

Writing Emails for Category 1 Prospects + Follow up call

By Robert Middleton

Category 1 emails are sent to people you know and/or have worked with before.

Every email is a personal email. You don't want to send a mass email to all your contacts. That won't work.

If you personalize all your emails, you have a very good chance of getting a very high response.

But first, what is your intention for sending these emails? The intention should be to get a conversation.

Then once you get a conversation, the intention is to get a meeting (if appropriate). And by meeting, I mean "selling conversation" where you explore new opportunities for new projects. More about that later.

The email itself

Paragraph one:

Something about the prospect, something about your relationship, some humor.

Paragraph two:

Something about the value you bring and the results you produce and a reason to talk. And a dab of humor.

Paragraph three:

A call-to-action, suggesting some times to get together. And a dose of humor.

I keep mentioning humor in these emails. It's not mandatory, of course, but often it will make the email stand out, be different than what everybody else is sending and get you more attention.

Here's a straight email and then I'll tweak it to add a little humor.

Straight version:

We haven't touched bases in a long time. Last time we met you were working on a new project to expand your business. I just took a look at your website and I'm impressed with what you've accomplished.

You told me to be in contact with you once the website was up and running. I've taken a look and I like what you've done so far. So I'd love to talk.

My next week is fairly packed but I have Wednesday or Thursday afternoon after 1:00 pm open. The conversation will take about 15 minutes. Please let me know if you can find a time then to chat.

So, it's OK, right? But not very exciting. Rather boring.

Version with humor added

We haven't touched bases in a long time. And I've been busy hunting Polar Bears in Antarctica (couldn't find any, wonder why?). But you've obviously been better occupied than I have. I just took a look at your website and I'm impressed with what you've accomplished.

You told me to be in contact with you once the website was up and running. And since Polar Bear season is over, I figured might be a good time to have a chat about how to turn that website into some great new clients.

My next week is fairly packed but I have all Wednesday and Thursday afternoons after 1:00 pm open. Are you

around then? I'll share some ideas with you plus my best Polar Bear Joke.

Let me know. Looking forward to speaking.

OK, maybe you have issues with Polar Bears, then find something else mildly amusing and use that instead.

Look, I know it can seem weird to insert humor into a pretty straight-forward email with a request to get together, but believe me, it works!

I exchange emails like this all the time. I insert some humor and I usually get it back in return. We're not just doing business, we're having fun.

For instance, I got an invite to do a talk for IMC. I responded thus:

"OK, I am very interested and open to this. Given I am still alive and kicking. Of course, I'm most interested in doing something on attention-getting emails.

"Since it's in the East Bay, I assume you'll arrange for helicopter transport (please)."

Then he responded:

“Delighted, Robert, and I understand the distance issue! The best we might be able to arrange is an Amazon Delivery Drone – two-day service. Say the word, and we'll work on it!”

Now that's fun. I'm smiling, he's smiling and we are looking forward to working together.

This is why you want to work at inserting a little humor in all your emails, if at all possible.

Look, I don't want to work with people. I want to play with people. And I mean play hard, go deep, experience fun, joy and fulfillment in every single transaction.

And humor is the royal road to that.

This doesn't mean you need to be cracking jokes all the time. That can get tiresome. But it does mean being plugged into your sense of fun and adventure at all times.

What happens when someone responds to your email?

They get back to you by email and say cool and you set up a time to talk.

Often this will be a short conversation. It probably won't be what I call a selling conversation. That is, you're not asking a huge number of questions on this call or pitching your services.

You're testing the waters. You're communicating the main thing you have to offer. And you're getting a sense of whether they are open to exploring, getting some assistance, and have a problem they want to resolve.

For me, a conversation like this always includes laughter. But I certainly don't have any pre-arranged jokes. I'm just good at The Reverse. I can talk about something serious and then reflect on it in an absurd way.

I don't go overboard with this; I'm not doing a comedy act. But I want to make things light and fun, but still focused on how I can help them.

So let's listen in on a conversation like this:

"Hey, Robert, good to connect! Loved your email. How's that Polar Bear hunting going? You do know there are no Polar Bears in the Antarctic, right?"

“Well, I wish my tour guide has mentioned that. The gun I brought with me was a little big for shooting penguins.”

Hilarious laughter ensues.

“But anyway, I wanted to talk with you for a sec about some new things I’m doing that are getting amazing results for my clients. “

Talking right away about results is what you want. Ultimately that’s what your prospective client is interested in. So if you’re talking about actual clients who got results, you are on the right track.

“OK, well, tell me.”

“I know I was onto something when one of my clients, who’s an executive coach, got seven new clients worth from \$30K to \$70K in less than a year. And it was from using a new marketing approach that I developed recently.”

“Wow, that sounds pretty amazing, what is it?”

Look, you want to use your best and most legitimate results here. They get attention, build interest, and stimulate a desire to know more.

“Well, it’s a way of getting in front of more of your ideal clients using a special kind of email.”

Note that after you say something, you want to stop and wait for the other person to talk. What we usually do is ramble on endlessly. That doesn’t work.

“Wow. Tell me more about it.”

“Well, it takes more time than we have today. I just wanted to know if this approach might interest you and see if we could set up a longer time to explore it in more depth.”

“OK, cool, sounds good. Sure. Let’s do that.”

“Perfect, let’s look at our calendars. And I’d also like to send you some information on this approach so you know more about it before we talk. That way we can save some time and you’ll already have some questions. Sound good?”

“OK, great, speak with you next week.”

Designing your follow-up call

This call is designed to set up a selling conversation with a prospective client who is interested in the results you can help them accomplish.

So first, of all, you must have a service or program that has a track record of producing results. You don't need a 20-year track record, but you need to be confident you can help your clients produce results.

But because everyone has a different service, you have to customize this short follow-up conversation to fit perfectly with your business.

So let's break it down into the different parts.

- 1.** Breaking the ice with a little chit chat and humor. Helps if you were hunting for Polar Bears in Antarctica, but you'll find something.
- 2.** Say that you're doing something that's producing some very powerful results for your clients. Then wait for a response.
- 3.** Then give a very specific high-level result that one or more of your clients have achieved. It needs to be exactly the kind of result they'd like to achieve. Then wait for a response.

4. Next, tell them a little bit about the approach so that it arouses some curiosity. We use a special approach that... This will usually lead to them asking more about what this approach is.

5. This is where you say it will take more time to talk about it and see if there's even a fit with the prospective client and that you want to set up a more in-depth meeting.

6. Now they're curious and will most likely want to find out more and be willing to set up the meeting. That meeting may be by phone, videoconference, or in person.

7. Tell them that you'll send them more material on your approach before you meet with them. This can really make a difference. I like my prospective clients know more about how I work, the results they can expect, how I've helped others, my approach etc. before I have an in-depth selling conversation. This will typically speed up the selling cycle and save time in the selling conversation.

This whole conversation can take from ten to twenty minutes. It's not a sales pitch. It's a hook to see if they are interested in exploring how you can help them produce results. And it leads to a selling conversation.

But to make this work, you need to be prepared with each part of the conversation. You need to be focused and light on your feet. You need to be rehearsed, but not rote.

OK, so now it's time to work on two things:

- 1.** The outreach email you'll send. Write it up, based on the outline above.
- 2.** The follow-up phone outline you'll use. Just follow the steps as outlined above and write out the whole conversation from beginning to end. Nothing else is acceptable. You can't wing it.

Send me the email and the follow-up script to me for feedback. I'll get back with you with either written or recorded feedback.

And then we'll set up a coaching session. In this session we'll discuss your email and practice the follow-up call. I want to make sure you are ready to start sending out those emails and following up.

OK, that's it. That's the process that really works to get you selling appointments with Category 1 prospects.

The next document is on Conducting the Selling Conversation.

Cheers, Robert