

- Home
- Ask Entrepreneur
- Grow Your Biz
- Business Ideas
- Franchises & Opportunities

- [Video](#)
- [Tools & Services](#)

[Find Vendors](#) [Business, Legal Forms](#) [Incorporate/LLC](#) [Colleges & Business Schools](#) [Franchise Your Business](#) [Business Plan Pro](#)

- [Community](#)
- [Blog](#)

## THE DAILY DOSE

### D.C. Debt Debacle: What Not to Do in High-Stakes Negotiations

July 29, 2011 by Lee E. Miller | 

 Share

 52



The debt-ceiling debacle in Washington serves as a reminder of what can happen if negotiations are handled badly. If the issues they were dealing with were not so serious, I would think that the parties did not actually want to reach an agreement. More likely the parties have chosen to ignore important negotiating principles for the purpose of trying to score political points.

### SPECIAL REPORTS



What lessons can entrepreneurs learn from the mistakes the president and Congress have made? Once parties have come to an impasse, how can they get beyond that and come to an agreement?

The budget talks illustrate two fundamental mistakes that negotiators often make. The first is to think that you can pressure the other side to agree by issuing threats. Threats generally cause the other side to harden their position rather than being seen as caving in. The second is to make proposals that you are forced to back off from because you cannot deliver the other parties who need to agree to them.

Even if you do a better job negotiating than the folks in Washington, you can still run the risk of reaching a standoff at some point. Too often this results in the parties walking away without an agreement. Ordinarily this is a bad outcome for everyone involved. In high-stakes negotiations, it can be ruinous. Here are some tips to help you get beyond an impasse.

- When you have reached a stalemate and things have gotten heated, take a break. Defuse the emotions. Let everyone cool down.
- When you come back, set aside the issue causing the impasse. Talk about other things. Focus on items where you have mutual interests and agreement can be more readily reached. Keeping everyone talking and moving the negotiations in a positive direction builds momentum. As progress is made on other issues, the parties become invested in finding a way to resolve issues that previously seemed unresolvable.
- Allow the other side to change their position without looking like they are giving in. People hate to admit they were wrong. Introducing new information, allowing them to blame someone else, changing approaches or changing your position to incorporate aspects of their proposal can allow the other side to gracefully modify their position.

Sometimes negotiations fail because there really is no agreement that satisfies the needs of all parties. More often, negotiations fail because to reach an agreement one party is made to feel like they have lost. Impasses get resolved when you offer the other party a way to agree that allows them to feel like everyone is a winner.

-- Lee E. Miller, an executive coach and trainer, is the managing director of [NegotiationPlus.com](#) and author of *UP: Influence Power and The U Perspective -- The Art of Getting What You Want (Your Career Doctors Press, 2007)*.

## FINDING CUSTOMERS

Resources, tips and insights for identifying sales prospects

Latest Post

[Why Experimental Marketing May Be For You](#)

## Five to Follow

The most innovative and influential entrepreneurs and businesses to follow on Twitter.

Latest Post

[Five to Follow on Twitter for Mobile 'Treps](#)

## The Social Media Challenge

Can a social-media makeover boost revenues for a Denver-area barbecue restaurant group?

[Read the results of this challenge](#)

 Daily Dose E-mail

 Subscribe



Have news, a story, or suggestions?

[Contact Daily Dose](#)

## CONTRIBUTORS



Mikal Belicove  
Contributing Writer

Did you find this story helpful? [Yes](#) [No](#)



#### Previous Posts

- [D.C. Debt Debacle: What Not to Do in High-Stakes Negotiations](#)
- [Five Truths About Social Media Marketing](#)
- [What a U.S. Default Might Mean for Small Businesses](#)
- [AdWords Express Takes Pain Out of Local Online Advertising](#)
- [Senate Grills SBA Over Federal Contracts](#)
- [One Way to Get a Product into Big Chains](#)
- [Five Lies About Social Media Marketing](#)
- [A Lesson in Apologies from TOMS Shoes](#)
- [Airbnb: From Scrounging for Rent to a \\$1 Billion Valuation](#)
- [Three Business Lessons from the NFL Lockout](#)

content continues below



[Carol Tice](#)  
Contributing Writer



[Laura Lorber](#)  
Executive Online Editor



[Teri Evans](#)  
Deputy Editor



[Jason Fell](#)  
Senior Online Editor



[Diana Ransom](#)  
Contributing Editor

#### ARCHIVE BY MONTH

Select a month to view archived posts



1 person liked this.



---

Post as  
...

## Showing 0 comments

Sort by

[Subscribe by email](#) [Subscribe by RSS](#)

Real-time updating is enabled. ([Pause](#))

0 new comment was just posted. [Show](#)

---

[Home](#) | [Community](#) | [SecondAct.com](#) | [YoungEntrepreneur.com](#) | [Startup Guides](#) | [Business Books](#) | [Events](#) | [Mobile](#)

[Subscriptions](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Newsletters](#) | [Advertise with Us](#) | [RSS Feeds](#) | [Reprints & Permissions](#) | [En Español](#) | [Site Map](#)

Copyright © 2011 Entrepreneur Media, Inc. All rights reserved. [Privacy Policy](#)