



Warm Email Prospecting for Freelancers

Define Your Value Statements

Welcome to Module 1! If you haven't yet listened to the Introduction, I encourage you to do so. Much of that material may simply be a review for you at this point, but I think it's important that you really understand my thinking behind this email prospecting approach and why I truly believe this the best way to find prospects fast and cost-effectively—and why I think cold calling is NOT one of the best long-term prospecting approaches out there for freelancers.

In this module we're going to lay the groundwork for crafting highly effective prospecting email messages that get read and get response. Now, I have to warn you—it will be a couple of modules before we get to the really juicy stuff. The actual writing and sending of email messages.

I know you're probably anxious to get to that part. But I can't overemphasize the importance of adequate and thorough preparation. As tempting as it may be to send out an email blast to 37,000 prospects, that's exactly the sort of thing that gets freelancers into trouble. Plus, it's very ineffective. So there's really no point.

Let's first talk about positioning and messaging and why it's so important to get this nailed down before you craft any prospecting emails. The crazy-busy prospects of today have a very, very short attention span. Essentially, you have about 10 seconds to capture their attention in an email (if you're lucky!). Which means that if you don't have your message down pat—or if it's sloppy and wordy—you'll run a high risk of losing them quickly and getting your email deleted.

So when I talk about positioning, I'm talking about defining the following:

- What you do
- For whom
- Why you're different
- What relevant value you bring to the table
- And/Or... whom you've worked for that's worth mentioning.

You'll find a worksheet in this module that will walk you through this process and includes spaces for your answers. We'll actually run through this together now, so if you haven't already printed that worksheet, go ahead and pause this video, print out the worksheet and come back to this once you have it in front of you.

I really encourage you to take the time to go through these questions with me. It will make a big difference in the results you get from this program. So don't think it's busy work or some sort of mindless exercise. It's very important.

OK, so let's run through this together...

- **What type of work do you do (what type of work, or what types of services).** And out of all those services, what one, two or three services are you really known for among your clients? So, when clients think of you, what types of services do they typically think about?

-Example-:

I write all kinds of copy and content for business-to-business marketers. Everything from white papers to case studies, web copy, articles, lead generation emails, direct mail. You name it. But what I'm best known for is white papers, case studies, and bylined articles.

By the way, this is probably a good time to make the distinction between "target market" and "niche" or "specialty." A target market is a defined group of prospects you often go after: hospitals, food companies, heavy equipment manufacturers, authors, local specialty retailers. But a "niche" or "specialty" is more about what you're known for. So yes, I write white papers to case studies, web copy, lead generation emails, brochures and direct mail. But what I'm REALLY known for is white papers, case studies, and bylined articles.

- Next, **what types of people or organizations do you typically do this work for?** (In other words, what's your target market? What type of organizations do you typically work with?)

-Example:

I typically work for software companies. And specifically enterprise software companies. So here again, this is more about target market and not so much about “niche” or “specialty” or the work you're best known for, which is what you defined in the question above.

- **Why (or how) are you're different?** For your target market or markets, what makes you a better choice than most of your competitors?

-Example:

I could have gone in a few different directions here, but when I was starting out and didn't really have much of a track record as a freelance copywriter, I leveraged my work background. Specifically, my software sales background, experience and track record. And basically, I would talk about how I brought my street-level sales experience to bear in my marketing writing. And how I approached copywriting from the viewpoint of the people who would benefit from it the most—the sales team. That made me very different from many of the other writers out there who may have had more experience writing, but little to no experience out there in the trenches doing real face-to-face selling.

-Also, keep in mind that the idea here is not necessarily to figure out why you're different from EVERYONE. That's a common mistake. Your goal is to describe what makes you different from MOST.

- **What value do you bring to the table, and how can you express that in a way that means something to your prospect?**

-Example:

There are a couple of ways you can approach this. If you work in a profession where you can measure results fairly easily—and where delivering tangible and measurable results is important or would make a real difference in your prospecting efforts—then I would encourage you to dig up those metrics and incorporate them into a value statement. So, for example, say you're a freelance accountant. You could say that you typically help clients save an average of 12% to 17% in tax liability by uncovering hidden deduction opportunities that are completely legitimate and legal.

The other approach will be more appropriate if the kind of value you deliver is harder to measure. And it basically involves using softer benefits or value statements. For instance, maybe you're a web designer. And you know from client feedback that your web design is of such high quality that your clients are constantly talking about how much better their website is converting. Or how many more comments they get from prospects and customers about how great the site looks. Or how much easier it is for their salespeople to close business because the website now makes the company look like a very established and financially sound company. Notice that none of these statements have metrics in them. It's all anecdotal information. But it can be very powerful. And the more detailed it is, the better.

- Next, **whom have you worked for that may be worth mentioning?** You may not have a lot in the way of documented metrics. Or you may not have much in the way of anecdotal results. But if you've worked for one, two or more organizations that would be immediately recognizable to prospects in your target market, that's pure gold! Everything else being equal, it gives you immediate credibility. Which is a big reason, by the way, to focus many of your efforts in a specific target market, even if that market is fairly broad (such as manufacturers in general). Doing so allows you to leverage these client names and get more mileage out of them.

So think back to organizations you've worked with in the past and list as many as you can think of. Don't judge too much at this point. We're not necessarily looking for household names right now (like GE, Microsoft and Humana). We're merely creating a list we can refer to again later and pick names that may be appropriate based on whom we're going after.

OK, so at this point you should have answers to all of the question above and your mind might even be racing already. If it is, that's great. And if it's not, don't worry. We're now going to start connecting the dots.

Developing Your Value Statements

In this next step, you're going to take the answers to your questions above and start creating one or more "value statements." A value statement is basically a statement that describes what you do, for whom, why you're different, what value you deliver and whom you've worked for.

Not all of these elements HAVE to be in place in order to have a strong value statement. But for now, your goal is to incorporate as many of these elements as you can into one or more value statements. Let me give you some examples...

I help enterprise software companies write white papers and case studies that make it easier for salespeople to close more business. I'm a 12-year software sales veteran, so I bring a unique results perspective to the table. I've worked with companies like IBM, SAP, Salesforce.com and Cognos.

So let's look at the elements I incorporated into this value statement...

- What you do – yes
- For whom – yes
- Why you're different – yes
- What relevant value you bring to the table – somewhat
- And/Or... whom you've worked for that's worth mentioning - yes

As you can see, it's sometimes hard to fit in all of these elements. That's why I suggest you create several statements and variations on those statements.

For instance...

I help enterprise software companies write white papers and case studies that make it easier for salespeople to close more business. One of my clients, a marketing director at IBM, has publicly stated that I'm an indispensable member of her team and can pick up ideas and strategies faster than any outside expert she's ever worked with.

- What you do – yes
- For whom – yes
- Why you're different – somewhat
- What relevant value you bring to the table – yes (soft)
- And/Or... whom you've worked for that's worth mentioning - yes

I'm a seasoned designer who works with food and beverage companies to create new and fresh packaging designs that truly get noticed. My designs have won a number of prestigious awards, and I've worked with very successful small and regional producers all the way to global brands such as Stonyfield Farms, Odwalla and Horizon Dairy Farms.

- What you do – yes
- For whom – yes
- Why you're different – yes (awards and experience)
- What relevant value you bring to the table – somewhat
- And/Or... whom you've worked for that's worth mentioning - yes

Here's another variation...

I'm a seasoned designer who works with food and beverage companies to create new and fresh packaging designs that truly get noticed. I've worked in food and beverage marketing for more than 27 years and my designs have won a number of prestigious awards.

- What you do – yes
- For whom – yes
- Why you're different – yes (awards and experience)
- What relevant value you bring to the table – somewhat (gets noticed...)
- And/Or... whom you've worked for that's worth mentioning - no

I'm a videographer who works for businesses in the Atlanta area to help them tell their story more effectively and through a more engaging format. Recently I helped a local specialty manufacturer create a demo video that increased sales by more than 23% in less than two months.

- What you do – yes
- For whom – yes
- Why you're different – somewhat
- What relevant value you bring to the table – absolutely
- And/Or... whom you've worked for that's worth mentioning – no

OK, so what if you're a new or budding freelancer and you have few or NO clients? What do you do then? Will this strategy even work?

You bet it will. But it will require you to dig deep into your background, work experience, skills, attributes and aptitudes. Let's look at each element of the value statement so you can see what I mean...

- **What you do** – Even if you're new or haven't even gotten started, you have describe what type of work you do or what type of results you create (or will create) for clients. That never changes. That's something you have to do regardless.
- **For whom** – Even if you prefer to remain a generalist (and there's nothing wrong with that), email prospecting the way I'm going to show you in this program requires that you define a target market. You can have MANY target markets. But as far as the prospect is concerned, she doesn't care about that. The message that's going to resonate with her the most is when you tell her that you work with X type of organizations. She doesn't need to know that you also work for 5 or 6 other types of companies or industries—or that you'll pretty much work with any type of organization. In the email, she'll want to know that you work with organizations like hers. And by the way, there's nothing wrong with saying "I work with X type of organizations,"

even if you haven't yet. Your intention is to work with these types of organizations. You're capable of doing that. That's what matters.

- **Why you're different** – Here's where you're going to need to get creative. Now, don't misunderstand me. I'm not asking you to lie. You do NOT want to do that. But you're going to need to look at your background, work experience, skills, attributes and aptitudes and determine what makes you different. You don't need to talk about your FREELANCE track record. You need to focus on your overall track record, period. In other words, leveraging your work background and experience.
 - **Example** - accountant and corporate controller—experience with accounting software (using, implementing, helping customize, train, etc.). Or someone with, say, 10 years' experience working at a YMCA as a purchasing manager. Well, 10 years at the YMCA taught you all about that organization, the inner workings, the structure, how decisions are made, etc. Many possibilities here, depending on what you're looking to do. As a consultant, you could help companies get “break into” the Y as an account. Or help them navigate the field. Or as a copywriter, you could help gyms create better marketing campaigns. You have to take some time to think through your skills, experience and knowledge and brainstorm all the possibilities and credibility elements. Trust me, I've worked with dozens of budding freelancers on this and there is ALWAYS a way to make you stand out, even if you still have zero experience freelancing.
- **What relevant value you bring to the table** – Here again, you need to look at your overall work track record. And if you don't have actual metrics, don't worry. And if the only metrics or results or value you have are with a previous employer, as long as your agreement with that employer doesn't prevent you from divulging that results information, I would use that. There's no need, in my mind, to specify that those results were results you achieved while you were employed. After all, whether you knew it or not, you were always a free agent to begin with. You just had a salary and an employment contract!
- Finally, **whom you've worked for that's worth mentioning** – Again, if you can, use your previous employer's names. Or start doing some pro-bono work to get the samples, client names and track record!