



Using Warm Emails with Current and Dormant Clients (Part II)

Continuing our discussion from the previous lesson, let's look at three more ways you can use warm emails to generate work from existing or dormant clients.

Technique #5: Bring a Hot Idea to the Table

Another great way to land more work with an existing or dormant client is to approach them with a great idea.

I often find myself thinking about my clients' businesses while walking the dog, chopping vegetables or going on a hike (I know, I know ... I need to "turn it off" sometimes!).

Something about the relaxing and mundane nature of these activities helps me come up with great ideas out of the blue. I don't ask for them; they just come to me!

Other times, I'll read about a strategy someone else implemented that could work for another client. When this happens, I don't waste time. I jot it down and contact the client with the idea as soon as possible.

Regardless of your profession, if there's one thing most clients value in a freelancer, it's knowing that someone truly cares about them, their job (if they're an employee) or their business (if they're an executive or entrepreneur).

So if you can occasionally provide fresh, new ideas or approaches that will help them do a better job, improve their business or meet their objectives, you'll find yourself *creating* (if you will) new projects that didn't exist before.

At a minimum, if they don't go for your idea, you'll probably at least be the first person they contact on the next project.

So let me give you a recent example of this...

A couple of years ago I had come across a few software companies that had written e-books on specific topics and used those e-books as their offers in email and direct mail campaigns.

It's always been common to offer white papers in these types of campaigns, but to position it as an "e-book" rather than as a white paper is somewhat of a new thing.

Anyway, after seeing 3 or 4 of these campaigns last year from several software companies, I thought of a client of mine who at one point had reached out to me about ghostwriting a business book for him. He's a thought leader in his industry, and he wanted to put many of his ideas together in a physical book, which he could use as a lead generating and credibility-building tool with prospects.

Well, he never actually went through with that idea, but the whole e-book thing got me thinking. So I decided to contact him about doing an e-book instead for a couple of reasons:

- It would stand out in an industry filled with white papers
- It would give him more room to discuss some of his more complex ideas, which can't be discussed properly in 5 – 7 pages (white paper)
- It could be the stepping-stone—the genesis, if you will—of his book (I suspect that he put the book project on hold because it just seemed so overwhelming to him!)

He loved the idea! In fact, he replied that same day and said "Let's do this!" and he put me in touch with his marketing director, who reports directly to him. Frankly, the e-book idea never materialized. But instead, the client decided to do a three-part white paper series that netted me over \$10,000!

What would your email look like? Here again, it all depends on what idea you're proposing. But here's the exact copy from my own email above...

SUBJECT LINE: Lead generation idea

Mike,

Here's a thought-leadership and lead generation idea: write a 5,000-word e-book.

You can use it as a lead generation tool, a way to nurture longer-term leads, the basis for a presentation, etc.

Plus, it can become the precursor for your printed book. I know you've wanted to write something for a while. Doing an e-book first could be a logical stepping-

stone, and it could make the process of writing the actual book easier. (Plus, I know of a great writer who could help you do this ;)

Just a thought. Hope you guys are doing well.

*Cheers,
-Ed*

Technique #6: Spread the Word About a New Service Offering

I'm surprised at how few solo practitioners reach out to their prospects and clients individually every time they have a new service offering.

Believe me, clients aren't surfing our websites every month to see what's new on our end. You have to tell them—and you have to tell them several times over the course of a few months. Why? Because they're already getting hit left and right with marketing messages and new information. So it takes repeated effort to get their attention.

Now, the key to spreading the word about this new service effectively is to contact each client personally and position the new service in a way that's relevant to them and their business, and in a way that sparks ideas on how they can take advantage of your expertise.

That's something you RARELY see freelancers do. But it's absolutely the BEST way to market a new service.

Let me explain what I mean by giving you an email script example that illustrates my point...

SUBJECT LINE: *Though this would work well for you*

Hi Darcy,

Not sure if I had mentioned this in our recent conversations, but I'm now writing white papers.

I had an idea on a topic that could be very effective for you guys, in terms of generating more and better-quality leads. It has to do with the recent surge of iPad adoption in construction jobsites.

Anyway, you had mentioned a few months ago that you were looking for better ways to generate leads, and I think this could be a winner for you. Let me know if you'd like to discuss this idea further.

Thanks!
-Ed

Notice how personalized and relevant this message is. Also notice how tied it nicely to my client's challenges and objectives. I can do that because I know them well and have a good relationship with them. So that allows me to craft a very personalized message that hits the target.

Compare that email to the common approach many people use...

"Hey, Darcy. Did you know that I'm now writing white papers? Do you happen to have any needs in that area?"

Or compare it to the generic announcement in your newsletter. Or the "I have a new service" postcard. See the difference?

Don't get me wrong, those techniques work. But not nearly as well as this direct approach.

Technique #7: The "Loss Leader" Strategy

Another idea is to consider adding one or two "loss leader" services to your services roster. By loss leader I mean entry-level services that are relatively low-cost and low-risk for the client.

So here's how I got the idea for this...

A few years ago, a colleague of mine was having difficulty landing enough website copywriting projects to hit her income goals. Her average project was \$7,500+, not necessarily a low-priced offering. And of course, with high price comes a perception of higher risk on the client's part. If the copy doesn't quite cut it, they've just spent \$7,500 that didn't yield the return they expected.

So in order to lower clients' perceived risk of hiring her at that level, she began offering a \$500 website "copy audits."

This new audit service included a thorough evaluation of the website structure, copy, message, search-engine optimization and usability, and it included a full page of recommended changes or adjustments.

She then detailed her findings and recommendations in a very attractive report that was easy to read and understand.

Clients loved it. And as a result, she often got hired to implement the changes—sometimes even to rewrite all the copy on the website.

So the idea here is to take a closer look at your services and see where you can increase the chances of getting hired by offering a smaller or less-comprehensive service that will give clients a sampling of your expertise and how you work.

Keep the fee for this service low enough for the right clients to take you up on it. Look at it as a cost of attracting good clients. And remind yourself that a certain percentage of those who take you up on it will end up graduating to bigger and more profitable services.

How could you use warm email prospecting to generate interest in a loss-leader service like this?

Here's an example...

SUBJECT LINE: Low-cost way to improve your website

Hi Deb,

I know we've talked in the past about revamping your website. But I also know that cost is an issue.

So I wanted to run an idea by you that I think will give you a lot of what you need for a fraction of the fee we discussed:

My new website audit service.

This package includes a thorough evaluation of the website structure, copy, message, search-engine optimization and usability — plus a full page of recommended changes or adjustments.

You get all my detailed findings and recommendations in a very attractive report that is easy to read and understand.

All this for just \$500.

Let me know if this sounds like something you'd like to discuss further.

Thanks!

-Ed

A few key points here:

- The purpose of this email is to "fish" for interest. You're NOT trying to sell the client on the project. Just trying to determine interest.
- If she replies with any level of interest, you can then take the conversation to the phone, which is where you can really sell this idea.

- Just like with the previous few techniques we've discussed, it's important to make your message relevant and personalized. In this case, I tied my offer to an initiative or objective I knew was important to this particular client.

Technique #8: "Chasing the Mover"

This technique is a combination of a few of the strategies I've already discussed in this program. I call it the "Chasing the Mover" technique because it involves reaching out to someone you've worked with in the past who's now moved on to another organization.

The technique is very simple. All you have to do is look at your client contact list, searching for names of individuals who are no longer there. Then, use LinkedIn to see where they're working now, and send them an email with an idea (and reminding them of what you do and your value) to see if it's worth reconnecting.

So here's an example...

SUBJECT LINE: *Saw that you're now at Briscoe*

Hi Marcie,

I just came across your name this morning and saw that you're now at Briscoe. Great to hear! Hope all is well with you and your family.

Since we worked together at ABC Co., I've worked on a number of animated illustration projects for other training companies, including Fillmore, Ameritraining, KnowledgeWorx and others.

Here are some samples of that work: [URL]

Would it make sense to reconnect to see if I can help you at Briscoe?

Thanks!

-Ed

Key points:

- You want to keep this to people you've actually worked with AND were happy with your work
- Keep it brief. Don't try to warm them up too much in the beginning. Get to the point as quickly as possible
- Remind them of your expertise (they may have forgotten) and provide some great samples
- Offer to reconnect

Also, don't limit your outreach to the people who hired you in previous companies. Contact others you may have worked directly with in those projects.

For instance, when I was logged into LinkedIn the other day, I got one of those "people you may know..." messages that show you a list of people you're not currently connected with but may actually know (LinkedIn is fairly accurate with this).

One of these recommendations was for a gentleman I worked with a few years back with one of my clients. He wasn't the person who hired me, but he's the one I worked with the most on a particular white paper project. That's because he was the subject matter expert who provided me with the most information for that white paper.

Anyway, I knew he had left this company, but I saw in LinkedIn that he's now at another company that's NOT a client of mine—a company I'd like to work with someday. I haven't contacted him yet, but I may very well reach out to him sometime this year with an email like the one I just showed you. He and I worked very well together, and he really liked the work I produced for this client. So I think I have a good chance of at least reconnecting and striking a conversation with him.

In fact, that's another way to use this particular technique. You don't have to start the process with your client contact list. You could just go to LinkedIn and go through all your contacts, one by one, to see who's working where—and if it would make sense to contact some of these folks based on who they are and where they're working today.

Plenty of Hidden Opportunities

I hope this lesson has given you some ideas on how you can use simple, short and personalized emails to reach out to current and past clients.

As you can see, there are plenty of ways to unearth hidden opportunities with the people and organizations that already know you and trust you.

The key, however, is to do it in creative ways—and to focus first on adding value to the client. Client-focused ideas, when delivered confidently and professionally—and backed with smart justification—will go a long way to helping you land profitable work... often when you need it most!