

The Ultimate Guide to  
Mastering Cold Emails

# GROW YOUR BUSINESS WITH COLD EMAILS

Everything you need to know about cold emails  
to get an avalanche of responses

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Included - 5 template emails with more than 50% reply rate

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## ***Intro***

I'm Jeremy, founder of [QuickMail.io](http://QuickMail.io), a platform that helps you automate cold emails and get more replies without having to sacrifice much time.

Unlike many consultants who rely on tactics that worked three years ago (and only partly work now), I will tell you what works right now in 2016.

No bullshit. Just pure unfiltered knowledge.

I will even share five templates so good that MORE than half of the people who receive your email sequence will be moved to reply. (That's right. Sending two emails will result in one person hitting reply, writing something back and then sending it to you.)

Imagine the difference it would make to your business if you could interact with half the people you contact.

And all of this without the need to hire an entire sales team.

Yes, it's that powerful.

Cold email is how I started my business. I originally used it to get interviews to gain knowledge about a specific market, then to get feedback on what I was building, and finally to get demo calls to gain new customers and expand my network as a founder. It's what made my business profitable. So I know firsthand that it can be a really lucrative channel when executed properly.

The problem is that most of the things you read on the Internet are highly subjective to the [Survivorship bias](#). Information is often outdated or grossly inaccurate (revealing only half of the story, or not enough data). There's a lot out there that's just plain wrong and totally misleading.

So, be ready for a ride because all of those fancy posts you read on the Internet on cold email won't account for a fraction of what you'll learn in this book.

Some examples of what I'll cover with you:

- I'll let you know the number one reason why cold emails fail or succeed (based on real data after analyzing both winners and losers).
- I'll explain why almost everyone is wrong in the way they build their cold email campaign (and how to fix this easily).
- I'll tell you about every possible way to build your prospect list.
- I'll show you how to setup cold emails so that people will thank you for your perseverance (even though you didn't spend more than a second on it).
- I'll share five email sequences built for different purposes, all performing at a

reply rate of more than 50 percent.

And I'll share many more things that will give you all the tools you need to crush it with your cold email campaigns.

Ready? Let's get started!

# **PART I**

## ***Before you write your first email***

### ***Master the game***

To win the game, you need to know what game you are playing.

Interestingly enough, most advice on outbound email focuses primarily on the writing aspect. You will get plenty of advice in this book on how to approach the writing part, but it's really just one piece of the puzzle.

To get all of the pieces of the puzzle together and really grow your business with outbound cold emails, there are a few more things you need to master first.

What no one will tell you is that the game is either won or lost before you even send your first email.

In this section, I'm going to show you what you need to know and look for so that you can be successful at it, while at the same time minimizing the negative impact of failure on you and your business.

## CHAPTER ONE

### *The most important metric you have to know*

#### *Sender Reputation*

Because cold email can be a very cheap way to acquire new customers, it's very often abused. As a result, a lot of different techniques are used by email services (receiving but also sending) to quickly determine if emails sent are spam or not.

Everyone knows (or should know) that adding “Viagra” or “cheap loan” to your subject line won't do you any good and will be intercepted by most spam filters. But there is a much more problematic and persistent criteria that you need to know about. Why? Because it could kill your business over time.

It can affect every email you send from your company domain name and can take weeks — if not months — to fix. In fact, it can be so annoying that some companies have gone so far as to migrate to new domain names just to solve the problem. This is especially important to know when you begin cold emails because you may not recognize the problem until it's too late.

I'm talking about sender reputation. It's a simple number that gets assigned to you and can vary from 0 (bad) to 100 (good).

It's important because while a good reputation will get you almost straight to the inbox, a bad one almost certainly guarantees your email will land in the spam folder. It's a strong factor to watch for good deliverability, but it gets worse. Because the reputation is actually on the domain, creating new emails won't actually help you get out of this. In fact, once your sender reputation is damaged, it's very hard to undo and you run the risk of being blacklisted.

In reality, this spam killer criteria has one fundamental flaw: it's based on your domain email server IP address. So you may wonder why it is such a problem if your email is hosted by Google Apps or sent by SendGrid. After all, it's their IP that gets the blame.

Well for sure, but in order to protect THEIR own sender reputation, they will rely on similar mechanisms to determine your sender reputation, too. In the case of SendGrid, they will even kick you out if your sender reputation falls below 70 percent.

## ***What affects it?***

Okay, so now that you know it's important, you need to know what key factors will hurt your sender reputation the most so that you can take care of this.

There are five factors that will badly impact it:

### 1. High bounce rate

With emails, there are two sorts of bounces:

- Soft bounce, when the problem is temporary (e.g. inbox full)
- Hard bounce, when the address has been rejected by the destination server (the email doesn't exist)

A high bounce rate strongly suggests the message is spam and will therefore impact your sender reputation.

You should go through significant effort to lower this in order to preserve your sender reputation (and ultimately your deliverability). So, just make sure that you are indeed emailing people with actual working emails.

This can be achieved by a combination of good prospecting (getting quality emails) and verification tools (we'll cover this in the Prospecting section)

### 2. Spam complaints

When people label an email as "Spam" or "Junk," not only will it reduce your ability to reach this user's inbox, but all of those complaints will be aggregated to determine whether or not your email will land in other people's inboxes, too.

Similar content is easily flagged as spam. So take advantage of personalization capabilities as much as you can to minimize this.

Note that emails like info@, marketing@, sales@, support@... and other generic emails usually generate more complaints than individual targeted emails like john.smith@company.com

### 3. Spam traps

This is a bad one.

Spam traps are fake (or obsolete) email addresses that are set by email providers and aren't supposed to actually receive any emails.

Sending to these emails is a strong indicator that a list has been purchased and therefore a stronger likelihood that the sender is a spammer.

Currently, there are no tools to identify these obsolete email addresses, and even list cleaners remain clueless.

To minimize this, you need to make sure prospecting is done well.

### 4. Volume & consistency

Sending 500 emails in one day is another indicator that you are spamming. Instead, spread your usage over time so that you don't send bursts of emails.

It's best to send 100 emails a day, in one week, rather than sending 500 emails all in one day.

### 5. Too many recipients

This one is easy to avoid, as you'll get the best results when you're sending to just one person at a time.

Only send to between one and four people (not hundreds in one go).

## ***Third parties***

In order to boost their sender reputation, some people rely on email sending services (such as SendGrid or Mandrill) instead of Google Apps.

Companies like these developed special deals (feedback loop) with many of the email service providers to know when someone generates a complaint so that they can police their own users.

Note: It is still possible to deduce deliverability problems by monitoring closely your open rate. Sudden drop may indicate a deliverability problem.

Being able to monitor your sender reputation with a sending service is a fantastic feature, as you can closely monitor it to make sure your emails get delivered.

The flip-side of that is that you will end up in the promotional tab rather than the inbox, as services like Gmail will notice those emails come from sending companies (they know their IPs) and will be placed at the same level as email marketing sent by Aweber, MailChimp and all those other marketing tools. Prospects will also see a small “via mail59.atl51.rsgsv.net” next to your email address, which is not good to emulate personal reach out.

It’s still better than hitting the spam folder, but far from excellent for personal outreach emails that come from your personal email.

But although some tools allow you to white label emails being sent out so it looks genuine (with a small change in your DNS fields), your domain still run the risk of being blacklisted.

So, what do we do?

## ***New domain***

An easy solution nowadays is simply creating another domain name similar to that of your product, only completely dedicated to cold email. This way, you can easily discard it if you run into any problems.

For example, if you own a .com, you can buy the .co and do cold email from that. Another approach is to buy a similar or enriched name, like mydomainapp.com or getmydomain.com instead of mydomain.com.

Even massive companies like SendGrid have secondary domains to silo risks (E.g. they use sendgrid.net instead of sendgrid.com for link tracking)

Once the domain has been purchased, open a new Google Apps account and you’re ready to go (or buy the new domain directly with Google Apps for easier set-up). Plus, it’s easy enough to have your new domain redirect to your main domain if the user is curious enough to enter the email domain in the browser.

This approach sits very well with email service companies like Google (Google Apps), SendGrid, and many other email providers/senders (at least for now).

This would not have worked before the era of cloud emails when companies managed their own email infrastructure. This is because the IP wouldn’t have changed (so changing the domain name would not have changed the IP of the server sending the emails). Or this would have required new IPs to be warmed up first (sending a few simple emails to get recognized before sending higher volume)

With emails in the cloud, it became the responsibility of email service providers and email sending companies, so now it's much easier to switch domains and reset your sender reputation.

Note that creating a new domain still requires some setup work. Make sure you get things right with SPF, DKIM and other counter spam mechanisms to get a high deliverability rate.

## ***Resources***

Here is an easy way to make sure everything is setup properly for your new domain: <https://toolbox.googleapps.com/apps/checkmx/check>

My favorite tool to test the “spammyness” of a message based on domain setup and email content: <http://www.mail-tester.com/>

To test your sender reputation: <http://dyn.com/free-email-test/>

Return path score card: <https://www.senderscore.org/register/>

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### ***Boring but good to know***

#### ***I am the law***

OK, this is probably the most boring part of the whole book (at least for me), but you need to understand at least the bare minimum in order to know where you stand.

Fortunately, in most cases, there isn't much to know about it.

Of course, the law is different for each country.

#### ***Countries***

##### ***USA***

In the US, you need to know about CAN-SPAM (Controlling the Assault of Non-Solicited Pornography And Marketing). It's an Act that was passed in 2003 for commercial emails. Yep, pornography and marketers are basically the same, at least legally speaking.

You can get all the information on the FTC page here:

CAN-SPAM Act: A Compliance Guide for Business - <https://www.ftc.gov/tips-advice/business-center/guidance/can-spam-act-compliance-guide-business>

But, since it's boring as hell to read these, here is a short version with my take on it. If you're still in doubt, always check with your business attorney. I'm not a lawyer and won't be in court defending you based on my analysis of the text.

In short, you get fined up to \$16,000 per email in violation of the CAN-SPAM act (with 2,000 emails per day for Google Apps accounts, the NSA could probably fund itself quickly while spying on emails). So either you conform to the legislation, or the solution you sell has got to be really expensive and your conversion rate awesome.

Let's look at the first option in detail.

1. Don't use false or misleading header information.

Sending emails pretending to be Elvis won't fly here. It doesn't state if nicknames/pen name work, and I have to wonder how actors using stage names would do it, but there you go. No more "Sandy from New York" when in fact it's "Amor from the Philippines."

2. Don't use deceptive subject lines.

That will teach those spammers using "RE:" when they never sent a prior message (By the way, that's bad practice. You don't want to start a relationship based on tricking people.) Sure you may get great open rates, but you want positive replies.

3. Identify the message as an ad.

This one is tricky, because not all emails are ads. Fortunately, the law gives you a lot of leeway regarding how you go about this. Somehow I feel that "THIS IS AN AD" as a first line won't get anyone very far.

4. Tell recipients where you're located.

This one shouldn't be too hard, assuming you use your business address.

5. Tell recipients how to opt out of receiving future email from you.

Now this one is interesting because it doesn't have to be through a click as long as the instructions are clear. So technically speaking, "Please reply \*I want more spam from you\* to be removed from further communication" qualifies. Or to ask them to dance on one foot and send a picture of them doing it since that qualifies, too.

6. Honor opt-out requests promptly.

The law was passed in 2003 and administration at that time was using wooden PC, so "promptly" means within 10 business days in the context of the law.

Interesting fact: People have 30 days after you send them the email to opt-out (since the opt out system needs to be valid for at least 30 days after sending the email).

7. Monitor what others are doing on your behalf.

Basically, you can't get away with it by hiring another company to do the dirty work for you.

That's it.

The CAN-SPAM Act classifies email content in three categories:

1. Commercial content: messages that promote or advertise products or services.
2. Transactional or relationship content: messages that relate to existing business relationships or transactions.
3. Other content: neither a commercial nor a transactional relationship.

The problem is that “Other content” is vague and has no real examples.

The Act specifies: *A commercial e-mail message is defined as any e-mail that has a “primary purpose of . . . commercial advertisement or promotion of a commercial product or service”*

Let’s take the example of an inquiry email where you contact another business to find out who is in charge of marketing. Should an email like that still contain an unsubscribe mechanism? Its primary goal is to find the right person to talk to — not to advertise a product or service. It’s not considered “transactional” or “relationship” either, since you’ve never contacted the business before. So it seems like it falls in the “other” category. Gray area here...

And, because “unsubscribe” and such only have to appear when the \*primary purpose\* is commercial, we should be able to add a line toward the end of the message that says “Visit our website to check our exciting new products!” since it’s not the primary goal of this email.

So there you go. Messages asking, “Who is the marketing director?” while including a “Visit our website to check our exciting new products!” after your signature should not need an unsubscribe mechanism.

Of course, here is the disclaimer: I’m just an entrepreneur and I take calculated risks. You should not consider the contents of this article to be legal advice.

## ***Canada***

Canada has a much more constraining policy regarding commercial emails.

CASL (Canada’s anti-spam legislation) came into effect in July, 2014.

You can find the site here: <http://fightspam.gc.ca/eic/site/030.nsf/eng/home>

More rules were added in January 2015 highlighting the fact that it is now illegal to install programs, such as malware, on someone’s computer without content. Seriously?

When was that ever legal?

And July 1, 2017, people will have an option to take civil action against company or individual that they believe has violated the law. Oh boy.

Here is the full text: <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/E-1.6/index.html>

But if you are located \*outside\* Canada, you don't need to care at all: "CASL allows Canadian enforcement against spammers operating in Canada."

Or in plain text in the law: "12. (1) A person contravenes section 6 only if a computer system located in Canada is used to send or access the electronic message." Interesting how absurd this is in our current interconnected world, isn't it?

Note that users have 60 days to unsubscribe instead of 30 for the US. So the unsubscribe mechanism should be functional for at least 60 days.

On the bright side: "Penalties for the most serious violations of the Act can go as high as \$1 million for individuals and \$10 million for businesses. Civil cases cannot be brought before the courts until July 2017". So make sure you collect more than \$10 million before you get caught if you plan on breaking the Canadian law.

2017 may be a good year for lawyers in Canada, while spammers outside Canada won't care at all. Strange world to penalize your own country.

## ***Other countries***

Each country has their own law. In the UK for example, you can cold email other businesses, but not individuals. So far so good, until you discover that solo contractors are considered individuals.

Given the economical situation of the world today, there are far more things to worry about than just spam, but it's clear that more regulation will come.

## CHAPTER THREE

### *Your worst enemy*

#### *Yourself*

To master the game, you need to know one enemy very well: yourself.

Below, you will find some really important concepts you need to keep in mind when doing cold emails.

#### *Know your goals*

Managing expectations is a big part of successful cold emails as a continuous growth channel.

I get it. You want to start cold emailing right now — but spending a bit of time reading about the mindset will help ensure you will have a better experience overall, which will help you reach your goals faster and stick with it longer.

Cold email can be used in a variety of ways, so it's important to know why you are in the game.

Is it to obtain funding meetings? To promote a product or service? To book demos? To interview people? To get feedback? To land job interviews? To get the email addresses of decision-makers? To grow your LinkedIn connections? To get more attendees for your webinar?

Once you know your goal, you need to decide how you are going to track success and what success means to you. Does your idea of success mean that you want 10 percent of prospects to reply to you? Or 5 percent to book a demo with you? Or 20 percent to subscribe to your YouTube channel?

When you have a clear goal in mind, it'll make the journey way easier. Do spend a bit of time on this — it's not that hard, and it will help you become more successful according to your own definition of success.

Finally, cold email are infamous in B2C (Business to Consumer), you want to use it for B2B (Business to Business) instead. It doesn't mean that your product should

strictly be B2B though. For example, you may sell physical products to consumers but instead of emailing potential buyers, you could use cold emails to reach out to influencers (press, bloggers...) or retailers.

## ***The 20 mile march***

The next most important thing (after you know what you want) is allowing yourself enough time to achieve that goal.

If I told you that I wanted to be the best tennis player in the world, then gave myself two weeks to reach this goal, you'd laugh. It's equally as strange to see people giving up after one month of cold emailing.

What's really important with cold email is having a repeatable process.

**You'll be way more successful if you focus on the activity more than the results.**

Let me give you an example. When I launched my business, my action was to contact 20 new businesses by email each day. The goal was not to obtain five demo calls because that was outside of my control. It was ultimately up to the prospect to book a demo with me, but contacting 20 new people each day was completely within my control. I could hold myself accountable.

If the results don't match the actions, you can always change the actions.

In the previous example of becoming a tennis player, a bad measurement would be your global ranking (as it depends on who you meet and how good others are). A better measurement would be to train 10 hours each day. You can track that and be easily held accountable. Becoming number one is much more likely.

So if you want to be good at cold email, you've got to be prepared to contact a lot of people in the process!

## ***Strategy vs Tactics***

When it comes to writing high-performing emails, you should not study the tactics — instead, look at the underlying strategies.

**If you study the tactics, you will be limited by what you learn. But if you study the strategies and the mindset, you will be able to generate an infinite number of great templates.**

To start with, your goal should be to warm people up as fast as you can and build trust — NOT to close them on first email.

**The money is almost never in the first email, so you have to think about relationship building instead.**

To give you some perspective, a stranger in the street is actually easier to engage with than someone reading your email. Someone reading your email can simply hit delete and decide to ignore you. It's harder to deal with a physical version of someone right in front of you. Interestingly enough, people think it's tough to sell on the street. But in reality, it's hard to sell anything before you establish a relationship. Not to mention that people on the street are probably not the right audience for you, and pre-qualifying people is a big part of success.

Asking for money in the first email (before establishing a relationship) is like a beggar on the street. You should aim to start a conversation first. On the street, that means asking for time or direction first... not money.

Shifting your mind from selling to being curious will not only increase your chances of selling, but it will also help you learn more about what makes a better product and the typical objections — which, in turn, will help you sell more.

Your mindset is very important — not just for writing good content, but for writing EFFECTIVE content.

Study copywriting masters and you'll be unstoppable.

## ***Dealing with rejections***

One of the most difficult aspects of cold emailing is the rejection. And if you run a typical campaign, you will get rejected A LOT. Get used to it — this is not such a bad thing. What is much worse is actually not getting any responses and therefore not knowing where the other person stands.

If you follow the advice in this book, you should expect a response rate of between 20 percent and 30 percent with no effort. But out of those responses, a certain percentage will be rejections such as:

“No”, “no thank you,” “unsubscribe,” “get me off your list,” “this is not of interest to us,” “No interest. Thanks,” “Not interested,” “Sorry, we don't need these kinds of services at this time,” and so on.

You will even get the occasional person who's having a really bad day and needs to get their frustration out:

“Stop spamming me. You're emailing me about a product that no longer exists. You're obviously not doing any actual research on which people you should be cold emailing and I certainly wouldn't use your services based on this exchange.”

“One more email from you and I'll take out a restraining order on you and your company”

“I get dozens of cold emails (i.e. spam) a day. It would be a full time job to reply to them all, and it is obviously made worse when the same people email me until they get a response. No offense intended, but if the first 3 emails didn't evoke a positive response, it's highly unlikely the 4th will.”

“I suggest you talk to these people: <http://www.samaritans.org.nz> Spamming me to get my attention GUARANTEES I won't listen to you.”

These are all real answers by the way and on top of this, you need to add the hard and soft bounces when emails are invalids, mailbox full... and you'll face a lot negativity and many just give up after “testing” cold emailing and wrongly assuming this is a channel that would not work for their business.

So, is it really worth it? How can you deal with all that negativity?

1. To start with, you have to recognize that this is part of the game. Not everyone likes the same things, so by default, you will get people who dislike what you have to say or offer. That's OK. Your approach and the market you are in will generate very different reactions. Try cold emailing doctors with a friend-tone, dropping their MD title and you'll see what I mean by that. Little things are big things with people.

2. It gets a lot easier when you have success to counter balance this.

Consider some of the other messages I've received from cold emails:

“Nice email. My co-founder Tom, would like to meet with you. I assume he can go via the calendar link?”

After my fourth email: “I appreciate you following up so many times. I have been busy, indeed. My inbox is a mess right now. I didn't forget about you. I simply planned to get back to you later. I have other priorities I need to deal with, but I promise to evaluate the applicability of your solution in the near future.”

“Hi Jeremy, well I am not so sure about rockstar, but happy to answer any questions if you are looking for user input on ideas.”

“I hope that you had a wonderful Christmas and are enjoying this special time of the year. That's an interesting question (...)”

“Hi Jeremy. Can we make it the following week? I'm on leave until then and am trying (for once) not to have any work meetings during that time.”

“Hi Jeremy. Sounds interesting, does Tuesday work?”

These are all very nice leads to get. So concentrate on those and track your ratio of rejection vs connections and aim for 1/1 to start with.

It’s been shown that being analytical makes us less emotional. So take advantage of this and start tracking numbers with your emails.

3. Another way is to rely heavily on automation. This means that you can set an entire week of automation and let it run without having to push the button to send email daily.

You can also not look at your cold email inbox for a few days to give yourself more of a chance of getting some positive responses too. The idea is to outsource all the emotional burden of sending emails and follow-ups to a cold-hearted machine that will relentlessly send emails whether you feel poorly or great, whether you’re sleeping, in a meeting, or just doing something else.

## *Expected results*

Here’s how to measure your cold email efforts, so that you can get a good sense of how you’re doing.

**1. Open rate** - A prospect who opens a sequence — AKA at least one of the emails you send them.

80-100 percent: You are doing a great job  
**70-80 percent: The zone you should be in**  
60-70 percent: Low results  
Under 60 percent: Rubbish

**2. Click rate** - Not easy to really quantify because the call to action with cold emails is rarely to have people click on links, but rather to reply to you. Here are some directions on “casual” links (a link to your company website, a link to your LinkedIn profile and so on).

30 percent and above: Doing fantastic  
20-30 percent: Great results  
**10-20 percent: The zone you should be in**  
5-10 percent: Low results  
Under 5 percent: Rubbish

**3. Reply rate** - People actually hitting reply and sending an email (this includes both positive and negative responses)

75-100 percent: You are doing amazingly, keep doing it, I can't even get my family to reply in this range

50-75 percent: You are doing fantastic

40-50 percent: You are doing great

**20-40 percent: *The zone you should be in***

10-20 percent: Low results

5-10 percent: Poor results, something needs to change.

Under 5 percent: Rubbish, you need to seriously review what's going on.