



Copywriting Secrets for Crafting Seductive Cold Emails

How to make sure you don't regret hitting send the next morning.

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SalesFolk[™] 



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1. Introduction to Writing Seductive Cold Emails

Are your prospects excited or repulsed when they get your cold emails in their inbox?

Think about the kind of emails you would like to receive and respond to.

Do you appreciate thoughtless canned cold emails asking for 30 minutes of your time to demo one more product that you don't care about whatsoever?

Are you enticed by vain and self-obsessed emails, full of bullet points listing every feature their product has to offer?

Probably not. And your prospects aren't either.

People respond to cold emails every day, but most of them are composed so well that you don't realize that they are cold emails. They have relevant context, feel warm and conversational, and give you a compelling reason to respond immediately.



In our last guide book, “[The Human’s Guide to Writing Cold Emails](#),” we talked about how to conduct thoughtful and thorough prospecting research in order to write laser-focused cold email campaigns for your buyer personas. If you want to review how to leverage LinkedIn and Twitter for in-depth prospecting research to understand how your potential customers think and behave, please **read and review that guide**.

Your cold emails won’t get any responses if you’re not thoughtful and considerate of your prospects’ pain points and needs. We created this guide to help you craft seductive cold emails and start more human sales conversations with your prospects. The next 4 sections of this guide will teach you everything you need to know to craft cold email copy that will warm up your customers like a glass of red wine.

I promise an actionable and entertaining read, so enjoy the ride, and enjoy all the goats!



2. Why the Best Cold Emails Are Always Thoughtful

You can have the greatest invention of all time, but if you can't convey your value effectively to your potential customers, you'll never get responses to your cold emails. Even worse, you probably won't be able to sell anything.

Even the coolest product won't get a demo if your cold email is carelessly written or you're relying on overused canned email templates that everyone's seen in their inbox 100x.

If you want to evoke emotion from your prospects and move them to action, you need to think about what matters most to THEM.

I. HOW TO ENTICE YOUR PROSPECTS WITH SEXY BENEFITS

Do your cold emails resemble a never-ending grocery list or a short novel?

You only have 3 seconds to grab someone's attention with a powerful hook that keeps them reading, so don't clutter your email's prime real estate with garbage.



What's The Difference Between Features & Benefits?

A **feature** is a “distinctive attribute or aspect of something.”

Example 1: “we write email campaigns”

Example 2: “build your prospecting list with automation”

Example 3: “a truck full of orange goats”

A **benefit** is an “advantage or profit gained from something.”

Example 1: “our cold email campaigns **triple your response rate**”

Example 2: “our software helps you **cut your prospecting time in half**”

Example 3: “**rediscover the joy of life** by playing with orange goats”

See the difference between the features and benefits?

Benefits are much more enticing than features because they elicit emotion.

Let's look at 2 real cold emails to see how important it is to use enticing benefits instead of flat features.

The first one is an example of a **poorly written cold email** I received:



SUBJECT: Do you have multiple data sources in your organization?

Hi,

I was hoping to share with you some **exciting new features and updates** on **our new [Company] 15 product**.

So far we have seen how **[Company] 15 provides you with a full collaborative decision making experience, a newly integrated Geo-Analysis, and how [Company] 15's Real time Notifications & Alerts works.**

Today I would like to share with you the latest on **how [Company] can Connect & Model different data sources.**

What's wrong with this email?

There's no clear benefit listed anywhere!

The closest thing to a benefit is the ability to “**model different data sources,**” and that's still a feature, not a benefit.

No one is going to respond to your cold emails if you don't clearly demonstrate what's in it for *them*.

This cold email could have been more enticing if it mentioned a benefit instead, such as, “***model complex data in half the time.***”



On the other hand, this cold email that I wrote received a **7% response** rate for one of our clients the first time they sent it:

SUBJECT: Make {!Company} 2x more productive

Hi {!First},

Would you like to **make your employees more productive and engaged at work?**

A recent Harvard Business study shows that giving regular feedback and recognition directly **improves productivity and customer success**. We've helped management at [Client A] and [Client B] discover their employees' top motivators and give top performers the recognition they deserve.

I know 2 simple things you can do to **make {!Company}'s team 2x productive**.

When do you have time for a short call?

Why was this email effective?

It mentions the benefit of “**increased productivity**” 3 times in the email. In each instance the sender mentions it again, they give additional context while reinforcing that value in the prospects' mind.

Instead of just being another faceless salesperson trying to close the deal, the sender is a credible figure who has delivered results and promises a desirable benefit to the potential customer.

There's **no need for a grocery list of features** in your cold emails. Simple, concise messages that address your prospects' needs, will resonate better than flashy graphics and lengthy youtube videos.



If I was going to run this email campaign again, I'd revise a few things, like adding a custom insert with the company's name in the first sentence, and making the question more specific. I also wish the case study sentence had specific numbers in that statistic, but the sales team wasn't allowed to share those numbers in their cold emails, so we went with what we had.

However, the more a prospect can clearly visualize the details of a benefit, the more it will entice them. Here's a few ways you can turn your features into benefits:

5 STEPS TO TRANSFORM FEATURES INTO KILLER COLD EMAILS

1. Make a list of all your products' features.
2. "Reverse engineer" your features. Think about each corresponding benefit with your customer in mind.
3. Consider your ideal buyer persona. Narrow those benefits/features you listed to only those that offer a direct benefit to the persona you're targeting. Does it save them time/money? Increase productivity? Reduce or eliminate a pain point?
4. Don't overwhelm your prospects with too much information in one email. Choose one benefit per email to focus on.
5. A/B test your messages to find which value propositions resonant the most with your prospects.



II. HOW TO CONVINCING YOUR PROSPECTS THAT YOU'RE A REAL HUMAN

Sending out mass, impersonal emails to a list of random names rarely screams “careful” or “thoughtful” to your prospects. Using the tired and extremely overused “*Can I speak to the right person?*” approach just won’t cut it in 2015. Effective cold emails must directly speak to prospects’ needs, and don’t feel like “cold emails”—they feel like “**regular emails**” that you don’t think twice about responding to!

Your prospects crave highly personalized, relatable messages. Asking to connect to the right person is a red flag that suggests you have no clue who they are or what their business is about.

...How can you claim to have the perfect product for my business when you don't demonstrate that you have any understanding about me or my company?!

Using generic copy in your cold emails shows laziness and does not add credibility.

Cold emails are often the first step in developing a trusted and long-lasting relationship with a stranger. Just shoving in a custom insert that says “Hi {! First_Name},” won’t convince people that you’ve taking the time to send a thoughtful message to start a genuine conversation.

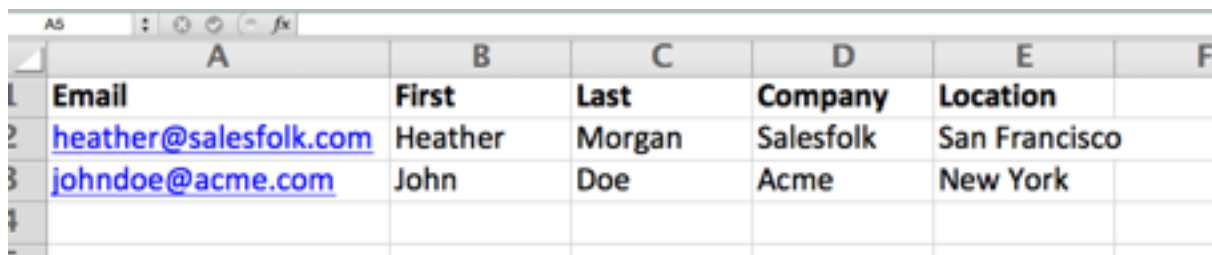


A. How to Reach Your Customers--Creative Custom Inserts Matter!

The difference between your email being ignored and deleted versus eliciting a prompt response is as simple as **adding customization** with a **personal tone**. While writing cold emails one-at-a-time doesn't make sense in terms of the cost of your sales resources, greater personalization does typically result in higher response rates.

If you're going to do mail merges, you absolutely must include custom inserts in order to make sure the emails don't feel too mass and generic.

Custom inserts are merge fields in your email template that can be denoted with coding like `{!First}`, `{{First}}` or `<<First>>` to insert the first name of a prospect from your corresponding CSV file, as shown below.



	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	Email	First	Last	Company	Location	
2	heather@salesfolk.com	Heather	Morgan	Salesfolk	San Francisco	
3	johndoe@acme.com	John	Doe	Acme	New York	
4						

Where you stand in the market and your customers' level of interest in your company determines how many different types of custom inserts you should use. Adding fields beyond just first name and company take extra time and effort, but the value of adding that extra personalization often greatly outweighs the cost of appending that data to the columns in your CSV.



Generally, you should consider further personalizing your email templates with additional custom inserts and/or segmentation when:

- You are in a highly competitive space.
- You are trying to reach high level executives who are extremely busy.
- You have a complex and expensive product.

Adding custom inserts in your email mail merge such as **{!Competitor}**, **{!Product}**, or **{!City}** makes your cold email feel more relevant. The more your templates are personalized, the more your prospects will believe that the email you sent them is a thoughtful one-on-one request rather than the mass email that it actually is.

Here's an example of a highly personalized email that was built using custom inserts:

SUBJECT: loved your article **{!First}**

Hey **{!First}**,

I just read your blog post, "**{!Blog_Post}**" and really enjoyed it. What I found especially interesting was **{!Finding}**.

I'd love to get your thoughts on **{!Topic}**.

What do you think about **{!Intelligent_Question}**?

The above email had an extremely high response rate, but is still not a good tactic for every sales organization, since those 4 additional custom inserts with take time and resources to append.

Whether you decide to only include **first name** and **company name**, or go as far as including an **entire custom sentence** related to each specific



prospect depends on the **cost-benefit of your results**. In order to evaluate whether or not you should add further customization, you should first try a campaign with “**minimal customization**” (only include first name and company name).

Aim for an increased response rate of at least **10%**, with **a cost that is less than the value of the increased leads**. Less than that isn't worth your time.

There are varying levels of personalization, so you should test to see which yields you the best results for you in the least amount of time. You and your salespeople do not necessarily have to do the prospecting research yourselves. There are many cost-effective ways to append the data you need for custom inserts, including hiring virtual contractors on Upwork (formerly Odesk) for basic data entry, using interns for research and writing, as well as scraping data from the internet.

B. How To Get Closer To Your Prospects With “First Person”

One of the most simple but powerful cold email tips is to use language that conveys a tone of familiarity and a one-on-one conversation. You can do this just by using “**you**,” “**I**” and “**we**” instead of “they” and the third person. Using third person naturally feels more generic and impersonal.



Here's an example of a generic company pitch:

“Another major advantage of [Company Name] is its transaction system which ensures a safe and timely payment. When an advertiser makes a purchase with [Company Name], we keep the payment until the project has been fully delivered. Once the project is over [Company Name] will transfer the payment to the provider.”

This message is crappy because it's too “**seller-centric**,” and doesn't engage or address prospects in any meaningful way. The sender's use of the **third person** makes the reader feel distant from the recipient. Third person signals to the reader that this was copy-pasted or mail-merged to thousands of people.

Since this company didn't take the time to craft a personal message to me, I don't feel special and I won't bother taking the time to respond.

The following comes from the introduction of a personalized cold email that generated lots of revenue for the company that sent it:

“I'd really appreciate if I could ask you a few quick questions about how {! Company} is keeping track of server performance. In exchange for your time, I'll share some tactics [Client Name] is using to stay on top of their MySQL servers with you.”

Notice how the use of **1st person (I)** and **2nd person (you)** gives this email a highly conversational tone that resembles a one-on-one email?

Although it was mail-merged, it has the kind of tone of a “one-off” email.



III. HOW EMPATHY CAN WIN YOUR PROSPECTS OVER

It's hard to appeal to your prospects if you don't have a clue who they are, or worse yet, don't care about them at all. The secret to winning new customers is understanding their fears and pains and demonstrating that you can offer them the solutions to alleviate their problems.



Ritika Puri has intense empathy. Ritika co-founded her content marketing business, **Storyhackers**, to help companies attract customers with alluring content. Her customers include LinkedIn, Forbes, Shopify, Dell and many more. Part of Ritika's success is because she always focuses on customers/prospects.

“Whether you're a salesperson, marketer, or a writer, empathy is your best ally. If you want to make money, you need to give a damn—and when it comes to giving a damn, actions speak louder than words.

While most of us care, we often have a tough time showing it. Don't let your sales quota squash your best intentions, and remember that it's the small things that count.”

-Ritika Puri, CEO of Storyhackers



Here's some great advice from Ritika about developing genuine relationships with prospects:

HOW TO START WARM SALES CONVERSATIONS LIKE A PRO



1. Stop asking for selfish things. Offer value instead.
2. Make the person's day by sharing a fun, relevant piece of content.
3. In the pitching, proposal, and closing process, ask your prospects the simple question 'what do you think?'
4. Don't distract yourself with stuff when you're in the middle of a phone conversation.
5. Communicate in a way that makes you smile and/or laugh.
6. Assume nothing in your communications. NOTHING. Your prospects aren't "eagerly waiting for your launch" or "celebrating your company's birthday." They're living their lives and solving their own problems.



3. How to Write a Cold Email From Start to Finish

So now you know why personalization matters so much to your cold emails, and how certain language can help you connect with your prospects on an individual level.

But how do you actually write a great cold email from beginning to end?

I. GET YOUR SUBJECT LINE OPENED EVERY TIME

Subject lines are the gateway to your cold emails. If your subject lines aren't intriguing, your prospects will never even open your cold email and you lose all hope of reaching them by phone.

So, how do write kick ass subject lines that will pique your prospects' interest and get them to click "open"?

We've consistently seen these approaches to subject lines get **40-83%** open rates:

A. Pique their curiosity

SUBJECT: {!First}, coming to Thursday drinks?

This subject line was sent as a company hosted after-party invite to a list of conference attendees. Questions are intriguing and conversational, but make sure your question is relevant to your prospects.



B. Dangle a golden carrot in front of their noses.

SUBJECT: increase {!Company}'s outbound sales calls by 50%

Who doesn't want to increase their sales and improve their business? Give your prospects something to get excited about by offering them something valuable.

C. Kick a bruised knee.

SUBJECT: {!Company}'s next data breach

Fear is a big motivator. If your prospects think they or their businesses are at risk, they'll want to act to protect it. This tactic is can be effective, but you also need to be careful so that you stay credible and aren't annoying.

Remember, the subject line's purpose is to get them to open the email, but your end goal is to get them to respond, and **on good terms**. I could easily get a 100% open rate that says "*your [husband/wife]'s tied up in my trunk,*" but that probably won't have very positive results.

If you're going to kick a bruised knee, be ready to handle gushing blood by offering a trustworthy solution for their pain. It's important to transition the body of these emails properly so they don't get angry and mark you as spam etc.



II. HOOK YOUR PROSPECTS IN WITH A GREAT INTRODUCTION

Now that you've inspired your prospects to open your cold email, you're half-way to your goal.

Effective sales writing will grab your prospects and keep them reading. If you want them to read through your email and reach your Call-to-Action, you have to keep their interest. If your first sentence is boring, you will lose them.

Below is a prime example of a crappy cold email introductions that fails to keep prospects hooked:

“[Company Name] is all anyone is talking about these days.”

This introduction is **vain and painfully self-focused**. Annoying your prospects right off the bat is a great way to ensure they won't respond. Starting your cold emails by referring to yourself gives your prospects a good idea of where your priorities lie.

Here is the first sentence of a cold email that got a high response rate:

“How safe is {!Company}'s data if you become the next target of a malicious attack?”

This question is effective because it addresses a scary pain point that's **already occupying the mind** for this emails' target persona. If you want your prospects to read on and respond, you have to engage them in a thoughtful and relevant conversation.



III. MAKE YOUR PROSPECTS IMAGINE THEY'RE ALREADY CUSTOMERS

Why should strangers trust your claims that you can benefit them or their business?

They don't know you, and have no reason to believe anything you say.

Dollar amounts and percentages mean nothing without context.

Throwing around figures like “increased productivity by 50%” or “cut the time spent filling out paperwork by half” are useless if your prospects can't see how these statistics relate to their lives. Be clear about how and why increasing productivity or eliminating paperwork will benefit them.

There's no better evidence of the value you can provide than your happiest customers' testimonials and past results. Including a short sentence with an example of social proof makes it easier for your prospects to say yes.

Remember, you're asking your prospects to take a leap of faith with you, so give them useful and relevant information that will convince them you're worth their time.



Here's an example of a **bad cold email** we regularly get in our inboxes:

Hi,

You are receiving this email because we wish you to use our target email marketing service

...

We have worked on a number of projects and campaigns, all our packages are tailor made and designed according to your requirements. Increase your client base and market your product to millions or let us bring the buying leads for you!

We would love to be your marketing partners, would you be interested in email marketing services for your product or service? We can always help your business reach the next level! Our goal is to increase your business sales 2-5 times than now.

...

Kind Regards

This email doesn't work because it's self-focused and too ambitious. When reading it, I'm immediately skeptical of these claims because they fail to give me proof to backup their claims made in the **red section above**.

Give your prospects **supporting evidence** of how you've helped other companies achieve this level of success. Your prospects need to see that you're offering them concrete details and not random numbers.



Here's the email your **prospects** *wish* you sent them:

Hi {!First},

I have an idea that can increase {!Company}'s outbound sales calls and monthly revenue.

This same concept led to [Client Name] increasing their outbound calls per day from 14,000 to 21,000, while also boosting their monthly revenue by 40%.

When can we connect so I can quickly share this idea with you?

Thanks,

People desire messages like this one because every line contains the promise of a potential benefit to them. Great cold emails show prospects that you understand their problems and have a real solution that can help them. Enticing your prospects with credible value helps ease doubts while building trust and credibility.



IV. WHY GREAT SUBJECT LINES DON'T ALWAYS GET RESPONSES

So you've written a great subject line that got an 83% open rate.

Awesome! Good job.

And you've written a captivating first sentence that piqued your prospects' attention, and kept them reading. The rest of your cold email was pretty good too, but wait...

..where's the Call to Action?!

Oh C@\$p!

Do everything right, but screw up your Call-to-Action, and your prospects won't know what to do.

GAME OVER.

All your hard-work was for nothing!

Here are a few common mistakes people regularly make with their Calls-To-Action (**CTA**) that will kill your outbound efforts:



1. Missing Call to Action

SUBJECT: {!Company}'s database monitoring

Hi {!First},

Does {!Company}'s MySQL database monitoring software increase your attack surface?

Third-party and open source monitoring apps can be a chore to maintain. You have to trust someone else with your credentials, or worse, mitigating security bugs.

When can we schedule a call to discuss staying on top of {!Company}'s MySQL databases without increasing your attack surface?

Thanks,

The original cold email shown above was very successful, but if we had removed the [Call to Action](#), it would have left the prospects lost and confused.

Everything you write in your cold email is building up to your CTA, the point where you ask your prospects to do something for you. Failing to include a compelling CTA basically makes your entire email **pointless**.



2. Weak & Confusing Call to Action

...

Please have a look at our website: *****

We look forward to working with you.

If there is any question you want to ask, feel free to message me at anytime.

Regards,

This CTA fails because because it doesn't incentive prospects to take any clear action, and passively requests prospects to do multiple things.

Asking your prospects to “look at” your website is not an enticing CTA.



You can't rely on your prospects to seek you out on their own time. Your cold emails need to focus on a singular goal: **getting them on the phone.**

Make it easy for them to say yes by simplifying your requests.

PRO TIP: WHEN IN DOUBT, ASK “WHEN?”



Include questions in your CTA that ask “**when**” instead of yes/no questions that can be shot down easily. (*Brownie points for adding a strong and enticing incentive for them to respond!*)

Example: “When do you have time for a short call so I can learn a bit more about {!Company}'s sales processes and share with you how LinkedIn was able to double their sales productivity?”



3. Obnoxious & Aggressive Call to Action

....

We would love to be your marketing partners, would you be interested in email marketing services for your product or service? **We can always help your business reach the next level!** Our goal is to increase your business sales 2-5 times than now.

If you would require more information please send us an email and we would be **glad to discuss the project requirements with you!** Looking forward to your **positive response.**

Remember! It won't sell if nobody knows you have it.

Kind Regards

This endless Call to Action is so bad that it's kind of laughable.

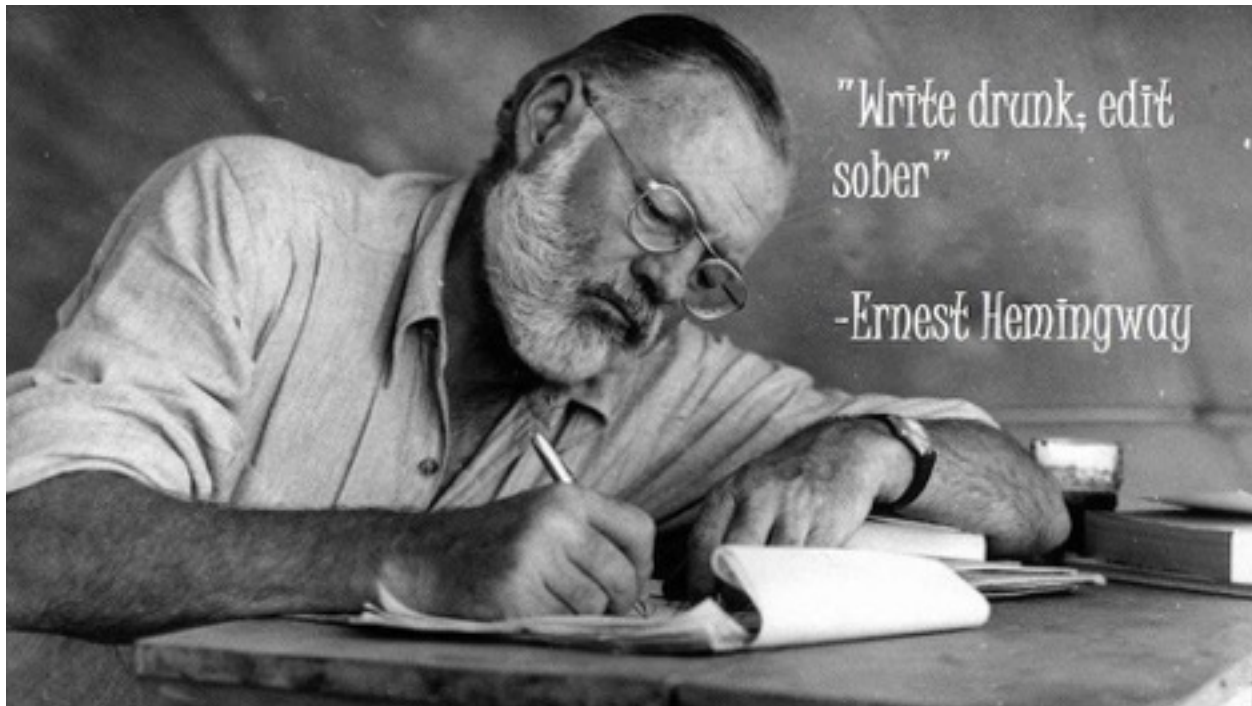
When reading it, I cringe. I'm immediately **overwhelmed** by the sender's big expectations and plans for me, even though I've never heard from this person before in my life.

It screams **desperation** and is way too self-focused.

Presuming that you've already won your prospects' business without taking the time to be compelling and start a 2-way-conversation is just annoying, and damages your likability.



4. Stop! Read this Section Before You Hit Send!



The last thing you want is to spend countless hours toiling away on your cold emails and then leave out a few words or transpose several letters that make you look stupid.



Writing and pressing send with tired eyes can take *"Hey Debbie, would you like to try our new iPhone **six** app? I think I have a **general** idea of what your company needs"* to:

*"Hey Debbie, would you like to try our new iPhone **sex** app? I think I have a **genital** idea of what your company needs."*

And suddenly you look like the **biggest creep!**



I. COMMON GRAMMAR MISTAKES THAT MAKE YOU LOOK STUPID

Never ever forget to proofread.

I can't tell you how many emails I get on a weekly basis from native english speaking professionals that still don't know the difference between:

two/to/too and **there/they're/their**.

The other really common one is the difference between **"your"** and **"you're."**

Come on!

This is grade school grammar and spelling.

No one is perfect 100% of the time, but these misspelled words and grammar mistakes make your prospects lose confidence in you and your abilities.

If you can't even get a simple cold email right, how can they trust you with **"THEIR"** business?!

I'll admit that even today, I still regularly confuse **"whether"** with **"rather"** and **"peak"** with **"pique,"** but I'm aware of this tendency, so I'm constantly double-checking myself whenever I use these words.



II. HOW TO CUT THE CRAP OUT OF YOUR EMAILS

If your messages are too long-winded and generic, your prospects will get bored and abandon you.

So how do you keep your prospects hooked on your message?

Every sentence in your cold email should hook your prospects and keep them reading. One wrong or distracting sentence, word, or phrase can make your prospects give up on your message and hit delete. If you want to grab your prospects' eyeballs and keep them engaged, every word needs to carry its weight and **every sentence needs to pack a punch**.

Look at each line of your cold email with a critical eye and ask yourself:

What purpose does this line serve? Does it add value to my message? If the answer is no, then **take it out!**

The key is to keep it **simple and conversational**.

Overcomplicating your message with academic or super technical language only excites and overwhelms your prospects.

PRO TIP: AVOID LINKS!



Videos, flashy graphics, and external links distract from your core message.

Unless your video is the next Piano Cat, it's probably not worth linking. Most video content and links are actually distracting and risk losing prospects.



Henneke Duistermaat is the founder of **Enchanting Marketing**. She's an irreverent copywriter and business writing coach on a mission to stamp out gobbledegook. Henneke dazzles readers with her regular contributions to popular marketing blogs like KISSmetrics and Copyblgger.

Henneke shares 5 questions you must ask always yourself before you send a cold email below.

1. Is your goal crystal-clear? Does your reader know what he should do, and have you made it as easy as possible for him?
2. Why would your reader care about taking action? What's in it for them? What will they learn? How will you make them feel better?
3. What's stopping your reader from taking action? How can you take his hesitation away?
4. Why would your reader trust you?
5. Have you edited your text, so every word counts?



I hope you enjoyed this guide and have learned to write better cold emails!

...stay tuned for our next guide!



Wait! ...There's still 1 page left! ...keep reading!

5. For Additional Help With Your Cold Emails

Stay tuned for our next cold email guide. It will cover everything technical you need to know for creating large, but highly targeted, email campaigns and how to optimize them (coming out in **Fall 2015**).

Until then, you can stay up-to-date with all our latest tips and hear more of our strange metaphors, by reading our blog at www.salesfolk.com.

If you enjoyed this guide, we would really appreciate it if you share it on [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

If you're interested in having SalesFolk create hyper-targeted email campaigns for your business, please email Haley at haley@salesfolk.com for more information or visit the Salesfolk website and click the "orange '[Hire](#)' button."