Tips for getting past the gatekeeper
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TIP #1: BE NICE

First impressions last with gatekeepers, so if you sound pleasant, you're off to a great start. Even if the gatekeeper is annoying or surly, remember your objective and remain pleasant. Of course your pleasantries can come across as forced or phony, in which case they'll have the opposite effect. Express what's in your heart but use discretion. If you want to come across as nice, be enthusiastic. Convince the gatekeeper that your call is important. Enthusiasm comes from knowing exactly what you want to say and then saying it clearly, but not from a script that would make you sound arrogant. If you believe in your product, that will show through. An experienced gatekeeper makes a judgment about you before you've uttered your second sentence. That's why it's important for you to come across as warmly confident. It's OK if you want to jot down a few reminder notes before you call, but use them only for quick references.

TIP #2: BURY YOUR INSECURITIES

Here is a quick story. One day, a gentleman with a timid voice calls and asked for Jane. It took a millisecond before the gatekeeper became suspicious. Was he an unpolished scam artist? Maybe he was just having a bad day. No matter. At that moment, he clearly sounded unprofessional. The gatekeeper asked his name and the nature of the call. He hesitantly answered. Stumbling over several words…it sounded like a time-waster to the gatekeeper. There was no way she was going to patch him through to Jane. Instead, she offered to take a message explaining that Jane was not available. The gatekeeper didn't give Jane the message, because of the impression the caller made.

TIP #3: DON'T BE OBNOXIOUS

If you don't get past the gatekeeper after the first call please don't call back the same day. You will be filed exclusively in the obnoxious category. If you are demanding and reek of attitude, then you'd better he prepared to undergo an extensive line of questioning. This is the only way a gatekeeper can possibly penetrate your veneer to the actual purpose of your call. Once he's got a handle on what you want, he'll probably still get rid of you. Look at it from the gate-keeper's perspective: Would you be quick to interrupt your boss from her busy schedule so she can deal with a difficult and unprofessional person?

TIP #4: TELL THE TRUTH

Here is another story. One day, a call comes into the office from a gentleman who brashly says, "Jane Applegate." After asking who was calling the caller gives a name not recognizes. After pursuing it further, he becomes irritated and says Jane knows his family. Although the gatekeeper was suspicious, she offered to take his phone number, explaining that Jane was not available. The reluctantly gave it to the gatekeeper and hurried off the phone. When the gatekeeper gave Jane the message, she had no idea who he was. Needless to say, she did not call him back. The next day he calls again. He identified himself with the same name, but this time he changes his affiliation by stating he was a close, personal friend of one of the company's executives. Again, he did not get through to Jane because she didn't know who he was or why he was calling. Granted, a better-crafted tale might have gotten him further, but is it really worth it? Remember, any lie will eventually backfire on you.

TIP #5: KEEP NO SECRETS

Here's how you can raise the odds that you'll get a positive response when a gatekeeper greets you: Politely introduce yourself, state your affiliation. and identify whom you wish to speak to – even if it's the boss. Let the gatekeeper in on your call – give him/her the essentials and then be prepared to answer questions. Don't respond as if you're being grilled. Remember, you both have the same goal: to have a profitable conversation with the boss.

TIP #6: GAUGE THE GATEKEEPER

Like everyone else, gatekeepers come in all personalities and moods. The gatekeeper may be friendly and warm… abrasive and hurried…or hurried and friendly. Take a moment to chat with a friendly gatekeeper before you get into the purpose of your call. But if the gatekeeper is abrupt, be ready to race to your point. If you suspect your messages aren't being delivered. You may have to write a personal letter or, if you live nearby, pay a visit to the office/complex.