TopReach

Call scripts for recruiters

A good recruiter call script tells the candidate why you're calling them in particular, asks about what they want before pitching the role, and ends with a clear next step either way. Below are scripts for passive candidates, applicant screens, business development calls to hiring managers and check-ins with placed candidates, with the reason for each line, plus objections, voicemails, texts and the rules. Recruiting has lighter calling rules than sales, but texting consent, salary history bans and equal employment rules still apply.

gettopreach.com/scripts/recruiting · Last reviewed November 7, 2026 by the TopReach Compliance Desk

In this PDF

1. Passive candidates
2. Applicant screens
3. Business development with hiring managers
4. Placed-candidate check-ins
5. Objections and honest answers
6. Voicemail scripts
7. Follow-up texts
8. The rules, with sources

How to read these scripts

Words in a box, like `First name`, are fields TopReach fills in on the call. Words in brackets, like *[street]*, are yours to fill in. Each line comes with the reason it's there, so you can change the words and keep what works.

Learn the opener and the ask close to word for word, and let the middle be a conversation.

How do good recruiters use a script?

- Say why you're calling this person: a skill, a project, a mutual connection.
- Ask what would make a move worth it before you describe the role. Then describe only the parts that match.
- Ask about expected pay, not current or past pay.
- Always ask for a referral when the answer is no, and always ask permission to stay in touch.
- Log the outcome, their pay expectations and timing before the next call, so the follow-up picks up where you left off.

Passive candidates

People who are employed and not applying, called because their background fits a role you're filling.

Aim for: A screening conversation, a referral, or permission to stay in touch.

OPENER 1 · DIRECT

The why-you opener

> "Hi **First name**, it's **My first name**, a recruiter with *[your firm]*. I'm calling because of your work on *[specific skill or project]* at **Company**. Do you have two minutes?"
>
> **Why:** A specific reason shows you looked at them, not a keyword search. Two minutes is an easy yes.

> "I'm filling a *[role]* for a *[type of company]* in *[area]*. Before I say more: is there anything that would make a move worth considering for you right now?"
>
> **Why:** Asking what they want first means you describe only the parts of the role that match.

OPENER 2 · CONSULTATIVE

The advice ask

> "Hi **First name**, **My first name** with *[your firm]*. I recruit *[role type]* in *[area]*, and your name came up as someone people respect. I'm not assuming you're looking. Could I ask for your advice for a minute?"
>
> **Why:** Asking for advice is flattering and low pressure, and it often turns into interest.

> "I'm looking for someone who *[key requirement]*. Who's the best person you know at that?"
>
> **Why:** If they're interested, they'll say so. If not, you get a referral.

Questions to ask

> "What do you like most about your current role, and what would you change?"
>
> **Why:** What they'd change is the reason they might move; what they like is what the new role must keep.

> "If the right role came along, what would it need to have?"
>
> **Why:** Their criteria, in their words, are your pitch.

> "What pay range would make a move worth it for you?"
>
> **Why:** Ask about expectations, not current pay. Salary history questions are banned in many places, California and New York among them.

> "What's your timing: anything that would make now a good or bad time to move?"
>
> **Why:** Bonuses, vesting dates and projects shape when they can move.

The ask

> "Based on that, I think *[role]* is worth a closer look. Can we do a 20-minute call on *[day]* to go through it properly?"
>
> **Why:** Ties the role to what they said and books the real conversation.

Applicant screens

People who applied to a role, called to confirm fit and next steps.

Aim for: A clear yes or no on moving forward, and the next step booked.

OPENER 1 · FRIENDLY

The friendly screen

> "Hi **First name**, it's **My first name** with *[your firm]*. Thanks for applying to the *[role]* position. Is now still a good time for our call?"
>
> **Why:** Thanks them and confirms the time.

> "I'll tell you about the role, ask about your experience and what you're looking for, and then explain next steps. About 15 minutes. Sound good?"
>
> **Why:** An agenda puts candidates at ease and keeps the call on time.

OPENER 2 · DIRECT

The quick qualifier

> "Hi **First name**, **My first name** from *[your firm]*, about your application for *[role]*. A few quick questions so I don't waste your time: are you able to work *[location or schedule]*?"
>
> **Why:** Confirming must-haves first saves both of you time.

Questions to ask

> "Walk me through your experience with *[key skill]*."
>
> **Why:** An open request lets them show depth.

> "What made you apply for this role?"
>
> **Why:** Their motivation predicts whether they'll accept an offer.

> "What pay range are you looking for?"
>
> **Why:** Expectations, not history, keep you within salary history bans.

> "Are you interviewing anywhere else, and where are you in those processes?"
>
> **Why:** Tells you how fast to move.

The ask

> "Thanks, **First name**. The next step is *[next step]*, and you'll hear from me by *[day]* either way."
>
> **Why:** A date for a decision, either way, is the most candidate-friendly thing you can promise. Keep it.

Business development with hiring managers

Hiring managers and owners at companies that could use your firm. These are business calls, so honesty rules apply and the Do Not Call Registry mostly doesn't.

Aim for: A job order, a meeting, or a date to follow up.

OPENER 1 · DIRECT

The specific reason

> "Hi **First name**, it's **My first name** with *[your firm]*. I saw **Company** is hiring *[role]*. We place *[role type]* in *[area]*. Are you the right person to talk to about that search?"
>
> **Why:** A real, visible reason for the call and a quick check that you have the right person.

> "How's the search going so far?"
>
> **Why:** Lets them tell you the problem: too few applicants, the wrong applicants, or no time.

OPENER 2 · CONSULTATIVE

The candidate-led opener

> "Hi **First name**, **My first name** from *[your firm]*. I'm working with a *[role]* who's *[one real strength]* and looking at companies like **Company**. Would you be open to hearing a little about them?"
>
> **Why:** Leading with a real candidate is concrete value. Only use it with a real candidate's permission, and never share details that identify them.

Questions to ask

> "What's the hardest part of filling this role?"
>
> **Why:** The pain they name is the service you sell.

> "What happens if it stays open another month?"
>
> **Why:** Helps them weigh the cost of waiting, in their own words.

> "How do you usually work with recruiters, if at all?"
>
> **Why:** Tells you about terms, past experiences and competition.

The ask

> "Could we take 20 minutes on *[day]* to go through what you need? If we're not a fit, I'll tell you."
>
> **Why:** A short meeting with an honest promise.

Placed-candidate check-ins

Candidates you placed, called after their first weeks and then a few times a year.

Aim for: Make sure the placement is going well, and ask for referrals.

OPENER 1 · FRIENDLY

The check-in

> "Hi **First name**, it's **My first name** from *[your firm]*. It's been *[a month]* since you started at **Company**. How's it going?"
>
> **Why:** Genuine interest after the placement builds the relationship and catches problems early.

> "Anything that's different from what you expected?"
>
> **Why:** Surprises are early warning signs. Hearing them first lets you help.

OPENER 2 · DIRECT

The referral ask

> "Hi **First name**, **My first name** from *[your firm]*. Glad things are going well at **Company**. I'm looking for a *[role]* right now. Who's the best one you've worked with?"
>
> **Why:** Placed candidates know other good people. A specific role prompts a specific name.

Questions to ask

> "How's the team, and how's your manager?"
>
> **Why:** Trouble with the team or the manager is a common reason a placement goes wrong. Ask directly.

> "Is there anything I can help with?"
>
> **Why:** Offers support without overstepping.

> "Would it be OK if I checked in again in a few months?"
>
> **Why:** Permission keeps future calls welcome.

The ask

> "Thanks, **First name**. If you think of anyone for the *[role]*, text me their name and I'll take good care of them."
>
> **Why:** A light, specific referral ask.

Objections and honest answers

Agree with what's true, ask one question, and offer a small next step. Never argue, and stop when someone asks you to.

“I'm happy where I am.”

That's great, and I'm not asking you to leave. Is there anything that would make you consider a move in the future? And is there someone you know who might be a fit for this role?

Why: Respect it, learn what would change their mind, and ask for a referral.

“Just send me the job description.”

Happy to. So I send the right one, what's the one thing a role would need for you to consider it?

Why: One question turns a brush-off into a conversation.

“What's the salary?”

The range is *[range]*, depending on experience. What range would make a move worth it for you?

Why: Be open about the range where you can. Some states, California among them, require pay ranges in job postings, and candidates expect them.

“I'm not looking right now.”

That's fine. Would it be OK if I checked in every few months, in case something changes?

Why: Permission for a future call keeps the relationship going.

“How did you get my number?”

[It's on your professional profile / a colleague suggested you / you applied with us before.] If you'd rather I didn't call, I'll take you off my list now.

Why: Tell them honestly and offer the exit.

“We don't use recruiters. (client)”

That makes sense for most roles. Is there one that's been hard to fill? If it ever stays open longer than you'd like, I'd be glad to help with just that one.

Why: Agree, then focus on the exception.

“Your fee is too high. (client)”

It's a fair question. The fee is *[terms]*, and it only applies if you hire someone I introduce. What would a good hire be worth to you compared with the role staying open?

Why: Be clear about the terms, and frame them against the cost of the open role.

“We already have an agency. (client)”

Good. Are they filling everything you need? If there's a role they're struggling with, I'd be happy to help on that one.

Why: Position yourself as the backup for the hard role.

Voicemail scripts

About 20 to 30 seconds: your name and number first, one reason tied to them, then the number again, slowly.

Passive candidate

> “Hi **First name**, it's **My first name**, a recruiter with *[your firm]*. I'm calling because of your work on *[specific skill or project]*. I have a *[role]* I think you'd find interesting, and if not, I'd value your advice. You can reach me at **My number**. That's **My number**.”
>
> **Why:** Specific, flattering and low pressure, with two reasons to call back.

Applicant

> “Hi **First name**, **My first name** with *[your firm]*, about your application for *[role]*. I'd like to set up a quick call. Call or text me at **My number**, or reply to my email.”
>
> **Why:** Gives several easy ways to respond.

Hiring manager

> “Hi **First name**, it's **My first name** with *[your firm]*. I saw **Company** is hiring a *[role]*, and we place *[role type]* in *[area]*. If the search is taking longer than you'd like, I'd be glad to help. My number is **My number**.”
>
> **Why:** A visible reason, a specific offer and no pressure.

Placed candidate

> “Hi **First name**, it's **My first name** from *[your firm]*. Just checking in on how things are going at **Company**. No need to call back unless you'd like to. I'll send a quick text too.”
>
> **Why:** A light check-in that asks for nothing.

Follow-up texts

Text only people who agreed to texts, and keep an opt-out line in a first message.

Passive candidate, after a voicemail

Hi *[first name]*, it's *[your name]*, a recruiter with *[your firm]*. Just left you a voicemail about a *[role]*. Open to a quick chat? Reply STOP to opt out.

Why: Short and clear, with an opt-out. Text only where you have consent.

Applicant scheduling

Hi *[first name]*, *[your name]* at *[your firm]* about your *[role]* application. Does *[day]* at *[time]* work for a 15-min call?

Why: One clear question to book the screen.

Hiring manager follow-up

Hi *[first name]*, *[your name]* with *[your firm]*. Following up on my voicemail about your *[role]* search. Open to a 15-min call this week?

Why: A business contact gets one clear question. Keep it short and specific to the role.

Placed candidate check-in

Hi *[first name]*, *[your name]* here. Hope the new role is going well! Free for a quick catch-up this week?

Why: Friendly and light, for someone you already work with.

The rules for recruiting calls

Calls offering a job aren't telemarketing, so the Do Not Call Registry generally doesn't apply, and calls to employers are business-to-business. Consent for automated calls and texts, salary history bans and equal employment rules still apply.

- The FTC's Telemarketing Sales Rule covers calls to sell goods or services, so calls offering someone a job generally aren't telemarketing, and the National Do Not Call Registry doesn't apply to them.
- Calls selling your firm's services to employers are business-to-business. They're mostly exempt from the FTC's rule, but since 2024 its bans on misrepresentation apply to business calls too.
- Autodialed or prerecorded calls and automated texts to cell phones need the person's prior express consent, whatever the message. Text candidates who gave you their number for that purpose, and honor STOP straight away.
- Don't ask about salary history where it's banned. California's Labor Code 432.3 and New York's Labor Law 194-a both ban it, and New York's law covers recruiters acting for employers. Ask about pay expectations instead.
- Don't ask about age, race, religion, national origin, disability, genetic information, pregnancy or family plans. These can be evidence of discrimination under the laws the EEOC enforces.
- Keep a do-not-call list for people who ask you to stop, and share it across your team.
- In Canada, recruiting texts and emails may count as commercial messages under CASL, so get consent and include an unsubscribe option.

If you record calls: the consent line

"Just so you know, I record my calls so I can take accurate notes for your profile. Is that OK?"

If they say no: Say "No problem, I won't record this," and only carry on if you can turn recording off for the call. If you can't, offer to continue by email or video.

When it's required: Required before you record in states that need everyone's consent: California, Florida, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, Montana, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania and Washington, plus Connecticut and Nevada for phone calls. Courts disagree about Delaware and Michigan. Federal law and most other states need only one party's consent, but California applies its own law to calls into the state, so asking every time is the simple rule. In Canada, tell the person the call is recorded and why.

Statutes, regulators and sources

1. FTC Telemarketing Sales Rule definitions, 16 CFR 310.2
   https://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/16/310.2
2. FTC Telemarketing Sales Rule exemptions, including business calls, 16 CFR 310.6
   https://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/16/310.6
3. FCC TCPA rules, 47 CFR 64.1200
   https://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/47/64.1200
4. California Labor Code 432.3: salary history ban
   https://california.public.law/codes/labor_code_section_432.3
5. New York Labor Law 194-a: salary history ban
   https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/laws/LAB/194-A
6. EEOC: prohibited employment policies and practices
   https://www.eeoc.gov/prohibited-employment-policiespractices
7. Government of Canada: CASL and texting
   https://ised-isde.canada.ca/site/canada-anti-spam-legislation/en/texting-good-client-relations
8. Reporters Committee: state-by-state recording consent guide
   https://www.rcfp.org/introduction-to-reporters-recording-guide/

Last reviewed November 7, 2026 by the TopReach Compliance Desk. General information about the rules, not legal advice for your situation. Laws change and depend on the facts; talk to a lawyer before you rely on it.

Use these scripts in TopReach

Paste a script into a call list's Script tab and it shows on the call screen next to the outcome form. Fields fill in on each call: `First name` `Last name` `Full name` `Company` `My first name` `My name` `My number`. Every change is kept as a version you can restore.

The latest version of these scripts, and a free script generator: gettopreach.com/scripts/recruiting