

Basic Selling

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While we all know the basics of selling sometimes it is helpful to be reminded of a simple one. Never, be too busy or too important to build a relationship with the decision maker's assistant. They can help make you or certainly break you.

Years ago, I knew that a large contract for a six hospital system was coming to an end and would likely go to RFP, but I was unable to get a meeting with the decision maker who would issue and manage the RFP. Finally I reached out to the assistant, explained my plight and asked for advice on the best way to reach him. She outlined how I needed to do it, it worked and we obtained the meeting.

It went further, after the meeting she guided me on who the key influencers were and who would probably be our best internal coach. She was right. The whole effort took months of collecting data and pricing, during which we talked often and swapped stories (she let my manager know which Saint to pray to for a lost dog).

The internal coach guided us through the process and offered advice. On his suggestion we redid the proposal, so rather than outsource the work, we were going to help them build the infrastructure to take it in-house over a three year period. As it was winding down he called me to tell me that we had won the project.

It all started with a phone call to the assistant, made her laugh, pleaded my case and asked for help.