

# 10 Cold Email Formulas

## That Just Plain Work

For years copywriters have used basic scientific principles of persuasion and influence to come up with a number of writing techniques that reliably draw readers into their content. These formulas just plain work – and can stop people in their tracks and compel them to read your cold email.

Here are 10 of the best formulas we've come across, as seen in real-world cold email examples from Yesware sales reps and others.

### 1. Before-After-Bridge (BAB)

**Before** – Here's your world now

**After** – Imagine what the world would be like if you solved this problem

**Bridge** – Here's how to get there

The screenshot shows an email interface with a subject line "Recipients" and "Subject". The body text is as follows:

Hi Mary,

If you're like most companies, sales transactions increase significantly in Q3/Q4, yet most executives have no way of knowing the ROI of their commission spend. ← **BEFORE**

Xactly's compensation platform allows you to customize sales plans that cut errors in payments and eliminate the pain of calculating and adjusting commissions for your reps. ← **AFTER**

If you are willing to give us 15 minutes, I can show you how on average our customers see a 19% lower sales turnover, 5% more reps hitting quota and 37% faster sales cycles. ← **BRIDGE**

What's the best way to earn your ear for a few minutes and share how your peers are leveraging incentive pay to drive corporate strategy?

At the bottom right, there is a blue "Send" button and a yellow circular button with the text "CLICK TO COPY".

### 2. Problem-Agitate-Solve (PAS)

**Problem** – Identify a pain point

**Agitate** – Agitate that pain point

**Solve** – Offer a solution

The screenshot shows an email interface with a subject line "Recipients" and "Subject". The body text is as follows:

Hi Alex,

I noticed on your careers page that you're hiring Sales Development Reps who diligently keep track of their activity in Salesforce. ← **PROBLEM**

Would love a few minutes to discuss how Yesware removes this burden. ← **AGITATE**

Yesware helps clients like Acquia, Zenefits, and New Relic to aggregate & automatically sync activity data to Salesforce to:

- Reduce manual Salesforce entry by 1 hr/rep/day ← **SOLVE**
- Cut activities per win in half
- Increase booked meetings by 10-15%

Would you be open to call next week to see how we could help your team?

At the bottom right, there is a blue "Send" button and a yellow circular button with the text "CLICK TO COPY".

### 3. But You Are Free

Make a request, and then tell your prospect they're free to do whatever they'd like.

This email template illustrates the 'But You Are Free' strategy. It starts with a subject line 'Recipients' and 'Subject'. The body begins with 'Hi Yesware,' followed by a thank you for the product. The main body text explains the sender's role as an early-stage tech startup and references a previous article. A key sentence is highlighted: 'My request: tweet our article to your community. It would make a world of difference to us if you helped us get off the ground.' This is followed by a quick tweet link and a final statement: 'If you'd rather not, I understand. I appreciate you reading this far!'. A 'Send' button is at the bottom right. An orange circle on the right says 'CLICK TO COPY'. Green arrows point to the highlighted text with the label 'BYAF'.

### 4. Star-Chain-Hook

**Star** – The big idea

**Chain** – A series of facts, sources, reasons, and benefits

**Hook** – The call to action

This email template illustrates the 'Star-Chain-Hook' strategy. It starts with a subject line 'Recipients' and 'Subject'. The body begins with 'Good afternoon Dakota,' followed by a statement: 'Small businesses, Fortune 100 companies, government entities and nonprofit organizations all have one thing in common.' This is followed by a highlighted sentence: 'They save a whole lot of time and money by using Conga Composer.' Below this, there is a call to action: 'Check out some of our case studies to see for yourself. I've also included a couple of links that provide more information about the product:' followed by two bullet points: 'Conga Composer Data Sheet (PDF)' and 'Conga Composer Functionality Overview (PDF)'. The final paragraph states: 'You can start a free 30-day trial today to see how Conga Composer can help streamline document generation and reporting for Yesware. There's no obligation to subscribe, and free technical support is included in your trial.' A 'Send' button is at the bottom right. An orange circle on the right says 'CLICK TO COPY'. Green arrows point to the highlighted text with labels 'STAR', 'CHAIN', and 'HOOK'.

### 5. Attention-Interest-Desire-Action (AIDA)

**Attention** – Grab the reader's attention

**Interest** – Make it personal to engage their interest

**Desire** – Build desire for what you're offering

**Action** – Ask for a response

This email template illustrates the 'Attention-Interest-Desire-Action' strategy. It starts with a subject line 'Recipients' and 'Subject'. The body begins with 'Hi Barbara,' followed by a highlighted sentence: 'I saw that you were interested in taking a look at Yesware via Twitter.' This is followed by another highlighted sentence: 'My colleague and I have had great success teaming up with Social Selling experts like yourself.' Below this, there is a highlighted sentence: 'A few notable experts we partnered up with include: Trish Bertuzzi, Lori Richardson, Jim Keenan and Craig Rosenberg.' The final paragraph states: 'I'd love to get your feedback on Yesware's product and explore how we could work together to share Yesware with your clients. Would you have some time next week to connect?' A 'Send' button is at the bottom right. An orange circle on the right says 'CLICK TO COPY'. Green arrows point to the highlighted text with labels 'ATTENTION', 'INTEREST', 'DESIRE', and 'ACTION'.

## 6. Star-Story-Solution

**Star** – The main character in your email. It could be you, your prospect, a product, etc.

**Story** – Talks about how the star faces the same problem your market does

**Solution** – An explanation of how the star wins in the end

Subject

Recipients

Subject

Hi there,

← **STAR**

I share big ideas with some of the most influential media in the world. Yesware is my secret weapon.

Last week, it helped me land feature stories in VentureBeat and ReadWrite. Two days ago, it showed me that the exclusive I pitched to Forbes was still sitting in an inbox, waiting to be opened (womp).

← **STORY**

So I went to Wall Street Journal and they're taking it instead (win).

Bottom line: I didn't know about the referral credit before I sold my entire team on Yesware, and now I feel as though you guys will owe me something in return.

Kidding.

← **SOLUTION**

Real bottom line: I want to contribute to the success of a company that makes me successful every day.

Send

## 7. The Reader's Digest Model

In 1961, legendary copywriter John Caples analyzed Reader's Digest to find its secrets for hooking readers in the opening paragraph. He found that the most-successful articles:

- Are fact-packed
- Are concise
- Are specific
- Contain few adjectives
- Arouse curiosity

Subject

Recipients

Looks like we have plenty of things in common... ← **SHORT OPENER**

Hey Craig,

← **BEGINS WITH INTERRUPTING IDEA**

Here are some commonalities between Yesware and TOPO:

- Your customer, Company X, is also a customer of ours.
- We are a Salesforce.com ISV partner, and it looks like Salesforce.com is a client of yours.
- Our Director of Sales is on the speakers list as the Sales Hacker conference. He also used to work at Netsuite, another client of yours.
- **Most importantly, we're focused on driving results.** Customers like Acquia, and The Financial Times have seen a 25% growth in new business using our product. Customers choose our sales technology to accelerate their sales efforts.

Let's explore how we can work together to help your customers share the same experience our customers have had since using Yesware. I also can share with you some more customer success stories and why our market-leading product is chosen by high-growth sales teams.

When is the best time for you to connect?

Cheers,  
Dakota

← **PIQUES CURIOSITY**

**PS: It looks like your session title is "TBD." If there is any data/information I can provide to strengthen your presentation, please let me know.**

Send

## 8. The 3-B Plan

**Brevity** – Keep it short

**Blunt** – Get to the point

**Basic** – Keep it simple

Give the reader a clear sense of who you are and what you want from them. And get to the point quickly.

Subject

Recipients

Subject

Leslie,

I just tried giving you a call and left a voicemail.

Please give me a call back at 555-675-9870, or send me a note if you get the chance.

Thank you!

Send

CLICK TO COPY

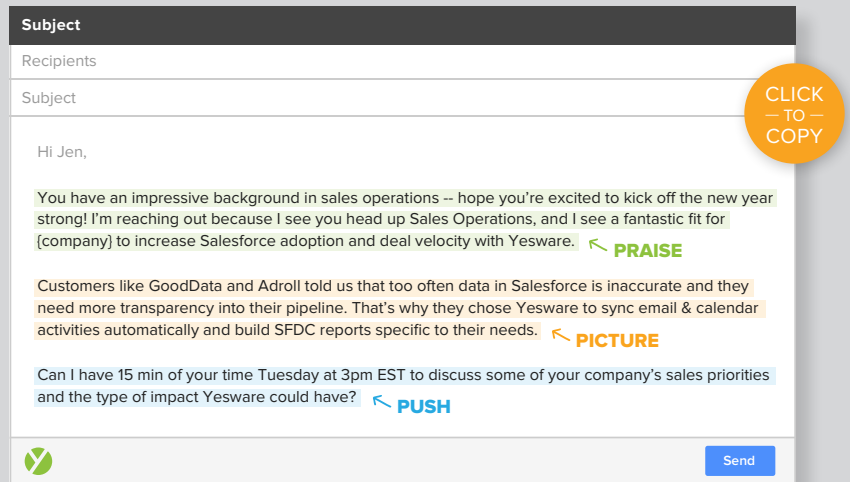
66% REPLY RATE

## 9. Praise-Picture-Push (3P's)

**Praise** – Open with a sincere, respectful compliment

**Picture** – Use cause-and-effect reasoning to paint a picture describing how your product/service/idea will deliver

**Push** – Ask them to commit



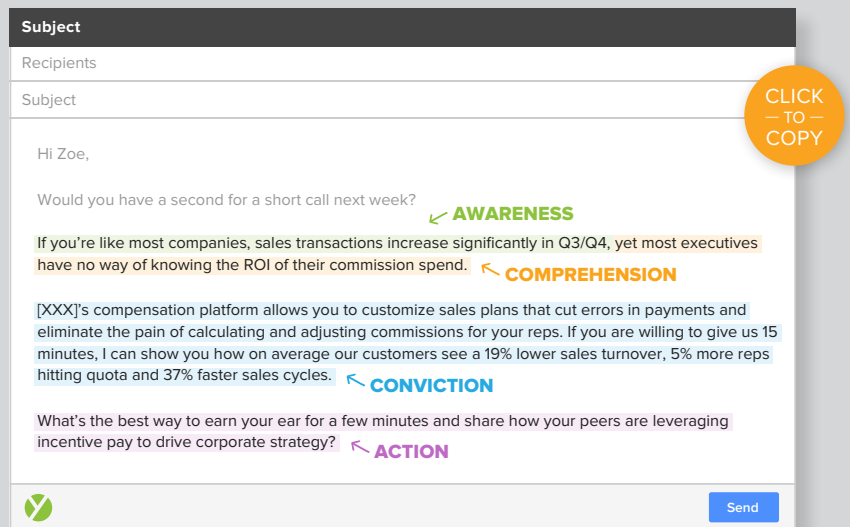
## 10. Awareness-Comprehension-Conviction-Action (ACCA)

**Awareness** – Present the situation or problem

**Comprehension** – Describe how it will impact them

**Conviction** – Create desire by explaining how your solution fixes the problem

**Action** – Ask for a response



## Bottom Line: You Don't Have To Reinvent The Wheel Every Time

Want to see the science behind why each one works?

Read our blog post: <http://www.yesware.com/blog/cold-email/>


# Yesware *Sell Smarter.*

“


*"My team sends a high volume of outbound emails each day. The engagement insights we get from Yesware are invaluable. We're making qualified decisions based on analytics and data, rather than hypothesis and guesswork...*

***It's shortened our sales cycle by at least 20%."***



**Tim Bertrand**  
VP, Worldwide Sales  




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