



executive assistant or a co-worker. If you are prepared, and you ask the right questions, these people could help you reach your local contact.

It is strongly recommended to keep the name and the phone number of the person you will be forwarded to, especially if he/she is the assistant of the person you wish to speak to. This key person can provide a direct link to the decision-maker you wish to reach.

Try asking the following question:

*“I was hoping you could help me. I’m trying to reach Jane Smith, and her voicemail picked up. Do you know if she is in a meeting, or out for the rest of the day?”*

Depending on the response you receive, you can then try one of the following strategies:

### Strategy one

Reception: *“She is in a meeting.”*

You: *“Thank you for your help. Do you happen to know when she will be available?”*

Then follow with: *“Maybe it is best to call back then?”*

### Strategy two

Reception: *“She is away today.”*

You: *“Thank you for your help. Do you know if she will be back tomorrow?”*

### Strategy three

If you speak to your local contact's personal assistant, ask if it is better to schedule a call in advance. Then ask the person to set up a fifteen-minute appointment. Mark this date and time in your calendar, and do not forget to make the call.

## 3.8 Three steps to voicemail success

If you decide that you want to leave a voicemail message, try this three-step process to increase your chances of getting a positive reply from your local contact.

**1. The first message**—Example: *“Mr X, this is John Doe from the Embassy of Canada\*. We have not yet had the chance to meet, but I was talking to Paul Smith from (other local company) yesterday, and he suggested that I call you. Sorry I missed you today, but I will try to reach you again on (date) and (time).”*

Make sure your tone is soft, non-threatening and friendly. Plus, it is critical that you do call back exactly on the date and time that you say.