

# THE MASTER NEGOTIATOR

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Tactic of the Week #62

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President**

Peter and his team of expert negotiators train leaders, sales professionals and procurement specialists in the art of negotiation.

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## Tactic #62 - Help Me Understand

Summary: Asking questions to clarify a counterpart's position on issues.

Some authors on negotiation encourage readers to ask only questions to which they already know the answers. Although we agree that you may not want to ask questions in some situations, we support asking questions when you don't understand your counterpart's position. Asking for clarification or more information from your counterpart can be very helpful in creating a win-win outcome.

### Example

An organization sends out a memo informing customers that checks will no longer be accepted for payment to accounts. All future payments must be made by debit card. One customer, using the Help Me Understand tactic, calls the organization to ask why the policy is being implemented. The accounts receivable manager informs the customer that by eliminating the "float" period while checks are in the mail, the organization hopes to minimize the money it needs to borrow to maintain adequate cash flow, thereby saving over \$50,000 annually.

### Counter

This clarification allows the customer to come up with an option, using the [If...Then](#) tactic. The customer asks the accounts receivable manager, "If I mail my payment five days before the due date, then will you accept my check?" Since the outcome for the organization would be the same as debit transaction on the due date, the accounts receivable manager agrees to accept the customer's check.

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.

*If you'd like to forward this issue to a friend or colleague, please click "forward email" below.*

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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