



Warm Email Prospecting for Freelancers

General Email Prospecting Tips

In this lesson we're going to go over some general tips on how to craft these emails and how to manage the process of writing them.

#1: Consider Reusing SOME Content

So.... I've given you many examples to show you how you can combine all of these elements to craft short and powerful prospecting emails. And again, I can't stress enough the importance of making each and every email unique, based on what you know about the prospect and how that ties into your ability to help them. If you deviate from this, you can very quickly be labeled as a spammer.

Now, that doesn't mean you can't have SOME "pre-made" copy ready to go should you come across a great prospect you want to reach out to. Let me explain what I mean. Here's the email template again—the one we covered earlier in the module...

SUBJECT LINE: [Meaningful Connection]

BODY COPY:

[Meaningful Connection]

[Value Statement]

[Soft Offer]

[Hard Offer]

[Email Signature]

One thing you could do is create an inventory of really good elements for some of these items. So let's say you come up with a brilliant subject line...

"I helped Whole Foods rebrand"

Or...

"Congrats on the book deal!"

Or any of the others I showed you in the last module. They're very simple, but they're very effective. And they can be repurposed over and over again IF you change the specifics to reflect the situation.

So if you look at the structure I used, it's basically this:

I helped {Client} {results achieved}

Or...

Congrats on the {achievement: could be a promotion, new responsibility, etc.}

So what you can do is create a file in your computer that houses an inventory of these elements. And as you come up with great subject lines, soft offers, hard offers, etc., add them to that file. And when you need to craft a new email and need some ideas, refer to that document for elements you can repurpose and customize to fit a specific need.

#2: Never send attachments in a prospecting email

Sending an attachment increases the chances of the email getting trapped in the prospect's spam folder. And even if it does get through to the inbox, many people still view attachments suspiciously when they come from someone they don't know—even if the sender looks credible.

So if you want to send information, like I showed you in my examples of "soft" offers, include a link in your email instead. And don't imbed the link in text—show and write out the whole URL.

Also, keep your URLs short. Ultra-convoluted URLs with dozens of random characters look suspicious and may be cut off by some email clients. When the prospect clicks on it, it won't take them to the right page, which may be frustrating and make you look bad.

Finally, don't use a URL shortener. Show the actual URL. A URL shortener doesn't show the actual URL the prospect will be sent to when he or she clicks on it, which may cause some suspicion and prevent a click through.

And I should also mention that your email signature should be very simple. It's OK to have maybe one URL in your signature. But if your standard email signature contains a bunch of copy and several links, strip that down when sending out these emails. You don't want the focus of your email to be your signature and everything that's in it. You want the prospect focused on your message. And an email signature with a bunch of copy and links will create confusion and possibly inaction.

#3: Keep Your Copy Conversational

Write the email in a friendly, upbeat, conversational manner. You don't want to sound like a corporation. At the same time, your copy must strike a good balance between friendliness and "to the point" tone. You have yet to establish trust with the prospect. So being overly friendly in an effort to establish rapport will often backfire. Make sure it doesn't sound like a polished sales letter. If it does, the prospect will think it's a typical marketing message and ignore it.

#4: Be Confident

Don't sound meek or apologetic. (e.g., "Sorry to bother you like this. I was just wondering if you might need a freelance writer. I'm really good. I'll work for free on the first project to prove myself to you...")

None of that! That's a position of weakness. You really want to put yourself in a position of strength and authority, even if you're a bit nervous about approaching a prospect whom you think is too good for you.

I understand those feelings. I've been there. But you need to get over that. You need to remind yourself about what you bring to the table. How you've helped others—both as a freelancer and a previous employee, if you're just now getting started as a solo professional.

Read testimonials you've gotten. Think back to a situation where a client praised you or your work. Do whatever it takes to psych yourself up, because so much of marketing and sales is about confidence. If you come across as unsure of yourself of your abilities, your prospects will quickly sense that. And even if your copy and call to action are strong, your lack of confidence will override it.

#5: Keep it Short

I've said this earlier, but it bears repeating. Again, you're shooting for 100 – 125 words tops. And if you can do it under 100, that's even better!

Keep in mind that, again, the goal of the email is to get the prospect to raise his or her hand, so to speak, and indicate interest in starting some dialogue. That's it! It's the dialogue that follows that will determine whether or not they end up working with you. It's in the dialogue where the real selling will

be done. That's where you can both determine if there's a fit and if it would make sense to go to the next step and put a proposal together, set up a meeting—whatever that next step would be. The email alone can't possibly get you to that next step. So don't try to make it do that.

I realize that there's a strong temptation to lay it all out there—to show and tell the prospect everything you can do and all of your impressive accomplishments. But while that may be great for us, it will dramatically decrease your chances of response.

Remember: in your email, less is more. All you want is a response. You want to see if they'll "play ball" with you.

#6: Stick to Subject Lines that Are Short, Relevant and Intriguing

Your email's subject line is probably the most important part of your email. Why? Because it's a teaser. And if the prospect senses that the message it contains is not relevant or valuable, he'll hit delete without even reading your message. So in order to have your message opened and read, you need a great subject line.

Subject line development is an art in and of itself. But I wanted to give you some powerful tips on how to create awesome subject lines for your prospecting emails.

- First, **keep it short**. I would shoot for 40 total characters or less. 50 at the most.
- **Capitalize the first word only**. I've tested this and using a "headline style" subject line, where you capitalize the first letter of every word, doesn't work as well. It comes across as a marketing message, not a one-to-one note.
- **Make it relevant** by including an element of the connecting you're going to be making in the body of the email. So going back to some of our examples earlier

*Congrats on the book deal!
I helped Whole Foods rebrand
Pellham collateral headache*

All of these examples are very relevant to the prospect they're being sent to. They hint at the topic you're going to talk about in the email, which is something that's important or relevant to them. And notice how short they are!

- At the same time, you have to make the subject line intriguing WITHOUT coming across as some sort of slick, hyped up marketer. There's a fine line here, and this is where much of the art of subject line development comes in.

- Finally, notice how all three previous examples hinted at something relevant and important WITHOUT giving away the whole message. You want to communicate enough for the prospect to open the email. But you obviously don't want to trick the prospect by saying something and then talking about something completely different in the email. I call that "bait and switch." That's when you trick the prospect into opening the email by saying something you know will cause him to open it, but then making the email about something completely different.

#7: Have a Good Stable of Soft Offers You Can Use

As I mentioned earlier in this lesson, it's a good idea to keep a list of good copy ideas you've used successfully and which can be repurposed in the future. One particular list you should definitely start building is a list of quality soft offers.

If you're just starting out—or even if you've been freelancing a while but just don't have existing content that's both tied to what you do and positions you as a "go-to" solo professional in your field—you need to start developing one or two simple pieces you can use as soft offers.

Types of soft offers that work very well are:

- Case studies / success stories
- Article or news release about how you helped a client solve a challenge
- Article, report or white paper that explains the value of what you do w/o talking about you specifically (this works especially well when you're talking about concepts the prospect may not be as familiar with; e.g., white paper marketing or lead nurturing.
- A nicely laid-out document with client testimonials from your clients
- A page that contains one or two video or audio testimonials from your clients
- Link to your home page or a "Why Me" page on your website
- Link to a samples portfolio or one of your portfolio one-sheets

As you can see, there are many possibilities. One thing, though. Whatever you do, DON'T make them have to register to get your soft offer!

Now, in terms of **hard offers**, remember that in most cases, if you have one, your hard offer will be a phone or Skype conversation. I've seen some people get creative with this and invite prospects to a small executive breakfast or online event (such as a webinar), but IMO, that doesn't work as well. That kind of offer has more of a "email blast" feel to it. It's not a one-to-one conversation or outreach. It's part of a marketing message that is obviously being sent to many others. So I would stick to a phone conversation when using a hard offer.

#8: Don't call their baby ugly!

This is a mistake I see a lot of people make. You could do everything right—everything I've talked about in this program. But if you then turn around and point out *everything* that's wrong with their [whatever you help clients with—website, design, copy, photography, strategy, public relations—you name it]. If you then blatantly point out everything they're doing wrong, you could very quickly lose that prospect.

Here's the thing: prospects often need (and even want) help from an expert. But they don't want to be constantly reminded of everything they've done wrong or are doing wrong. Because way too often, when you do that, the perception is that you're calling them "stupid." And no one wants to be called stupid or incompetent.

In my previous career, we used to call this "calling their baby ugly." I mean, how would you feel if someone told you that your baby was just plain ugly? Even if you felt that your baby was not really that cute yet, you don't want people saying (or even thinking) that! It's just a very hurtful thing to say. And most parents would be greatly offended. Same with prospects. Much of what you point out could very well be things the prospect himself worked on for years. It could be his brainchild.

So be careful how you word your approach. Focus on what you can do and what you can improve, and stay away from pointing out all the bad stuff you see.

#9: Double check spelling/grammar before sending

Finally, it goes without saying that you should double-check your email before you send it. It's easy to make a mistake when we're busy. So take the time to triple check your spelling and grammar. Have your spouse or a friend read it, if they're around. Sometimes having another set of eyes on your copy will really help.