

What's the Best Way to Get a CEO to Meet with You?

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Executives are very busy people. They attend meeting after meeting. Their time is valuable, and it's no secret they rarely see vendors or sales people of any kind. You, on the other hand, have been told to call at higher levels in the organization. The vexing question is how to do it. Consider the following possibilities.

Get Sponsorship:

The easiest way to get an appointment with a “C” level executive is sponsorship. If you have worked, for example, with the IT department on a year long project, you obviously have gotten to know people. Perhaps, you have a strong relationship with the IT manager or director. Often, you can get that individual to sponsor a meeting with an executive if that person clearly sees why it would be advantageous to the organization or to his area of expertise.

Sponsorship is particularly likely if your own internal contact views you as a “trusted advisor,” versus a vendor. Because you have demonstrated over time, that you have the organization's best interest at heart and your focus is on providing value, internal contacts are usually happy to promote you. However, if the individual sees you as a vendor or doesn't know you on a personal level, giving you entrée to an executive would be viewed as risky to their own career.

It is never a good idea to work around your internal contacts or to pretend that they have suggested you call. Obviously, the CEO will check.

Develop a Strong Value Proposition or Elevator Pitch:

To have a strong value proposition, you need to do your homework. You need to become a subject

matter expert on both the industry and on the company or corporation.

If you are in health care, finance or IT, for example, learn every thing you can about the industry. Gather statistics. Internet subscriptions to **Factiva** or **Hoovers** can provide an enormous amount of information. Often, your own company keeps track of what is happening across the industry. Additionally, you should attend industry conferences and meetings. Read what the executives themselves read. Usually, they read the **Wall Street Journal** and **The Financial Times**. They also subscribe to many industry and CEO magazines.

Additionally, become an expert on the corporation or company. Read their Annual Reports and listen to Analyst Calls. Know their business inside and out. Clearly understand what the Executive's key initiatives are and how the individual will be compensated. Then, use that information to create a strong value proposition that plainly states what you know about them and their issues and how you can address them so that they save time, improve customer satisfaction, or increase their return on investment. Your value proposition must demonstrate the benefits.

Then, scout out ways to see the individual. Know what events the individual attends or the clubs where the person is a member. Only approach the person, if you have your elevator pitch is solid.

Know the Administrative Assistant:

Executives depend on their administrative assistants. They know how the executive thinks and what the executive is trying to accomplish. Try out your elevator pitch on the admin. While this person is a “gatekeeper,” he or she will give you entrée if your elevator pitch resonates with them.

Getting a meeting with a CEO is challenging but

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not impossible. Think about who you know and what you know. Then, use them to your advantage.

Impact Communications, Inc. consults with individuals and businesses to improve their face-to-face and over the phone communication skills. When you have to have impact, phone (847) 438-4480 or visit our web site, www.ImpactCommunicationsInc.com.