



Warm Email Prospecting for Freelancers

Module 4a: Make a Quick and Relevant Pitch

This is the module where it all comes together. So far you've...

- Defined a series of value statements.
- You've created one or more "Ideal Client" profiles and started to assemble some lists based on those profiles.
- You've also done some detective work to get the contact names AND emails of the individuals you need to target.
- And you've developed a series of relevant and meaningful connections you can use in your emails.

Your job now is to craft very personalized individual emails using all of these elements.

Let me first give you a sample template or formula to use, and then we'll use that template to write a powerful email to a specific prospect.

SUBJECT LINE: [Meaningful Connection]

BODY COPY:

[Meaningful Connection]

[Value Statement]

[Soft Offer]

[Hard Offer]

[Email Signature]

OK, I know that doesn't really make a whole lot of sense without actual content, so let's put together an email based on this template.

Let's say that I'm a business-to-business copywriter and one of my target markets is medical equipment companies. Let's also say that I recently came across a news announcement about a large medical equipment company that acquired a midsize company in my area. I read an article about it in my local business chronicle.

So right away, I have a meaningful connection I can make, and that's the fact that there was a trigger event here. A big company in my target market acquired a competitor.

Going back to my value statement worksheet, one of my differentiators I've listed in my worksheet is the fact that I help medical equipment companies rebrand and repurpose their marketing materials up to 35% faster and with no handholding. And that figure is based on going back to some key clients and interviewing them to identify how much faster I was able to do the work vs. how long it was taking them to do it in house.

Also, I noted in my worksheet that one of my clients even sent me an email one time after completing a large rebranding project that said how I blew their expectations out of the water. As soon as I got the email, I replied and asked the client if I could use that statement as a testimonial in my marketing materials. The client had no problem with this, so I now have a great testimonial I can use.

Also, the interviews I conducted with clients to get more information on my performance gave me enough material to draft a one-page article on how I help clients get key projects completed faster, so I'm going to leverage that information.

And a quick search in Google produced the prospect's contact name and work email.

So with those pieces of content in front of me, here's what I wrote specifically for this prospect...

SUBJECT LINE: Pellham collateral headache

Hi Susan,

I read about your recent acquisition of Pellham Medical. I'm writing because I help medical equipment companies rebrand and repurpose their marketing materials up to 35% faster and with no handholding.

In a recent project with a global medical equipment company, I helped them completely rework 27 pieces of collateral and their corporate site in 43 days. The client's comment: "You blew our expectations right out of the water!"

Here's a link to an article on how I achieve these results for clients: [URL]

Would it make sense for us to connect?

*Regards,
[Signature]*

Let's analyze this email and why it works...

- First, notice that I led with a meaningful connection, which in this case was a Trigger Event. The whole idea behind this strategy is to use the event as a valid and relevant excuse to see if the prospect will "play ball." Also notice that I got right to the point. No need to sugarcoat anything or warm up the prospect. You really want to keep this email to 125 words or less. 100 or less if at all possible. This particular email is 101 words long, not including my signature.
- Next, you'll see that I followed that with one of my value statements (not mine; this is a fictitious one). So here's an example of why you need to take them time to develop a value statement (and a few variations on a main one) that succinctly explains the value you bring to client projects and engagements. This particular statement included all the key components: what I do, for whom, why I'm different (expressed in terms of past results performance), and then value expressed in the way of a recent client project, what I delivered for them and what they thought of my work.
 - Good value statements can include either business value information or, as in this case, key departmental value information. By "business" I mean value in terms of impact on revenue, costs, profits, marketing share or risk. So, more high-level, strategic stuff. And by departmental I'm talking about benefits for a specific department or function within the organization (such as saving them time, avoiding headaches, making things easier, etc.). Which way you do depends on the type of work you do and the job titles you typically go after in the organization. If your services are more strategic and higher level,

you're probably going to use business value statements. And if your services are more tactical or departmental in nature (which is the case for much of what I do as a freelancer), then it may be better to stick to departmental value statements. Same with your audience. If you're reaching out to CEOs and other senior executives, business value is key. But if you're going after middle managers or directors, then departmental value statements will probably make more sense.

- Next, I did something people RARELY do. Rather than go for the kill at this point and blatantly ask for an appointment (which is what most people do), you're going to offer a less threatening next step, such as a link to a success story of how you helped a similar client. Or you can link to an article you wrote, a document that explains how you work, a special report you've created, an article from a business or industry publication that reinforces your value or your approach, or any other credibility builder like this. Basically, this is what's called a "soft" offer.
- Finally, you close the email by doing the opposite of what most others do when they close a prospecting email—you ask *HER* if she thinks you should connect. This disarms her a bit (because almost everyone else who says they're going to call uses what's called an "assumptive close," which is basically a statement that assumes that the prospect will *definitely* be interested in your services. That used to work 40 years ago, but today, prospects can see right through that—and they'll label you as potentially too aggressive and someone they shouldn't take the time to listen to). I still consider this a "hard" close because you're asking for a next step, but it's definitely on the softer side of a hard close.
- And that's it. That's your email!

Let's look at another example. This is for a virtual business manager or (online business manager) whose target market (or at least one of her target markets) is authors, speakers and seminar leaders.

SUBJECT LINE: Congrats on the book deal!

Hi Max,

I read about your new book deal when I came across your website the other day. That's great news — congrats!

*I'm writing because I work with authors to help them promote their books and build their businesses cost-effectively. In fact, I recently worked with David Meerman Scott to promote his latest book, *Real-Time Marketing and PR*. We took the book all the way to #3 in Amazon and #8 in the NYT. And we did it with a modest budget.*

Here's a one-page brief of where I can add value: [URL]

Would it make sense for us to chat? In fact, you can call me this afternoon if you have a moment. I'm in the office. My number is 770-555-4488.

*Regards,
[Signature]*

OK, let's do an analysis of this email...

- Subject line: definitely a BIG meaningful connection. Very relevant and personalized. It doesn't get more personalized than that!
- The first paragraph continues the message from the subject line, and that's important, because if you use a subject line like this and then don't continue or expand on that message right away, you'll lose the prospect. You've grabbed their attention. Now you need to keep reinforcing the fact that this is a legitimate and highly personalized email message. BTW, there's no need to lay it on thick here. A basic acknowledgement and congratulations is enough.
- Also notice the excellent value statement—it really hits on all the triggers, because the biggest challenge business authors have is marketing and promoting their books...and doing it cost-effectively! And notice the use of a recent profile client this particular prospect will recognize. That's instant credibility. She also included a sentence with a results she achieved, but that may not be necessary if the client she mentioned was well known enough or if other factors were present. But she basically pulled all the stops and went for it.
- Here again, notice the soft offer and how relevant it is. I should point out that one of the reasons your emails are this short is not just the fact that shorter emails tend to get read more,

everything else being equal. But also because the point of an email like this is NOT to tell your whole story or to sell yourself completely. The point is to get the prospect to play ball—to take the next step and read the article. Or read the article and reply to your email asking for some more info or for a phone appointment. And it's *in the next step* where you really do your selling. That's probably one of the *biggest* mistakes people make with email. They want to throw it all in, thinking the more the better. But the fact is, when using email, less is always more!

- Finally, here again we went with a mild hard close by NOT making assumptions about how well we'd work together. But we went a bit further this time. We suggested the prospect contact us! Now, I have to tell you, I haven't personally tried that line. But my colleague Steve Slaunwhite swears by it. And you know what? If you've done a great job putting together a smart and customized email, and if you've kept it short, there's a decent chance that the *right* prospect, if approached at the *right* time WILL take you up on that invitation to chat.

Let's take a look at another example...

SUBJECT LINE: I helped Whole Foods rebrand

Or...

Been watching your product line developments

Hi Max,

I've been watching your recent product line developments at Horizon Foods recently. I recently worked with Whole Foods to redesign their in-store signage and private-label branding. And I have some ideas on how you could complement your effort with some key design enhancements.

I work with food and beverage companies to create new and fresh packaging and in-store signage 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 Whole Foods, Stonyfield Farms and Odwalla.

Would love to chat briefly and run some ideas by you. If this sounds interesting, let me know when would be a good day and time to discuss.

*Regards,
[Signature]*

Analysis of this email...

- Notice how this email mainly leverages a high-profile past client to make that meaningful connection (or at least a client the prospect would recognize or know well). I like how he used both the well-known client AND the fact that he noticed that the prospect had been making some changes in this area. So he had a one-two punch combination here that's very powerful.
- From there, notice how he moved right into his powerful value statement that includes most of the key components we talked about in Module 1
- And then, notice that instead of doing a soft offer, this designer went straight for the hard offer. But rather than saying "call me now." He softened a bit by letting the prospect choose the next step.
- Notice also how he reminded the prospect at the end that he wanted to run some ideas by him—something he had mentioned in the first paragraph.

- And that brings up another point we haven't really talked about. If you work in fields or with target markets where there's a certain level of consulting or advice that's either expected OR you can deliver to add more value to your clients and get higher fees... then this "I'd like to run some ideas by you" approach can work very well! Of course, you really do have to have some good ideas to share with the prospect. But doing so can really set you apart from freelancers who are just trying to push a service or a project and don't really take a consultative approach to their work or to their client relationships. So keep this in mind as you're thinking about your offers in these emails. This is something you'll want to consider introducing if you can do it credibly.

Yet another example...

SUBJECT LINE: Karen Ford sent me your way

Hi Brenda,

I recently did some video promo work for Karen Ford at Zicorp. While talking with her the other day, she suggested I contact you. I have some ideas on how you can significantly improve conversions in your upcoming product launches. Would love to run these by you.

I'm a videographer who helps local companies tell their story more effectively and through a more engaging format. Recently I worked with a local specialty manufacturer to create a demonstration video that increased sales by more than 23% in less than two months.

If this sounds interesting, let me know when would be a good day and time to discuss some ideas.

*Regards,
[Signature]*

Analysis of this email...

- In this email, the author leveraged a mutual contact to make that meaningful connection. And in these cases, I would always put the contact's name in the subject line, as I've done here. In fact, I use this exact subject line almost exclusively when I take this approach.
- Again, notice how the subject line and first paragraph tie together nicely, and how I took the same approach as I did with the last email, wanting to share some ideas with the prospect. I think this is a great approach to take when you're leveraging a connection, because the connection itself, in a way, gives you a little more leeway in your right to assume you can help the prospect.
- From there, the author (again, this is a fictitious example) went right into the value statement. And here again, she capped it off with a hard offer only. Since there is a mutual connection, I think using a hard offer like this can work very well. So I wouldn't be afraid to try it.

The only thing I would change here is that I would have asked the client (Karen Ford) to make the email introduction for me. That would have been even more powerful. But if she's super-busy or is waffling on doing it (yet she's given you her blessing to contact this person), then I would just email the prospect.