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## **Smoke Out The Red Herring**

Maybe you've faced negotiators who used the "red herring" tactic of adding extra issues that they don't care about to their list of true issues. They spend time driving a hard bargain on all their issues, then back down on the phony ones and ask you to make a concession on the issues that are important to them. Their goal is to appear more cooperative than they really are with reciprocal concessions.

When faced with a negotiator who insists that all the issues on his list are equally important, don't buy into it. Instead, try to smoke out his real interests. One way to accomplish this is to immediately respond with multiple offers that you consider to be equivalent, suggest Northwestern University professors Victoria Husted Medvec and Adam D. Galinsky. For example, if a labor negotiator claims that wage rates, contract length and profit sharing incentives are equally important issues, respond with three proposals that vary on each issue but that are equally acceptable to you. If your counterpart objects to reducing his list to one issue, express that you are willing to have more negotiation but are trying to focus the discussion to make progress.

It is possible that he is posturing on the importance of some of his issues, or has not yet ranked their order of importance. Either way, his choice of the options you present may show which issue is most important to him and allow the dialogue to focus on the real issues.