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HAMILTON BRADSHAW
Investing in people with passion

How to find and persuade the company's decision-maker



James Caan

Dear James

We sell social media tools and one of the hardest things I find is trying to reach the decision-maker.

Terry

EVEN the most experienced and talented can struggle with this. It can be really frustrating to spend all that time preparing a pitch, only to find yourself unable to reach the person with the authority to make a decision.

Before you even attempt to contact anybody, ensure you have done your research. Understand who you want to get to. Attend the right events – I personally believe nothing beats pure networking. Take a look at the team your decision-maker works with. Is there anyone who could make an introduction? Many business deals have been kick-started by a simple, two-minute conversation with a receptionist.

LinkedIn is also a very useful networking tool. Remember to make sure your own profile is professional and up-to-date.

Reaching the decision-maker's PA isn't the worst thing in the world, provided you treat them with respect and build up a rapport with them. Too many people see PAs as some sort of gatekeeper you need to force your way past. In reality, they can be a vital source of information.

Finally, one of the most important skills you need is to go in with the right mentality. Tell yourself that you

are trying to solve the customer's problems. Once you have done this, you should find it a lot easier to justify why the decision-maker needs to speak to you.

■ *For the full article and news of James Caan's free app, go to standard.co.uk. James Caan's book, *How to Start Your Business in 7 Days*, is out now.*