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NEGOTIATION BRIEFINGS

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Beating the odds in difficult negotiations

Through agile, creative moves, the U.S. national women's hockey and soccer teams overcame resistance to negotiate groundbreaking labor contracts.

Sometimes our negotiation goals seem manageable, such as securing an annual raise or reeling in a new client. At other times we shoot for the moon, aiming to change deeply ingrained practices or to get much more from our counterparts than they want to give. When we set high goals, choices about our negotiating behavior become all the more critical. Should we make aggressive moves or try to be accommodating? Negotiate on our own or hire experts to represent us? Publicize our cause or keep it private?

Not one, but two U.S. women's national sports teams—hockey and soccer—found themselves facing such decisions over the past year when they tried to convince their sports' governing federations to fundamentally restructure their labor contracts with the goal of making them more equitable. The teams followed different playbooks, but both succeeded in negotiating precedent-setting agreements that are expected to permanently alter their sports. Drawing on reporting by the *New York Times*, we examine the deals to identify strategies that similarly ambitious negotiators can adopt.

Second-class treatment

The U.S. women's national ice hockey team is used to excelling. The team has medaled in every Olympic Games since hockey became an official event in 1998 and has finished in first or second place in every world championship since 1990—a record far exceeding that of the national men's hockey team.

But when it came to their labor agreement with U.S.A. Hockey (USAH), members of the women's team didn't feel like winners. The federation paid the women only $6,000 every four years, spread across the six months preceding the Olympics; team members also received small training stipends from the U.S. Olympic Committee. Too busy training to work full-time jobs, many players added one or more part-time jobs to their schedules and, due to the low pay and lack of maternity benefits, retired from the sport sooner than they'd liked.

USAH doesn't give much financial support to members of the men's national hockey team, either, but most of them earn seven-figure salaries from the National Hockey League (NHL). (A U.S. national women's hockey league folded in 2007; a four-team league started up in 2015.) But members of the women's team said that USAH was treating them like second-class citizens in other ways. The men's team flies business class to games; the women have flown coach. In a dangerous sport, only the men received disability insurance. To add insult to injury, the federation reportedly didn't give the women their 2015 world championship rings until 2017.

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The team also accused the federation of squandering promotional opportunities and failing to adequately develop the women's hockey program. USAH spends $3.5 million per year on boys' hockey but had no equivalent program for girls. "Girls can't dream of what they can't see," two-time Olympic medalist Jocelyne Lamoureux-Davidson told the *Times*.

Going on offense

As they entered negotiations for a new contract in early 2016, the women's team, believing they had little to lose, aimed to turn their pastime into a profession—both for themselves and for future generations. They demanded a living wage of $68,000 per year, as well as child care, maternity leave, and the same travel and insurance benefits as the men's team, according to *CNN Money*.

For more than a year, USAH refused to significantly restructure the women's contract. But on March 15, 2017, the team finally got the federation's full attention by making a surprise announcement: It would boycott the International Ice Hockey Federation Women's World Championship tournament, set to begin March 31, if the talks didn't soon achieve "meaningful progress."

"We feel like we've been ignored, and this shows how serious we are about this issue," said Meghan Duggan, the team captain, according to the *Times*.

Power plays

Five days later, the two sides met for 10 hours of talks: eight members of the hockey team, the team's lawyers, and 10 other players participating remotely; and four officials and two lawyers representing USAH. The players called the meetings "productive," but several days later the federation backed away from the concessions it had been considering and revealed that it was looking for replacement players for the tournament.

Meanwhile, the team worked on publicizing its cause, using the hashtag #BeBoldForChange on social media. Top youth hockey players rallied around the team, as did most major U.S. men's and women's sports leagues and a group of 20 U.S. senators. Rumors emerged that the NHL was considering boycotting its own world championship in solidarity. Thanks to the attention and support, when USAH asked other women hockey players to sub for the team members in the tournament, most refused.

Despite the mounting negative publicity, USAH's 91-member board of directors—only 15 of whom are women—voted down the team's latest proposal on March 27. But at the suggestion of board member Julie Chu, a four-time Olympic U.S. hockey medalist who had publicly supported the athletes, the board authorized its executive committee to negotiate an agreement with the players in the days ahead.

Skating to victory

On March 28, three days before the start of the tournament, the two sides reached a landmark deal that met most of the team's demands. The players will now earn up to $71,000 annually and up to $129,000 during Olympic years, when contributions from the U.S. Olympic Committee are added in, the *Times* reports. The women won the maternity, travel, and insurance benefits they'd fought for. And the federation promised to create an advisory group made up of women's hockey leaders to help develop tomorrow's stars.

Euphoric team members rushed off to Plymouth, Michigan, where they parlayed their off-the-ice victory into another championship, defeating archrival Canada for the fourth year in a row. "It's two storybook endings for us," player Hilary Knight told the *Times*. "I can't speak enough of the bond that we created, doing what we did, making history for the next generation."

The women are seeking one more victory: they want to work to increase the representation of women in USAH's leadership. That could happen naturally, as management begins investing in developing the sport. "The opportunity for exposure and additional income are there for the taking," ESPN.com said.

Conflict off the field

If the U.S. women's hockey team benefited from becoming increasingly assertive in its negotiations, the U.S. women's soccer team succeeded when it replaced a combative stance with a more collaborative one.

In 2015, after winning the Women's World Cup, the U.S. women's soccer team earned far higher revenues for the U.S. Soccer Federation than the men's team did. Fed up by unequal pay and other perceived slights, a group of team members ordered their union to fight harder for higher salaries and other improvements in their upcoming contract negotiations. As talks with U.S. Soccer launched in early 2016, the centerpiece of the union's campaign was pay equity with the men's national team, according to the *Times*.

But the two teams' very different pay structures complicated the discussion. The women received set salaries and benefits with limited opportunities for bonuses. The men's incentive-based pay, by contrast, fluctuates widely depending on whether they win or lose, and they receive fewer traditional benefits than the women. (The base salary is $72,000 on the women's team; the top players on both teams recently have earned above $1 million.)

The difficulty of comparing apples to oranges led the women's team and U.S. Soccer to cherry-pick data, a tactic that sowed conflict. In February 2016, the federation sued the players' union to enforce the expiring collective-bargaining agreement (CBA) and block a possible strike. In response, some of the team's players filed a wage-discrimination complaint with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission accusing U.S. Soccer of wage discrimination.

Bending the ball

When the women's team's CBA expired at the end of 2016, labor and management were barely speaking. Over a series of team meetings, phone calls, and text messages, the players agreed it was time for a "fresh start," according to the *Times*. They fired their combative union leader, Rich Nichols, and began taking greater control of the negotiations themselves. In addition to hiring new lawyers and an interim union director, the team set up a new union structure that put players in key leadership roles.

Members of the U.S. women's soccer team

"Our big goal is to have as many of the players cued in, and involved, and invested, as possible," team midfielder Megan Rapinoe told the *Times*. "No one knows what we need and what we want and what our goals are more intimately than the members themselves."

Following the changes, Sunil Gulati, the president of U.S. Soccer, publicly expressed optimism that a deal was within reach. As the talks intensified, women's team members kept in touch day and night, tracking one another's priorities and practicing their talking points, writes Andrew Das in the *Times*.

Perhaps most important, the players refined their message. They still aimed to earn as much as their male counterparts, but they replaced their union's rigid "equal pay" mantra with the more flexible "equitable and fair." Soon Gulati was echoing the new phrasing.

Fast and furious

At the start of April, at least 15 members of the team participated in lengthy negotiating sessions with U.S. Soccer representatives—including Gulati—in Dallas, where the team had gathered for a training camp. The parties reportedly made progress on issues such as travel and inclusion in decision making, but compensation remained an obstacle.

The news that the U.S. women's hockey team had reached a historic agreement gave the talks momentum, the *Times* reports, as did the fact that the soccer players were about to scatter to their National Women's Soccer League (NWSL) teams in mid-April. (U.S. Soccer pays league salaries, which are wrapped into players' national team contracts.)

On April 5, a five-year deal emerged. U.S. Soccer agreed to a more-than-30% increase in players' base pay and increased performance bonuses, though it did not guarantee pay equal to that of the men's team. The team won greater control over licensing and marketing rights, as well as commitments from U.S. Soccer to continue to back the newly formed NWSL and to give more support to players on the periphery of the national team.

Gulati portrayed the deal as a win-win that will establish U.S. Soccer in the fight for gender equity in the sport worldwide, according to the *Times*—and he credited the players for enabling a breakthrough by establishing a more collaborative tone.

Aiming high—and succeeding

The following six takeaways from the hockey and soccer teams' negotiations can help you reach similarly ambitious goals:

1. Present a united front. Members of both women's teams achieved their goals by working together effectively behind the scenes. When negotiating as a team, devote ample time in advance to building rapport, agreeing on goals, assigning roles, and formulating your negotiating strategy.

2. Acknowledge your mistakes. Wise negotiators recognize their weaknesses and errors, and adapt accordingly. For the hockey team, that meant accepting that they had little to lose and going all-in on a high-risk threat. For the soccer team, it meant facing the fact that their combative approach wasn't working.

3. Strive for balance. Make too many aggressive moves in a difficult negotiation, and you risk driving the other party away. Be too accommodating, and your counterpart won't take you

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seriously. Both assertive and collaborative moves have a place in negotiation; above all, strive for balance.

4. Weigh the pros and cons of going public. The women's hockey team strengthened its position by publicizing its federation's starkly different treatment of male and female players. The women's soccer team had less success doing the same, perhaps because members denigrated the men's team in the process. Before publicizing your plight, test your message on trusted advisers.

5. Seek out allies. Women's hockey was victorious in part thanks to the intervention of a sympathetic federation board member. A hostile counterpart can seem monolithic, but there may be allies you can enlist to your cause.

6. Determine what's in it for the other party. Despite their low revenues relative to men's hockey, the women's hockey team convinced the federation to invest more in their sport by highlighting the potential long-term financial benefits it could reap from getting more girls to play hockey. Because the other side's opportunities aren't always obvious, be sure to name them. ■

NEGOTIATION IN THE NEWS

Contracts, confusion, and the Oxford comma

If you've tended to leave contract drafting and review to your lawyers in the past, you might think twice about doing so in the future after reading about a legal dispute that blew up over a comma—or, rather, the lack thereof.

In 2014, the *New York Times* reports, three truck drivers sued Portland, Maine's Oakhurst Dairy on behalf of about 75 drivers. Citing a Maine state law, the drivers accused Oakhurst of unfairly denying them overtime pay for four years. The dairy disagreed, citing the same Maine law.

The law stipulates that overtime rules do not apply to "The canning, processing, preserving, freezing, drying, marketing, storing, packing for shipment or distribution of: (1) Agricultural produce; (2) Meat and fish products; and (3) Perishable foods." At issue was whether or not a comma was implied after the word "shipment" in the passage. Did the law exempt from overtime *packing for shipping or distribution* of the products listed, or the *distribution* of the products as well?

The answer to this question mattered, as the drivers distributed perishable foods but didn't personally pack them. And it hinged on the lack of a so-called Oxford comma after "shipment."

In a list of three or more items, such as "produce, products and foods," some presses and style guides (including Oxford University Press and *The Chicago Manual of Style*, which *Negotiation Briefings* follows) favor adding a comma after the word "products" to clear up potential confusion and maintain consistency, while others (such as the *Times* and the Associated Press) say the final comma is unnecessary in this and most cases.

The drivers argued that the lack of a comma after "shipment" in the law meant that only packing, and not distribution, was exempt from Maine's overtime rules. A U.S. appeals court agreed, saying that the absence of a comma provided enough uncertainty to rule in the drivers' favor. The *Maine Legislative Drafting Manual* instructs lawmakers not to use the Oxford comma.

"That comma would have sunk our ship," David G. Webbert, a lawyer for the drivers, told the *Times*, while also conceding that the sentence was unclear. Oakhurst Dairy's president indicated it planned to appeal the case.

When reviewing a contract draft, do you think you would notice the type of ambiguity written into the Maine law? If not, you might want to start reading the fine print more closely. ■

Negotiation research you can use

For an effective first offer, strive for precision

The party that makes the first offer in a negotiation generally gets the best deal, multiple negotiation studies suggest. The first offer presented serves as an anchor that draws subsequent offers in its direction.

Negotiation researchers also have found that precise numerical first offers are more effective than rounder offers. For example, a house with a list price of $255,500 is likely to attract higher bids than houses with list prices of $256,000 or $255,000.

Why are precise first offers more effective than rounder ones, and how can we further capitalize on their benefits? Leuphana University of Lüneberg professor David D. Loschelder and his colleagues examined this question in a new study.

A lack of ambition

In one of their experiments, the researchers had pairs of participants play the roles of seller and buyer in a negotiation simulation involving the sale of a chemical plant. One member of each pair was instructed to make the first offer (sometimes the buyer, sometimes the seller). In addition, those making first offers were encouraged to make either a round offer (such as €5 million or €36 million), a moderately precise offer (such as €5,818,600 or €36,181,300), or a highly precise offer (such as €5,818,614.76 or €36,181,385.24).

Like past research, the results showed that more ambitious first offers led to more favorable outcomes for the party who made the first offer. However, those making a highly precise first offer were less ambitious than those who were less precise.

This difference didn't translate into better deals for those with rounder first offers, though; on the contrary, those who made the most precise first offers came out ahead. Why? First, because offer recipients made less ambitious counteroffers in response to more precise offers, which they did because they judged those who made more precise offers to be more knowledgeable about the value of the commodity; precise offers tend to convey expertise. Second, those who made precise first offers made smaller subsequent concessions than those who made round first offers as the price haggling continued.

Offer recipients judged negotiators who made precise offers to be more knowledgeable.

Why did those who aimed for precision make less-ambitious first offers than those who made rounder offers? Because they correctly predicted that they would need to make fewer concessions to meet their goal—that is, they anticipated the stronger anchoring effect of their precise offer.

Capitalize on the precision effect

The study's results lead to the following recommendations:

- Strive to make a precise numerical offer, but make sure it's no less ambitious than it would be if it were round. An ambitious, precise offer should lead to the best results. Note, however, that precision may not be as effective with experts, who are less likely than amateurs to be anchored by very precise offers when making assessments in their field, Loschelder has found.
- If the other party opens with a round offer, try to capitalize on the benefits of precision by responding with a precise counteroffer.
- Beware the tendency to be strongly anchored by precise offers and to assume that precision conveys knowledge, as that may not be the case.

Resource: "How and Why Precise Anchors Distinctly Affect Anchor Recipients and Senders," by David D. Loschelder, Malte Friese, and Roman Trötschel. Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, *2017.* ■

Successes & MESSES

How the "Party of No" didn't get to yes

The Republicans' failed attempt at Obamacare repeal.

For Republican leaders, the desire to repeal President Barack Obama's signature health-care legislation, the Affordable Care Act (ACA), has been a unifying goal for seven years. So it was no surprise that after Donald Trump won the presidency and the Republicans retained both houses of Congress in the 2016 election, they made health-care reform their first order of business. What was surprising, including to the Republicans themselves, was how badly they botched the repeal. The debacle serves as a warning to negotiators preparing for complex multiparty talks of the need to plan carefully and dig deep into the details.

Dissent and doubts

The trouble began with the way the Republican health-care bill was drafted. House Speaker Paul Ryan and his team put together the American Health Care Act (AHCA) in "secretive locations at the Capitol" with input from White House Chief of Staff Reince Priebus, writes Tim Alberta for *Politico*. Trump himself stayed out of the fray, marveling publicly that health care had proven to be an "unbelievably complex subject." After being leaked, the AHCA was released unceremoniously on March 6 as a take-it-or-leave-it document.

Apparently assuming that congressional Republicans would rally around the bill, Ryan didn't develop a clear strategy for selling it to them or to the American people. He was reportedly unprepared when conservative pundits trashed the bill as "Obamacare lite" and moderates objected that it would harm millions, including many Trump voters.

As Ryan's team hastily rolled out a PR campaign, Trump stayed on the sidelines. "Is this really a good bill?" he asked his advisers, according to the *New York Times*. Trump had promised Americans better, cheaper health coverage. But the Congressional Budget Office released a report estimating that 24 million Americans would lose health care under the AHCA by 2026 and that coverage would worsen for those with insurance.

Stuck in the middle with you

To pass the bill in the House and move it on to the Senate, Ryan and Trump faced the daunting task of winning votes from two factions that disliked the bill for opposite reasons. Members of the conservative House Freedom Caucus wanted a more complete rollback of Obamacare. Meanwhile, some of the members of the more moderate Tuesday Group, many of whom were spooked by the angry constituents who had been protesting the proposed repeal at town-hall meetings, felt the new bill needed greater consumer protections.

What tools of persuasion did Ryan and Trump have available to win some votes? Because a 2011 ban on federal earmarks remains in effect in Congress, Ryan couldn't try to win over members with promises of pork-barrel spending in their districts. Throughout the negotiations, Trump hinted that he would work to keep "no" voters from being reelected in 2018, but in light of his low approval ratings, lawmakers seemed to shrug off these threats.

With few carrots and sticks at their disposal, the leaders were left to tinker with the contents of the bill, writes Paul Kane in the *Washington Post*. But that didn't offer a clear path to victory, either. If they offered too many concessions to the right wing of the party, moderates would never sign on—and vice versa. "Every concession made to win conservatives . . . was destined to result in the loss of moderates," *Politico* concluded. As for trying to pick off a few Democrats, Trump and Ryan didn't see a point in even trying.

Personality trumps policy

Following a budget meeting at the White House, House Freedom Caucus leaders Mark Meadows and Jim Jordan nabbed an impromptu meeting with the president and complained that Ryan wasn't soliciting their input on the Obamacare repeal and replace bill. Trump assured them that he himself was open to their ideas.

The president began courting House Republicans with invitations to the White House and unannounced phone calls. Speaking to *Politico*, congressmen recounted "colorful" talks full of "exaggerations and foul language and hilariously off-topic anecdotes."

Trump seemed to relish the schmoozing and arm-twisting, but the details eluded him. As a business executive, "He's really not used to getting involved himself," one senior House GOP aide told *Politico*.

"If this was about personalities, we'd already be at 'yes,'" Meadows later told the *Post*. Calling Trump "charming," he added, "but this is about policy, and we're not going to make it about anything else."

Representative Dave Brat of Virginia recalled an unexpected phone call he got from Trump. "He's selling. The salesman in sell mode. On that, he's the best. Humor, heart, personality." But with his policy concerns unaddressed, Brat was unable to get behind the bill.

An ailing agreement

In mid-March, Trump entertained Meadows at his private club in Florida. Back at the Capitol for a meeting the following Tuesday, March 21, the president told the Freedom Caucus that he expected them to support the bill as is. Trump singled out Meadows, saying he would "come after" him if he voted no.

The threat may have been a deal breaker for Meadows, whom some Freedom Caucus members perceived as already being too close to Trump. "Mark desperately wanted to get to yes, and Trump made it impossible for him," one caucus member told *Politico*. "If he flipped after that he would look incredibly weak."

Yet with the vote on the ACHA just one day away, Meadows joined other caucus members at the White House in the morning, expecting to talk policy with the president. To their dismay, they instead found themselves stuck in a "pep rally" led by Vice President Mike Pence and top Trump aides, according to *Politico*. The message? "Take one for the team." After White House chief strategist Steve Bannon repeated the phrase, one congressman reportedly snapped at him not to talk to them like children. An awkward silence followed.

A failed resuscitation

On the day of the scheduled vote, March 23, Trump told Freedom Caucus leaders at the White House that he was willing to go along with their proposed cuts to so-called essential benefits—including outpatient visits, mental-health services, and maternity care. But Meadows and others wanted deeper cuts, which were even more likely to turn off Tuesday Group members and perhaps doom the bill in the Senate.

Eventually, Trump cut off the discussion. "Forget about the little [stuff]," he said, as reported by *Politico*. "Let's focus on the big picture here." Fretting about how the bill's defeat would affect his reelection chances in 2020, the president warned the attendees that this would be the only chance he'd give them to reform health care—and that their constituents would punish them if they didn't get the job done.

> **"Forget about the little [stuff]," Trump said. "Let's focus on the big picture here."**

House members left the meeting with the impression that Trump hadn't learned enough about health-care policy to know how to put together a package that could win in the House, let alone the Senate. Later in the day, reporters caught Trump off guard with the news that Ryan had postponed the vote until the following day.

Dead on arrival

With the bill seemingly headed toward failure, the major players switched into damage-control mode. Ryan's allies began referring to Trump as "the Closer." Trump aides told the *Times* that the president regretted going along with Ryan's idea of putting health-care overhaul before tax reform.

That night, Trump instructed House Republicans to hold a vote on the ACHA even if they knew it would fail, apparently aiming to publicly identify and shame those who voted to leave the ACA in place. Trump again warned that he would not try to negotiate an Obamacare repeal again. That night, the entire House Republican Conference convened and tried in vain to resolve their disagreements.

The next day, after concluding that he didn't have enough votes, Ryan visited the White House and convinced Trump that pulling the bill was their best option. In a contrite public statement, Ryan said that Obamacare would remain "the law of the land."

Trump, for his part, called the *Post* and blamed Democrats for not supporting the bill. "Just another day," he concluded. "Just another day in paradise."

Negotiating "unbelievably complex" issues

When preparing for multiparty talks on contentious topics, you would be wise to learn from Trump's and Ryan's mistakes:

- **Look for early, easy wins.** When negotiating with new partners, try to build momentum and rapport by discussing issues in which disagreement is low before moving on to more contentious ones.
- **Involve others from the start.** Instead of presenting fully formed plans, enlist interested constituents in the planning process to get their input and begin shaping a deal that everyone can agree on.
- **Prepare, prepare, prepare.** Charm and flattery will get you only so far. Immerse yourself in the details of the issues at stake so that you can make informed tradeoffs and win over potential deal spoilers.
- **Make sure your threats have teeth.** For a threat to be effective, it has to be motivating and you must be willing to follow through on it. When you're negotiating from a place of weakness, a threat could backfire. ■

Q: I was recently laid off from my longtime job and am back on the market. I received a pretty good offer (Job A) but was being considered for a more interesting, higher-paying job (Job B) at the same time. The recruiter for Job A told me the company needed an answer within two days, and I didn't expect to know about Job B for about five days. I rejected Job A and ultimately was not offered Job B. Now I'm wishing I'd taken Job A. How could I have handled this situation better?

A: Searching for a job is stressful enough without the added anxiety provoked by employers' "exploding offers"—those that have a strategically set deadline for acceptance, with the goal of preventing the recruit from having time to explore other options. Although employers sometimes present offers with a short fuse because they are desperate to fill a position, some use the strategy to nab the best candidates and reduce competition with other firms.

An exploding offer might seem like an effective power play for employers, but the gambit is likely to backfire in the long term. It can cause them to miss out on strong candidates, such as yourself, who need more time to decide. And even if someone does accept an exploding offer, if she felt rushed into making a decision, she is likely to continue exploring other opportunities, to be an unmotivated employee, and to quit after a short period of time. Moreover, when exploding offers are widespread in a certain market—for example, in the market for graduating MBA students—they can create widespread inefficiencies by matching employers with the wrong candidates, University of Utah professor Harris Sondak and Harvard Business School professor Max H. Bazerman have found in their research.

The pitfalls of exploding offers were demonstrated in a 2014 laboratory study by Nelson Lau (KCG Holdings) and Yakov Bart, J. Neil Bearden, and Ilia Tsetlin (all of INSEAD). Participants played the role of either a job-offer proposer or a job-offer responder. When given a choice between making an exploding offer and making an extended offer, a substantial percentage of the proposers chose to make an exploding offer. Across experiments, responders were about equally likely to accept exploding and extended offers. After accepting a job, responders then had a chance to divide a sum of money between them and their proposer. As compared to responders given extended offers, those given exploding offers were far less generous to their proposers, keeping more of the funds for themselves. The results suggest that "negative reciprocation" is, indeed, a problem with exploding offers: When someone is stingy toward us (by rushing us into a decision), we are likely to respond by being stingy in turn.

How can you handle exploding offers in the job market? First, you might be able to manage the timing of offers. For example, if you anticipate having a couple of good job prospects around the same time, you might schedule two interviews for jobs that you value similarly for the same day. Or if you anticipate liking one job more than another, you could try to schedule the interview for the more desired job first.

Second, if you receive an exploding offer, you might let your other prospects know about it, without getting into the details. This knowledge would show your other prospects that you're in demand and might motivate them to speed up the process.

Third, express your enthusiasm for the parts of the exploding offer that you like and then look for a way to extend your decision-making process without indicating disinterest. For example, you might ask to meet with someone in HR to make sure that you understand the specifics of the health-insurance benefits. Or if the job would require a move to a new city and your partner would need to find new work as well, you could ask for time for your partner to find a job before deciding yourself.

If the recruiter continues to be impatient, explain that you hope to stay with your next employer for a good long time and that, as a rule, you make serious decisions carefully. A wise employer will view your need to deliberate as an indication that you would be similarly methodical on the job. Sometimes an exploding offer is a warning sign that the job would be a bad fit. After all, if this is how they treat you when courting you, you might not want to see how they would treat you on the job!

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