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Tactic #20 - Isolating
Agreement

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Tactic #20 - Isolating Agreement

Summary: Discussing the issues that can be easily agreed on before addressing the difficult issues.

In complex negotiations, there are usually many deal points that need to be discussed and negotiated. Issues such as price, delivery schedules, service agreements, warranty, who will actually perform the work, training, and how add-ons or additional work will be handled are all examples of negotiable issues that need to be determined. If both parties are close to agreement on these issues, it may be best to discuss them first in the negotiation.

Example

When unions and management teams negotiate, they almost always negotiate the easiest points up front, and then save the economic issues for the very last. This serves two purposes. First, it speeds up the negotiation by getting resolution to the issues on which both parties agree. Second, it helps build the relationship between counterparts by allowing them to reach agreement on the easier issues.

Counter

There are two important points to remember if you or your counterpart uses this tactic. First, you should not narrow the negotiation down to one last issue. If you do, you may create a win-lose outcome. For example, when wages are the last thing left on the table, neither side has much room left for negotiation. Second, when using this tactic, remember, a lose-lose outcome is always a possibility. For example, if wages are the last deal point to be negotiated and the management team finally agrees to the union's demands for higher wages but then has to lay off people in order to pay the higher wages, both sides lose. One effective defense against Isolating Agreement is to tackle the toughest topic first. Doing so ensures that you have additional deal points you can juggle to create a win-win outcome.

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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.



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