

Scotwork[®]

since 1975



THE
**Dirty
Tricks**
OF NEGOTIATION

AND HOW TO SPOT THEM

Volume 1

Dirty tricks. Occupational hazards

Negotiation can be hazardous. There are dozens of underhand tactics out there designed to wrest control and push you from the negotiating table empty-handed. Hard to detect, these dirty tricks can be ruthlessly effective. They can catch you off-guard and force you to concede again and again. Identifying and side-stepping these threats will help you keep control and secure a better deal.

Every trick in the book. In a book

Every day Scotwork experts observe negotiation in action all over the world. Over 100,000 hours of deal-making analysis has exposed a minefield of sneaky tactics, ranging from the slightly questionable to the downright dirty. This book brings together 10 of the most notorious negotiation tricks.

Become a real-deal negotiator

At Scotwork we know it takes more than a few tricks to stay in control. Using more cooperative methods gives you much better commercial outcomes and builds longer, stronger relationships. Our real-deal negotiation skills training empowers thousands of people and businesses to become winning deal-makers.

To find out more visit us at [**scotwork.com**](https://www.scotwork.com)

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Trick #1

GIGGLING SCHOOL GIRL



Childish? OMG totes! This little tactic is set to undermine any confidence you have in your negotiating position. Watch as your opponents appear to pass secret notes to each other, look up and giggle. Yes, giggle! This ruse might seem at home in the school playground, but in the negotiating room it could work just as powerfully against you. How? All that subterfuge is designed to unsettle you. It could make you feel you have wildly misjudged your strategy. And push you into a major rethink of your proposal. Just grow up, please!

Trick #2

CURBING YOUR ENTHUSIASM



Blimey, this lot are a tough crowd. They didn't even snigger at your tried-and-tested ice-breaker. Not a smile. Not a raised eyebrow. Not a flicker. Nothing you do excites an iota of enthusiasm. Your negotiation opponents are a Berlin Wall of indifference. Your pitch or proposal is greeted with lukewarm tumbleweed. This 'hard to get' tactic is designed to suppress any buying signals, so you have absolutely nothing to go on. Their refusal to rise to your sales pitch eventually erodes your confidence. Now you lack belief in yourself and your negotiating position. Beware of the curb!

Trick #3

PASSING THE BUCK



In any negotiation it takes two to tango, right? Not in this dirty trick. Here, your opponent is happy to sit back and pass all the problem-solving to you. So you have to unstuck the sticking points, unlock the impasses and resolve the conflicts. He's a master blame-gamer who tosses every issue back in your face: "You've put me into this impossible position. You need to sort it out!" This throws the onus on you to resolve by surrendering concessions. And before you know it, the bully has exactly what he wants. Take care! This one-sided buck-passing could cost you a lot of bucks.

Trick #4

PLAYING GOOD COP, BAD COP



You've seen it in a thousand movies. Cop 1 applies coffee and ciggies, while Cop 2 pulls out fingernails. Slowly. This psychological con-trick is a classic of the negotiation room too (well, not the fingernails part). Here Good Cop gains incremental concessions through Bad Cop's behaviour. Or Good Cop starts, Bad Cop replaces him (says he was too soft) who then plays hard-ball. Good Cop then returns, replaces Bad Cop (says he was too harsh) and threatens that unless you comply, Bad Cop will be back. And this time he REALLY means business!

Beware these antics of painful persuasion.

Trick #5

GOING NUCLEAR



Batten the hatches. Take cover. Man the shelters. BOOM!

Your negotiating opponent has just gone nuclear. All you did was make a modest demand. But then, without warning, he suddenly launches a terrifying pre-emptive strike. A wildly disproportionate threat designed to vaporise your confidence and send you trembling from the negotiating room. An aggressive scare-tactic to deter you from even asking for a wish-list item, let alone movement on a main issue. Dramatic it might be, but the nuclear option only serves to incite you to match your opponent's belligerence. Don't do it: gloves off usually means burnt fingers.

Trick #6

CHINESE WATER TORTURE

*“OK, I’ll say it
again – a little
louder this
time.”*



If at first they don't succeed, they try again. And again. And again. And again. Your opponents make the same demand, time after time after time. Whatever you say or do in reply, they repeat the same mind-numbing mantra. This agonising drip-by-drip tactic gradually and relentlessly saps your energy. It gnaws at your patience. It grinds down your resolve. It weakens and weakens you until at last...you crack! Now your torturers are free to squeeze extra concessions from you. Of course, it's always good to ask for what you want, but taken to the extreme this technique becomes a very dirty trick. Always keep your negotiations clean and torture-free.

Trick #7

THINKING SMART, ACTING DUMB

“Now, I’m just a plain ol’ girl from Kensington – let’s keep things simple for me, ya?”



Typically, sales pitches are laced with factual evidence to reel in the buyer. Conditions are often added to sweeten the deal and bring the buyer on board. But beware. Sometimes the buyer is wary of all this smarty-pants logic and silky smooth sales rhetoric. Rather than play the game by your rules, they prefer to fold their arms, sit tight and act dumb. “I’m just a simple soul”, they say. “All this is far too complicated for me.” What they’re really saying is: “No conditions, just give me the deal I want. Now!” No explanation. No justification. Just blatant rug-pulling. Watch out for the signs and outsmart the deliberate dumb-downers.

Trick #8

SOCIAL PARIAH

“Kid, let me tell you
a thing or two about
how we do things
around here.”



You may be completely innocent but your opponents find you guilty of unprofessional behaviour. They suggest that your position (however squeaky clean) is utterly unreasonable and falls well short of accepted norms. “How could you possibly propose such a thing?”, they cry. “No one else in our industry would stoop so low.” Your conscience is pricked. Your moral compass spins wildly. Moral high ground landslides into oblivion. Self-doubt runs riot. Trapped by feelings of isolation and unnecessary guilt you are more likely to cave in and concede. Don’t fall foul of this dastardly deception. You are innocent until proven otherwise. Your opponents are guilty as charged.

Trick #9

KEEPING OMERTA



Silence may be golden, but this dirty trick is guaranteed to tarnish your hopes of a successful deal. Cards are kept so close to chests that you have absolutely nothing to go on. Zero explanation. Information vacuum. No context to any proposal or statement. Was that a pin I heard dropping?

The idea here is to keep you at arm's length. To freeze you out and keep you clueless. Force you into filling the awkward silences with concessions and giveaways. To put you so far on your back foot, you'll bend over backwards.

Whatever happens, don't be disquieted by the quiet.

Trick #10

PICKPOCKET

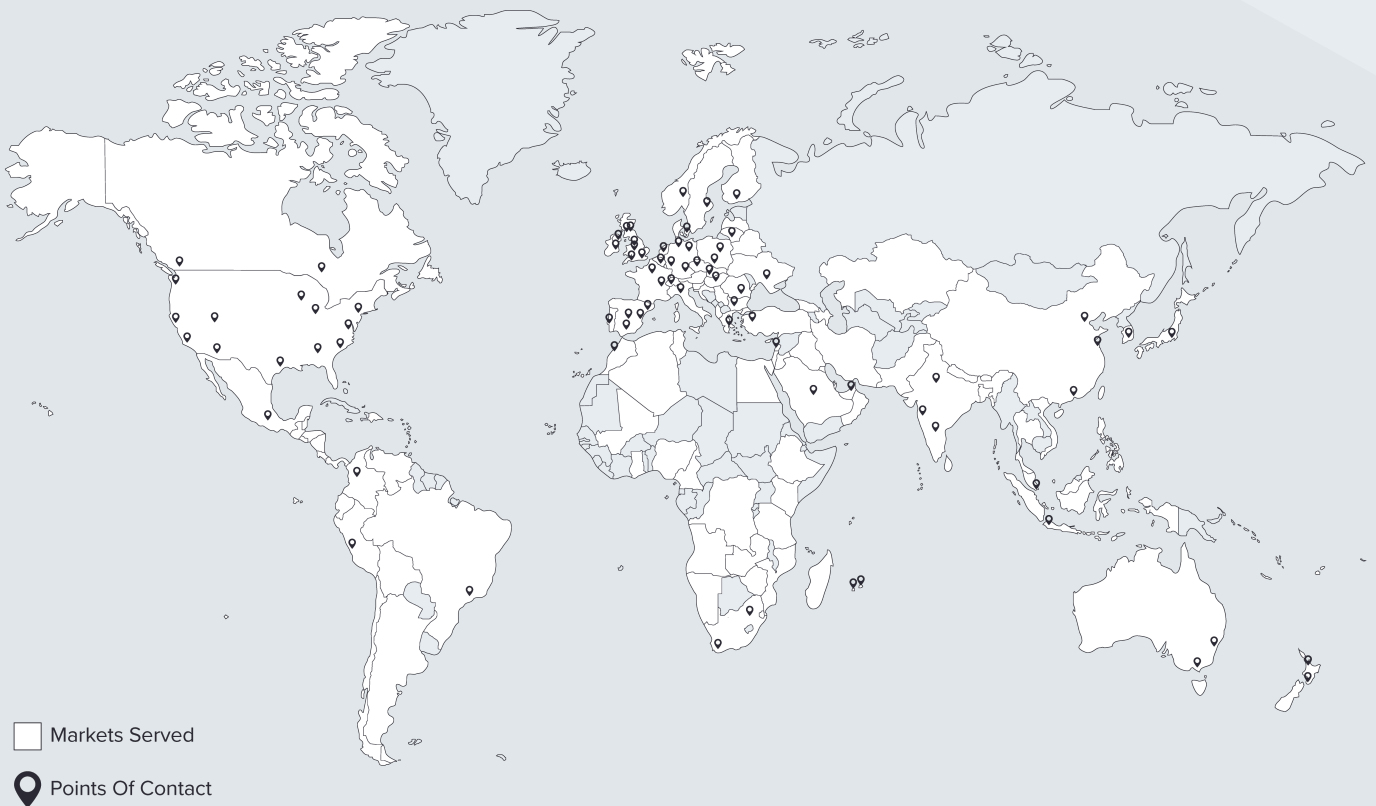


The deal is done. Everyone is happy. It's time to stack the chairs, switch off the lights and exit to crack open a celebratory bottle. But hold your horses. Suddenly your negotiation opponents are digging in. They aren't going anywhere. Not until you accept that extra hot-off-the-press post-agreement demand. They're banking on you saying 'yes' because you've already spent days reaching an accord. Surely you won't risk unstitching the whole deal for one teeny-weeny eleventh hour demand? Or chance souring your new-found bonhomie? Prepare to be robbed or hang up your coat and renegotiate. And beware the negotiating room: pickpockets are operating in this area.

About Scotwork

MAKING A REAL IMPACT WORLDWIDE

Scotwork has coached hundreds of thousands of senior managers in 30 languages. We have grown into the world's number one independent negotiation consultancy, with offices in 50 countries. We work with organisations large and small across all sectors. After more than 50 years we are still giving people powerful skills that transform their lives, and handing businesses more successful futures.



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Please contact us to find out more

Email info@scotwork.com

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