

1. Gatekeepers are not the enemy

Sure, there might be a few receptionists or PA's out there who take delight in making a hard time for recruiters, but the majority of them are likely to treat you the same way you treat them. Above all else, you need to treat the gatekeeper with respect and integrity. There are many reasons to do so, the first is fact that they are just doing their job.

2. Sound important and senior

A gatekeeper won't want to offend a senior or important person by probing too deeply. Imagine you are a senior executive. Talk slowly and with confidence. Standing up while talking on the phone will give your voice a sense of authority.

3. Build a familiar relationship

When you hear their name, write it down and use it regularly. Throw in a bit of humour, mirror their phone style, their vocal pitch and speed of conversation. Make personal notes about the things they talk about and bring them up the next time you speak. Be genuinely interested in the gatekeeper as a person and make them feel important.

4. Don't play tricks!

The gatekeeper is used to salespeople trying to trick their way past them. They've heard every trick in the book. Remember your prospect and gatekeeper will talk to each other after the call, and any trick you've played will be found out. This sort of destruction to your integrity is almost irreparable. Protect your integrity.

5. Ask for advice

Ask for help and advice. It makes your gatekeeper feel important and quite likely to share some valuable information with you. Is there someone else you should be speaking with? Is there a better time to call or a better way to reach your prospect? Asking for "help" is powerful: "Perhaps you could help me?" "Could you help me out with your opinion?" It is human nature, when someone asks for help, to WANT to help them.



6. Gather information

The gatekeeper knows a lot of inside information about the boss, the company, other decision makers and their processes.

What is their current situation, how do they recruit, why do they do things that way?

How does their boss really feel about the company's current agency, or internal recruitment team? Their own opinion?

Dig deep for information you can use to have a relevant and intriguing conversation with your prospect.



7. Be "in the know"

Throw a little bit of knowledge about their company into the conversation.

If they say their boss is in a meeting all afternoon, say "Of course, there'd be a lot of those lately with the merger going on right now. How have the changes affected you?"

When you sound knowledgeable about the business, a gatekeeper will assume you already have some involvement.

8. Get referred

Referrals are powerful in so many ways – particularly with Gatekeepers.

When you say "his business associate, John Smith, has referred us to each other", it is highly likely your gatekeeper will put you through with no further questions.

9. Get creative

Social media can be an interesting way to reach out. Or why not try an old fashioned letter to get their attention?

Send information with a note to say you'll follow up on Monday. When the Gatekeeper asks "Are they expecting your call" the answer is "Yes".

People rarely go door-knocking anymore so why not try it? It's harder to say no to someone who's had the initiative to stand in front of you and treat you like the important and resourceful person you are.

Finding ways to be original and different can be intriguing and prosperous for getting through to your prospect.

10. Avoid

If all else fails, try to avoid the Gatekeeper altogether.

Call early in the morning before the gatekeeper comes in, or later in the evening after they've gone home.

Even if you only get through to your prospect's voicemail, when you're next speaking to the Gatekeeper you can say "I'm following up from a call I made earlier this morning".