the difference.
- Don't cave.
- Search for a better solution.



### ONE LAST THING

**Buyer Says:** "I can get that signed today if you give this one last concession..."

**Description:** Buyer catches the seller at their most vulnerable point and uses eagerness to get the deal done to wring out final concessions.

**Response Strategy:**

- Don't be tempted to cave.
- Remind the buyer that the process to get to final agreement includes flexibility on both sides.
- Respond with questions and a trade offer.



### CHERRY PICKING

**Buyer Says:** "I know I said our initial order would be 5,000 units with 5 components, but we'll just need this piece first..."

**Description:** Buyer tries to unbundle a solution but assumes all will be the same price when it isn't.

**Response Strategy:**

- Make sure to respond that it won't work immediately to address the issue.
- Note on proposals that price assumes "this solution and volume" and changes will affect overall price structure.
- Engage discussion to work out appropriate pricing.



### "WE'RE DONE."

**Buyer Says:** "We can't go forward with what you've proposed..."

**Description:** Scare tactic to see if you'll cave to the buyer's communication that they will walk.

**Response Strategy:**

- If you think it's a bluff, don't cave or blink.
- Ask, "Why?"
- Focus on opportunities and possibilities.
- Consider changing the scope vs. just dropping the price.



### ANCHORING

**Buyer Says:** "We're looking to spend no more than \$500,000 for this..."

**Description:** Buyer shares a target number, such as a budget cap, to anchor the bargaining range on the low side.

**Response Strategy:**

- Go first with price. Don't wait for them.
- Find out whether it's a real number or a ploy.
- Understand what their likely alternatives are—this will help you respond.



### TEMPER TANTRUM

**Buyer Says:** "I can't believe this!"

**Description:** A sometimes-planned, heightened emotional reaction to price or a specific term in the proposal in order to evoke a response from you.

**Response Strategy:**

- Don't get rattled. Remain professional.
- Suggest taking a short break.
- Get back to objectives and possibilities.



### OUTLAST

**Buyer Says:** "This is too much for now. Then I'll be out. Let's re-engage in 2 months..."

**Description:** Buyer tries to outlast you and wear you down with delays.

**Response Strategy:**

- Share your willingness to do the same.
- Don't seem too excited about moving forward.
- Focus on urgency on their end with questions. If not urgent, then don't rush.



### SELECTIVE MEMORY

**Buyer Says:** "I don't remember agreeing to that..."

**Description:** Buyer conveniently "forgets" what they agreed to.

**Response Strategy:**

- Avoid the issue altogether. Keep and share notes after all meetings.
- If you agreed to it, you agreed. Stick to that if it's important.
- Get back to objectives and possibilities.



### CLOSING WINDOW

**Buyer Says:** "Let's do a site tour first..."

**Description:** You have limited time to do a deal. They suggest time wasters first so you are time pressured when you actually get to negotiating.

**Response Strategy:** If they're stalling, ask to focus on the business agenda.



### WHACK BACK

**Buyer Says:** "Your price is too high..."

**Description:** Common buyer tactic to ALWAYS push back on the first price offered.

**Response Strategy:**

- Ask, "Why?" Response is often faulty logic.
- Follow the RAIN process for responding to objections.
- Focus on objectives and possibilities.



### THEATER OF THE ABSURD

**Buyer Says:** "We've revised our agreement. We want your first born child, too..."

**Description:** Buyer asks for the sun and the stars, knowing it's absurd, hoping to then appear reasonable by lowering demands that are still, actually, unreasonable.

**Response Strategy:** Reverse direction by giving them an example of why what they are asking for is silly.



### STICKER SHOCK

**Buyer Says:** "It costs how much?!"

**Description:** Buyer appears to be shocked with the price. It could be an orchestrated response.

**Response Strategy:**

- Wait for theatrics to die down.
- Ignore their flinch, and ask why it seems high to them. Often their reasoning is faulty.

Learn more!

## Learn to Respond to These Buyer Tactics & Master Sales Negotiation

Enroll in RAIN Sales Negotiation online training and you'll get the tools and develop the skills you need to take control of every negotiation so you walk away with not just a good deal, but the *best deal possible*. This online, on-demand program digs deep into a negotiation process that's been **proven** to work for sellers. It's a process that delivers results..

Try RAIN Sales Negotiation today: <http://goo.gl/K1ZTGJ>.

**RAIN Group**

Boston • Bogotá • Geneva • Johannesburg  
London • Mumbai • Seoul • Sydney • Toronto  
[WWW.RAINGROUP.COM](http://WWW.RAINGROUP.COM)