

EFFECTIVE GATEKEEPER STRATEGIES

Gatekeepers, otherwise known as receptionists, are the sentries at the castle. Their otherwise powerless world within the organization encourages them to fiendishly abuse the power in that one area where they do have power: the power to keep you out.

Who do they let through?

People who have been to the castle before.

People who can serve the king.

Who will they keep out of the castle?

Those who have fear and uncertainty in their voice.

Minor changes in major areas are the essence of real innovation and improvement. Consider this small change in how you can improve your efforts to get through the gatekeeper. There are two ways you treat gatekeepers: either like an ally or an adversary. Well, maybe not exactly an adversary. But if they aren't helping you get through, then they're probably going to hinder your efforts to get past them. Admit it and find a way to deal with it. Sometimes you get through with cordial politeness, and sometimes a slightly stern approach is just the trick. And the gatekeeper will always let you know how they want to be treated. The key is to listen to their tone. Listen to the tone of the receptionist when the phone is answered, and mimic their level of cordiality.

Usually in the first ten seconds of the call, you want to come across business-like and professional. Don't let the gatekeeper pick up on any emotion from you. If you come across like a happy sales person, the receptionist will think that you are just a happy sales person with no value to give, and will not let you through. But if you come across like a business professional with a mission, then you'll be put through to whomever you need to reach. So in the first ten seconds of the call, keep it serious.

When you ask for your party, don't say, *"Is John Smith there?"* Instead ask like this: *"Scott Love calling for John Smith."* This interrupts the pattern and rhythm of how the gatekeeper normally answers the phone. The gatekeeper is used to the normal back and forth of the initial phone call, like this. This is the typical way that all calls are made in to a company, which give the gatekeeper COMPLETE control of the call:

*"Good morning, ABC Company."
"Is John Smith there?"
"Who's calling?"
"Scott Love."
"With which company?"
"SLA Associates."
"And what's the nature of the call?"
"Uh...uh...uh...."*

Zammy! You're outta here! You get relegated to the "not letting through" classification.



Instead, say your name first, followed by "...calling for..." the name of the person you want to reach. "Scott Love calling for John Smith." Say it with seriousness, even a little bit of intensity, and see what results you get. Say it like you're almost ticked off, but not quite that aggressive. Say it as if NOBODY has ever treated you so disrespectfully as to not let you through when you call a company. Say it as if you DESERVE to be put through. (What? You're not letting me through? Do you have any idea who you're talking to right now? THAT's the attitude you need to have.)

If you need extra energy, try standing up when you make your calls. Stand in a power position with your arms at your hips, chest out, back straight, and your best "I pity the fool" Mr. T attitude. Try this for a month and see how much more often you get through!

I'll never forget the time that a recruiter told me she closed a \$35k fee from learning this one little tip from me during an in-house training session. About two months after I spent a day in her office, she called me to tell me that this one little tip changed her entire desk and was able to get her access to hiring managers and high performing candidates. Without that knowledge, she wouldn't have been as far along. Most of the quantum changes in your performance stem from small incremental improvements like this, which is why you need to study your craft every day. Most of the improvements in my training and coaching clients come from little things like this.

Copyright © Scott Love



Scott Love trains, motivates and inspires recruiters to achieve greatness in the profession. Visit his online recruiter training center for tips, tools, downloads, videos, articles, instruments and quizzes that can help you bill more. www.GreatRecruiterTraining.com