

## THE NEW WORLD GATEKEEPER?

You are busy, your time is valuable, and you want to avoid time-wasting telephone calls and meetings. A quick call to your telephone provider and a few minutes later you have Voicemail; today's traffic cop.

Sadly, the path to sales opportunities is cluttered with people and machines that make us work harder, so their colleague does not have to. *You know WHO they are, but do you know WHAT they are.*



They are the GATEKEEPERS. Not in the sense of an evil Harry Potter character, but as far as you are concerned, they are the evil forces that stand in the way of talking about what is important; well, what is important to you. A good day for them may be your worst nightmare. *Especially if you assume that the Gatekeeper is merely a low-level screener for the people in the big offices.*

- You should give the Gatekeeper the same respect you would the money person. **WRONG!** You must show them more respect. Not condescending, candy-coated affection, but sincere business admiration. Result, you now have **ONE** key in your hand to opening the presentation door. *It is called trust.*

Who are the Gatekeepers? They are assigned the task of preventing time-consuming conversations at higher levels that do not demonstrate a company benefit at first glance. *AE's who merely "present a package of spots with this weeks price" stumble into this abyss.*

- You must sell the Gatekeeper **FIRST** so make sure you are at your best when talking with them. Before you call, or stop in, your advance ActionPLAN must include knowledge of their business. What they do, their target, success over the years. *However, knowing this is only the foundation of your approach.*
- Asking too many questions over the phone is risky. It telegraphs that you have not done your due-diligence, or perhaps even lazy and looking for quick answers. If you need additional information before attempting to schedule time with the decision maker, keep your questions to a one or two. *Your function is not to conduct time-consuming research. Visit the client location and talk to their people, especially if retail.*
- Having trouble getting past the "press star ONE for..." voicemail? Welcome to the **new world Gatekeeper**. Use your creative efforts to get to a live operator. Often pressing "zero" one or two times will accomplish this. Always ask for a person by name. At this point also request the name of your contacts assistant. If you are connected to yet another voicemail, again pressing "zero" one or two times will often take you back to a live operator. This time ask to speak with the assistant. *You are more likely to get the assistant on the phone, or to return a call.*
  - Unfortunately, you now have reached the Gatekeepers, gatekeeper. Leave a short message that is refined to demonstrate a benefit for them and mention that you will try again, and leave your number. Above all, *do not just say you want to talk about advertising. Leave a challenging statement, like; "...I have some fantastic research on (???) . I promise to only take a couple minutes of your valuable time."* Then say that you would "appreciate" an opportunity to talk for a couple minutes.
  - Rule One of voicemail; credibility! Do not talk about "your" product, but focus on something to make the client's cash register ring. *Do not be a sales person, but a colleague.*
- Do not allow yourself to become a pest. Leave a message with your first call, then on the second call keep your message shorter and mention that you "...just wanted to follow-up."

- A excellent new world “gate” buster is to use email to reach-out to your contact. Once you learn the email address style of other employees, it is likely your contacts will be the same. *Also, simply ask, you will be surprised how often you are successful.*
  - Focus the email on your contacts benefit, not a sales message on your behalf. Two to three short paragraphs, each two to three sentences makes for a quick and comfortable read.

The harsh reality of a poor plan when trying to reach the decision maker is that we often **create** the Gatekeeper. How; our attitude, pressing style, undue pressure, over enthusiasm ...or frantic selling to get a commission. Remember, *your Gatekeeper may be your competition’s most treasured tool!*

When talking with the Gatekeeper keep in mind that you are not the first, or only, contact they have received today. It is likely that two people are waiting in the office, three more on hold, and a new call blinking on the phone.

Be patient, but not persistent. Persevere, but always with the **client’s need first** and the Gatekeeper will open the door for you every time.

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**Success Comes From...**  
**The Courage to Create**  
**The Confidence to Commit**  
**The Cooperation to Complete**  
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