



Warm Email Prospecting for Freelancers

Prepare for a Conversation

You've done all the hard work of sending out some great, targeted and customized warm emails. Now you have to be prepared to field and respond to the emails and phone calls you will get as a result of some of these emails.

You could do a great job with these emails. But if you drop the ball when the prospect calls or emails you, you've just wasted a potential opportunity. So it pays to be ready.

There are two approaches you can take when a prospect responds to your email. Which one you choose depends on the approach you took in your email to the prospect. Let's go back to a couple of the emails from the last module so you can see the difference and why it matters.

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]*

Notice how this particular email took more of a gentle approach. We established a connection with the prospect, made it clear why our email and our services were relevant, included a link on how you've delivered results for companies like Susan's, and finished by suggesting you should connect.

We didn't come right out and say, "Hey, I KNOW I can help you. We need to talk NOW!"

Instead, it suggested that there's probably a good reason for us to connect. But to know for sure if we should expand that initial conversation into a more detailed discussion about a project, we're implying that we need for information from the prospect.

So if you take this approach with your email, your initial exchange should follow this format or something like it:

- Thank the prospect for responding
- Remind them of the connection
- Explain that you can probably help them
- But to know for sure, you need to ask a few questions
- You then ask some qualifying questions
- And you use prospect's answers to suggest appropriate next step

So let's see what this would look like in terms of the dialogue with the prospect.

YOU: *Hi, Susan. Thanks for getting back to me. I emailed you because I read about your recent acquisition of Pellham Medical. I help medical equipment companies rebrand and repurpose their marketing materials up to 35% faster and with no handholding. And, depending on how you're planning on handling this process, I may be able to help you get through it faster and with fewer headaches. Mind if I asked you a few questions to see if we have a potential fit here?*

SUSAN: *Sure, go ahead.*

YOU: *Great! OK, how are you handling this process now?*

At this point, the idea is to ask 3 – 6 questions to help you determine if you can really help this prospect. You were fairly certain you could help them, based on what you read about them. But what you lacked was the “insider” information to help you determine for sure if this was someone who could benefit from your skills and expertise. The questions you ask and the answers the prospect gives you should help you decide that. And because these questions will vary from profession to profession—and from one situation to another—it's going to be something you'll have to come up with on your own.

I should pause here real quick to remind you that this is an email prospecting program—not a program on selling. These ideas and strategies are designed to help you get response to your emails. In this module I take it a step further and show you in what direction you should take the conversation or email exchange. But as far as exactly what to do beyond that—including how to price and quote the work—those things are beyond the scope of this program.

In terms of the questions, just keep in mind that the idea here is not to ask EVERY possible question you can think of. Your email (and the fact that the prospect has responded) means you have the right to a few minutes of the prospect's time. But in order to keep buying more and more time, you have to ask very pointed and carefully thought-out questions. Questions that make sense based on the prospect and what you know about them. And just enough to determine how to proceed from here.

Of course, play it by ear. If the prospect is engaged in the conversation, you may have a bit of wiggle room to ask a couple more question, but only if the answers will help you. If the prospect seems short and hurried, then cut it back and ask only the questions you must absolutely ask.

From here, your final step is to use the answers you gather to suggest a next step that makes sense. For instance, you could say...

Susan, based on what you just shared with me, I truly believe I can help you get your marketing and sales collateral rebranded and repurposed faster and more cost-effectively. It sounds like your resources are already stretched thin. And one of my specialties is helping companies that are in your situation. Can we set up a meeting over the next 3 or 4 days to scope out the work so I can put together a proposal for you?

That's just one example of what you could do. You could also try and define the scope of work on that phone call. Based on that, you could even give them a ballpark fee, just to make sure they can afford you. But in most cases, if you've done your homework already, you will probably only be approaching organizations who can afford you. So that may not be necessary.

The point is to suggest a next step that's appropriate for you, how you typically close business, and how the prospect responded. Keep things moving—that's the key. Don't just hang up the phone and leave everyone wondering what's next. You have to make sure everyone knows what the next steps are from here.

And by the way, this format would apply even if all the prospect did was to reply to your email. If all you get is an email reply, your job is to schedule a phone call so you can have some dialog. I find that trying to have this next discussion over email is too difficult and leaves too much to chance. So try to make this a scheduled phone call or Skype call, or whatever works best.

So if the prospect replied with another email—and assuming it was positive—you could email her back saying something like...

Hi, Susan. Thanks for getting back to me. Depending on how you're planning on handling the rebranding and marketing collateral repurposing process, I may be able to help you get through it faster and with fewer headaches.

Can we set a time to chat briefly? I'd like to ask you a few questions to see if we have a potential fit here. Just let me know what day and time work best for you.

*Regards,
[Signature]*

OK, so that was one approach—and again, it was based on taking a more cautious and unassuming tone. But in the last module I also shared some approaches where you're coming right out and telling the prospect that you CAN help them, and you even have some ideas on how you can do that.

So in other words, you're taking on more of a consultative and advisory role. Either because you provide a service that lends itself to a more consultative approach—or maybe that's the approach you like best. Either way, this approach requires a different message when you get a reply from the prospect.

So let's go back to one of those email scripts from the last module...

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]*

OK, let's say that the prospect called you directly as a result of getting this email. He's intrigued and wants to learn more. You could reply with something like...

Hi, Max. Great to hear from you. As I mentioned, I've been keeping an eye on what you guys have been doing at Horizon, and I love the fresh approach you've been taking to your private-label branding. I've worked with Whole Foods and a few other companies on similar initiatives. And I was wondering if you've considered [an approach/strategy/technique you've seen work well, etc.]

So here again, you always thank the prospect first. And you then remind them quickly about the connection and why you're credible. That sets up the stage for the ideas or suggestions you're about to give to them. (By the way, it may seem a bit repetitive to remind them about the connection and your relevance, but it's important to do so. Prospects are very busy people, and you don't know how many days have gone by since he received your original email.)

Now, if the prospect replies to your email asking for more information, in that case, you may want to respond with something similar...

Hi Max,

Great to hear from you. I've been keeping an eye on what you guys have been doing at Horizon, and I love the fresh approach you've been taking to your private-label branding.

I've worked with Whole Foods and a few other companies on similar initiatives. Would love the chance to run some ideas by you. Let's chat. Do you have 15 minutes sometime in the next week? Let me know what day and time are best.

*Regards,
[Signature]*

Again, you're really trying to get the prospect on the phone. And, of course, as you can imagine, once you do that, you're not really in a cold call. You're in a warm initial conversation with a prospect that has raised his or her hand and indicated interest in your services and value. That's a *much* better and *much more powerful* situation to be in. It puts you in a position of strength, and it sets the stage for engaging and meaningful dialogue.

Compare that with a cold call, where you've yet to get over that initial hump and you're basically shooting in the dark, hoping that you'll eventually come across someone who's not only a good prospect, but is also *receptive* to a cold call and will listen long enough to allow you to deliver your value message.

I know which scenario I'd prefer!