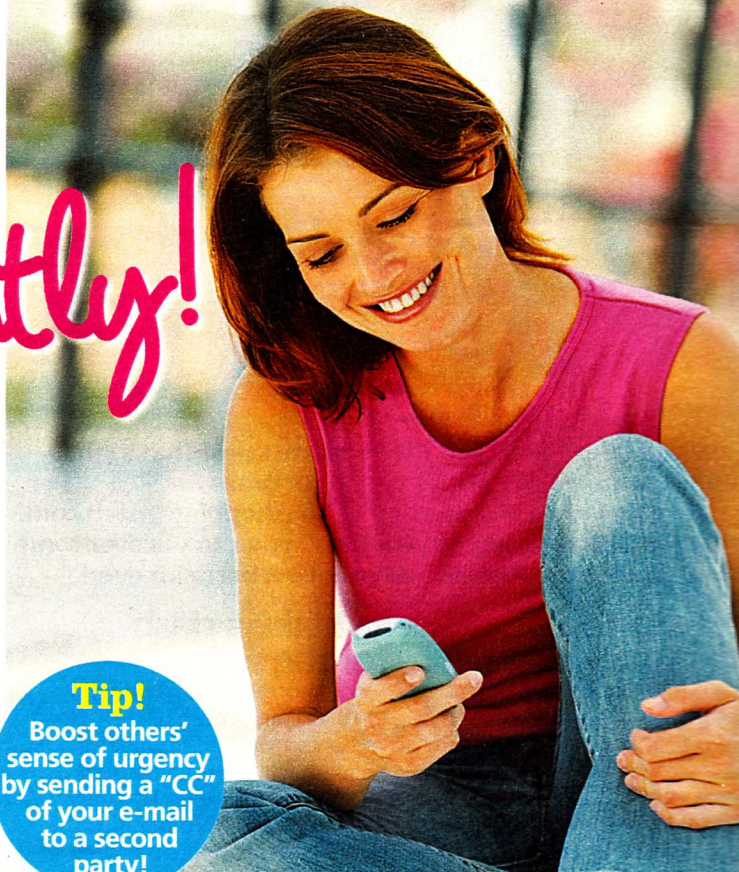


● Your Perfectly Organized Life

# Get ahold of anyone *instantly!*

When you have to reach someone right away, the last thing you need is to play phone tag or get caught in e-mail limbo. But now there's never any need to. With these simple tricks from top communication pros, you'll be able to reach a real person, without playing the waiting game!



**Tip!**  
Boost others' sense of urgency by sending a "CC" of your e-mail to a second party!

## Have your phone message returned sooner!

● **Leave this so they'll get back to you faster!**

You probably know to say your phone number slowly—and better yet, twice. What you may not know? How important it is to leave your e-mail address, too! "So many people prefer e-mail to the phone that you'll almost always get a faster response," promises Diana Ennen, author of *Virtual Assistant*.



Samaritan," says Marilyn Suttle, author of *Who's Your Gladys? How to Turn Even the Most Difficult Customer into Your Biggest Fan*. In fact, a study just published in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* found we consistently underestimate people's willingness to help us by a whopping 50%!

● **Use the "time bomb" trick!**

To increase people's awareness of the time ticking down, let them know you have a deadline and what you'll do if you don't hear back, as in "Unless you tell me otherwise, I'll assume I don't need to take Jack to school on Monday." "This gives you priority over anyone else they have to call back," says George Walther, author of *What You Say Is What You Get*.

● **Appeal to their altruistic side!**

The secret here: Use words like "I really need your help with this, so I'd be very grateful if you'd get back to me as soon as you can." "You'd be surprised how effective it can be to appeal to others' inner Good

## Get your e-mail seen right away

● **Send it on a Tuesday!**

That's when we receive the fewest e-mails and are most likely to pay attention to new messages, says e-mail expert Alastair Gill, Ph.D., of the University of Surrey in Britain. Worst time to get your e-mail read? Monday morning, when inboxes are inundated! In fact, Ennen suggests waiting until midmorning on any day to ensure your message isn't lost in the shuffle.

● **Use this two-letter word in your subject line!**

What is it? "Re:"—research shows we tend to click immediately on e-mails that have it in the subject line, says Walther, because we assume they're the continuations of conversations that have already been started!

● **Ask for a "Got it!"**

At the top of your e-mail, write *If you won't be able to answer right away, please send a "Got it" so I know this arrived*. Nine times out of 10, says Suttle, people will decide to say what they need to say now, rather than respond twice.



## Reach someone within 60 seconds!

● **Take a tip from your kids!**

A study has found the average phone message takes up to three days to return, while the response time for a text message is just one minute! Most of us won't answer the phone if we're in the middle of something, since we expect a long conversation—but it takes only seconds to read and reply to a text, says Walther. So if you have someone's cell number and need something fast, type it out. Don't know *how* to text? Websites like Txt2day.com and TextEm.net let you send and receive texts from your computer—for free!



● **Make it an instant message!**

Studies show that while people often respond "fashionably late" to e-mail or voicemail (a fast reply could imply you don't have much to do!), about half consider it rude not to reply to instant messages (IMs). Plus, IMing is so easy! "With e-mail, you feel the need to polish your message, but IMs are simply tapped out and sent," says Ennen. Can't IM through your e-mail provider? Try AOL Instant Messenger or Yahoo! Messenger.

● **Sign up for these!**

Research shows that users of Twitter and Facebook are more apt to check these sites than e-mail or voicemail when they're on the run, "so they're a great way to reach people," says Ennen. Plus, since Twitter DMs (direct messages) tend to be fewer and farther between than e-mails, they almost always get top priority!

**Tip!**  
Start your text or IM with "I know you're busy, but... " Acknowledging the person's time makes her more likely to reply, no matter what she's in the middle of!

—Barbara Hustedt Cro