



Warm Email Prospecting for Freelancers

Describe Your Ideal Client Profile

In this module we're going to talk about creating a very targeted list of high-probability prospects. Believe it or not, your list is the most important variable in successful email prospecting. You could have the best message in the world. But if you send it out to poorly targeted prospects, you're going to get very poor results.

Unfortunately, list-building is one of those tasks that most people approach haphazardly, which is a big mistake. You really want to put some serious thought into building your list. And the prospects that end up making it to your list must make sense. There has to be a really good reason for them being there.

Now, there are two aspects of building a targeted list. One is to find the right *organizations*. The other is finding the right *individuals* within that organization and their contact information—including, of course, their email address.

We're going to cover both of these aspects of list-building in this module. But before we do that, it's important to first define your ideal client profile—or ICP for short.

Your Ideal Client Profile (ICP)

One of the most important secrets to having great clients, enjoying your work and earning a higher income is to get clear about the type of client that's best suited for you. Because once you know exactly who you're looking for, everything else can fall into place.

For one, you'll be able to build a targeted list of prospects that makes sense for you and that increases your chances of success. This allows you to spend more time engaging with prospects who are good fit for you and less time with those who would be more trouble than they're worth or who aren't really willing to pay you what you're worth.

You'll also be able to do more fulfilling/enjoyable work that **adds great value** to your clients. And you'll **earn more** as you focus on your sweet spot—work you both enjoy **and** work that generates the most income per hour worked. Finally, doing great work for clients who really appreciate you almost always leads to more and better referrals and word of mouth.

But all this starts by being very clear about who your ideal client is, whether you've worked for such a person or organization, or whether it's a fictitious pie-in-the-sky persona you've never worked for but would love to some day.

So let me start this by giving you a couple of example of ideal client profiles...

In my case, the ideal client is a medium-size-to-large software company. My primary contact has a significant amount of decision-making ability. She (or he) can make copy decisions on her own without resorting to a review committee. She also knows what she's looking for, and she consistently communicates her needs and requirements. Furthermore, she values me as a key member of her team, so my fees are not an issue. She sees them for what they are: fair and reasonable, especially considering the unique perspective I bring to the table as an experienced marketer and sales professional (I spent 12 years in corporate sales). Finally, my ideal client has a steady stream of work for me. She doesn't come to me with just a one-time need. Once she sees the quality of my work and the results I help produce, she continues to send work my way.

Here's another sample ideal client profile to give you an idea of the level of detail you want to strive for. This one is for a freelance business manager:

My ideal client is savvy and successful female Internet marketer. She's either running an established business or is in the process building one. And if she's in "building" mode, she has a very clear vision of what she's going after. She's goal-oriented and driven. She's passionate and authentic—and it's easy to see that in her writing, podcasts, videos and other communications. This individual has a very positive view of business managers and what they do. In fact, she sees me as a critical part of her business—a trusted partner. She may not know or understand everything I can bring to the table, but she's very open to ideas on how I can help her achieve her goals. She's willing to let me take on duties she may not have thought about initially. I help her with social media (Twitter and Facebook specifically). I also handle all of her administrative duties, schedule appointments, manage her shopping cart, manage her newsletter and blog...even handle some of her email. Because she truly values my skills, involvement and deep level of commitment to her business, my fees are not an issue. She's happy to pay my rates. And when the time comes to increase those rates, she's very understanding and supportive. Best of all, she's an excellent source of referrals for me. She sends quality prospects my way throughout the year, many of which turn into excellent clients.

Notice the level of detail in this profile. Again, the more detail, the better. Let's go through some of the main elements that were present in these profile examples:

- Job title or position
- Gender
- Industry or industries
- Size of company/organization
- Important business attributes (e.g., company size, types of products/services sold, markets served, business performance)
- Type of work/niche/specialization
- Their view/opinion of using freelance professionals (how they think of you and the value you deliver)
- Level of business sophistication
- Price sensitivity
- Type of projects he/she needs help with
- Amount of work they need help with (workload and frequency)
- Level of involvement in the business (how strategic or tactical a resource U R)

OK, let's run through an exercise to help you better identify **your own** ideal client profile. You'll want to refer to the worksheet included in this module. So if you don't already have it in front of you, go ahead and pause the video and we'll go through this together.

Now, before we get started, let me just give you a glimpse into where we're going with this, because I know some of you might be wondering why you're even supposed to know this stuff now—or how you'll get this information from a prospect when you're prospecting with email.

First, you don't have to have just ONE ideal client profile. You could end up with 2 or 3. And as you'll soon see, each ideal client profile should yield you one list (sometimes more, depending on how narrow you want to go). But anything too far beyond that is overkill. For this exercise, try to focus on your primary or favorite client profile.

Also, some of these questions will come in very handy as you're building your list. The others will be much more valuable to you once you've started some dialogue with a prospect and you're trying to determine whether or not they or the project they're discussing with you will really be a good fit for you. So hang tight. Go through this exercise now. I'm telling you, it will really pay off.

As we run through these questions, think about your current clients. Also, think about great clients you've maybe had in the past. And if the question we're discussing doesn't really conjure up a specific client you've worked with in the past or are working with now, visualize the perfect scenario—and don't hold back! This is your time to dream and imagine. So don't set any limitations here.

Now, again, **some of these questions will come in very handy as you're building your list.** The others will be much more valuable to you once you've started some dialogue with a prospect and you're trying to determine whether or not they or the project they're discussing with you will really be a good fit for you. So make sure to save this completed worksheet and refer to it later in your sales process, when you're qualifying prospects who respond to your emails.

Finally, at the end of the worksheet, take the answers to your questions and write out a detailed ideal client profile. Refer back to the examples I gave you earlier, if you need to. And go ahead and pause the video and take a few minutes to do this—don't rush through it.

OK, welcome back. Before we close this part of the module, I want to emphasize that having a clear picture of your ideal client doesn't mean that once you get a response to one of your emails, you start engaging in some dialogue, and you realize this person or organization doesn't fit your ideal profile exactly... that doesn't mean you turn them down. Assuming a prospect has at least met a minimum threshold, you also consider a number of important factors. These can include the following:

- The added prestige to be gained from working with this client (if any)
- The desirability of the work they need help with
- Where you currently are in your VA career
- How much capacity you currently have
- Their expected turnaround time on projects (if applicable)
- The perceived difficulty of working with the client
- Whether or not the client is willing to pay your rates
- The client's apparent ability to pay on time
- How difficult it may be to secure the business
- How badly you need the work

OK, so that's it for your ideal client profile. In the next lesson, I'm going to show you how to find the right companies and organizations for your list. I'll see you there.