



Warm Email Prospecting for Freelancers

Create a Targeted List

The first step in building a high-quality, targeted list is to focus on organizations and industries where you would have the highest probability of success—either because of your background, experience, skills, client roster, specialized knowledge, and location, or because of current changes or growth in that industry.

Next, focus on the job titles of people who tend to hire freelancers in your field or who, with the right message, would consider doing so.

So, essentially, this process of list building is about three key things:

1. Identifying organizations you want to go after
2. Identifying specific individuals within those organizations you want to send a warm email pitch to, and...
3. Finding the email addresses for these specific individuals you've identified

This is why it's important to have your ideal client profile. Because without it, it's difficult to do a good job with the first two items on that list: identifying the best organization and the best individuals to go after.

By the way, you don't have to create just one list. You can, in fact, create a few different lists, each based on a set of specific criteria. In fact, if you have more than one ideal client profile, you should probably create one list for each profile. And in some cases, you can even create two or three lists out of one ideal client profile alone.

For instance, you can create a general list of midsize businesses in your area only (location-based), another of companies in an industry you have significant experience in (experience-based), and one that's made up of companies in a number of industries that market products to a target market you know a lot about (knowledge-based).

In terms of the size of your list, that's really up to you. And we'll talk about some execution strategies later on in this program, where we'll discuss how many emails to send out every week and so on. But for now, I would say that starting out 25 to 50 names is enough to get started.

Consider this your "starter list." It's a list you'll use to get going with, and one you'll continually add names to. So don't worry too much about the size of the list for now. Plus, as you'll see throughout this program, one of the keys to success with email prospecting is to focus more on quality, relevance and personalization than on quantity.

OK, so where do you find prospects for your list? Although you may be tempted to rent or buy a list from a list provider such as InfoUSA, Hoovers, or OneSource, the objective here is not efficiency and volume; rather, it's to create the most responsive list possible. That's tough to do if you're grabbing names blindly or trying to quickly assemble a huge list. Instead, compile your list manually, using a variety of high-quality sources.

Over the next hour in this lesson, my colleagues Pete Savage, Steve Slaunwhite and I are going to show you some of the best sources to go to for company names and the names of individuals you want to contact.

The material that follows came from a teleseminar we did recently on compiling a top-notch list. So that makes this a fairly long lesson—in fact, the longest one of this program.

As you go through it, you'll notice that we point out great sources for both organizations AND individuals and their contact information. However, most of the sources we point out are for finding the names of **organizations** that may be aligned with your ideal client profile.

In the next lesson, we'll dive *much* deeper into finding **people's** names, their titles and their email addresses. So hang tight. We'll get into some real neat research strategies coming up.

Steve Slaunwhite: One of the most misunderstood and intimidating aspects of promoting your solo business is assembling a list of good prospects -prospects who are likely to be interested in the type of services you provide.

Where do you find the names of these people? Should you buy a list or rent a list? Should you put something together on your own with information you find from a variety of sources? Exactly where do you start?

These are all great questions because the quality of your prospect list impacts everything. If you have a high-quality prospect list, you dramatically increase your chances of getting the clients, the projects, the income and especially the lifestyle you want as a freelancer or solo professional.

But—and this is a big but—if you don't have a top-notch prospect list, achieving that ideal or even getting your business off the ground at all, is a lot tougher to do.

What you're going to be learning over the next hour is how to compile a list of prospects that are likely to be interested in the services you offer.

Joining me today to help explain these 12 strategies to you are my colleagues from www.TheWealthyFreelancer.com, Ed Gandia and Pete Savage.

Where do you start this process of putting together a top-notch prospect list?

Ed: I think there are a couple of questions that you need to ask yourself first.

The first one is to give some thought to the actual job titles of the individuals you should be going after. Specifically, I would be focusing my list on the job titles of people who tend to hire freelancers in my field, or at least those job titles who, with the right message, would consider hiring someone in my field. The first thing is to give some thought to the specific job titles you're going to go after.

The second big question is really thinking about organizations and industries where you would have the highest probability of success. By that I mean either because of your background, your experience, your skills, your client roster, your specialized knowledge and where you're located, or just because of the current changes or growth in that particular industry.

Give that some thought: 1) the specific job titles and 2) organizations and industries where you think you have the highest probability of success.

EXAMPLE

Just to give you an example, in my case, the best prospect lists are marketing managers in high-performing mid-size software companies, specifically software companies that market in-demand software systems to hot or growing industries.

That's kind of a mouthful, but notice how specific I am with this criteria:

- I've identified the most receptive job title, which would be marketing managers in my case.
- I've also named the industry I prefer to focus on, which is software.
- Also, the fact that the company must be doing well financially is important to me.
- The type of software products they must market are actually systems that are in high demand, so I'm very specific there.
- Then there are the types of customers they go after, which, in my case, are organizations in hot or growing industries.

You don't have to get that specific and you don't have to create one list. You can create several lists, some based on location, some based on areas where you have a lot of experience, or some where you really know a lot about the target market that your prospects are targeting.

Let's say that you're an accountant and you know a lot about accounting, of course. You could target, say, accounting software companies. Or if you practice law right now or if you've practiced law in the past, anything legal could be a high-probability area for you.

Just make sure to target those areas and create separate lists if that makes sense to do so in your case.

Steve: So you focus on the job titles of the people who are likely to hire your particular type of freelance service and the types of organizations and industries that have the highest probability of hiring your type of services.

It's interesting, Ed. I met a freelance photographer last week who specializes in photography for major events and conferences. The job titles that he would go after would probably be event planners and the organizations would be obviously organizations that put on these large conferences. That's a good example of the way he would probably target his market and build his list.

Also, you can create more than one list. You can create a list of local businesses who may be interested in your services and perhaps a list of key companies in a niche industry across the country who may be interested in your services as well. So you can create more than one list.

Just a quick follow-up question, Ed.

Should you buy a list or rent a list, or should you compile a list on your own?

Ed: There's no doubt in my mind that you should compile one on your own. Just to give you an example, I just heard from a freelancer a couple of weeks ago who recently bought a list and spent a lot of money mailing to that list. More than half of it was inaccurate. A lot of that, we suspect, had to do with the recent layoffs. There are inaccuracies and they go out-of-date very quickly.

Costs are another factor. **You don't need thousands of names to do well with any kind of marketing effort if you do it right.** It's really not worth buying or renting, in my opinion.

Steve: According to statistics from the U.S. Postal Service, 18% of business addresses change every year. Those are just the businesses. Can you imagine how many contact names in businesses change every year?

If a company is putting together a mailing list that they're going to sell, they probably check it once a year, so the chances it's going to be 10%, 20% or 30% out-of-date are very, very high. So you're taking a risk with mailing lists and renting a list. If you're a huge, big-time marketer, of course you can afford that risk. But for freelancers like us, it's not worth the risk.

How many prospects do you actually need on your prospect list? Do you need 10 names or 10,000 names?

Pete: That's a good question that always comes up. It depends on one thing, and that is your income goals. **The more aggressive your goals are in terms of your income level, the larger the list you need.**

Ed is correct when he says you don't need thousands of names. A good number to shoot for is 150 to 200 total names. That's a good rule of thumb. Start there and concentrate on quality and repeated effort over the course of a year or longer. What I mean when I say "repeated effort" is don't go to the trouble of creating a great list using all these strategies and then only send them one sales letter, for example.

There are all kinds of stats to prove the fact that new prospects need exposure to you multiple times—four, five, six or seven times—before they express an interest in your services. That's just a marketing fact. It's a numbers game.

If you have 150 names, don't contact them once and then go out and try to build a new list if you don't get immediate results. Keep at it with different ways to touch on them.

Another idea here in terms of follow-up and multiple touches is to essentially create two lists. What I mean by that is you take your main list of 150 names, let's say, and you identify on this list your top 10 or your top 15 names of prospects which would be your dream clients D your top 10. These are the ones you'll approach in a more focused fashion and a more customized fashion.

These 10 or 15 companies, you would visit their websites frequently and you could follow them in the media. Learn more about their business and get more personal in your follow-up by sending a physical article that you've clipped from a magazine that's relevant and include a personal note.

Maybe you'll actually include phone follow-up with these 15 people, your dream clients. That gets rid of a lot of the anxiety around calling, which a lot of people have. You might not want to call 150 people after you send a sales letter as follow-up. That's totally understandable. You don't have to. Just limit your calls to this dream list.

I would say don't just randomly pick this dream list, of course. You should know that, "If I get in the door with this company, based on what I know about the company, they'd turn into a great client, I think."

Steve: In summary, you need about 150 to 200 names, obviously quality names, not just any names.

Another great idea, and I love this idea, Pete, is to create a dream list of perhaps the top 10 potential clients you want to go after, and then invest some serious time in building your relationships with those prospects and turning those prospects into clients.

Obviously, if you can build your business on a dream list of clients, what an amazing business you would have.

Pete: Yes, what more do you want?

Steve: Yes, what more do you want? You've got your favorite clients.

What's the best way to record and maintain this list? You just developed a list of 100 or 150 names. How do you keep track of these names and contacts?

Ed: Keep it simple - a simple spreadsheet with column labels for the person's last name, first name, job title, company, street address, city, state, country and zip, the typical stuff. Add the phone number and email address if you have them.

I would also add a "source" column so you know where you got the name. That can help you a lot when you're trying to identify where your responses are coming from and which prospects seem to really respond to your message. You can just very quickly determine if there are some sources that did better for you than others did.

Steve: So create a simple spreadsheet on your computer and record all the appropriate contact information.

You made a very important point, Ed, to track where you're getting these prospect names so you know which sources are your goldmine sources for good prospect information.

Is there ever a reason to move into a more sophisticated contact management system like ACT! or Salesforce.com or some of this other contact management software?

Ed: Yes, possibly. I think once your business has grown to a certain level and you're generating income, good tracking follow-up with these prospects is becoming a little more difficult.

At first, I wouldn't even bother. Even if your business is already established, learn how to do this with a spreadsheet. Get good at that first, and then consider something like that. I see that a lot of people get stuck and they don't take any action because, "Wait a minute. I have to look at a contact management system first and I don't have time for that." The next thing you know, six months have passed. Because of that, they haven't even done anything. So do the tracking that's the simplest and is going to get you to take action the fastest.

Steve: That's great advice. Let's start getting down to some specifics.

Where do you go to find these quality prospect names?

Pete: Let's get into the 12 strategies.

The problem here is not necessarily finding names. The biggest problem is that there are too many names out there. The key to success with building a top-notch list is to go in the most efficient direction and choose the best sources possible.

Let's talk about list building. We're going to do it primarily using manual labor, if you will, for the most part, like Ed mentioned. It takes longer, it takes more effort, but because you're on this call, you're going to know how to do it efficiently by using these 12 strategies.

Here's where you start:

Strategy # 1 : Go deeper with your existing clients

Go deeper with existing clients. That's the best place to look. If you already have an existing freelance business, don't overlook your existing clients as a source of leads. It sounds so obvious and people on the call might be saying, "Yes, I've heard that before," but ask yourself: how often have you done this?

It has been my experience that the vast majority of freelancers don't actually execute on this idea and dig deep within their clients for more business. I'm talking here about asking for internal referrals from

your clients, asking your client, "Who else in your company might be interested in my photography services or my project management services or my auditing services?" or whatever it is you do. Get into the habit of asking your clients for the names of peers and colleagues who could also benefit from your services.

As you're doing this within your client relationship, make sure you let your clients know the breadth of the services you offer. Don't just assume that they've been to your website and they know your list of services.

If you're a videographer, for example, tell your clients, "I know that I've produced some corporate training videos for you, but did you know I also do marketing videos? I also have a service where I film on location. I can come out and film seminars and events for you."

You have to bring this to people's attention. Too often, freelancers lose projects to competitors because their own clients are unaware of the breadth of services that they offer.

This is what you're going for here. You want to start to cultivate a list of names of other people within an organization whom you're already doing business with that would like to know about your services and that can offer you more business.

Steve: You make a very important point there, Pete. I found that in my own business quite a bit.

Let's say you're a freelance writer and you start working with a client at a big company like 3M. There are 50 different departments at 3M and each department has a marketing manager. If you cultivate that particular client that you're working with and learn about these other marketing managers and get referrals, you can build a very powerful prospect list of potential clients in that one company alone.

Pete: Yes, you definitely can. Often if the company is big enough—and you don't have to make your career working for big companies—but like you said, Steve, many, many people will fill the same role. There could be 10 marketing managers even in the same department for some large companies. It's just a matter of bringing it to their attention saying, "Who else do you know that I can help?" Sometimes you'll get a handful of names.

Steve: You're absolutely right.

Strategy # 2: Tap your network

Strategy #2 is one that a lot of people overlook - tapping your current network. This is going outside of your clients. I think that after going to existing clients, this is the next best place to start.

What typically happens is we think, "I really don't know a lot of people who work for companies that use what I do." You can't do that. You have to remember that the people in your personal and professional networks may not be direct prospects for you, but they probably know someone in a different company or organization who could be a great prospect.

By spreading the word, I'm talking about doing two things. One of them could be emailing your contact list with the information saying, "Here's what I'm doing. I'm looking for new clients. This is why I'm different. These are the services I offer. Do you know of anyone?"

Then there's calling people individually. One thing I did when I started my freelance business was schedule lunches every couple of weeks with different people whom I knew. Even though I knew that some of them weren't direct prospects for me, I knew that there was a chance they could refer me to someone. Just by telling them what I was looking to do and why and what services I was offering, spreading the word that way actually landed me a couple of very large clients. One of them is still a big client of mine five years later.

Most of these lunches didn't really pay off directly, but one or two gave me huge payoff. So don't overlook the people in both your personal and professional networks.

Specifically, let me give you some areas to look:

- Of course, there are friends, some of your spouse's friends, your neighbors, their employers, businesses or their contacts.
- Fellow church members, parents from your children's school, any other social group and their employers, businesses and professional contacts as well.
- A lot of people move around right now, so you may have been doing work there, but something stopped. Well, now one of your contacts is at a different company. You may as well contact them. They could probably use you.
- Anyone who has ever inquired into your services before - who has ever called you, emailed you, or you've met at a networking event. These are people you can reach out to again.
- Anyone who has subscribed to your newsletter or downloaded anything from your website. That's another obvious one. So go back to that file.
- Anyone you know is a potential referral source, specifically other freelancers in your field or freelancers who offer complementary services; maybe a printer you've worked with in the past who does business with companies that may be in your target market.

Think beyond your direct contacts, the people you know the best. Yes, start there, but go way beyond that and create a master list and start contacting these people.

Steve: That's an excellent idea. I think most people if they were to sit down and make a list of the amount of people they know in their personal network and their professional network and their community networks, they'd be surprised at how long that list is.

I find in general that people and professionals are happy to refer you if they only find out who you are and what you do. So spreading the word is an excellent strategy for building a really quality prospect list and one that I think a lot of people miss out on.
Give us another source of prospects' names, Pete.

Strategy # 3: Don't forget about your current and previous employers

Strategy # 3 is your current or your previous employer. Everyone on the call will either have a current or a previous employer for the most part. It's another often overlooked strategy.

If you're still employed, the company that you're working for right now may be worth keeping in mind and staying in touch with once you go out on your own. If you're thinking of making the leap into freelancing and you still have an employer, whenever possible try to leave on very good terms.

Then when you're out on your own, contact your other previous employers. Let them know what you're doing. Ask your contacts there if they can put you in touch with the right individual.

Really think of everyone that you've had a connection with by way of your current or past employers and reach out to them.

Strategy # 4: Previous employers' competitors

Along the same lines are previous employers' competitors.

You really can't lose here. If your previous employers aren't interested or able to hire you as a freelancer, you might want to consider pursuing some of their competitors, especially if your knowledge or your experience in your field is really going to come into play in the types of services that you're offering.

Make sure when you're pitching your services not to bury those experiences and skill sets into your background. Really dig in there and in your email or your letter or your phone call, get that information front and center. Say, "I have experience in this industry because I... etc."

Steve: That is a great tip, Pete.

Pete: Yes, and just as a caveat to that, you want to be careful, of course, that you're not violating any nondisclosure or non-compete agreements with a previous employer. It's often not the case, but if you ever signed any sort of agreement, of course, you don't want to violate it. Stay on the legal side in your actions.

Steve: Yes, or you'll get yourself into a lot of trouble.

EXAMPLE

You might appreciate this story, Pete. I was speaking with a freelance designer just a couple of months ago who got laid off from her corporate job. She left on good terms. She was downsized, right-sized, whatever you want to call it.

It was a large company. Then she started contacting people she knew in the company and she got her first client from a manager in a completely different division of that company that she didn't even know or hadn't met before. So it really paid off for her to look at her previous employer.

Pete: Yes, it happens all the time. One of my previous employers was 14 people in size. It was a small company. When I became a freelancer, they were my second or third client. I started doing work for them right away on a freelance basis.

Steve: The great thing about these strategies that we've talked about so far is that none of them cost any money. It's based on information and resources that you already have at your fingertips, if you only could tap them.

Give us another strategy, Ed. What about networking? I know you had some success with that strategy in building your own prospect list.

Strategy # 5: Smart local networking

Ed: Yes, I have, specifically with what I call "smart local networking." I say that because I'm not a believer in just the traditional networking that a lot of people think must be done to be successful out there locally.

I'm actually kind of shy, believe it or not. Even though I was in sales for a long time, I've never been good at working a room. The thought of going into one of these meet-and-greet, schmoozing events and shaking hands and collecting business cards, I've never been really good at that. I'm really good one-on-one.

What I found years ago was that where I really excelled and I got good results was getting actively involved in the organization, specifically an industry association or an industry organization.

I would **join some of the committees or the board**. Of course, you have to volunteer more time to do that, but what happens is that when you start doing that, you meet the other people on the committee and the other people on the board, and a lot of those tend to hire freelancers.

Again, I'm assuming that you're going to go to organizations where your prospects hang out. If you're going to go a chamber of commerce, for example, but you have no idea if there are going to be prospects there, that could be a waste of time. This is assuming that you've already targeted that organization or that association because you believe that there are a lot of prospects there for you.

Just get actively involved. This is not something that pays off from day one, but over the course of a few months or over a few years, people start seeing how you work and your work ethic. They get to know you and the next thing you know they're either hiring you directly or referring you to others who are not going to shop you around. Some of my best clients have come from that method.

Other than industry associations where your prospects hang out, **you may want to consider networking organizations that are for freelancers and independent contractors.**

For example, here in Atlanta where I live, there's a group called the Freelance Forum. I haven't gotten business directly from this, but many other freelancers have. It's just a community of freelancers that meet monthly and they talk about issues that affect freelancers. They trade leads and war stories and a lot of people get business from that.

Another great source locally would be a group called BNI which stands for Business Network International. Essentially, it's a leads club. It allows you to go in and meet weekly. You tell people what you do and what kind of prospects you're looking for. Then people dig into their own personal networks and give you referrals.

I used to not be a fan of BNI, but I went to a meeting recently to check them out again and I was actually very, very impressed. I would seriously consider that if you want to make networking part of your strategy.

Lastly, there are **online discussion forums and social media in your industry** again where your prospects hang out. If you live somewhere where you don't have these organizations or if you want to mix it up a little bit, definitely go online. There's a lot of opportunity there to network.

Steve: If you're comfortable networking and working a room and if you really are a good schmoozer, then obviously you should take advantage of that skill to make contacts at business and social events.

But if you're more on the shy side or the introverted side like I am, for example, then you make some very good suggestions. Get involved in the association. And once you become involved, then it's a great way to get known, make new contacts and get the word out about your services.

Something else about joining a membership association of any kind is that when you join, you often get access to the membership list. For example, if you were to join the American Marketing Association, which is made up mainly of marketing executives, then you get access to the membership list.

There are some ground rules regarding how you can access and use that list. They often discourage mass mailings to try to sell something to that list, for example. But if you follow the rules, it can be another very fast way to build a quality prospect list from that membership list.

Pete, let's talk about another source of prospects.

Strategy # 6: Company rankings in industry and trade publications

Let's talk about Strategy # 6 which is published company rankings in industry and trade publications. I'm talking about magazines and journals that publish a list of the top companies in their field. There are hundreds of them.

Med Ad News Magazine, for example, ranks the top 100 biotech companies every year. They also rank the top 50 pharma companies every year. If you're targeting companies in that industry, then that's a great list to start with.

You can get more general types of listings. For example, PROFIT magazine does the Profit 100.

Some of these lists don't provide you with names and addresses. They just provide you with the company name. But some of these addresses, they actually do provide you. They'll profile an executive or they'll have a contact person listed there and you can start there. Or, if they don't list the individual info, you can go to the company's website, use the other tools that we're going to talk about here, and find the right contact and his or her mailing address.

It's not uncommon for an industry to have one or two publications that publish these annual rankings. So the more familiar you get with your industries that you're servicing, the easier it's going to be for you to find these publications.

Remember, you don't have to be tightly focused on a very, very specific niche industry to do this. Look at some of the more general businesses that are doing well type of lists. That's usually a top 100 or top 50 list.

Steve: And it's also very current information when an online publication or a monthly magazine publishes such a list. The contact information is usually rigorously up-to-date.

Pete: A great place to start is Google. We'll talk more about Google in a minute, but just Google a term like "top U.S. insurance companies" if that's your chosen niche. You might be surprised at what turns up there. It's the place to start.

Strategy # 7 : Your local library

It's your local library, believe it or not.

I'm kind of a bookworm. I was raised back when if you needed something, you'd just go to the library.

That's one thing I did when I launched my business. What I found was in talking to the reference librarian is that there are dozens of industries out there that publish annual company directories. Many of them won't publish actual names, but you can get a lot of different company names and addresses.

For example, one of the ones I came across a few years ago is called *Direct Marketing Market Place™: "The Networking Source of the Direct Marketing Industry"*. This is published annually and a lot of larger libraries will carry the current version. Because I was targeting direct mailers in my case, this was a really good list for me. These were people who actually did direct marketing. As a direct marketing copywriter, this is a really hot list.

Just go out there and see what they have. I think you might be surprised. I know it seems old-fashioned these days with Google and the internet, but you may be surprised at what you can find at the local library.

Steve: The best library to go to is the closest library to you that has a business reference section. If it has a separate business reference section, chances are it has a good library there of business directories and databases and CDs where you can get a lot of information.

Just ask the reference librarian for the type of information you're looking for. Just ask him or her for the type of companies you're looking for and the type of contact names you're looking for and they'll help you out.

Your local library is a great source. Again, it's another source that is available to you at no cost usually.

Strategy # 8: Your local business chronicle and business directory

We're going to stay local here. It's your local business chronicle and local business directory. They're kind of two separate things.

If you're targeting local businesses and your metropolitan area has one or if you're near an area that has one, consider subscribing to the local business chronicle. That will help keep you up with what's going on in your local business community. It's a great way to identify potential prospects. Often, employees who are movers and shakers are profiled in these publications.

It talks about "good news" stories. Companies that are growing and expanding, changing strategies and acquiring competitors can often really be good targets because these events tend to create needs that can't completely be fulfilled by a company's current staff. They'll need to bring on additional resources to compensate for this growth and to really make sure they have the types of people and the skill sets that will allow this growth to continue.

Many of these publications put together an annual sort of book of lists which is a ranking of local companies by industries and sectors. Often in these lists, they have the company name and the address, and sometimes even key decision makers are listed here.

Another important add-on which that kind of leads into is what's called a "local business directory". That lists names and contact info for local businesses specifically. So get in touch with your city hall and they'll probably direct you to an agency called the Economic Development Agency or whatever the equivalent is in your local area

The city where I used to live was not a big city as far as cities go. It was London, Ontario, which has a population of about 350,000. I bought the local business directory which came on a CD-ROM at the time. It cost me \$80 and there were hundreds of companies in there.

Of course, I had to look at the directory and still make some decisions as to which of these companies I was going to target. But it gave me companies that were right on my doorstep, everything from medium-sized to local satellite offices of international corporations. So that was a great resource to go and pick up a local business directory.

Steve: Some of these local business directories, I found in general don't cost a whole lot. You can usually get one from \$50 to \$100.

The city right next to me, Mississauga, has the Mississauga Business Directory. I think it's \$49 and it lists every mid-size to large company in Mississauga. Each business profile contains a lot of information - contact names, addresses, websites, and the whole bit. It's definitely worth it.

Pete, I know you have a secret weapon when it comes to building a prospect list that you've had a lot of success with. Why don't you tell us about that?

Pete: The second part of this tip is secret. The first one is not so secret.

Strategy # 9: Google

Strategy # 9 is Google. There's no secret about Google, but I'll talk about Google and then we'll drill down into a tip that I completely stumbled upon once when using Google. It's just a gem, a goldmine of resources.

Let's just start with Google. Google is probably one of the best tools to find specific names within an organization. Most of the sources we've been talking about so far will give you names of organizations, but not in every case will they have the names and titles of the specific contacts you need.

To get those names, a good rule of thumb for a lot of things is to go to Google. You might want to try using the site-specific search function in Google. It's a handy little feature and it just lets you search for specific terms within a specific website. The command, if you're familiar with site-specific search, is you would do your keyword search on the name of the company.com, like "Acme.com."

Let's say you're trying to get the names of some of the marketing managers at Acme.com. You'd type in the Google search area in quotes: "marketing manager" and then in the site field, you'd type Acme.com. If the job title that you're looking for is made up of more than one word like "marketing manager", you just want to make sure you place those quotes around it. It tells Google to search only for that specific term.

Google will then go to Acme.com and anywhere that the phrase "marketing manager" appears, it will pop up a search result for you.

For marketing people, specifically, often you'll find those folks listed in a press release. So if a company has ever done a press release, you might find the marketing manager's title on there even though they're not specifically listed anywhere on the site in any sort of company directory, let's say. I'm not talking about finding a company directory. I'm talking about all the pages on a site that might list a specific title. That's the way to find that.

Here's a special tip which I honestly stumbled across using Google which has been so beneficial for me. Actually, I don't think I've ever talked about this one before. We all have a favorite sort of tool on the call, Steve, Ed and I, and this one is my favorite.

Here's what happened. I wanted to find a marketing manager at Siemens Corporation. I did the site search and it led me to a marketing manager there at Siemens. But the page it took me to was not the Siemens website. Actually, all I did in Google was type the words "Siemens" and "marketing manager". I didn't use the site-specific search. It took me to the website for a marketing conference and this person, the marketing manager at Siemens, was speaking at this conference. I saw a picture of him and his name and at least a dozen other people who had the same type of role as him who were instant matches for the types of prospects that I was looking for at the time.

Then I realized, "**Look for industry events.**" Go out and specifically try to find industry events and conferences that are happening in your industry. Find the brochure of the speakers list. They're all online now, sometimes in a PDF.

Those names of people are all in one spot. Pure gold is just to look for speakers. Usually, these people are movers and shakers. They're making things happen at their company and they're not always executive-level people, so you'd be surprised at how easy it is to get in touch with them.

Steve: So there are two main tips here, Pete. You can do a narrow search within a site for a particular job title like marketing manager. You do that by putting "marketing manager" in quotes and then putting the command "site:" and then the URL of that company into Google:

EXAMPLE

"marketing manager" site:Acme.com

That will bring up search results for marketing managers just within that site. So if the marketing manager's name is mentioned on a press release or in a bio on that site or somewhere else, you'll find that person.

This other great tip is just doing a general search for "marketing manager" with the name of the company into Google and finding all of these other places, perhaps events and conferences where they may also be listed and profiled as well.

Pete: That's a good summary, yes.

Steve: Here is a tool that may make that even quicker for people. If you download the Google toolbar, it has a command where you can do a search within a site, without having to type in that "site:" command. So if you go onto Acme.com and you click on the Google toolbar "search within site", and just type in "marketing manager", it will do the same thing. It will automatically do a search just within that website for that term. That may be a quicker way to do it.

Ed, there's another great source of actual names that you've used successfully in the past. Tell us about that.

Strategy # 10: Jigsaw

It's called Jigsaw. Google, this specific strategy, was Pete's favorite. **Jigsaw is my favorite for finding names that you normally don't find in the "About Us" section of a website.** These are people deeper within the organization and may be the actual decision makers for hiring freelancers in your field.

Jigsaw is basically a member-maintained online exchange of downloadable company information. The last time I checked, it actually had more than 12 million business contacts.

Here's how it works:

Say you've identified 100 companies you'd like to target, but you don't have the names of operations managers. Say that's the job title you're going after. You have some, but you don't have them all.

You can go into Jigsaw and you can type in those companies and actually search for that specific title. If it finds them, it will list them and then you can buy them with points. You can buy their name and contact information with points. You can either earn points by uploading some of your own personal and professional contacts or just buying them outright. I got on a monthly service one time and I got a bunch of points for that, so that's how I got mine.

I can tell you that I've assembled some really targeted lists using Jigsaw. I'm just constantly amazed at the depth and the accuracy of the information it contains. It basically has a built-in reward mechanism for keeping the information accurate and up-to-date. It rewards accuracy.

If somebody sees one of my contacts and they say, "That's not right. I know that that person just left," they can correct it and they get compensated with points for that and I get points taken off. Plus my rating goes down. You always want to keep a fairly high rating.

Jigsaw is a great place to go after you've assembled your list of company names and you're looking to go deeper and find the actual names of people.

Steve: Of course, you can find more information on that site at www.Jigsaw.com.
Pete, give us another source.

Strategy # 11: LinkedIn

This is another favorite of mine - LinkedIn. It's a business-oriented social networking site. We've probably all heard of it. It's used for professional networking. But listen to this. As of October (2009), it had more than 50 million registered users in more than 200 countries.

The best way to use LinkedIn—it's such a rich source of information—is to find specific individuals. You need to join the site. It's free. Join the site and use its search feature. It's very, very straightforward. LinkedIn has a pretty good interface, so it's easy to learn how to maneuver in there.

EXAMPLE

You're looking for, let's say, Acme Corporation again. Let's say you're looking for an engineering manager. All you do is search for "engineering manager" at the company "Acme Corporation" and see what comes up. You'll not only, in many cases, find the exact individual at that company right now, but you'll also find people who held that role at Acme in the past and have since moved on to other firms. You get a huge bang for your buck in doing searches using LinkedIn.

I just want to say that if you're hesitant about LinkedIn or social media, just completely put that aside for now. Set up a LinkedIn account. You really should get in there and set up a profile. You should do that today right after this call. Get in there and start using it just for the search feature alone because you're really going to find some useful and very, very accurate names by using LinkedIn. It's completely free.

Steve: There's another point to that too. Another advantage to LinkedIn is that people look for service providers on LinkedIn as well. So if you have a LinkedIn profile, you have a chance of people who need your services finding you.

Of course, if you don't have a LinkedIn profile, they won't find you. It's a no-brainer. You've got to have a LinkedIn profile these days.

Strategy # 12: -Investor's Business Daily SmartSelect® Composite Rating

This one is called the Investor's Business Daily SmartSelect® Composite Rating.

It's kind of a mouthful, but here's where this came from. I noticed that when the recession was starting, I was lucky enough to have several clients who were actually doing very, very well financially. They were investing a lot in marketing, so I really didn't feel the pinch. It really wasn't until later that things got a little slow for me.

What I said to myself is, "I need to find more companies who are actually doing well in this economy, either because what they sell is in high demand in a slow market or because they're positioning themselves for strength when things turn around."

I had bought Investors Business Daily, the daily financial newspaper, and I noticed that they not only provided stock quotes, but they also published their own financial performance rating for all these public companies -- thousands of them. They actually separate all companies by industry.

What that composite rating does is take five or eight financial indicators and combines them into one score. For each industry, it will assign a number from 1 to 99 with 99 being the highest score you can get.

What I did is I went to my target market, which is software, and I looked at companies that had—I think my criteria was 88 or higher. I came up with that list of companies and then I went to Jigsaw and Google and found the actual names of the job titles that I target and I created a really powerful list of companies who were actually doing well right now.

Of course, stock performance doesn't always equal the companies that are investing a lot in your area of expertise, but in many cases, that is a very, very strong indicator. So that's one way to find better quality companies.

It could also be a litmus test. So once you've compiled your list, you can see, based on these scores, how well they're doing.

Steve: We've covered a lot of information here. Let me just do a very quick summary and then we're going to open up the call for questions. I'm sure a lot of the audience has some questions.

Let's go through the 12 strategies we've covered so far:

Strategy # 1: Go deeper with your existing clients

Don't ignore your existing clients. There are referrals available there if you simply ask. Also, you can expand your services with existing clients as well simply sometimes by just letting them know about the other services that you offer.

Strategy # 2: Tap your network

Take a close look in your own professional network, personal network and community network. Spread the word about what you do and who you are and the services that you offer. You'd be surprised at the amount of contact names and referrals you can get just by tapping your own network.

Strategy # 3: Don't forget about your current and previous employers

Your current and previous employers can be an excellent source of contact names and referrals.

Strategy # 4: Previous employers' competitors

Strategy # 5: Smart local networking

Ed did a great job of explaining how to leverage networking to generate referrals and contacts.

Strategy # 6: Company rankings in industry and trade publications

Those top 100 lists can be an excellent source and a very accurate source of company information.

Strategy # 7: Your local library

Find a library closest to you that has a good business resource section. Chances are that section is a goldmine of information that you can use to build your contact list.

Strategy # 8: Your local business chronicle and business directory

These are great sources of contacts.

Strategy # 9: Google

Be sure to use the insider tips that Pete shared with you there.

Strategy # 10: Jigsaw

I'm embarrassed to say that a year ago, I'd never even heard of Jigsaw. It's such a great source of contact names.

Strategy # 11: LinkedIn

Get a LinkedIn profile and leverage LinkedIn to build your contact list. It's an excellent resource.

Strategy # 12: Investor's Business Daily SmartSelect® Composite Rating

Steve: I'm sure many of you have questions.

Let's get started with the Q & A.

Participant: This is a question for all of you guys, I guess. I understand, having listened through the call here, about how to go about setting up your prospect lists.

My question about that is: what do you guys find to be the most effective ways to verify or confirm that the marketing managers or directors that you're contacting on your lists are actually seeking your copywriting services, whatever those services might be?

Steve: If you get a prospect name from the internet or from a directory or from another source, how do you confirm that that person is still there and that the contact name is accurate?

Ed: I think there are two things. One of them is: are they still there? That's why you want to go to the best sources and the most current sources possible, which we've talked about.

I think you're more worried about: how do you know they're even going to be interested or do they ever hire freelancers in your field, right?

Participant: That's right.

Ed: You really don't know. That's why you really need to take time to set certain criteria up front and use that to guide you as you create your list.

If you know, based on your experience, that certain types of companies in certain industries or that market certain products tend to do really well with you—you get a lot of calls or you've seen great results from those people—then I would look for more people like that. That all starts with just really defining who your ideal client or ideal prospect is as detailed as you can.

Before you even start assembling lists, I would take some time to describe that and actually type it out. Do one sheet of paper and type out and describe your ideal client. Then use that as your guide.

Participant: I've gotten some great stuff. I've already done a lot of this, but even if there were just one on this, the call would be worthwhile.

You've given out so many ways to go about doing this. I'm not a shy guy. I'm a good networker, but I'm a terrible organizer, horrible. How do you put this all together? Where do you start - Section 12, 10, 11, 5?

Pete: I can answer that one.

Participant: By the way, I bought your book. Just to give you a plug which you didn't ask for, I've gotten some great results from it.

Pete: Good, I'm glad to hear that.

I share your orientation. I'm not the most organized person in the world, so I rely on tools to help me stay organized. I learned a lot about this from Ed Gandia. The best idea that he talked about in terms of simplicity applies to tracking these names. Use a simple Excel spreadsheet. Set it up very, very simply: name, title, company, address. Just build something very, very simple yourself using basic spreadsheet columns. Track them that way.

In terms of which one you want to start on, if you've taken notes or if you just wait for the transcript or the exec summary, the worksheet, go through this list of 12 and I would start with the ones that really resonate with you, whichever ones feel good. Probably three, four or five are going to feel really good. A lot of them are going to feel a lot easier than others. Pick the ones that resonate with you and start there.

You should at least consider trying each of the strategies on here. Some people will just do LinkedIn and get to 100 names or so and that's fine. But you should try to do something that feels right for you and consider using multiple sources so that you get a rich cross-section of places to go and things to do.

I will tell you one thing. Expect to spend a lot of time on Google because when I found the list of people who were speaking at conferences, that was a trail that led to a really rich resource. As we all know when we're surfing, it can lead to a lot of dead ends, so that's just a bonus tip. If you're not the most organized person in the world, monitor your time on Google and don't be surprised if you run into some dead ends there.

Participant: Very helpful. Thank you very much.

Participant: What do you recommend is the best way of contacting people for the first time?

Pete: We do a lot of conferences and presentations together, the three of us, and that question comes up every time. We always agree unanimously that the best way and the most effective way is to start by asking your close list of contacts. Start with your internal network.

In terms of reaching out to people who you may or may not know, direct mail is absolutely the best way to get in front of people. In terms of introducing yourself, you can put a nice letter together. You can put an offer for the types of services that you're doing. You can really connect well with people. If you do it right, you can get on people's desks in the mail.

It's much, much more acceptable than trying to reach out to someone, say, in email and it's a lot less frustrating than sitting hammering away on the phone, making cold calls. Cold calls as a first point

strategy, it just gets less and less effective as days go by. So start with your own network and consider direct mail.

Participant: I have done direct mail and it has not been that successful at all. But I will do my network.

Pete: Yes, you want to make a quick analysis of the direct mail campaign that you did and look at a couple of things. Look at the quality of the list and really, really be objective in terms of, "Was this the best quality list that I put together?"

Participant: It was a quality list.

Pete: How many times did you mail to them?

Participant: Once.

Pete: So that's the next point you should consider. If it was a good quality list and if you feel like you put together a good direct mail package—and you can look at examples of direct mail campaigns to find that out and compare yourself to it—mail to them again two, three or four times before you make a judgment that it didn't work.

You want to have a mechanism where you're touching people multiple times. To do something once and then make an assessment once, you're going to sell yourself short.

So I would do it multiple times.

Steve: Here's something that might improve your results as well with that list. If you're confident that it's a quality list, if you send out a letter and you're also confident that your letter is good, well-written and strategically put together in the right way, think about making a follow-up call about a week after you send the letters. For example, 10 or 15 letters one week and then make a follow-up phone call to that list the following week. That can dramatically increase your response.

Participant: Thank you.

If there's one overall message that we want you to take away from this teleclass today, it's this. **When it comes to building a prospect list, quality is more important than quantity.**

Even though the tips we showed you today will speed up the process considerably, I think it was Ed or maybe Pete that said this is manual labor. It does take some time and effort to compile that list of 100 to 150 people who are likely to be interested in the type of services that you provide. But the effort is worth it.

With a power prospect list like that, you'll dramatically improve your chances of landing clients, the kind of clients that can help you build a solo business that will give you the projects, income and lifestyle you want.

Pete, Ed and I thank you for joining us. Have a great day, everyone!