

what the schedule looks like for the next week or so. This is also an opportunity to get the timing and work-habits information on your opposite number.

In talking, you might casually ask what time her boss usually likes to have meetings: morning, afternoon? Does he/she usually work late or need to make a train? And so on.

Or you can be more direct, depending on your style: "You know, I'd like to catch him at a good time, maybe before all the pressures of work get to him. How about early morning meetings? Does he do that?"

Or, "So we don't rush through, tell me what time does she generally go off to lunch? When does she usually get back?"

If your questions are put on the basis of finding a mutually agreeable time that will best take into consideration the well-being of the secretary's boss, she/he will probably be very amenable to answering.

Ask about major pressures coming up (such as board meetings that require preparation, visiting firemen, etc.) or if the schedule is relatively free. This last can also give you the additional information on your timing and how receptive his/her frame of mind would be right now to your meeting topic.

When the secretary asks what the meeting is about, use the answers about content that I suggested above.

However, it's urgent business, you must get that across, too. If you have a problem to solve, state just that, without telling what it is ("I'd rather discuss it in person"), unless you need to get specific to increase the sense of urgency.

### ***A Secretary You Don't Know***

Your powers of persuasion are brought into full play here. Start with something like "You're just the person who can help me." This establishes both your need and her/his power. Then, "I need to see your boss for half an hour and I know you're the keeper of the book." What follows is probably "Who are you?" "Does he/she know you?" "What shall I say it's about?" Titles are vital here, if you're a stranger, but the big seller is to say *why* the boss should see you.

Remember about motivation; *his first!* Not, "I want to show him . . ." but, "It's about developing a new market for his product . . ." Be intriguing about what your thrust will be—always keeping that self-interest beacon before you.

If you're in the organization somewhere, your mutual interest in the good of the company is your primary link.