regie.ai

How to Stand Out in a Crowded Inbox

The ultimate guide of best practices for sending cold emails by Regie.ai

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Foreward

The Moment is Now

> **Sales teams have to meet buyers where they are, and today, that's in their email inbox.**

Data from RAIN Group points to email as a crucial channel for B2B sales success, reporting that a whopping 80% of buyers prefer to be reached via email.

Yet, this isn't a green light to mass-blast cold emails. In a recent Salesforce study, 71% of B2B buyers say most sales interactions feel transactional, while 89% say they're more likely to make a purchase when they feel understood by sellers. Modern buyers expect sellers to make an effort and meet them where they are, posing a challenge for businesses to strike the right balance between the quality and quantity of their email outreach.

Amid a variety of styles, habits and preferences in cold emailing, we're here to set the record straight and arm you with insights into the DNA of the perfect cold sales email.

This guide is the collaborative effort of experts from across Regie.ai. With these objectives as a north star, they've drawn on their experience and knowledge to bring you practical and actionable techniques to help you level up your cold email strategy.

Let's dive in.

Nina Butler
Head of Marketing, Regie.ai

Cold Email, Hot Strategy

The True Objectives of Cold Emailing

We've come a long way from door-to-door sales. Sales professionals today have reached a point where regularly sending cold emails is second nature. Yet, it's easy to lose sight of their primary purpose amidst the routine of outbound prospecting. Here's a refresher on the essential objectives of cold emailing:

Key Objectives:

1. **Inbox Visibility:** The primary goal is to ensure your email lands in the recipient's inbox, not the spam folder. This requires crafting messages that provide value and are optimized to bypass spam filters.
2. **Drive Curiosity:** Effective cold emails capture attention and spark curiosity by being relevant to the reader. When your email resonates with a prospect's interests or needs, it becomes engaging and stands a lower chance of being ignored or deleted.
3. **Conversation Initiation:** High-quality cold emails initiate meaningful conversations. The intent is to start a dialogue, not immediately sell.
4. **Engagement Invitation:** The most effective emails provoke a response, transforming recipients from passive readers to active participants.
5. **Jump Start the Customer Journey:** The final aim of cold email is to pave the way for responses in other channels. Email can be an amplifier to your outreach on social and through phone calls.

Understanding these objectives can fundamentally transform your approach to cold emailing, turning routine messages into powerful tools for connection and communication.

Understanding Your Cold Outbound Process

James Reichmuth
Head of Pre-Sales at Regie.ai

Let's face it: teams worldwide are expected to accomplish more with fewer resources, while leaders' inboxes are filling up faster than the queue for Taylor Swift tickets.

So, how can you or your team stand out amidst all the digital noise? It all begins with an omni channel outbound strategy that centers around your buyer and the journey they're on.

We'll discuss how this applies to your existing strategy through the lens of The Stacking Effect and explore how you can use your outbound campaigns to more thoughtfully engage with your buyers.

The Stacking Effect refers to the cumulative impact of various touch points (calls, social interactions, emails) on your prospect over time. Well-designed outreach facilitates the Stacking Effect, allowing your touch points to progressively build recognition and credibility, ultimately earning you the right to a conversation.

What role does each channel play in the Stacking Effect?

Social Steps: Commonly carried out on LinkedIn, the LinkedIn step aims to humanize you to your prospect while also establishing name recognition. For example, following, connecting or simply visiting your prospect's profile triggers a notification, initiating the process of building name recognition. As a result, when your email arrives in their inbox, they've already started becoming familiar with your name because they've seen it before.

Plus, an InMail later on in a sequence can reference a prior step, like a voicemail you left, or a step to come, like an email follow-up. When your steps build on one another, all of your outreach, across each channel, feels more human and more personalized.

Email Steps: This is your chance to start building credibility. The goal of the email step is *not* necessarily to book a meeting right off the bat; instead, it aims to humanize the seller, making future phone conversations smoother for both the buyer and the seller. This step is crafted to encourage your prospect to answer the phone later while providing you with something relevant to discuss based on your research.

Call Steps: This is where the magic happens. The call step is your opportunity to cultivate a relationship, demonstrating to the prospect that you've conducted thorough research and are reaching out for a relevant reason. Avoid being pushy or assumptive; instead, be prepared to listen and ask thoughtful questions about their situation and secure a next step with them while on the phone.

You can also accelerate the Stacking Effect by taking advantage of additional touch points or data in your tech stack. For example, including a gifting step for your Tier 1 account leads, or using intent data to determine the right keywords to lean into, can help you get on the prospect's radar faster.

As you begin to tailor your outbound strategy where your prospects want to be engaged, continuous experimentation and testing will help you further optimize your strategy.

Nailing Personalization and Relevancy

Katie Kalafus
Customer Success Manager at Regie.ai

Sales continue to be getting harder and harder for many companies; lower engagement rates, more competition and difficult macroeconomic environments. Furthermore, only 5% of target customers are actually ready to buy at any given time.

If you only have a 5% chance, you'd better take the best shot you can. But where to start?

The foundation for success lies in relevancy. It means reaching out at the right time (and in the right way) for your buyer; not the other way around.

To be relevant, you need to begin by identifying and understanding your buyer personas and Ideal Customer Profile (ICP). Without relevancy, you can send as many perfectly crafted emails as you want; they'll still fall flat because they're irrelevant to the person receiving them.

The 3 P's

Whether you already have detailed personas or are in the process of creating them, this "3 P's" framework helps hone your targeting.

➡️ Persona
When identifying your buyer personas, consider the following:

- Look through deal notes in your CRM on the last 10-20 deals your company closed. Who was involved in the buying process? Note their job titles to chart a pattern.
- Why did they buy your product/ service/ solution?
- Who gets the most value from you?

Once you've identified your buyer personas (aim for 3-6 to start), pain is next.

➡️ Pain Point
Solving a problem begins with a genuine understanding of the problem itself. This is why sales messaging that accurately identifies a prospect's pain is naturally attention-grabbing, even to cold leads.

However, you can't jump straight to messages that resonate, without aligning your personas to pain points first.

Think about each of your personas as an individual you are trying to help solve a problem. Your goal is to identify their top pain points/ challenges and how your product solves that pain.

For each persona, create a brainstorming document to help pinpoint their top challenges or pain points and validate it through real-life conversations and call listening. Questions to consider:

- What do they worry about?
- What are their goals or KPIs you can help impact?
- What are they responsible for?
- What will happen if they don't solve this problem?

Not all pain points and challenges are equally as strong; rank them from strongest to weakest. When writing your sales messaging, pick one to two of your strongest pain points to lean into first.

➡️ (Value) Proposition

Once you have a list of pain points, your next step is to craft a relevant value proposition that directly addresses these issues. Your value proposition should highlight how your product or service can help solve the persona's problems and make their lives easier. Ask yourself:

- How does my solution help them get better, solve a challenge, or reach a goal?
- How have others like them seen success? What proof points do I have?

However, the 3 P's are only the foundation of relevancy. To build on that foundation, your emails need relatability, or in other words, personalization.

Beyond Personas: Utilizing Personalization

Personalization is not just a buzzword; it's a critical strategy for standing out. Seventy-one percent of consumers demand more personalized experiences — and 76% get frustrated when it doesn't happen — thanks in part to the rise of digital selling and a pandemic that distanced sellers from their buyers.

But how do you decide where to focus your personalization efforts? And more importantly, how can you determine which strategies resonate best with your audience?

It’s Rooted in the Three R’s

“I’ve always found the best personalization to be rooted in the 3 Rs:

Relevant – this is anchoring on something relevant to me in my role and company and a challenge I may be having professionally, or a 9-to-5 data point as I call it.

Relatable – this now appeals to me as a person not just my persona. This includes my interests and hobbies and passions, or who I am in my 5-to-9 outside of work.

Respectful – this is being respectful and reaching out at a time that is good for me and in my preferred channel of engagement, not just at the time and channel convenient for your business.

When you combine the 3 Rs into a piece of cold outreach, I will respond 10 out of 10 times.”

Nina Butler
Head of Marketing, Regie.ai

If the strategy of personalization is relatively new to you, envision it as an in-depth understanding of your prospect. This goes beyond just knowing their name and job title.

Effective personalization delves into core business challenges, industry trends and personal interests. It's about crafting 1-to-1 messaging that's not just relevant but resonates on a deeper level with each individual prospect.

Data-Driven Personalization

Strong personalization is often rooted in data. This involves leveraging information about your prospects’ recent company announcements, industry changes, or their engagement with your previous emails. Tools such as LinkedIn, company blogs, and industry forums are excellent starting points for gleaning insights into your prospects.

To excel in data-driven personalization, focus on these key data sources:

⭐ *Tip: With Regie.ai, the prospect research process is streamlined. The platform automatically researches prospects and writes personalized emails that incorporate the insights it finds, ensuring that each message you send is as personalized and targeted as possible.*

Install the free Regie.ai Chrome extension today.

Recipient's LinkedIn

Pay attention to the content they've posted, engaged with or featured on. This provides a glimpse into their interests, professional focus and recent achievements or challenges.

Their company's LinkedIn

Look out for recent announcements, ads and insights into their company culture. This can reveal their current priorities and business direction.

Tools like BuiltWith or ZoomInfo

These resources can help you understand the technologies they're using, which can be a gateway to understanding their operational challenges or needs.

Crunchbase

For updates on recent news, funding announcements or strategic moves, especially for startups and growth-stage companies.

Recent content

Engage with their blogs, podcasts and webinars. This content often reflects their current focuses, expertise and market perspectives.

G2 Reviews

Customer feedback and reviews can provide insights into their product strengths and areas for improvement.

Investor documents for public companies

For instance, a 10-K report offers a comprehensive summary of a company's financial health and strategic direction. A brief review can reveal a lot about their challenges and goals.

Your own experiences with their product

If you have firsthand experience with their product or service, use this to inform your approach and demonstrate genuine engagement.

Personalize for the person, not the company

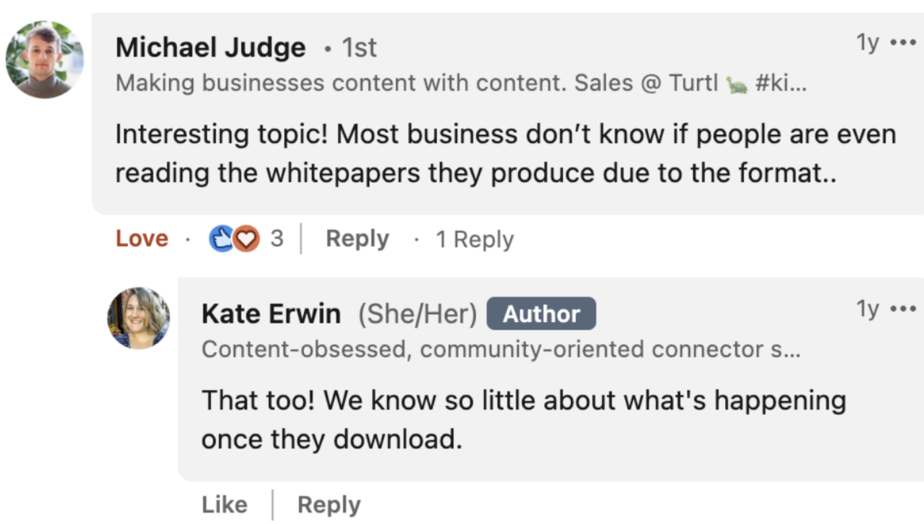
"If you can personalize your outreach using your prospect's words instead of the company's corporate statements, it feels so much more human. When your prospect is posting on LinkedIn, Twitter, or Slack communities, repeat what you read and connect that to a pain you solve.

I'll always remember the person who emailed me about a post I made on LinkedIn about how ICP always reminds me of the Insane Clown Posse. They got an immediate response. If someone mentions one of my TikToks, they get bonus points.

You can also use social listening to find the quiet hand-raisers. Follow hashtags related to your solution and see which of your prospects are talking about that topic or set up Slack alerts for specific keywords. If someone mentions a problem you solve in a community, you know who it is and can use that info to personalize your outreach.

I once wrote a LinkedIn post talking about how few people read white papers. Michael Judge from Turtl commented on the post and then reached out in a LinkedIn DM. It turns out that his product solved the exact problem I was describing. I took the demo right away."

Kate Erwin
B2B Marketer



The Importance of Personalizing Your First Email

Personalization shouldn't be an afterthought; it should be the cornerstone of your first email. It establishes the tone of the relationship and demonstrates your commitment to understanding the prospect's unique situation.

However, personalization doesn't have to stop with the first email. It's beneficial to weave personalization throughout your sequence and touch point channels. Many teams have successfully continued to personalize their follow-ups, tailoring the message to the evolving context and the prospect's engagement, to keep the conversation relevant and dynamic.

Finding the Sweet Spot in Personalization

Determining the right degree of personalization is a delicate balancing act. The key is to personalize enough to show you understand and care about the prospect's unique situation, without overwhelming them with too much familiarity or irrelevant detail.

This sweet spot ensures your message strikes the right chord, being both engaging and respectful.

Start by personalizing key elements like the subject line and opening sentence, then weave in personalized details naturally as you outline your value proposition. The aim is to show that your understanding of their needs is comprehensive and thoughtful, not superficial.

Take a more thoughtful approach

"Good personalization encompasses the following:

- Is it relevant to me personally?
- Does it have anything to do with what my day-to-day includes?
- Can I easily understand how the sender can help me?

For instance:

Hey Rocco,

Congrats on the recent advancements at Regie.ai! The new Email Analyzer and AI model are impressive innovations.

Seeing your commitment to sales solutions innovation, it's clear you appreciate efficiency. Automating manual research tasks saves valuable time.

Is cutting down research time something Regie.ai is aiming for?

Best Regards,
James

The message references something the prospect was personally involved in and then makes a correlation between how that relates to the problem that we solve. It's also a positive email and it's not focused on selling a solution. When sellers take a more helpful, natural approach before jumping to the sell, it improves relationships and builds trust – which is fundamental to prospecting.

James Reichmuth
Head of Pre-Sales at Regie.ai

The Difference Between Good and Bad Personalization

Personalized outreach is crucial to the success of B2B sales teams across industries, and sales leaders must equip their teams with the knowledge and skills they need to sell within changing market conditions. But there is a right way, and a... less right (or table stakes way) to personalize.

Table-stakes personalization refers to the minimum level of effort shown toward customizing or tailoring your outreach to your buyer. But what are examples of table-stakes personalization, you ask?

Table-stakes personalization utilizes simple, mail merge style personalization, like pulling in the company name and job title of your recipient and calling it a day. Or, demonstrating some level of personalized recon, like leveraging a hobby or Tweet you may find online, but using zero transition before launching into your value prop. There's also the trap of relying on persona-based templates but making no effort to personalize around that text with a unique intro or outro line.

The majority of buyers are frustrated by this thinly veiled personalization effort. It is no longer enough to produce generic, one-size-fits-all sales outreach strategies.

To meet buyer demands, great (not table stakes) personalization has emerged as the cornerstone that sets high performing outbound teams apart from the competition. Attributes of great personalization can include a strong, contextual link between the subject line of your email, and the body copy of the email.

It can also tie a unique data point on your prospect to exactly how your value prop relates to it and solves a unique problem of theirs. It may even provide a thought-provoking question based on an article or podcast your prospect contributed to.

Overall, today's competitive market conditions and heightened customer expectations necessitate that businesses address individual client specifics at the outset.

This level of personalization includes understanding their pain points, business goals, organizational structure, and decision-making processes, plus who they are as individual humans. It's about tailoring every interaction to resonate meaningfully with the recipient and demonstrating a genuine investment in their growth and success. Such a hyper-personalized approach helps to build stronger customer relationships, drive engagement, and ultimately enhance sales conversions.

However, for any of personalization's benefits to take effect, the message has to land in the prospect's inbox first.

Avoiding the Spam Folder

Kate Erwin

B2B Marketer

Deliverability is everything when it comes to cold outreach. If your email doesn't arrive in the inbox to which it belongs, prospects won't even see your personalized message, let alone reply.

The fact is, the spam folder is a significant hurdle for sales teams and, ultimately, outbound-generated revenue.

Your email may get sent to the spam folder because:

1. A spam filter catches your email to protect the recipient against unsolicited, unwanted, or dangerous outreach.
2. A recipient marks your email as spam because they perceive it as irrelevant to them.

The more often your emails are marked as spam, the more likely it is that your entire sending domain will get blacklisted, which will ruin sending for everyone at your company.

How To Email With Deliverability in Mind

No one wants to negatively impact the domain health of their entire company, so what can you do? Below are best practices that will help you maintain your deliverability and avoid the dreaded spam folder:

Use Plain Text
Plain text is best when sending cold emails. That means no links, attachments, or images because they tend to get emails trapped in spam filters, especially if the sending domain isn't warmed up yet.

There are however cases when including more than plain text in your email won't hurt deliverability.

For example, instead of sending a link or attachment right away, ask your recipient if they'd like to see it first. This gives you a personalized reason to reach out *without* immediately launching into your pitch, and if the prospect responds, they've signaled to the email gods that they want your outreach. Consider this a green light to include the resource in your next email, without the concern of getting stuck in spam.

Links

You may think, "I want to keep this email concise, but I have so much I want to include. I'll just link to it," but links are seen as spammy by inbox spam filters and humans alike.

Remember your corporate security training? One of the first things you learn is to not click links from people you don't know. So why are we asking strangers to visit external links if we won't?

Instead, do your best to capture the information you need to share in the message itself. You won't be able to include everything, but pulling out key ideas from the resource you intended to share is better for deliverability – and a useful exercise in prioritizing only the most relevant information.

Avoiding links is especially important in the first email, as that's the coldest. Yes, that includes your calendar link. It's tempting to include it in every email, but it's best to omit it until the recipient is warmed up.

Check your email settings. Is your calendar link auto-included in every email you send? It may be worth turning off this setting if you're sending multiple cold emails a day.

⭐ *Tip: If you've never spoken to a person before, they're ice cold—much too cold for a meeting request. Once they respond to you, they're warmed up enough to start sending links.*

One link that's an exception? The unsubscribe link. Google and Yahoo! require bulk senders to include it so recipients can easily opt out of unwanted emails. When sending with Regie.ai, you can easily integrate one-click unsubscribe options into your emails.

Attachments

Attachments from strangers aren't only another potential security threat, they're also slightly annoying. Who wants to clutter their downloads folder with a random attachment from a person they don't know?

Plus, more and more people are using mobile, which means even less storage space. Skip the attachments and convey what's relevant through plain text (concisely, of course).

Images

Certain image files—like GIFs—could be another spam trigger. They also might not load for everyone, so you want to make sure the context of your outreach is written in plain text rather than represented by a meme; regardless of how witty it is.

Dive Deeper Into Deliverability

The best way to learn about deliverability is to ask the people making the rules in the first place. Refer to Google's email sender guidelines and Yahoo's sender best practices (yes, some people still use Yahoo) for more information about each email provider's deliverability requirements.

Not sure if you're landing in spam? You can check your organization's sending reputation and abuse complaints via Google Postmaster. Keep your eye on this because after February 1, 2024, bulk senders with an abuse complaint rate of just 0.3% or higher will get their messages blocked automatically.

Avoiding Words and Symbols That Scream "Spam!"

In addition to deliverability, you'll also want to make sure your sales emails don't read too, well, sales-y. Avoid trigger words, promotional phrases, clickbait, and anything else that feels spammy.

Below is a roundup of things to watch out for:

Words That Create Urgency

It sounds counterintuitive; don't we *want* to create urgency? Phrases like "act now" and "don't hesitate" create a false sense of urgency that feels spammy. Even a benign phrase like "order now" makes it obvious that you're selling something.

⭐ *Tip: Use the Regie.ai Chrome extension to quickly check your messages for spam phrases.*

Clickbait

Is there anything worse than receiving an email that says, "RE: X" when you've never spoken before? Avoid anything clickbait-y as it's sure to send you to the spam folder.

Yes, this includes cutesy phrases like, "This isn't spam."

Long Strings of Symbols

Symbols are okay in the body of your email, but you're going to get flagged if you use too many (think "$$$" or "!!!"). If it looks like you fell asleep on your keyboard, you're going to want to cut the extra symbols out of your email before you press send.

Sales Terms

While you might want to use words like "free," "save" and "deal" from time to time, keep in mind that these words are seen as spammy by both spam filters and people.

Exercise Caution When Automating Your Outreach

Automation can be a blessing and a curse for your cold outreach program. While it can help you scale your outreach, email providers are penalizing bulk sending templated messages. Sending too many cold emails at the same time will land your messages in the spam folder and possibly damage future deliverability.

With email regulations tightening by way of Google and Yahoo!, you're going to want to make email compliance an imperative for your business. Here are additional areas to be mindful of with email automation:

Too Many Emails At Once

You want to stagger your email sends so it looks like a human is sending them. Bulk emails often get blocked by a firewall or filtered into the spam folder. Thankfully, most cold outreach software gives you the option to send cold emails in small batches.

If you're using automation, set it up to send no more than one email per minute.

⭐ *Tip: Regie.ai's Auto-Pilot product controls email sending volume and message uniqueness to ensure you're following best practices.*

More Emails Than Your Daily Sending Limit

Your daily sending limit will vary depending on your service provider and whether or not your domain is warmed up. Nureply suggests you never surpass 100 cold emails per day. If your domain isn't warmed up, they suggest starting with 10 per day.

If you're considered a "bulk sender" (AKA a company that sends more than 5,000 emails a day), Google and Yahoo! now have strict requirements for your sending.

The Same Message Over and Over

Having to repeat yourself is annoying, but it's even more annoying for the person receiving the same email over and over again. It'll also land you in the spam folder.

Dance Past the Delete Button

Dyer Whitt
SDR Team Lead at Regie.ai

In addition to taking precautions for getting past spam filters, think about why your email might end up in the prospect's trash. It often comes down to the language you use.

Why does language matter? Clarity, strength and personal touch are all prerequisites of a message that provides value to a prospect, rather than wastes their time. Communication is an art, and in this chapter, we delve into the words that are better left unsaid.

Think Outside The Cliché

In everyday life and sales emails, clichés are go-to phrases that have lost their spark. Use everyday clichés at your own risk, but when it comes to emails, it's best to steer clear.

Expressions like "just checking in" and "sorry to bother you" make an email generic, which signals minimal effort. Whenever possible, use fresh and original expressions to show your effort and you'll notice a swift improvement in engagement.

Common Expressions To Avoid

- *I hope this finds you well / I hope this email finds you well*
- *Quick question*
- *Checking in*
- *Reaching out because*
- *I'm sure you're busy / I know you're busy*
- *Sorry to disturb you*
- *I'll keep this short*
- *Just following up*
- *Thoughts?*
- *Waiting on your response*
- *If it's not too much trouble*
- *I apologize in advance for bothering you*
- *Touching base*
- *Catching up*
- *Hoping to connect*
- *Can I ask a favor?*
- *To whom it may concern*
- *Did you know*
- *My name is*
- *I work for*
- *Did you find what you were looking for?*
- *I've been thinking*

There's another drawback to these overused phrases—their tone. Many sales clichés invoke a subordinate tone. Regie.ai SDR Leader Dyer Whitt avoids them for this reason and coaches their team to do the same.

When your emails lean on clichés, you're stepping onto the slippery slope of posturing.

When you say 'I'm sure you're busy' or 'sorry to disturb you,' it automatically triggers a parent-child dynamic. You're positioning yourself as talking up to the prospect, instead of creating equal footing.

Sandler calls this dynamic Equal Business Stature (EBS). The idea of EBS and posturing also applies to cold calls too.

Reps need to notice when they're unintentionally putting themselves down because it'll be tricky to invoke the authority you need to move things forward. Using clichés is one way to almost guarantee that imbalance.

Weak Words, Weaker Message

Really strong emails respect every prospect's time by communicating with maximum precision and highly impactful language. Yet pesky filler words, or words that don't actually contribute to the overall message, are super commonplace in sales emails.

Pause. Let's try again, without all the filler.

Strong emails respect a prospect's time by communicating with precision and impactful language. Yet filler words, or words that don't contribute to the overall message, are commonplace in sales emails.

See what we mean? Without filler, the message is clear and concise.

Filler Word Examples

- Just
- Really
- Very
- Simply
- Truly
- Actually
- In truth
- Nearly
- Literally
- Genuinely

Any time you can choose stronger wording, the better. When somebody opens your email or answers your call, they're making time for you despite a packed schedule. Don't waste that opportunity by making them sit through paragraphs of filler. Get to your point quickly and strategically, so you're providing value, not wasting time.

Perform the Filler Test
Remove adverbs and adjectives from your email. If the message remains clear, you're on track to a concise, filler-free email. Continue refining to enhance clarity without losing essential meaning.

Back Off The Buzzwords
We're all guilty of using the "phrase du jour" on occasion – especially when writer's block strikes – but therein lies the problem with buzzwords. Like clichés and filler words, they're overused, low-effort and often lead to the delete button.

Plus, they take up valuable email real estate.

Think of terms like "revolutionize," "streamline," or "transform." They're tempting to lean on when more descriptive options elude you, but they're too generic (and too vague) to help the value of your message shine through.

Buzzword Examples

- Streamline
- Transform
- Circle back
- Revolutionize
- Synergy
- Wheelhouse
- Leading
- Cutting edge
- Bandwidth
- Touch base

Instead of relying on buzzwords to catch attention, focus on positioning the outcome.

Josh Braun has a lot of good content on this topic. To position the outcome you lead with a statement about what your prospect's situation, or their team's situation, is like without your solution. Now why is that a problem for them? Describe that, then come in with the future state; the outcome your solution provides.

You can't use buzzwords as a substitute for the outcome because all they really do is embellish the what, rather than explain the why.

Josh Braun in
Struggling to book meeti...

Let's see if I can make you aware of a problem you don't know about.

Here's my cold email:

"If you're buying shoes, tech, gaming gear, or dinner online you're probably overpaying. With a click, Honey will find every working coupon code on the Internet and apply the best one to your cart. No looking for promo codes. Works on over 20k sites, including Amazon, Walmart, and Lululemon. Over 1B in savings."

How'd I do?

Buzzwords can also give off a marketing-speak vibe that makes the message feel impersonal to the prospect.

For instance, if you offer to "streamline prospecting and optimize meeting generation for reps" where is your voice? Where is the customization to the prospect? To keep a message's tone in check and maintain a personal touch, Dyer uses a simple strategy they call the bar test.

If I'm sitting at a bar and somebody asks what I do – how would I talk about Regie.ai? How would I explain to that person what Regie could mean for them? That's what needs to show up in the email. I might make the language a little crisper before I press send, but my writing should reflect the way I speak. That's how it passes the bar test.

⭐ *Tip: It's so easy for buzzwords to skip into your writing, especially when you're pressed for time. Consider calling in some backup from Regie.ai Co-Pilot. Built to improve rep productivity, Co-Pilot gives teams time back by automating prospect research and message writing. With personalized prospecting emails generated in seconds – and built-in email analysis monitoring for common best practice errors – you can craft precise ands concise emails, faster.*

Skip the Formalities

Sales messaging that resonates with the way people naturally communicate is crucial. It helps foster relatability and humanizes the interaction between buyer and seller. Conversely, messaging that's overly formal deviates from the norms of everyday communication and creates a disconnect.

Overly formal language has phased out. It's just not how we communicate colloquially. So when you're writing an email or using messaging, everyday language is the thing that humanizes the person who's doing the outreach, and it makes them more palatable for the prospect. It helps them remember that, oh, this is a person on the other end. It's not just a marketing template whipped up by somebody who doesn't even know me, my business, or how I communicate.

Formal Words Fading From Use

- Dear
- Mr.
- Mrs.
- Miss
- Sir
- Ma'am
- Salutations
- Sincerely
- Kindest Regards

Formal emails often stem from a desire to convey professionalism, but professionalism and formality aren't always synonymous. While maintaining respectful language is a given, finding the right balance is key. Consider the following to ensure your emails are professional without being overly formal:

1. Variations in Communication: Reflect on how you speak to different individuals—close friends, family members, colleagues and strangers. What does each style of communication have in common? Is there a middle ground? Practice writing sales copy using language that stays within the middle ground.
2. Workplace Standards: Understand the cultural expectations for communication and professionalism within your workplace. The standards set for interactions between colleagues can guide your approach to outreach.
3. Prospect Expectations: Recognize the cultural expectations for communication and professionalism of your prospects. Some teams may share similar expectations, while others may require research into cultural differences in communication and business practices to tailor your approach effectively.

We're not writing grants. We're not writing letters. So why are we using Mr., Miss or the like? Not to mention, these titles assume gender.

I used to think that for certain audiences it was strategic to cycle through pronouns like Sir and Mr., but I've learned that the most important word, when we're thinking about formalities and pronouns, is the person's name.

NEXT
Q&A with Dyer on driving engagement
→

> **Regie.ai SDR Team Lead Dyer Whitt weighs in on a rapid-fire round of "Does This Drive Email Engagement?"**

Q: Do you ever add RE: to your subject line when the message isn't truly threaded?

A: Becc Holland has a list of email worst practices called The 7 Deadly Sins of Messaging and adding RE: fits into the first sin of being dishonest or misleading your prospect. She also mentions that explicitly making your prospect feel bad is never advantageous to the seller. I avoid both and coach my team to do the same.

Q: How about including a CTA?

A: In most cases, you should include a CTA, but I don't think that applies to every situation. Sometimes the CTA is implied, and in that case, not explicitly asking for the meeting can be more powerful.

If I've been going back and forth with somebody who is engaged but they're on the fence – they know why I'm reaching out. So for some prospects, not having that CTA actually works better by making them feel more inclined to respond.

This gets into the notion that the only point of a message is to book a meeting – it's not. Yeah, a message could book a meeting if you have the right person at the right time, but it should also be there to educate, illuminate or engage a potential buyer. And that doesn't necessarily need a CTA.

Q: Thoughts on using all caps?

A: Nope. Don't do it.

Q: Should you ever include more than one CTA?

A: If you're talking about a real CTA, yes, don't use more than one. But if you're talking about something like "Do you want to meet on Tuesday? How about at 2?" or "What do you think of this? Would you be open to meeting next week?" those are technically two CTAs in one message, but they're both working toward the same desired action. As long as you're not serving up a menu of desired actions, CTAs like these actually help your message sound more conversational.

Q: Will using commands get your email deleted?

A: It can, but I do think that there are times and ways to do it. The Challenger Method, for example, says teach, tailor, take control. I recommend this method to my reps, especially in verbal communication. If you're following it you'll use phrases like, "NAME, let's do this," which is a command, but it's also effective if used at the right time.

More than commands, the thing to avoid is not giving the customer an out. If I wanted to book a meeting I would say something like:

"Ok NAME, let's schedule a brief introduction. We'll learn a little bit more about your team, where you're headed, and if Regie.ai can be a catalyst for your 2024 growth. I promise if it's not relevant in the first 5 minutes, we can part ways as friends. But I've never heard of a sales leader that said that this was a waste of time. Is that something you'd be open to?"

You're taking command, but the prospect also has an out. A poor example of taking command is saying things like, "Let me have 30 seconds" or "Let's hop on a call now." It's too pushy and most importantly it's missing the why. If you want to meet with me, tell me why; tell me what's in it for me.

Overall, commands can be great and should be used, but only if you've done the work to set it up.

Putting It All Together

Riley Clack
Content Specialist

At this point in our guide, you've:

- revisited the objectives of cold email
- learned about the power of the Stacking Effect
- studied relevancy and personalization
- understood the pitfalls of deliverability and spam
- explored the power of word choices

It's time to thread all those best practices into the DNA of a great cold email structure.

Subject Lines: Your First Impression

The challenge with subject lines is their subjective nature. What resonates with one audience may not with another, hence the importance of continuous testing and adaptation. Exploring various approaches to identify the most effective strategies for your specific audience is crucial.

To start testing new subject lines for your audience, consider the following recommendations:

Try:

- Using title case for a professional touch.
- Highlighting the pain or problem the prospect might be facing.
- Sounding like an internal email; familiarity breeds openness.
- Sticking to a neutral tone; let the content spark interest.
- Clearly describing the contents of the email – avoid deceptive clickbait.
- Using unique subject lines rather than templated or stock options.

Avoid:
- Using excessive punctuation, numbers, or the recipient's first name.
- Relying on commands, superlatives, and clichés.
- Making the subject line overly exciting; sometimes, boring is best.

⭐ *Tip: Use The Rapid Writer Bolt by Regie.ai to instantly incorporate contextual subject lines into your emails. The Bolt generates personalized, sales-ready emails on the spot, including subject lines, right within your email provider to give reps a major efficiency boost in connecting with prospects.*

Opening Lines: Setting the Tone Right From the Start

Crafting an effective opening line in your cold email is crucial, as it sets the tone for the entire message. The opener should link logically to the subject line, grab the reader's attention and pique their interest to read more.

For intro lines that encourage your prospects to keep reading, consider the following tactics:

Try:
- Personalizing the first line to directly address the recipient.
- Keep the opening sentence concise, ideally under 20 words.
- Removing buzzwords that can instantly disengage your reader.

Avoid:
- Starting with non-personalized, generic phrases.
- Making the first sentence lengthy and complex.
- Relying on overused openers that recipients have seen countless times.

Just as Dyer pointed out in their section on cliché and buzzwords, using these in an email opener can weaken your stance and make your tone more generic:

Common Email Opener Clichés To Avoid

- I hope this finds you well
- Just following up
- Sorry to disturb you
- Thoughts?
- Can I ask a favor?
- Quick question
- Checking in
- Reaching out because
- I'm sure you're busy
- Sorry to disturb you
- I'll keep this short
- Waiting on your response
- If it's not too much trouble
- I apologize in advance for bothering you
- Touching base
- Catching up
- Hoping to connect
- My name is
- I work for

⭐ *Tip: Avoid starting cold emails with the word "I." Throughout your email, it's recommended to refer to your prospect more than yourself. At the very least, your first sentence should be about your prospect. The Regie.ai Chrome extension highlights for you your 1:You ratio.*

Your opening line is a prime spot for personalization! Don't waste the space with a cliché. Instead, strive to make your opening line as engaging and relevant as possible to significantly increase the chances of your email being read in its entirety.

Email Body: Crafting Your Message

After your subject and intro line successfully entice a recipient to open and read your email, the body of your message becomes the focal point. Here, the key lies in crafting content that's not just readable but also informative and persuasive. Your email body should encourage continued reading and prompt a response.

For an impactful email body, consider these guidelines:

Try:
- Focusing on the prospect's needs rather than your product.
- Adding a P.S. for additional emphasis or a personal touch.
- Using direct language to elicit a clear response or action.
- Varying the language in your greeting, CTA and sign-off to maintain freshness in your messaging.

Avoid:
- Making the email lengthy or verbose.
- Using jargon or technical terms that might confuse the reader.
- Focusing on your product.

<u>Email Length Recommendations from Regie.ai:</u>
- Intro & Re-Intro: 30-200 words
- Follow-Up: 30-110 words
- Referral: 30-60 words
- Multiple Choice: 50-115 words
- Break-Up: 30-80 words

A well-structured email body that adheres to these principles is more likely to engage the reader and lead to conversations. Remember, the goal is to communicate effectively, not push an agenda. By following these recommendations, you can enhance the readability and impact of your cold emails, paving the way for more meaningful interactions with your prospects.

Concluding With Impact: Crafting Your Call to Action

The culmination of your cold email lies in its CTA. This crucial component guides the recipient toward the desired response.

A well-crafted CTA can transform a good email into a great one, prompting action without being pushy.

Effective CTAs:

- Are clear and direct: Your CTA should clearly articulate the next step you want the recipient to take, and there should just be one. Avoid ambiguity to ensure the recipient understands what primary action is expected.
- Maintain a conversational tone: While being direct, keep the language friendly and approachable. A human touch in your CTA can make it more compelling and less transactional.
- Avoid pushiness: Overly aggressive CTAs can be off-putting. Aim for a tone that encourages action without pressuring the recipient.

CTA Examples To Try:
– "Are you interested in knowing more?"
– "Can I send over some more info?"
– "Any interest in discussing this more?"
– "Would talking to [colleague name] make more sense for you?"

Remember, the CTA is not just a functional element; it's an invitation to continue the conversation. By crafting it thoughtfully, you can encourage engagement and move the relationship forward.

Tying In Personalization

The effectiveness of your cold email lies in the balance of its components – the subject line, the body and the CTA – with personalization. Achieving this balance isn't easy, but with practice and the right support, sending emails that stand out in an inbox can become second nature.

Take a look at a few examples of great email personalization from one of the top SDRs at Regie.ai who used Regie.ai to personalize like a pro:

> *Hey,*
>
> *Noticed you were a carpenter before your sales career – crafting a sales email can feel like building a rocking chair, isn't it?*
>
> *Just like carving wood into fine piece of furniture, ensuring your team crafts engaging sales emails, can be challenging.*
>
> *With Regie.ai, imagine a future where your team generates predictable pipelines, just like crafting rocking chairs, using personalized sales outreach.*
>
> *Want to explore more?*

The message is clear, with content that's personalized to the prospect. The email's pain point (creating engaging sales emails is a challenge) and value prop (generating predictable pipeline) are also personalized to the prospect's persona, SDR Manager.

Let's look at another:

> *Hey*
>
> *Noticed you have a degree in Exercise Science. Ever notice the perfect sales email is like a squat?*
>
> *Regie.ai can help your SDRs hit those personalization reps, making outbound engagement as strong as quads after leg day.*
>
> *How do you think quick, personalized emails could impact your team's performance and goals?*

Notice how personalization is woven throughout the emails, not just tacked on in the beginning, while best practices like low word count and clear CTAs are met?

A New Era For Cold Email

Every sales professional knows that the art of cold emailing is ever-evolving and becoming ever more important to master. The strategies and insights shared in this guidebook are your arsenal for navigating today's crowded sales landscape, but they also lay the groundwork for adapting to future changes and trends as needed. Think of these are your seven commandments of cold emailing:

7 Golden Rules of Cold Email

1. Understand Your Audience: Recognizing and understanding your buyer personas is vital. Tailor your message to address specific pain points and interests to ensure relevancy and engagement.
2. Personalization Is Powerful: Move beyond basic personalization techniques. Dive deep into your recipient's business challenges, industry trends, and personal interests for truly relevant 1-to-1 messaging.
3. Craft Compelling Content: Strive for emails that are concise, clear, and prospect-centered. Exclude clichés, filler words, and buzzwords that undermine the authenticity of your message.
4. Strive for Effective Subject Lines: Craft subject lines that pique interest while remaining truthful. Steer clear of clickbait and ensure they accurately reflect the email's content.
5. Navigate Deliverability and Engagement: Implement strategies to ensure your emails reach the inbox and encourage positive engagement, including the use of plain text and favorable timing.
6. Balance Professionalism With Approachability: Find the right balance in tone between professionalism and approachability, resonating with the recipient in a manner that's neither too formal nor too casual.
7. Continuously Learn and Adapt: Emphasize the importance of staying abreast with evolving email trends. Regularly test and adapt your strategies for sustained success in your cold emailing endeavors.

As you apply these principles, remember that cold emailing is not just about the immediate sale; it's about building relationships and establishing trust.

Future Outlook

As technology advances and consumer behaviors evolve, the effectiveness of your outreach will depend on your ability to stay informed and adapt your strategies. As you learn and improve, let the best practices shared in this guide empower you to approach cold emailing with confidence, creativity and a forward-thinking mindset.

For ongoing support, platforms like Regie.ai stand ready to assist you in navigating outbound sales. With advanced personalization and automation capabilities, Regie.ai is not just a tool; it's a partner in the pursuit of reliable prospecting and pipeline predictability.

The Human Minds Behind This AI Guide

Our goal at Regie.ai is to evolve the operational, execution, *and* experiential side of prospecting, making it easier for businesses and better for buyers. We have built the only Generative AI platform for enterprise sales teams that provides a single pane of glass for your prospecting operations, so we know a thing or two about what makes outbound sales great.

We've been doing AI since before AI was cool.

If you're interested in learning more about how Generative AI could support your sales efforts, we'd love to talk – human to human.

Contact us

regie.ai