



## INTERNATIONAL FREELANCERS ACADEMY

Training that transforms your solo business

# Warm Email Prospecting for Freelancers

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## How to Find Meaningful Connections You Can Leverage

We've established the fact that you need to make a relevant and meaningful connections with your prospect—because an email stating the value of your solutions or describing a specialty or skill is not enough.

But where do you find these connections? Do you just guess, or is there a more reliable way to do this?

**Fortunately, there are three very reliable ways to find these connections**

1. Using trigger events
2. Naming a high-profile client or a big, relevant accomplishment
3. Leveraging a mutual connection

### #1 Trigger Events

This is a term I first heard from my friend and colleague Jill Konrath, author of *Selling to Big Companies* and *SNAP Selling*. Let me first tell you what trigger events are and then I'll show you how to use them to target and reach out to high-probability prospects.

A trigger event is simply a big event or change within an organization (or in that organization's industry) that creates an opportunity for you as a freelancer to get your foot in the door.

Here are some examples of GREAT trigger events.

- Positive or negative financial announcements
- New funding received
- New product or service announcements
- Expansions into new markets
- New strategic initiatives within the organizations
- New management or ownership
- Layoffs, downsizing, rightsizing
- Pending or recently enacted legislation
- Landing a very large or prestigious new client
- New partnerships, relationships or affiliations
- Job openings

You get the picture (BTW, this is from Jill's two books).

Why are these important? Because they create a certain level of "pain" or need that makes the company much more receptive to your services.

Of course, based on your profession and the services you provide, you'll need to determine which types of trigger events are worth paying attention to. But the list here should give you a good start.

So... how do you find these triggering events? Simple.

1. **You scour the news.** One way to do that is to subscribe to business, industry and trade publications for the target markets you're going after. Going through these once a week or every couple of weeks will yield trigger events for potential prospects.

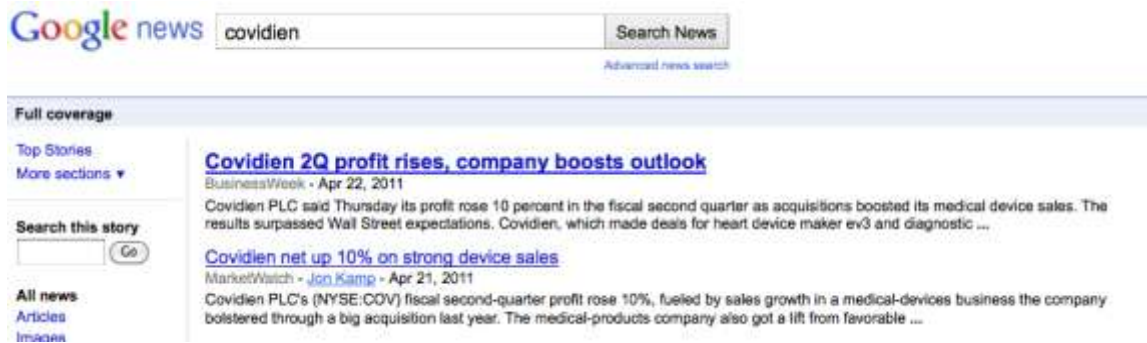
And that, by the way, is a great way to add prospects to your list. Remember in a previous module when I said that you don't need to start out with a bunch of names—that 25 or 50 names would be enough to get you going?

Well, this is why. Because as you scour the news and various publications out there, you'll come across prospects you can add to your list based on their relative fit to your ideal client profile and the trigger event itself. So your seed list of 25 to 50 prospects will start growing before you exhaust those names.

2. Another great way to find good trigger events is by setting up Google Alerts for companies already on your list. Google Alerts is a free service from Google that sends you email updates of the latest relevant Google results (either from the web itself, or of news items, blog mentions, etc.) based on your choice of query or topic. In our case, we're mainly going to use Google Alerts to get alerted on news on companies in our prospect list.

Later in this module you'll find a lesson that shows you how to set up and use Google Alerts. So make sure to go through that if you're not familiar with this tool.

3. **A related way to find great trigger events is to use Google News**, which you can get to at [news.google.com](http://news.google.com). Basically Google News can come in handy when you're compiling your list of prospects and you're ready to get started sending emails but don't want to wait for alerts to come in. So, instead, you can go to Google News and see if there have been any recent news about that organization. You'll get immediate results and can take action right there and then based on what you find.



- Now, if you're going after smaller organizations that may not have enough coverage to make it through the Google News feed, there are a couple of other sources you can try. One is **your local business chronicle**, which is something I mentioned in a previous lesson.

## Theragenics in distribution deal with Oncura

Atlanta Business Chronicle

Date: Thursday, April 14, 2011, 10:13am EDT

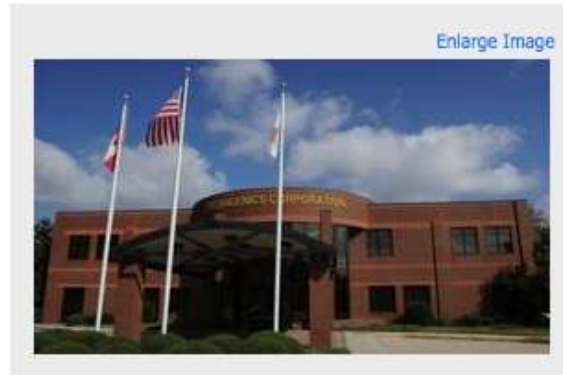
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**Theragenics Corp.** inked a one-year deal to be a non-exclusive North American distributor with **Oncura Inc.** for its brachytherapy-related products.

Financial terms were not disclosed.

Buford, Ga.-based Theragenics said the deal begins in May and includes the option to add one-year terms if both parties desire.

Oncura, a unit of **GE Healthcare**, makes and sells the iodine-125 based OncoSeed, which is the first seed used in prostate cancer treatments, Theragenics, a surgical products and cancer treatments company,



- Another great resource is Newslink, which you can find at Newslink.org.** This handy resource is basically a portal that lists hundreds of newspapers across the U.S. Not only does it list those newspapers by state and metro area, it also includes links to all of them.



Once you're on a newspaper's website, you can then use that website's search field to research some of the companies on your list and see if you can find any relevant trigger events.

OK... so that's trigger events—and those are some great ways you can find relevant trigger events that, as you'll see in the next module, will enable you to craft powerful email pitches that get read and get response.

## **#2 Naming a high-profile client or a big, relevant accomplishment**

So let's say you're a graphics designer who works mainly on branding and packaging design for food and beverage companies. And let's say that you've worked with Snapple, Land O' Lakes, and Twinings of London.

Those are big names in the food & beverage industry. So it may make sense to throw them out there and use them as a way to create instant credibility and show the prospect that you know what you're doing. Because, after all, if Snapple, Land O' Lakes, and Twinings of London hired you, you must be pretty good, right?

And by the way, they don't have to be big names or big household names. What really matters is that the specific prospect to whom you're writing recognizes them and sees them as a positive sign.

So let me give you an example of this.

A few months ago, one of my clients was approached by a team of two public relations freelancers about doing some work for my client. They did exactly what I described above, but they really zeroed in. First, they went straight to the CEO of my client and they explained, very briefly, how they had recently helped one of their clients get acquired by a much larger competitor. This particular company they worked for was one of my client's main competitors, so two things:

- First, it was a company my client was VERY familiar with. And because they were a direct competitor, this told my client that these freelancers knew the business already and had established relationships with the media in this particular industry.
- Second, they explained that their work with this client involved positioning the company for growth and acquisition. They didn't go into all the details in their message. They just threw enough in there to pique my client's interest

Needless to say, these two freelancers were hired after just a few phone conversations and an in-person meeting. And it all started by throwing in a very relevant name that triggered instant credibility in my client's mind.

And it doesn't have to be a client you've worked for. Another way to do this is to mention an award, recognition or big win you've recently enjoyed. The example above is actually a good example of this because even though it included a recognizable name in that industry, it also talked about a big accomplishment these freelancers had recently achieved.

Maybe you've recently won a big award in your industry. Or maybe you've published a book on the subject you're approaching your prospect about. Or maybe you worked on a project that ended up getting huge exposure or recognition. Say you're a PowerPoint presentation designer and a big-name speaker hired you to design her slides for a TED Global presentation, and that presentation became a very popular talk. You would be silly NOT to mention this!

So think of successes you've had over the last couple of years, and try to think of ways you can use those client names, projects or other successes to build credibility in your emails.

### **#3 Leveraging a mutual connection with the prospect.**

This approach can be extremely powerful when done right. And it basically involves looking at your personal and professional network and trying to see if there's a connection to a key contact in one of your prospect companies.

One way to do this is simply to call contacts who may know people in those companies and see if they do indeed know someone and if they can make an introduction for you. This works well if you know who may have those connections based on what you know about them and their work history or business contacts.

But an even better and more practical way to do this is with the social media tool LinkedIn, which we've mentioned a couple of times in this program. If you already have a LinkedIn account—which is free, by the way—it's simply a matter of logging in and punching in the name of each contact you want to email and see if there's anyone in your immediate network with a direct connection to that individual.

If you've worked in an industry long enough, or if you have a lot of people in your network, you'll be surprised how easy it is to find direct connections to some of these individuals.

For example, let's say that I've identified Jody Beasley at a company called CGI as someone who would be a great prospect for me. I haven't found much in the way of trigger events. But doing a search in LinkedIn, I find that he's connected to someone I know...

**Jody Beasley** 2nd  
 Vice President at CGI  
 Greater Atlanta Area Information Technology and Services

**Current**

- Vice President at CGI

**Past**

- Senior Principal at American Management Systems (AMS)
- Principal at American Management Systems (AMS)
- Senior Analyst at American Management Systems (AMS)

[see all...](#)

**Education**

- Harvard Business School
- University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill - Kenan-Flagler Business School
- University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

**Connections** **500+** connections

**Public Profile** <http://www.linkedin.com/in/jodybeasley>

Share PDF Print Flag

Add Jody to your network

Send InMail  
 Get introduced through a connection  
 Save Jody's Profile

Picture yourself with a New Job at:  
 CGI

**Ed Gandia**  
 Newest Employee  
 CGI

 [View Jobs](#)

**Summary**

Energetic leader and seasoned general manager of professional services organizations specializing in communications and information technology consulting and delivery services. Demonstrated track record of profitable business growth, customer relationship management, and organization/team development.

**Specialties**

Communications, Technology Strategy, I.T. Delivery



So, the way it works is, once you find a connection, simply reach out to your contact, explain that you're trying to make a connection with this individual, give them a good reason why you think you can help this prospect, and ask if they'd be willing to broker an introduction.

Here's a sample email (which could easily be converted into a phone script, by the way) of how I would message this request:

*Hi Dennis,*

*I'm calling because I've recently launched a commercial writing business. Specifically, I'm leveraging my corporate training experience to help companies in that industry write better marketing and sales materials.*

*I've been working on putting together a very targeted list of prospects—companies I really believe I can help. One of these companies is CGI. And while doing a search in LinkedIn, I saw that you were connected to Jody Beasley over there.*

*Wanted to see if you could introduce me to Jody to determine if my services would be of value to CGI.*

*I've found that many companies in that industry have more marketing materials to write than they have time or resources to create them. And I can help fill that need in an affordable way.*

*Please let me know when you get a chance. Thanks!*

*[Signature]*

**A quick note about this approach.** Personally, I think it's better if your contact can make that initial introduction for you. But if they don't offer, or if they'd rather you contact the prospect and use their name, then that's fine too. Just make sure you're clear on how this is going to happen so you don't sit around waiting for no reason.