



BEAT THE INBOX



THE COLD EMAIL SALES PLAYBOOK THAT WILL
GENERATE MORE SALES **IN 10 POWERFUL STEPS**



Prologue: This Cold Email Playbook Will Change the Way You Sell

We want you to sell more. It's that simple.

At SellHack, we love the art of the deal — from the first reach out to the satisfaction of the close. Modern outbound tactics like cold email are the answer to finding targeted prospects, starting more conversations and closing the big deals.

This playbook takes everything we've learned while growing and scaling businesses over the last 15 years and condenses it into a usable guide. These hacks get straight to the point and give you an action plan. Each section has a tl;dr so you can read this in five minutes and start making moves today. It also includes longer details, templates and guidelines that you can study and use to train up your team.

THE SELLHACKER'S DICTIONARY

A few quick email and sales metrics definitions in plain English for your reference.

CONVERSION RATE

Conversion Rates are the percentage of prospective customers who take a specific action you want.

MAD

When selling, focus on people who are MAD. That is, they have the money, authority and desire to be your customer. Focusing on MAD prospects means you won't wade through a pipeline full of maybes.

OPEN RATE

The email open rate is a measure primarily used by marketers and sales teams as an indication of how many people view or open the emails they send out.

PROSPECT

A prospect is someone who has the money, the authority, and the desire (MAD) to become your customer. This is a qualified person or company that fits your product or service well and can be moved through your sales cycle.

SUSPECT

A suspect is someone who appears to fit your target market or shows some interest in your offerings, but is not a confirmed prospect. This is someone you'll want to further qualify and research before you commit them to your sales process.

TL:DR

This is one of those things all the cool kids use when they don't want to take the time to type "too long, didn't read." There is a tl;dr in every chapter that gives you the quick overview of that chapter so you can scan the eBook your first time through and start getting more sales.

LET'S GO

Ready to grow your business through a smarter approach to prospecting, emailing and pitching?
Let's do this!



**YOU HAVE
2.7 SECONDS
TO GET TO
THE F#CKING
POINT**

CHAPTER 01

According to email provider ExactTarget, people only take 2.7 seconds to decide if they will read, forward or delete a message. You need to get to the point and get past your audience's BS filter. There are some simple formulas that you can optimize to identify who you want to email, find their email address, write the email, follow-up, move forward or move on.

In this chapter we'll kick off the playbook by covering what a cold email is, why cold emails help you reach so many people so affordably, how to automate sending so you get the best results and how they can become your best-selling tool.

TL;DR - USE COLD EMAILS TO GET TO THE POINT AND MAKE MORE MONEY

- ★ Cold emails let you reach anyone, are easy to set up and cost you almost no time or money.
- ★ Automate anything you're doing repeatedly to save even more time.
- ★ Cold email, done correctly, helps identify people who are really interested in your value proposition, and beats warm referrals or making cold calls.

The Meat and Potatoes

THE BENEFITS OF COLD EMAIL

Cold email is the tool that can get you to almost anyone. Forget trying to hack your way into an event to meet the CEO of the company you're dying to work with — just email him or her a compelling message and you're on your way.

Why does cold email work so well? Here are seven of its key benefits:

1. If you use the right tools (hint: SellHack), you can get almost anyone's email and reach them directly.
2. It's easy to set up email templates and test them.
3. You can reach limitless contacts at almost no cost — and have more measurable data than cold calls.
4. You can learn common responses and optimize your initial reach out.
5. You get to edit the email text, making you less prone to mistakes common with live cold calls.

6. Once you have a proven template, you can delegate the task of emailing to your BDR, SDR or even an outsourced assistant.
7. Automation systems exist that save you even more time. We Replyify to automate our cold email follow-ups, phone calls and social selling.

AUTOMATE AND DOMINATE

You need to get to the point, right?

Understand how people read email – they read it quickly. They read it on their phone. Get to the f#cking point and avoid the trash bin. We cover this more thoroughly in chapter 7, but here's the key: Write short messages that get to the point. Move the ball forward on closing a sale in every message. Test every message you send to see how it performs. We use a tool, which is integrated into SellHack, called Replyify for this purpose. The point is to track how effective your emails are, what's working and build templates from that.

When you find a winning formula, you rinse, wash and repeat. Use that template and share it with your team. Remember, once you have a template that works, anyone on your sales team can use it.

MYTH BUSTER: WARM INTROS ARE ALWAYS BETTER THAN COLD EMAILS

Early in their career, most sales or business development people are told that a referral is gold. And it is true that most referrals lead to a first meeting. But after that, do they really equal more deals than other types of qualifications? The fact is, many referrals lead to people taking meetings for the wrong reasons – they are doing a favor for the referrer, not really looking at your product or offering as something they would consider adopting.

Cold email, done correctly, is the exact opposite. You have the ability to work out a winning pitch, personalize part of the message for your prospect and craft a narrative around their pain points. Because of this, you can drive more meetings based solely on the benefit of the offering you send to the prospect. This helps to filter out people who are really interested in your value proposition versus just taking the meeting as a favor to someone else.



PRO TIP: 58 PERCENT OF ADULTS CHECK THEIR EMAIL FIRST THING IN THE MORNING. TRY GETTING YOUR EMAIL TO AN INBOX BETWEEN 7-9:30 AM.

Nurtured leads make 47% larger purchases than non-nurtured leads - automate delivery of your best content to your leads.

SOURCE: THE ANNUITAS GROUP

80%

of people only scan your email - capture their attention with large images and bold headlines.

SOURCE: NIELSON NORMAN GROUP

51%

of all email is opened on a mobile device - design your emails for small screens first.

SOURCE: LITMUS

iPhones cut off a subject line that is longer than 32 characters - make sure to place the most important words in your subject line first.

SOURCE: HARLAND CLARKE DIGITAL

Subscribers that receive a welcome message show 33% more long-term brand engagement.

SOURCE: CHIEFMARKETER.COM

20%

more comprehension when text is surrounded by a significant amount of white space.

SOURCE: CRAZY EGG



**CREATE A
PITCH WORTH
GIVING**

CHAPTER 02

OK, you're ready to grow your business through email. So let's start at the beginning: You need a unique selling proposition that positions your company's offering and benefits in a concise, understandable way.

More than 70 percent of the people you reach out to are unhappy with their current system, provider or product. This is your opportunity, so what do you do? Skip the five-minutes of blathering about what your company does. Sharpen your quick pitch so that you can clearly state your value proposition — in writing or in person.

TL;DR - PITCH TIPS TO GET YOUR MESSAGE HEARD

- ★ Write down the No. 1 way you help customers, what problem you solve for them and what outcome you can help them achieve.
- ★ Turn that into a concise elevator pitch.
- ★ Tweak your value proposition by testing out variations on different audience segments

The Meat and Potatoes

WHAT VALUE DO YOU BRING?

Be candid with yourself for a second: Do you ever dismiss emails or calls quickly because you can't see how they could **possibly** provide any value to you? Guess what, when you reach out to people, that's how they look at you if your pitch isn't spot on.

Don't get ignored any more; hone your value proposition to the point that it fits the audience you're reaching and helps them see the benefit you bring their business and their role.

To best explain how you solve a problem for your audience, first consider your audience. Senior executives think about different problems than do directors/managers. Lower level employees often don't have purview over purchases that impact other team members. Take a look at the following images for guidance on how to prepare a message that wins with different audiences:

INFLUENCING THE DECISION CRITERIA

Decision Criteria	Examples	Message	Audience
Business Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capability & expertise • Customer base • Company stability • Leadership team 	<p>Data Center Automation</p> <p>Cost, Security, Quality, Visibility</p>	CEO, CFO, CIO, VP, Dev, VP Ops
Architectural Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensibility • Integrated data model • Integrated Server, Network, Storage, Application, Process 	<p>Server, Application, Network, Storage, Automation:</p> <p>Integration, Standards, Policy, Cycle Time Reduction, Security</p>	VP & Director Level, Sr. Architects, CSO, Technologists, Engineering
Functional Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simplified operational control of apps • Consistent user interaction models • Automatic update of policies 	<p>System Administrator, Network Engineer</p> <p>Task Automation, Productivity</p>	System Admin, Network Engineer, Managers, Users

VALUE ALIGNMENT

	Objectives	Business Strategies	IT Initiatives	Critical Capabilities	Solutions Set
Executives	●	●	○		
Directors and Managers		○	●	●	○
Individual Contributors			○	●	●

● Focused on and accountable for ○ Aware of and understand their relationship to

HERE COMES THE PITCH

Aside from understanding the value you bring, you need to get your pitch across the plate without losing your audience.

Whatever your pitch, you most likely need to trim the fat to make it clear and concise. Give it to someone who doesn't know what you do and get a sense for whether they understand it. Be brief – remember, you have 2.7 seconds to get to the point.

Here are some additional tips on what makes a winning pitch. Follow these or risk getting ignored.

A good pitch:

- Is not all about you – talk about your prospect's pains and needs
- Spells out tangible benefits (e.g. "Our customers save 27 percent on XYZ costs.")
- Is concise
- Has simple, clear calls to action
- Is well said/written (pay attention to details like names, spelling, grammar) to avoid burning out good contacts

Remember, the right pitch should have your prospect thinking, "This might be the person who can help me with my problem. I should find out more." When they think that, you're on the right path.

TWEAK AND TEST

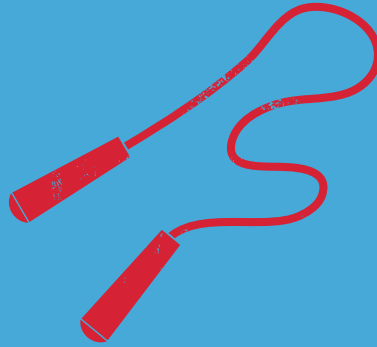
Once you understand your value proposition, play with it by testing the different emotions you can draw out with simple tweaks to the messaging.

Come up with at least three at a time to test. Let's pretend that we are trying to sell Salesforce, and we think the value prop for it is the revenue impact it can make through giving visibility into what a sales team is doing. If that's the value, here are some example value props and the mindset they play off.

- Value Prop No. 1: (Value) Save time in Salesforce with reporting.
- Value Prop No. 2: (Value) Increase sales with competition amongst your sales teams.
- Value Prop No. 3: (Value) Better visibility - see your top and bottom sales reps in one report
- Value Prop No. 4: (Competition) See how companies like X, Y, Z have grown their revenue 10x in the last year.
- Value Prop No. 5: (Vanity) You think your sales team is the best, do you have the metrics to back it up?
- Value Prop No. 6: (Fear) Most successful sales people in X industry send 50 cold emails every day. How many are your team members sending?
- Value Prop No. 7: (Curiosity) Ever wonder how much time your team spends on cold emails?
- Value Prop No. 8: (Functional) Get help quickly organizing your sales reports in a way you never could before.



PRO TIP: TELL THEM THE TANGIBLE BENEFIT THEY GET FROM WORKING WITH YOU OR GET IGNORED.



**DEVELOP A
PROCESS FOR
FOCUSING ON
MAD PROSPECTS**

CHAPTER 03

The basics of selling are easy. It's a matter of converting suspects into prospects and turning prospects into customers.

A suspect is someone who appears to fit your target market or shows some interest in your offerings; a prospect is someone who has the money, the authority and the desire (MAD) to become your customer.

In this chapter, we'll talk about building on a sales funnel process focused on converting these MAD prospects into real dollars in a consistent way.

TL;DR - THE BASICS OF A BETTER PIPELINE WITH BETTER PROSPECTS

- ★ Understand your close rate – Find out how many emails it takes you to make one sale and create your workload from there.
- ★ Be agile: Only prospect people you will contact in the next week.
- ★ Find the optimal velocity for your buyer and adjust your approach.
- ★ Be diligent about keeping the pipeline full of quality suspects.

The Meat and Potatoes

THE CLOSER (RATE)

What's your close rate?

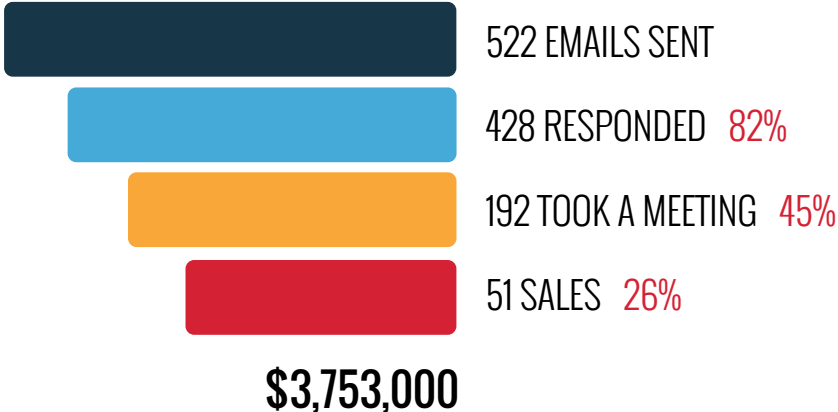
This simple question stumps sales people constantly.

Do the math: How many emails do you need to send out initially to land one sale? Your job is to make the answer higher by putting more of the right people through the funnel. (We'll talk more about identifying the right personas in chapter 4.) The first step in doing this is understanding your funnel.

A 2013 InsightSquared study of 652 B2B companies that use a formal pipeline management process found that those who spend 3+ hours per month reviewing their pipeline sold 11 percent more than the rest of the group.

So if you're looking to grow your sales, start off by figuring out what your close rate is — actually do the math on how many prospects you have to reach out to in order to get a meeting and how many meetings it takes to get a sale. Once you have those numbers, the easiest way to increase sales is to understand your funnel and apply more pressure (either by creating more prospects or booking more meetings).

When you better understand your numbers, set daily, weekly and monthly goals on how many prospects you need to email and stick to your schedule.



STAY LEAN AND AGILE

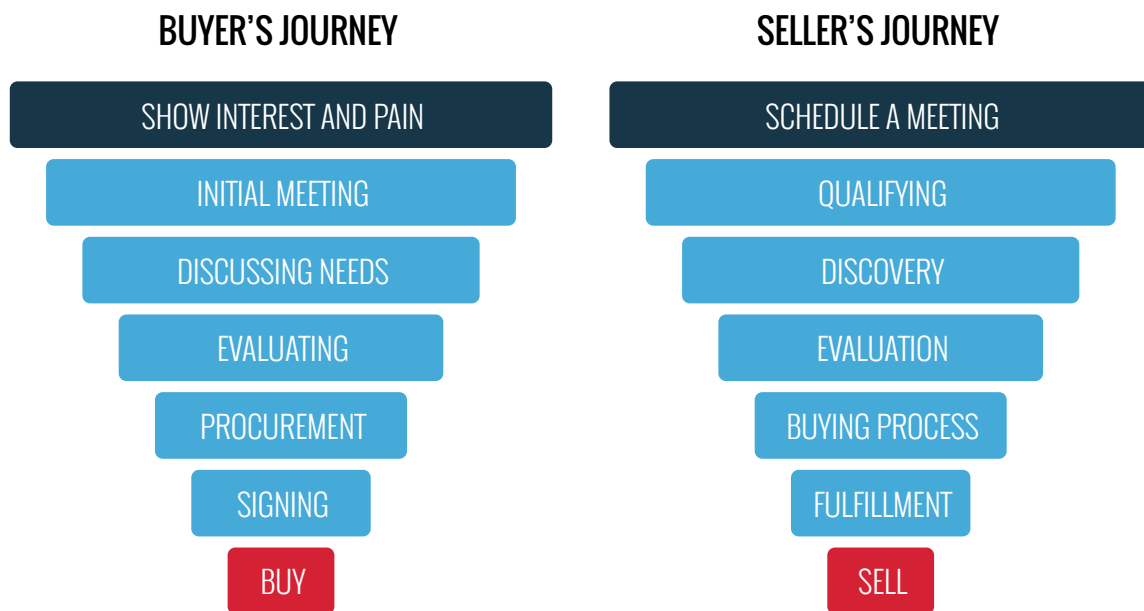
Whether you organize your prospects by geography, vertical market or sales volume, you need to prospect systematically. Increase your prospecting not in an impulsive flurry of phone calls, but in a methodical way.

Be nimble. Develop a plan, implement it and review your progress on a regular basis. Adjust your plan based on results and feedback. Half the battle is developing a routine that works for you.

FIND YOUR BALANCE

If you have a sales process that you already understand, the next step is to create a process for your buyer that follows their journey with definitions from *their* point of view.

When you can map out what the process looks like for the buyer, you can understand how they're seeing the next steps and how to work the right velocity into your prospecting. This will help you determine the amount of prospects you need today to hit revenue/sales goals. When you have that figured out, you can adjust your pace accordingly.



Keep a Quality Pipeline

Your goal is to keep a full pipeline of prospects who could ultimately buy from you. You must relentlessly and rigorously separate suspects from this pipeline by qualifying people and ensuring they are quality prospects.

Pursue only those prospects who are fully qualified, not those you think might be qualified, those you wish were qualified, those who used to be qualified, those who are partly qualified, those who give the impression that they are qualified or those who themselves want to be qualified.

Increase your prospecting activity, but before you even begin, do your homework on which prospects are worth pursuing. (See more in chapter 4).



PRO TIP: BOOK RECURRING TIME ON YOUR CALENDAR TO COMPLETE SPECIFIC PROSPECTING-RELATED TASKS SO YOU'LL ALWAYS HAVE A FULL PIPELINE.



**THE IDEAL
CUSTOMER -
FINDING THE
RIGHT BELLE
FOR THE BALL**

CHAPTER 04

So you think you've got a pipeline process ready to push MAD prospects through the funnel. But are you sure you know who the right prospect is for you?

Before you can sell anything, it's important that you identify your ideal customer profile (ICP). You simply can't know what your buyer personas look like — let alone what channels or messaging you should use — until you are clear on this.

Let's dive into how you can learn more about your ICP and use that to start outpacing all the other salespeople you know.

TL;DR - LEARN YOUR IDEAL CUSTOMER AND ADJUST YOUR TACTICS ACCORDINGLY

- ★ Study the common characteristics and problems of your ideal customer profile — and know the solution.
- ★ Learn how to talk, read and write like your ICP.
- ★ Match your ICP to companies with money and urgency to hit it big.
- ★ Compare your ideal customer profile to your existing customer base.

The Meat and Potatoes

BE A SLEUTH

If you want to sell, you need to know what you're selling and, just as importantly, why someone else would need it. Beyond your value proposition, you need to understand the common problems of your end customer.

What is the industry like at this moment in time? What are the challenges your customer is facing? Remember that your ideal customer is the person for whom you best solve a problem. So study the problems you solve and be a detective. Get clues from your existing customers (or even customers of your competitors) on why they buy from you to piece everything together. As you study the common characteristics of your customer and why they buy, you'll get a very strong sense for your ideal customer. As you sell, you'll start to hone in on how you solve a big problem for this ICP.

BECOME A CHAMELEON

While you're doing your gumshoe detective work, figure out how to really blend in by picking up clues on how your ICP talks about their industry — and to whom they talk. Find out what they're saying on LinkedIn. Read industry reports and whitepapers. This will help you go from TV-grade detective to full on undercover bada\$\$\$. Once you pick up the lingo and know the game from the inside, you'll be able to construct better messages and gain the trust of your prospects as an authority.

HONE IN ON THE RIGHT ICP FORMULA

What do you do once you have your ICP targeted? You sell to them, of course.

More specifically, you match their traits to companies with money and a sense of urgency so you hit it big.

And who has money? That's the right question. Here are some examples of prospects who have cash and publicize it:

- A company that just raised capital (CrunchBase does a daily report of this)
- Public companies who just had a big quarter/year (these reports are public)
- Companies who are hiring (check the job boards for hiring needs specific to your product/service)

DO A CUSTOMER AUDIT

Now that you know who you want to sell to, how does your existing customer base look? You should review them to see how it matches to your ideal profile. The best place to start this audit is with your best (generally defined as your most profitable) customers to see if they share you ICP traits.

You may find that your profile is off based on some obvious traits of your best customers. Or, you may find out that your customer base is off because they are missing key traits of your ICP that help you grow revenue. If that's the case, grow using your ICP and be prepared to start shedding bad customers.



PRO TIP: SELL WITH FOCUS. YOU'RE BETTER OFF SELLING TO 10 PROSPECTS YOU UNDERSTAND THAN 100 YOU DON'T.



**STALK YOUR
PROSPECTS
(LEGALLY)**

CHAPTER 05

Identifying customers who want to work with you is easier than ever thanks to modern technology. Once you have your ideal customer profile identified, it's time to hang out at the same digital watering holes your prospects do.

Here's a look at what it takes to blend into the social realm of your customer and start a conversation.

TL;DR - USE TECH THAT WILL TELL YOU YOUR PROSPECTS' SECRETS

- ★ Learn who is actively talking and contributing to conversations as a 'Thought Leader.'
- ★ Follow prospects and look-a-likes on LinkedIn, LinkedIn group members, and twitter. Retweet, like, connect and share their content.

The Meat and Potatoes

IDENTIFY THOUGHT LEADERS

Once you've decided what persona you're reaching out to, and what criteria defines that persona, make a list of 5-10 people in each buyer persona that you want to contact.

Once you have a list of these people, the research (read: stalking) begins. Again, you should have a sense of where these thought leaders are aggregating, but here are some areas to search:

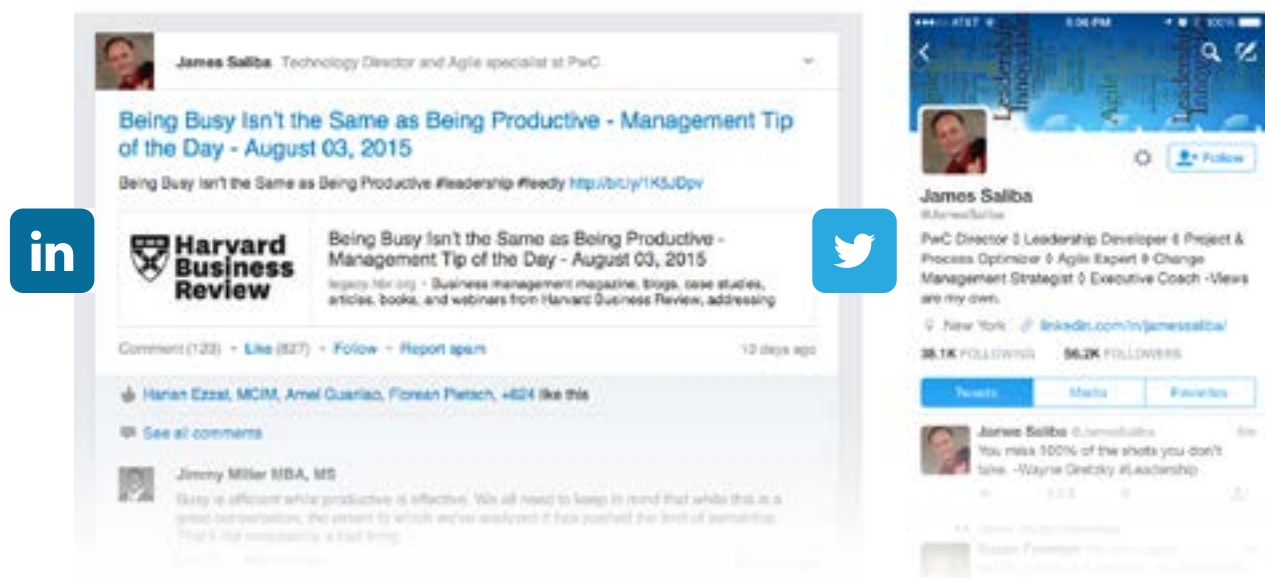
- **LinkedIn** - Looking at LinkedIn profiles is an obvious one, but most industries now have lots of groups. Find the most successful groups (those that have a lot of members and are active) and find out who is running that group and who posts often. This is generally a thought leader (or someone like you who is ahead of the game. You better get going!)
- **Forums** - Professionals often answer questions online in places like Quora, Reddit and industry-specific sites.
- **Twitter** - You can search Twitter by #hashtags based on common industry phrases or even hashtags for events in the industry. Find the people in these conversations and you'll often find prospects who like to talk.

HACK THEIR SOCIAL WORLD

Now that you have a sense for who you should reach out to and who makes an impact in the community, you can hack their social world to get on their radar.

The bones of this are easy: Join the LinkedIn group, follow them on Twitter. Like the posts they share on Medium, share their digital whitepaper. You don't have to heavily inject yourself, but put yourself on their map.

James Saliba participating in a LinkedIn Group and his Twitter profile.



As you do so, you'll get a sense for their personality. This will help you even further become the undercover sleuth we talked about in chapter 4. You'll have a sense for their language, but now you'll also have a sense for who these people are and how they would like to be approached. You'll see what matters to them in business and, often, personally.

Using this information, you're almost ready to send them an email. That's right, after 5 chapters you're almost ready to send an email! Almost.



PRO TIP: DON'T GET STUCK ON A NETWORKING TREADMILL. FIND OUT WHERE YOUR PROSPECTS ARE HAVING MEANINGFUL CONVERSATIONS AND ENGAGE THEM.



**STRUCTURE
MESSAGES
YOU WOULD
RESPOND TO**

CHAPTER 06

We're almost ready to write an email to the person we've identified as our ideal customer profile so that we can make megabucks. But next we have to think about how we'd craft a message — even before we put text in an email.

Here's the goal: Every conversation, voice mail and piece of literature should move your prospect to some action, no matter how small. The best way to do this is to offer plenty of benefits.

Don't get caught in a sales stalemate; use these tips to make every conversation proactive and aimed at your goal of getting a decision on a sale.

TL;DR - USE GOOD MESSAGING TO MOVE THE BALL FORWARD

- ★ 3x3 analysis: Before reaching out to your prospects take three minutes and find three things you have in common.
- ★ Craft your "why now" statement.
- ★ Create a schedule and structure for the timing and messaging for a mix between calls and emails.

The Meat and Potatoes

GET PERSONAL WITH A 3X3 ANALYSIS

So you have your ideal customer profile figured out, you know your value proposition clearly and you're ready to make a sale. Now, it's time to get personal. No, seriously, get a little personal.

If you've taken the time to be a digital sleuth, then you know the online watering holes where many of your prospects hang out, so take three minutes to find out about the person you're going to email. This is not a strategy to suck your time away, this is a strategic effort to make every email you send more likely to get through. Keep yourself on a timeline. Go find out three things about the prospect in a maximum of three minutes. Incorporate the most interesting one thing you find in your first email. Write the other two in your CRM for future use.

TELL PROSPECTS WHY NOW IS THE TIME TO ACT

Have you ever been in a crowded bar when they yell out, “last call!” and just watched how many people head straight to the bar?

It’s no secret that urgency makes people act. So what is it about the offering you’re going to make to your prospect that will make them act? It might be a temporary pricing discount, it might be the ability to work with you now will put them ahead of their competition, it might be the ability to get exclusivity with you. Whatever your offering is, figure out why your prospect can’t afford to buy it six months from now instead of now. Because if they feel like they can do it in six months, they’ll kick you down the road.

CREATE A SCHEDULE

OK, we’re getting ready to dive into the email creation process, but before we do let’s make sure you’re committed. Don’t plan on sending one email and getting a sale. In fact, don’t plan on sending out 10 initial emails and getting a sale.

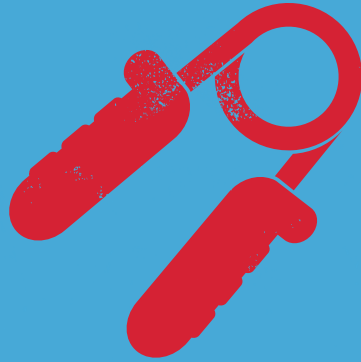
You’re in this to work a lot of prospects through a funnel, and you need to commit to a schedule to make that happen. Figure out how many times you’re going to reach out to a prospect before you give up — tip: most people give up after three efforts to reach out, but most people respond around the sixth time someone reaches out to them. You’re going to be better than most salespeople, but that doesn’t mean you’ll be able to trim that down to one message.



Make a plan to mix emails and follow-up calls over a time period. Remember that each message should move the ball forward. Be unique, know your value proposition and talk to their pain points.



PRO TIP: THE NEXT TIME YOU GO TO TRASH A 'BAD' SALES EMAIL, KEEP IT AND READ THROUGH IT TO LEARN HOW YOU CAN AVOID HAVING YOUR MESSAGES TOSSED.



**WRITE EMAIL
CONTENT
THAT DOESN'T
SUCK**

CHAPTER 07

Prospects want to know why it would be worth their valuable time to spend 5 minutes, 30 minutes or an hour with you. Prove that you're worth it.

So many sales emails are too long and off point, leaving prospects to assume that's what the relationship will be like. Kill that with these fundamentals of a sales email.

TL;DR - WRITE MESSAGES THAT FOLLOW A WINNING FORMULA

- ★ Focus on the fundamentals of a quality email.
- ★ Write subject lines that win.
- ★ Try proven formulas and templates, then customize them.

The Meat and Potatoes

FOCUS ON FUNDAMENTALS

Do you want to write a good email? Pay attention to these SellHack-tested rules:

- Make it less than 90 words.
- Use 2-sentence paragraphs so it can be scanned.
- Don't get cute with your font. People hate that sh^t.
- Never include more than one link or attachment.
- Write like you talk – kill the sales jargon.
- Imagine the recipient is 12 years old and write in simple language.
- Proofread (especially for people and company names)
- Avoid email cliches like the plague.

WRITE A WINNING SUBJECT LINE

Subject lines are the gateway to your cold email's success. You could have the best email list, a personalized 'hook', low-commitment call to action and a value prop that induces fear or solves the prospect's problems but if your subject line sucks, your email might as well delete itself.

Most folks send email thinking about how to position themselves or their company as a superior option to the prospect. We call this the 'why me' method and it's the completely wrong approach.

'Why me' subject lines read like this: 'sales acceleration software' or 'website design services' or 'partnering with xyz company'.

Here's a two-minute drill to create subject lines that get opened:

Goal: Get the email opened (don't change this, this should always be your first goal when thinking about subject lines)

What's the purpose of this email? Download an app to help take a nap without falling into a deep sleep. (When you do this exercise, you'll obviously change this to your call to action outcome).

Micro-Conversion (call to action): Take a quiz on sleeping habits

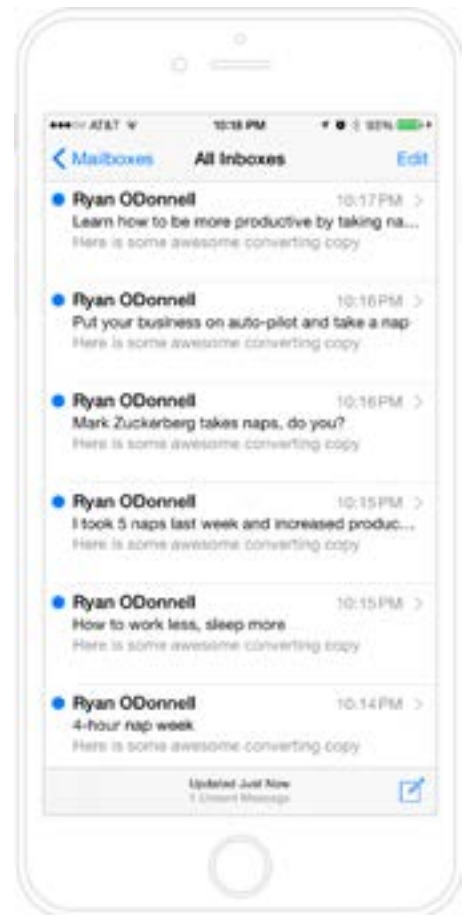
Subject Line Brainstorm: Start Writing (two minutes max). Don't overthink this. Just write.

Here are the 10 subject lines we came up with for example:

- Subject 1: Take a nap
- Subject 2: Take a nap & grow your business
- Subject 3: Do you take naps?
- Subject 4: Get paid to take naps
- Subject 5: 4-hour nap week
- Subject 6: How to work less, sleep more
- Subject 7: I took 5 naps last week and increased productivity 300%
- Subject 8: Mark Zuckerberg takes naps, do you?
- Subject 9: Put your business on auto-pilot and take a nap
- Subject 10: Learn how to be more productive by taking naps

Now, go to your email account and send yourself one message for each of these subject lines. Look at the emails on your computer and phone.

How do they look? Which email(s) would you open? Show them to other folks on your team and take note of their feedback. Pick two subject lines for your first A/B test and start writing your email.



FOLLOW THE FORMULA, THEN CUSTOMIZE IT

It may seem like a lot to ask to consistently craft well-edited messages with great subject lines that make your prospects jump up and down.

Well, here's the good news: You really only have to do it one time for every email step in your sales funnel. That's it. As you craft messages that win, use them over and over again. Remember, we're working to create great messages that can be templated and shared with your team. When you have a winner, pass it around.

But here's what you do need to do each time — add a custom touch to the winning formula. Sometimes that's as simple as a personal introduction and some indication that you know what this prospect's company does. Other templates might require more knowledge dropped in. But don't just send the same template to everyone and expect it to work; treat people like humans. (And if you're copying successful emails and pasting them into new messages, for God's sake, make sure you switch out the names. Nothing is more embarrassing than firing off an email to Cara at Apple and realizing it says, "Hello Arnold, I hope things are well at Google.")

DON'T GET DELETED. AVOID THESE EMAIL WORDS THAT TRIGGER THE DELETE RESPONSE:

1. Exciting
2. State-of-the-art
3. Best-in-class
4. Solution
5. Partner
6. Leading edge
7. Passion
8. Unique
9. One-stop shopping



PRO TIP: STARTING TODAY, PAY ATTENTION TO ALL THE UNSOLICITED EMAILS YOU RECEIVE SO YOU CAN LEARN FROM THEM. EVERY COLD EMAIL SENT TO US AT SELLHACK GOES INTO A 'VENDOR COLD EMAIL' FOLDER AND IS TAGGED WITH 'OPENED', 'BAD', OR 'REPLIED' TAGS. TRY IT. YOU MAY BE SURPRISED THAT THE EMAILS YOU FLAG AS 'BAD' SOUND A LOT LIKE THE EMAILS YOU ARE SENDING.

The Anatomy of a Great Sales Prospecting Email

1. KEEP IT SHORT

Your email should be short and sweet with a maximum of 3 sentences.

2. ASK ONLY ONE QUESTION

Don't make your email complicated to answer. Ask only one question per communication.

3. EASY TO REPLY

Make sure the recipient can answer your email within seconds. Avoid asking complicated questions.

4. BE SPECIFIC

Tell the recipient what you are looking for.

5. "FYI"'S ARE ALMOST ALWAYS READ

It's old marketing but it still works. Add "FYI" or "P.S." at the end of your email with a link to your website.

6. NO FANCY HTML

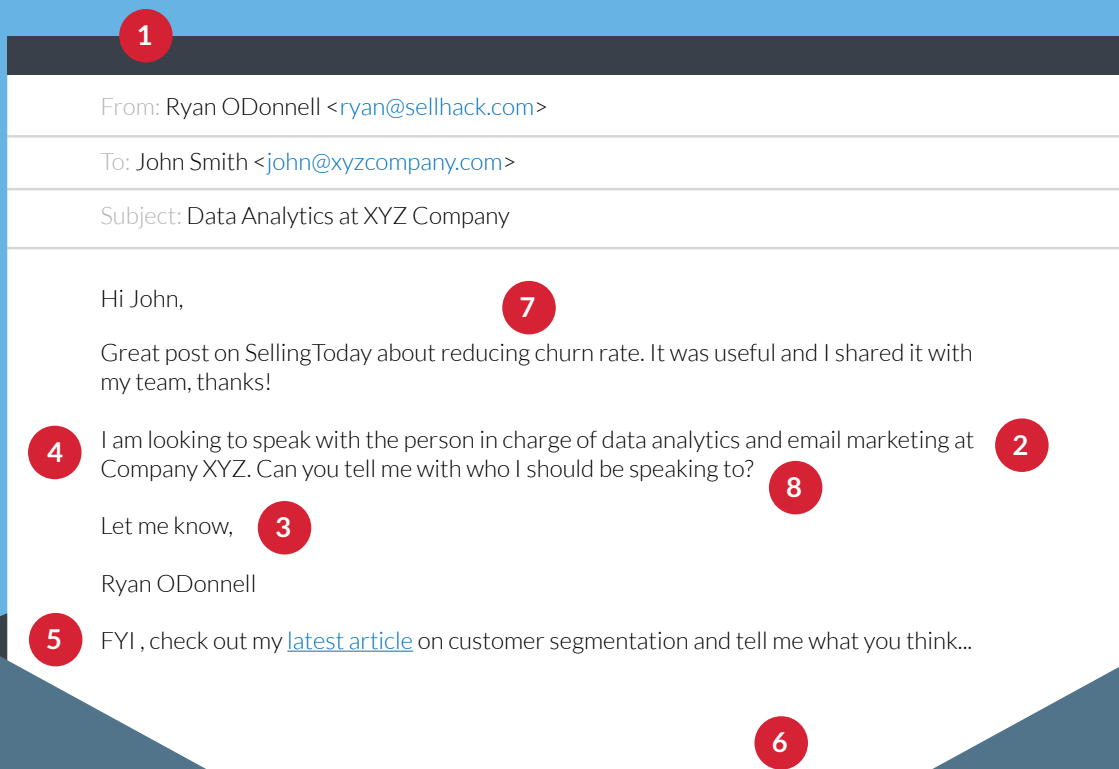
People are used to fully automated email now. Make it look like you pressed the send button.

7. RESEARCH BEFORE EMAIL

Take a look at what the recipient has done on the web and personalize your email.

8. ASK FOR THE RIGHT PERSON

Save your time and always ask if you can speak or get introduced to the right person within the company.





**DON'T
FORGET YOUR
EMAIL HAS
TO GET TO
THE INBOX**

CHAPTER 08

We don't want to get too far down a technical rabbit hole here, but email deliverability cannot be overlooked.

List hygiene is absolutely critical to your engagement score, which is critical to getting email delivered to the inbox, which is critical to getting opens, clicks, leads, sales, ice cream, a Super Bowl ring and that car you always wanted in high school but couldn't afford.

Don't get stuck in the spam filter; follow these rules so your emails are delivered and your yes is that much closer.

TL;DR - FOCUS ON EMAIL BASICS TO GET RESULTS

- ★ Clean your list – remove duplicates, typos, fake emails, spam@ addresses, etc.
- ★ Play by the CAN-SPAM Act rules – [This isn't 'Nam, there are rules for sending unsolicited emails.](#)
- ★ Use the right tools.

The Meat and Potatoes

KEEP THAT LIST NICE AND CLEAN

As an email sales pro, a lot is required of you. You need a repeatable process for finding prospects, building lists, and verifying email addresses and phone numbers. You need to be able to write relevant, engaging messages. You need to craft concise, compelling emails that the reader can scan and act on. And you also need to have a firm understanding of email deliverability. Because you could spend all your time writing awesome content and designing a stellar template, but if you can't make it to your contact's inbox, all your hard work goes unnoticed.

To focus on your email deliverability, follow these tips:

1. Reach out to inactive subscribers
2. Use double opt-ins
3. Ask subscribers to white-list you
4. Make sure you have DKIM and SPF records
5. Use a familiar sender name (Ryan from SellHack)

6. For cold emails, no fancy templates...plain text is best
7. Test emails you send with your users' email clients
8. Honor unsubscribes quickly
9. Get email sender accreditation from a third party
10. Set up an Email Sending Domain (try a .co or .net)

PLAY BY THE CAN-SPAM ACT RULES

We get asked a few times a week by our clients if sending a cold email is spam.

Myth: B2B emails are exempt from CAN-SPAM regulations.

Fact: CAN-SPAM applies to all commercial messages, not just bulk emails, teeth whiteners, or diet pills. Specifically, "any electronic mail message the primary purpose of which is the commercial advertisement or promotion of a commercial product or service."

Follow these rules to help avoid \$16,000 fines!

- Don't use false or misleading contact info
- Don't use deceptive subject lines
- If your email is an ad, then label it as such
- Tell the recipient your address
- Give recipients a way to opt out
- Honor opt outs
- Monitor what others are doing on your behalf

USE YOUR TOOLS

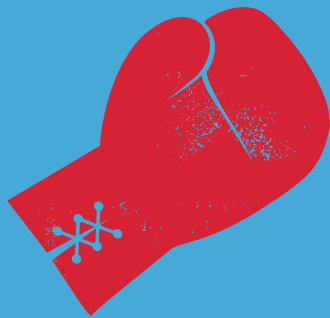
You are not alone in your efforts to send relevant emails to a clean list. There are lots of tools out there to help you follow the rules. Here are several that we use at SellHack.

1. [Validate the emails you already have in your CRM using SellHack](#). You can also use it to filter role-based emails like "sales@abc.com" or "info@abc.com."
2. Send your cold emails directly from your inbox with a trusted provider like Replyify
3. Spell check your emails as you type them. Odds are the guy you met is not named Mike Smith.
4. Use [Litmus](#) for email rendering testing
5. Use [Lyris to check your content's spam score](#)

6. Keep track of your sender score to make sure email filters like you at <https://www.senderscore.org/>
7. Do a quick – and free – test of your email deliverability with [SendForensics](#)
8. Use [MxToolbox](#) to check your network diagnostics



PRO TIP: DON'T GET CAUGHT IN THE SPAM FILTER – USE TOOLS TO MAINTAIN A MEANINGFUL LIST THAT WILL HELP DRIVE SALES.



**EVALUATE
YOUR
CAMPAIGN AND
RESPOND LIKE
A CLOSER**

CHAPTER 09

Even if you followed everything we've laid out so far in this playbook, there's work to do. Follow your results and tweak them to get even better results. When you get into a conversation, control it to manage specifics around the next steps to put you into an ideal scenario.

Follow these guidelines to get better and get to the finish line.

TL;DR - MEASURE AND TEST EVERYTHING TO CONSTANTLY IMPROVE

- ★ Learn the pulse of your customer by tracking dates/times you're more successful and A/B testing everything.
- ★ Respond with specific details on availability and needs.
- ★ Know the four types of responses you'll get.
- ★ Let go of bad suspects who aren't MAD.

The Meat and Potatoes

LEARN THE PULSE OF YOUR CUSTOMER

Let's bust two email myths:

MYTH NO. 1: EMAILS GET A FASTER RESPONSE IN THE MORNING.

Wrong. While emails sent between 6 and 7 am tend to get quicker responses, emails sent around 8 pm get roughly the same response rate.

MYTH NO. 2: MONDAY IS THE BEST DAY TO SEND EMAIL.

Wrong. There's all kinds of mixed research on this, but time and again Monday appears to be the wrong day to get anyone's attention. Many people are too overwhelmed with the start of their week to pay attention to you.

So what's a cold emailer like you to do? Study your people! While there are widespread stats on overall email habits, your audience will have its own pulse. Find it. Do A/B testing where you send the same messages to prospects at distinctly different times or on different days. Measure the outcomes and adjust.

IT'S CALLED SPECIFIC TIME

When you get an email response, you have an opportunity to move the ball forward; don't blow it. Many salespeople respond to emails with vague questions like "Is there a time next month that works for you?" Or "Do you have 30 minutes free sometime soon?"

Don't give your warm prospect the chance to cool off. Respond with specific times that could work for a call. Show them you're serious by giving them action items and a push forward. Tell them how much time you'll need and if you're going to do a product demo, ask them to send materials ahead of time to help you customize it for them.

IT'S NOT ME, BECAUSE I'M GOOD

Just like you should study the best time to email your audience, you should also learn their common behaviors through the rest of the sales cycle. More than likely, your prospects will have common objections to your efforts to sell them. These objections include price, timing, approvals required, staffing needs, etc.

Now, you're nine chapters into this playbook, so at this point they should understand why you have a unique value proposition and your message should have their attention. The next step to be an email boss is to have well-studied answers to these common objections.

From today on, make a list of all the objections you get in the sales cycle and see which three or four are the most common. Once again, A/B test here, testing your best answers to these questions. When an answer starts to do the trick, have it on speed dial (or, speed email) to handle the common objections.

LET GO OF BAD SUSPECTS WHO AREN'T MAD

Letting go is hard to do. Figure out how to do it when you're dealing with suspects who do not have the money, authority and desire to buy from you.

These suspects take up your time and pull your focus away from people you can actually close. Be a closer — even when that means closing out deals that won't happen. Move on and close the deals that are actually available to you. Your ideal prospect is not only MAD, but they offer good revenue potential and a real chance at a near-term close.

Here's a simple way to think about who you need to study and pursue:



PRO TIP: CREATE AN ARCHITECTURE FOR YOUR CAMPAIGN BY MEASURING RESULTS AND MAPPING OUT COMMON RESPONSES.



THE PITCH:
EXPECT A YES,
EMBRACE A NO.
DON'T SETTLE
FOR MAYBE.

CHAPTER 10

Embrace the fear. Act like a hero, not a coward. If you've come this far, you've done everything right.

Remember, you have to make it easy for your customer to buy from you, so stay on task and focus on getting to the finish line by reiterating your value. Don't get tackled on the one-yard line.

Here are some tips on getting the yes, dealing with the no and avoiding the worst thing in sales — the dreaded maybe.

TL;DR - BUILD A WINNING PITCH

- ★ Show up, follow-up, follow through (close).
- ★ Be friendly, be STRONG and be consistent.
- ★ Handle objections. Know what to expect and counter with clear answers and documentation.
- ★ Tell your customers what to do. You're the expert at what you're doing.
- ★ Whether or not you win: Include asking for referrals as part of your follow-up process.

The Meat and Potatoes

SHOW UP, FOLLOW-UP, FOLLOW THROUGH (CLOSE)

If you get to pitch day, you've worked your way through the sales funnel and you're on the two (or maybe even one) yard-line. Let's do this!

To progress through the final stages, reinforce your prospect's interest in working with you by being diligent to the finish line. Follow up on any materials you need from them to handle paperwork. Be clear about the timeline on the close. Follow through with any promises you've made about getting them setup or connecting them with others in your organization for a rollout.

On pitch day, act like you've been in the end zone before. Here are some fundamentals for a pitch:

- Show up on time and prepared.
- Customize your presentation for both the company you're talking with as well as the prospect(s).
- Start the conversation with your expectation for what this meeting is about (closing a deal).
- Reiterate to everyone involved what steps have been taken so far and what problems you're looking to solve.

- Come prepared with a deck, but be ready to never use it. Even better, acknowledge that you have a deck, but out of respect for their time, you aren't going to use it.
- Ask questions and listen.

BE FRIENDLY BUT MAKE THE CLOSE

Don't confuse talking for selling or selling for closing. When you're making your pitch, your goal is to get the deal closed.

That doesn't mean you ignore the personal relationship that got you to the goal line, but you do need to be consistent in your focus. Start a pitch off by sharing your expectations. Include in those expectations that you want to close business and that now is the time you'd like to do that. Be firm in that goal and don't let a little hemming and hawing make you take a step back and turn this effort to close into another meeting.

TELL YOUR CUSTOMERS WHAT TO DO

You want to be friendly, but remember that your customer is listening to your pitch because you're the expert. In many cases, particularly if your prospect is making a purchase for a service or product that is more than \$10,000 in annual recurring revenue, this might be the first time in their career they've ever handled such a deal. Help them. Tell them what the steps are to finalize the sale and what the timeline looks like for payment.

Explain what happens after the sale — and let them know what role you'll play, if any, in the post-sale relationship.

HANDLE OBJECTIONS

It's not unlikely for your prospect to make one last goal-line stand. They may ask for a last-minute discount or attempt to say they need to wait another quarter. Maybe you have the flexibility to move the goal post a bit, but know when you need to walk away without a deal.

Be firm and remember that you've done your homework. You know why your product or service works, why they need it now and what their problems are. Reiterate these things and don't give up your position in the conversation. Keep track of the common objections you start to get at this point and sharpen your toolset on handling them.

WIN OR LOSE, ASK WHO THEY KNOW

If you made it all the way to pitch day, you've almost certainly earned the respect of your prospect and they understand what value you can bring. So regardless of whether you close a deal or not, don't be afraid to ask your prospect who else they know that might need your help.

Remember, you are selling to your ICP, and they likely attend trade shows, join groups or talk online with other folks you want to sell to. Ask them to make the connection for you. Cold emails work well, but peer-to-peer recommendations never hurt.



PRO TIP: NOTHING IS WORSE THAN A MAYBE. ASK FOR A DECISION – A 'NO' NOW IS BETTER THAN A 'MAYBE' THAT DRAGS ON FOR SIX MONTHS.

