

but not enough to challenge too soon. "Some new thoughts on that project I think will interest you," or, "Something to do with making more money for the company" (that'll get them every time). What you're looking for is enough information to create some positive anticipation and a "clean-slate" kind of mindset.

- If you're the senior person and the thrust of your meeting will be a negative one, the less defensiveness you can create, the better. Don't give it away, allowing the other person to build up a head of anxiety. Try something general like "I haven't talked with you for a while and there are some things I'd like to go over ..."

"I'll Get Back to You ..."

Be sure you are clear about how you will get confirmation of your appointment. Either get it right then, through the person involved, or from the secretary, if she has the authority to do it on her own. Asking her to confirm with the boss brings up a ticklish subject: The "I'll get back to you" syndrome.

Don't let go of your options at this moment. If you say, "Okay," when she/he says that, or volunteer it by saying, "Please get back to me," you have no recourse but to passively wait for a call or to call if you don't hear and become an unwelcome nag.

On the other hand, if you establish that *you'll* be the one to call back and confirm, *you* keep the initiative. You then have the *right* to call, to press a little and, generally, to keep actively running the show.

Say, "I'm going to be out of my office a lot in the next few days," or, "**I**ll be at meetings and hard to reach," or, "I need to confirm this rather quickly so I can get materials together. Let me call you this afternoon." In any case, ask when she/he can make it definite or when she'll see the boss to confirm. Then make an appointment with the *secretary* about the best time to call back to get the exact meeting time.

Person-to-Person Approach

If the atmosphere at your job is informal, with a small cast of characters, you can simply suggest a time directly to the boss or person(s) you wish to see. (This presupposes that you've gone through all the "what, where, when, and if" planning considerations.) Select and ask for the best time first, but have two more possibilities at the ready to allow for the other's schedule needs. Be sure your other choices also have *your* timing considerations in mind, so you don't get caught short.