

# THE MASTER NEGOTIATOR

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Tactic of the Week #64

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President**

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## Tactic #64 - *Fait Accompli-Asking for Forgiveness*

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Summary: Taking action first, asking for forgiveness later.

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Fait Accompli is a tactic described by Gerard I. Nierenberg. The phrase is French for "accomplished fact," and refers to a deed that is already done-and is therefore irreversible. You employ this tactic when you do something without first negotiating it. Then, when you get caught, you respond to any questions with something like, "Who, me? I didn't know I wasn't supposed to be doing that. I apologize. I will not do it any more."

### Example

Your neighbors' trees are hanging over your property and you are tired of raking up the leaves. Instead of making a big deal and asking your neighbors to cut the trees back to the property line, you decide to trim them yourself. Your neighbors become incensed that you have cut their trees without asking. You reply simply that you thought you were doing the right thing by not bothering them, and you apologize for your actions.

### Counter

The reason this tactic is so powerful is that there are few tactics to counter it. What is done, is done. About the only thing the neighbors can do is stop future progress. For example, if you are still cutting the trees, the neighbors could ask you to stop, saying they will hire a professional to trim their own trees. Putting the process on hold puts them in a better position to enforce future action. They could also use [The Safeguard](#) tactic to guide the future relationship, asking you to agree that you will never cut the trees again without first getting their permission.

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.*

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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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