The Ultimate Guide to

Sales Email

(Backed By Data)

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YESWARE EMAIL PHILOSOPHY

Before we dive into the nitty-gritty of what makes a great sales email, let's go over some broad but important rules that should drive every email interaction.

Be yourself.

Trust is the foundation of every transaction. If a buyer doesn't trust you'll give him what he's paying for, the transaction won't happen. So, it's your job, as the seller, to establish trust by showing the prospect you can deliver on exactly what you promise. The best way to show you're a trustworthy person is to be genuine and demonstrate to your prospects that you truly care about them.

Have a game plan.

Before sending every sales email, ask yourself this question: Is this going to move the prospect closer to making a purchase decision? If the answer is no, then don't do it. Empty sales touches that deliver no value to your prospects make them leery of giving you more of their time. Equally as important, you aren't doing yourself any favors by wasting your own limited selling time on sales actions that don't move the customer at least one step forward in their buying process.

Add value to every exchange.

In today's world of overloaded inboxes and digital distraction, the salespeople who win are the ones who add value to the sales process. That means eliminating trivial sales interactions, like check-in or touch-base emails, and instead going the extra mile to provide information that will assist your prospects in their decision-making. Share relevant news articles, links to market research, white papers or other industry content that they will find valuable. When every interaction is a meaningful one, you'll train your prospects to pay attention, open and read the emails you send.

Yesware TIP

To find valuable content to send your prospects, set up Google Alerts, Twitter Alerts, or use Talkwalker Alerts to monitor for media mentions of the company, their chief stakeholders, products, competitors and related industry terms.

13 Scientifically Proven Ways to Increase Open Rates and Get Replies

At Yesware, we're all about abstracting data from email activity to help salespeople close more deals. The following are tips for increasing open rates and getting more replies, all backed by data.

INCREASE OPEN RATES

To find out what impacts the probability of an email getting opened, we studied the email behavior of more than 6,000 anonymous Yesware users. Based on the data provided by our study, here are some tips for increasing email open rates and forging better lines of communication.

1. Send emails when there's less competition.

While most people consider the work week to be the most active time to send and receive email, our study found that more work-related emails are opened on Saturday and Sunday than during the actual work week. To improve the chances your emails get read, send important notes on Friday afternoons or weekends.

Email Reply Rates are Highest on the Weekends

|	Emails Sent	% Open	% Reply	% Reply Same Day
Week Day	525,742	66.3%	39.1%	33.1%
Weekend	5,278	73.6%	**45.8%**	32.6%

2. Don't limit sending emails to business hours.

Email open rates are highest early in the morning and late at night. If you're not an early-riser or night-owl, consider using Yesware's Send Later feature to schedule your emails ahead of time.

Send Emails in the Early Morning or Evening
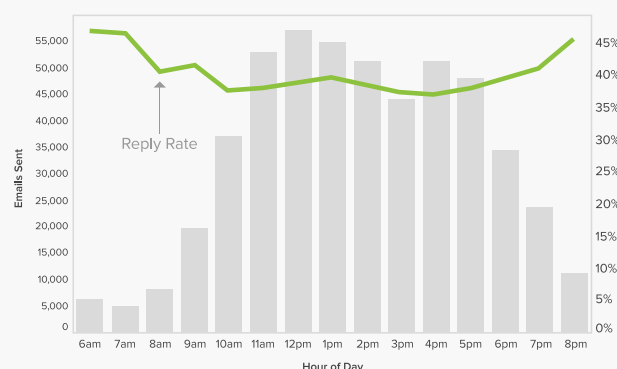
Yesware TIP
Perfect the Subject Line

BE SPECIFIC.
While it may be tempting to 'arouse curiosity' in your subject line, it's better to be precise instead. With so much junk email floating around, almost anything that hints of spam will get deleted immediately. Your subject line should describe what your email is about – plain & simple.

MAKE IT ACTION ORIENTED.
A good subject line leads to action. To make the subject line action-oriented, provide a sense of urgency and convey a value that is somehow unique.

INCLUDE DIGITS.
If you're going to include a number in the subject line, write it out as numerals (33 opposed to thirty-three). Digits stop wandering eyes, making it more likely your email will get noticed in a crowded inbox.

3. Subject line length doesn't matter.

Yesware's research also found that subject line length did not have a significant impact on email open and reply rates. Looking at data drawn from two anonymous companies in the graphic, we can see that there is no specific pattern that points to any particular word count outperforming others. It's all over the place.

4. But some words are better than others.

There's no such thing as a silver-bullet subject line. The best way to understand what makes some email subject lines more or less effective is to study what works for others and then try it for ourselves. Here's what we've learned from the best and worst email subject lines sent by over 1,000 anonymous inside sales pros. Here's a hint: Don't use the word 'calendar.'

Email Purpose:
Scheduling a Meeting

Word Used in Subject Line	Opens	Replies
call	62.6%	35.1%
meeting	60.5%	30.7%
time	59.5%	24.9%
calendar	33.1%	9.9%

Email Purpose:
Greeting a Prospective Customer

Word Used in Subject Line	Opens	Replies
intro	61.6%	35.8%
introduction	52.6%	35.0%
welcome	65.3%	24.9%
hey	49.7%	18.6%

Pro TIP

"The first step is grabbing the prospect's attention. Use short, precise subject lines that speak to an accomplishment and/or the reason to open the email. Open rates will soar with subject lines that compel the prospect to act."

AARON JEFFERIES
Senior Account Executive
LocBox

5. Send to two or more people.

Sending one email to multiple people improves both open rate and reply rate by as much as 12 percent. The data even suggests that emailing three or more recipients increases the likelihood of getting a response, as illustrated in the chart. Make sure to get in the habit of asking your prospects, "Is there someone else you want me to copy on this email?"
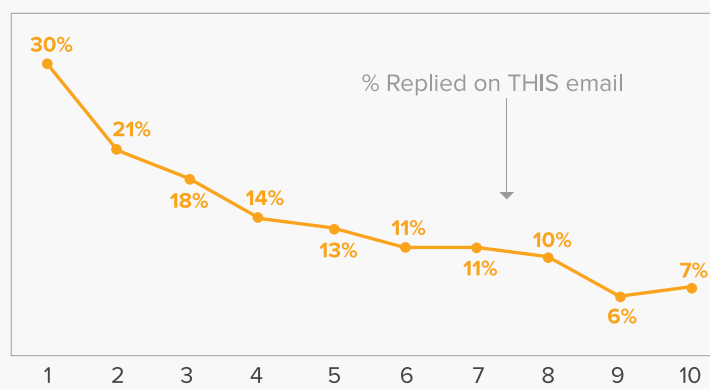
6. Don't wait for a reply.

Response time to prospecting emails is a critical factor in determining success. It takes just one day for an email to be a lost cause – 91 percent of the time it's opened within a day after you sent it.

When Sending an Email to 2 People...

	Open Rate	Reply Rate
1 recipient in *To* field +1 in *Cc* field	**83.7%**	**61.2%**
2 recipients in *To* field	70.2%	49.3%

Email Three Recipients for Best Reply Rate

1 Recipient	2 Recipients	3 Recipients
35.9%	54.9%	62.6%
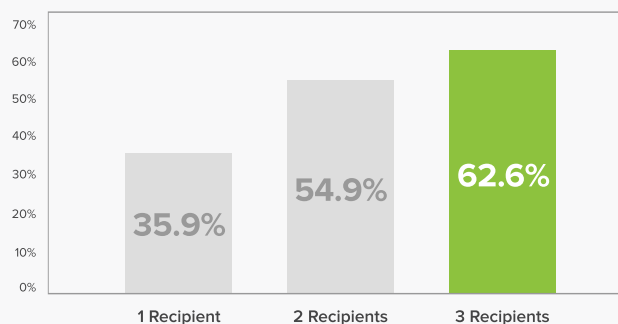
How Many Emails Should I Send to Get the First Reply?

% Replied on THIS email

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
30%	21%	18%	14%	13%	11%	11%	10%	6%	7%

GET REPLIES

Alright, so you survived the "delete," and you got a few opens. But are your messages getting replies? If not, use these tips below, backed by research.

7. Mention other stakeholders.

When it comes to making decisions – like whether or not to reply to someone's email – we take cues from other people. If your prospect sees that his colleagues are receptive to your ideas, he'll be more likely to give you the time of day. That's one reason this email template used by Yesware has been so effective at garnering replies.

8. Provide a reason.

Clearly justify why the prospect should get back to you, and be sure to use the word "because." A study performed by Harvard social psychologist Ellen Langer found that people were more willing to comply with a request – in this instance, to cut someone in line – when the line-cutter used the word "because" when describing the reason. Even when the reason was seemingly nonsensical, 93 percent of people still complied!

9. Insert a little humor.

You've been going back and forth with someone for weeks now, and then suddenly, they're MIA. What's your next move? Throw in a frog. In an experiment by O'Quinn and Aronoff, buyers agreed to pay significantly more money when a seller said, "My final offer is $X ... and I'll throw in a pet frog." Inserting humor into an email makes the prospect relax, smile, and increases compliance.

Template: Mention other stakeholders   _ X

Recipients

Subject: Get 100% Salesforce compliance with Yesware

33%
REPLY RATE

Hi [Prospect name],

[Stakeholder at prospect's company] told me he's interested in getting Yesware for the sales team.

Customers like GoodData and AdRoll told me that too often data in Salesforce is inaccurate and they need more transparency in their pipeline. That's why they chose Yesware to sync email and calendar activities.

Are you available [day and time] to discuss how Yesware can help your sales team be more productive?

☑ Track   🔔 Remind ▴   ☑ CRM   Templates ▴

Send   ⏱ Later ▴   📎   A   📎   +   Saved   🗑   ▾

Template: Insert a little humor   _ X

Recipients

Subject: Are you OK?

46%
REPLY RATE

Hi [Prospect name],

I haven't heard back from you, and that tells me one of three things:

1) You've already chosen a different company for this, and if that's the case, please let me know so I can stop bothering you.

2) You're still interested, but haven't had the time to get back to me yet.

3) You've fallen and can't get up. In that case, let me know and I'll call 911.

Please let me know which one it is, because I'm starting to worry. Thanks in advance and looking forward to hearing from you.

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Send   ⏱ Later ▴   📎   A   📎   +   Saved   🗑   ▾

10. Three is the magic number.

Numerous studies have proven that the brain likes to be presented with three choices, whereas four choices may trigger skepticism, and anything higher can lead to confusion. Try breaking your email into three (short) paragraphs, offer three options for meeting times, or describe your product using three adjectives.
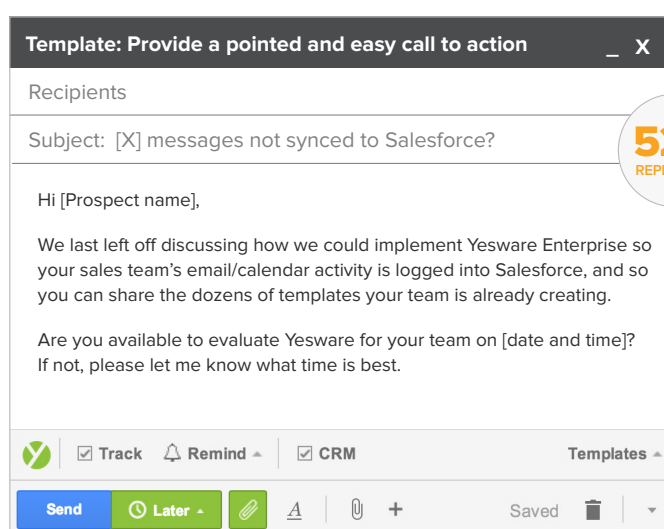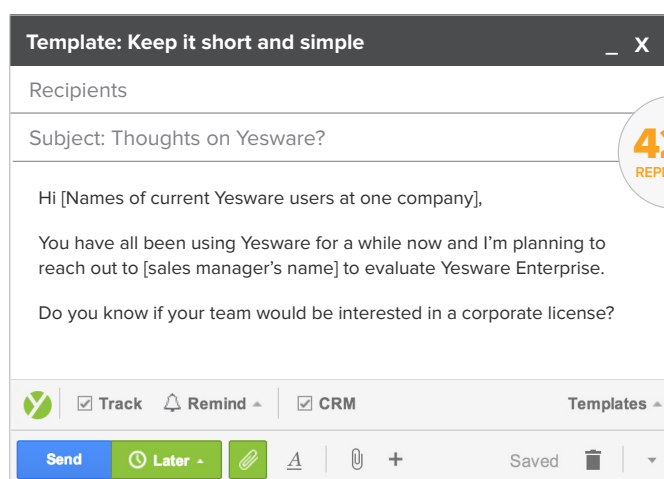
11. Keep it short and simple.

Drawing from data culled from five years of emails, researchers from MIT and Boston University found that shorter emails result in quicker response time. MIT's Marshall Van Alstyne argues that Twitter length — roughly 140 characters — is ideal. The below email template illustrates how you can keep it short without sacrificing results.

12. Use the prospect's name more than once.

Recent research shows that reading our names in print activates the brain. To get prospects engaged in your message, personalization is key. Try catching the prospect's eye by placing his or her name in the subject line or in the closing.

13. Provide a pointed and easy call to action.

According to research by psychologist Robert Sutton, people are more responsive if they've been given clear directions on how to contribute. Research from Carnegie Mellon also found that people are more likely to respond to email requests that are easy to answer, as opposed to complex messages that require more time to address. Below is an example that's worked particularly well for Yesware.

Template: Keep it short and simple _ X

Recipients

Subject: Thoughts on Yesware?

42% REPLY RATE

Hi [Names of current Yesware users at one company],

You have all been using Yesware for a while now and I'm planning to reach out to [sales manager's name] to evaluate Yesware Enterprise.

Do you know if your team would be interested in a corporate license?

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Template: Provide a pointed and easy call to action _ X

Recipients

Subject: [X] messages not synced to Salesforce?

52% REPLY RATE

Hi [Prospect name],

We last left off discussing how we could implement Yesware Enterprise so your sales team's email/calendar activity is logged into Salesforce, and so you can share the dozens of templates your team is already creating.

Are you available to evaluate Yesware for your team on [date and time]? If not, please let me know what time is best.

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Send   ⏱ Later ▲   🔗 A 📎 +   Saved 🗑 ▼

Bonus: Write Better, Close More Deals

TURN BLAND TEXT INTO A PERSUASIVE EMAIL: WORK ON YOUR VERBS

To turn bland text into a persuasive email, you need to work on your verbs. Here are two important principles to keep in mind when crafting persuasive emails, especially when you have limited time and space to get your point across.

Avoid weak verbs.

Avoid weak verbs, like the verb form 'there is.' A stronger, punchier alternative to 'there is' can always be found. *For example, instead of writing, "There is no reason to drink soda," you might say, "I can think of no reason to drink soda," or "Soda should never be consumed."*

Avoid passive verbs.

Verbs are either active or passive. Active verbs are used when the person performing the action becomes the subject of the sentence. Use active verbs to make your emails come alive. An easy way to find passive verbs: look for uses of the verb 'to be' (is, was, were, am, etc). *For example, instead of "Jen was given a thumbs up by him" (passive), you might say, "He gave Jen a thumbs up" (active).*

Try it yourself!

Take a look at the sentence below. Highlight the verb form 'to be,' as well as weak verbs that don't carry enough punch. Look for stronger substitutes.

"This product is revolutionary in the field of online research and it makes your work easier."

* Answer Key: "Is revolutionary" is a passive verb. "Makes" is a weak verb. A possible alternative is: This product revolutionizes online research. It lightens your workload.

Pro TIP

"PROOFREAD. Every time. Misspellings and grammatical errors are a big red flag for me as a hiring manager AND as a prospect. I may still talk to you, but you already have a black mark on your record."

SETH LIST
Director of Marketing Development, *Umbel*

Trust the Experts: Email Templates That WORK

Learning how to write an effective email takes practice. To shorten your learning curve, here are some email templates proven to be effective for every stage of the sales process.
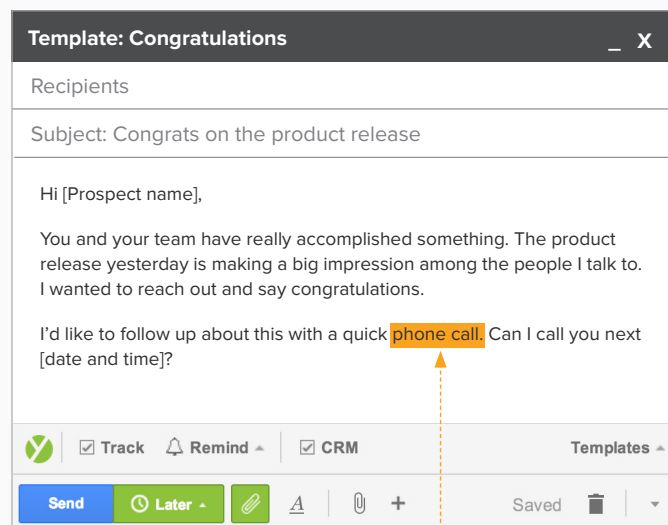
COLD EMAILS

Breaking through to a hot prospect with a cold sales email is tough, but not impossible. Great ways to strike up a conversation include:

1 **Congratulate the prospect on a product launch or press coverage.**

2 **Send praise for new success.**

3 **Add value by referencing an article or blog post.**

1

Congratulate the prospect on a product launch or press coverage.

Template: Congratulations ___ X

Recipients

Subject: Congrats on the product release

Hi [Prospect name],

You and your team have really accomplished something. The product release yesterday is making a big impression among the people I talk to. I wanted to reach out and say congratulations.

I'd like to follow up about this with a quick phone call. Can I call you next [date and time]?

☑ Track 🔔 Remind ▲ ☑ CRM Templates ▲

Send ⏱ Later ▲ 📎 A 📎 + Saved 🗑 ▼

Always include a strong call to action that outlines the next steps. Asking for a phone call is a great way to take things to the next step.

Pro TIP

"Go straight to the top. A CEO or CMO will likely not be the ones to use your product or even evaluate it, but if they delegate meeting you to the appropriate person, you'll be much more likely to get in the door."

ALEX RIVAS
Sr. Manager, Global Client Development, *Unmetric*

2

Send praise for new success.

The key here is to be genuine, not fawning.

Template: Praise _ X

Recipients

Subject: Heard about your skills and wanted to get in touch

Hi [Prospect name],

We haven't met in person but I've been impressed with your [specific example, such as blog, work, or leadership] for some time. This isn't a particularly easy environment to excel in. Amazing work.

I was wondering if I could ask you a couple of questions. My company is having some success with [product/service] but your experience could really help us accelerate.

I'd like to follow up about this with a quick phone call. We can cover the important issues in 20 minutes. Can I call you next [date and time]?

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Send   ⏱ Later ▲   🖉   _A_   🔗   +   Saved 🗑   ▼

Always suggest a date and time. Most people who are at all interested will check their calendar for that day.

Pro TIP

"If your templates look like templates, you're wasting your time! The best way to reach a prospect is to identify with them and their needs. Researching your prospects is key. If they have a blog or use social media, it can help make your emails more targeted."

SHAWN BRENNAN
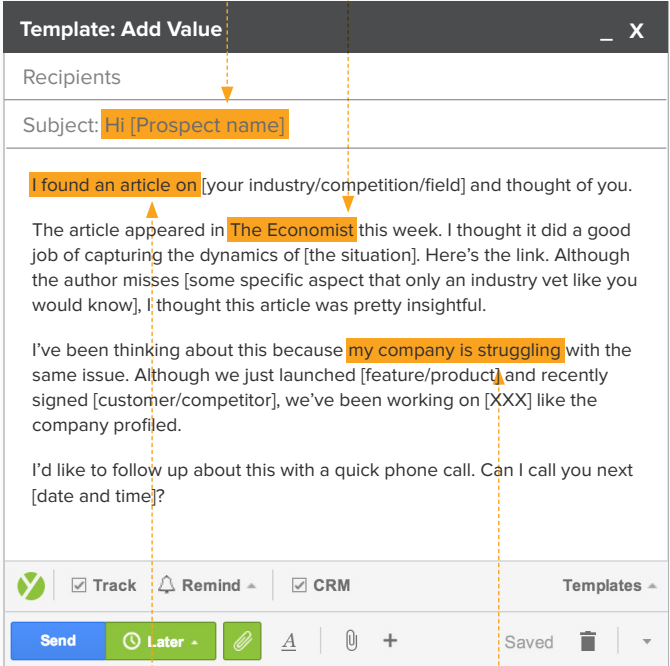Market Development Manager, *Cloudant, an IBM Company*

3

Add value by referencing an article or blog post.

Use the prospect's name so they know it's not spam.

Citing the source at the top establishes credibility. Don't bother with this approach if your source isn't bulletproof.

Template: Add Value _ X

Recipients

Subject: Hi [Prospect name]

I found an article on [your industry/competition/field] and thought of you.

The article appeared in The Economist this week. I thought it did a good job of capturing the dynamics of [the situation]. Here's the link. Although the author misses [some specific aspect that only an industry vet like you would know], I thought this article was pretty insightful.

I've been thinking about this because my company is struggling with the same issue. Although we just launched [feature/product] and recently signed [customer/competitor], we've been working on [XXX] like the company profiled.

I'd like to follow up about this with a quick phone call. Can I call you next [date and time]?

☑ Track   🔔 Remind ▲   ☑ CRM   Templates ▲

Send   🕐 Later ▲   🖉   A   🔗   +   Saved 🗑   ▼

What you share should not be about your company. To establish credibility, offer something that will genuinely help your prospect be more successful.

It's okay to admit you're working to improve something. It's honest and a state that everyone can relate to.

KEEPING IN TOUCH

At Yesware, we recommend making it a practice of revisiting your prospect at least four times by email. The good news is that by continuing to offer something of value to the start of your messages, you'll begin to be seen as a generous and trusted resource instead of just another salesperson, and, by extension, you'll begin to close more deals.

The basic approach with keeping in touch over email is to use a different approach than with the opening email. If you were praising a prospect, switch to adding value. Mix up your approach to demonstrate your depth as a resource and a person.

Template: Congratulations to follow an add value opening _ X

Recipients

Subject: Quick question about your new product line

Hi [Prospect name],

Last week I sent you an article from The Economist on [changing industry dynamic] because it seemed to speak to your situation. This morning I found out your team announced a whole new product line! Congratulations to you and your team on the launch. I know how hard it is to build something from scratch. In looking over the materials you posted, I had two questions:

1. [A genuine, non-self-serving question about how it works]

2. [A question about how it could intersect with your company's product]

The reason I'm asking is because my company makes [xxx] and [yyy]. I'm always trying to find new applications and to learn new approaches for our work here.

Interested to hear your thoughts.

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Send   🕐 Later ▲   📎   A   📎   +   Saved 🗑 ▼

Always use "you" and "yours" when talking about the prospect's company or team. Personal pronouns personalize the email.

Don't try to schedule a call with this follow up email. Let the person get back to you via email if they want. If they do, you are building communication.

Template: Add value to follow a congratulations opening _ X

Recipients

Subject: Congrats on [your news, launch], Quick question

Hi [Prospect name],

Your news today made an impression on me – I've found myself thinking about your company a fair amount. Here's a BusinessWeek article that thoughtfully describes some of the same opportunities your announcement addressed [link]. Am I reading this right? [Question about how the article impacts the prospect's company]?

Hope you find it interesting!

☑ Track   🔔 Remind ▲   ☑ CRM   Templates ▲

Send   🕐 Later ▲   📎   A   📎   +   Saved 🗑 ▼

As our world becomes increasingly fast-paced, the value of being timely is getting higher. If you can reach out within a minute of something happening relevant to the prospect, that's great. Within an hour – good. Within a day – OK. Within a week? That's borderline. If you respond any longer than that, find something else to write about.

Invite prospects into a conversation by asking a question. The more specific and straightforward your question, the better. You want to make it easy to reply to, and make sure they clearly see the benefit of replying.

Keep it short. The goal here is to add value, ask a question in case the prospect wants to engage, and then get out of the way.

GETTING BACK IN TOUCH

Typically, if you've been out of touch with a prospect for a while, it's because the prospect isn't hot, or the fit isn't right. When you do get back in touch, oftentimes it's better to just find out the prospect's interest level by asking for a meeting. Here's a template that uses the congratulations approach in the introduction, then goes right for the meeting in the closing.

Template: Reconnecting _ X

Recipients

Subject: Let's get coffee on [date]

Hi [Prospect name],

I hope this note finds you well. You guys have been busy since we last talked! I saw your announcement of [X] and [Y]. Congratulations! Things have been going well over here too – we released [new feature of relevant product] and have been getting great feedback from our customers.

Are you going to be [at industry event or in city of prospect's HQ] in two weeks? I'm heading out, and I'd love to ask you about your announcement of [Y]. I have a thought about how it might dovetail with some of the R&D work we're doing here.

Let me know if you'll be in town.

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Send | ⏱ Later ▲ | 📎 | A | 📎 | +   Saved 🗑 | ▼

Yesware TIP

Yesware's **email tracking feature** makes it easy to determine which prospects are best to follow up with. If a prospect reads your email multiple times and/or clicks on the internal message links, it is likely that he or she is interested, but needs that extra nudge to seal the deal. We recommend sending a follow-up email within 24 hours of when the recipient reads or forwards your email.

OVERCOMING OBJECTIONS

It's common to face objections during the sales process. The better, faster, and more effectively you handle them, the more successful you will be.

Sales objections typically fall into three categories:

1 **Lack of need.**
2 **Lack of urgency.**
3 **Lack of money.**

Here are three email templates to handle objections in each category:

Template: Lack of need _ X

Recipients

Subject: Thoughts on your competitors

Hi [Prospect name],

Thanks for your note earlier today. Since our last conversation, I've been doing more research into your competitors, and I found this interesting link [a capability of the prospect's competitor]. It struck me that some of the ideas we discussed could be quickly leveraged to provide you with an even more compelling value for your customers.

The ultimate outcome of our collaboration would be much more than just this one feature, but here's a very quick win that could benefit us both.

Can we arrange a call to discuss this further? Say next [day] at [time]?

☑ Track   △ Remind ▲   ☑ CRM   Templates ▲

Send   ⏰ Later ▲   📎   A   📎   +   Saved   🗑   ▼

Template: Lack of money _ X

Recipients

Subject: Let's cut the fat

Hi [Prospect name],

I just got your email, and before you get swamped with other things, I wanted to ask you a couple of quick questions about your pricing comments:

1. Is our total package price too high?
2. Are there aspects of the overall proposal that didn't resonate as much with your team?

Sometimes I get too carried away with all we could do together. By staging a roll out, we could lower our price while still leaving the option to expand later. As to your comment about breaking down the price by billable hours, I find that's not always the most helpful way to view our value. I'm happy to go into my thinking here when we next talk.

Are you free for a call tomorrow at [time]?

☑ Track   △ Remind ▲   ☑ CRM   Templates ▲

Send   ⏰ Later ▲   📎   A   📎   +   Saved   🗑   ▼

Template: Lack of urgency _ X

Recipients

Subject: The math from our earlier call

Hi [Prospect name],

Since our last conversation, I've been building out a financial model of the impact our partnership can have on your business. I know you get these things all the time, but this time I've used your assumptions and results even more conservative than we've had with a similar implementation. The end result is that after only three months of working together, the project will be cash positive for you guys. Over [X] years, we can drop more than $[XX] million to your bottom line! Those are the kind of results that will get us both big promotions!

Let's at least get the implementation team scheduled for a preliminary discussion. And I would be happy to review my spreadsheet with you before the meeting.

Are you available on [date and time]?

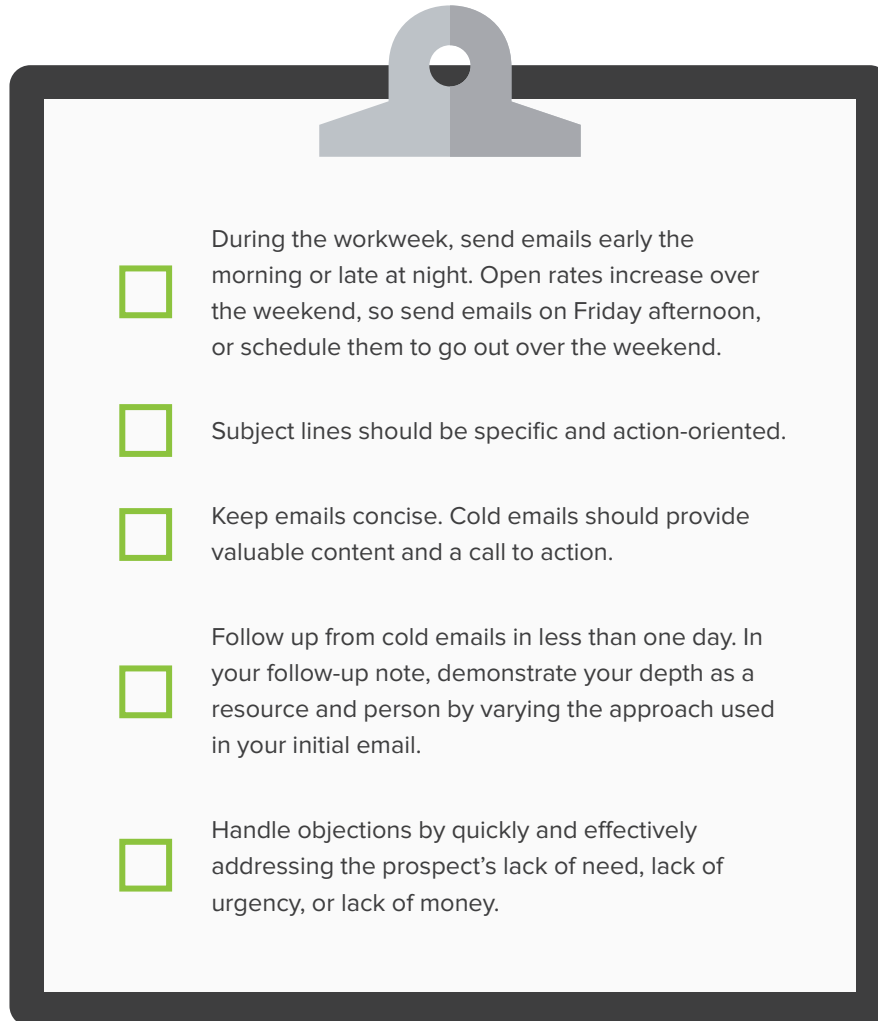☑ Track   △ Remind ▲   ☑ CRM   Templates ▲

Send   ⏰ Later ▲   📎   A   📎   +   Saved   🗑   ▼

WRAP UP

For a quick reference on the top takeaways from this eBook, check out the checklist below. Do these five things every day to increase open rates, get more responses, and close more deals.

☐ During the workweek, send emails early the morning or late at night. Open rates increase over the weekend, so send emails on Friday afternoon, or schedule them to go out over the weekend.

☐ Subject lines should be specific and action-oriented.

☐ Keep emails concise. Cold emails should provide valuable content and a call to action.

☐ Follow up from cold emails in less than one day. In your follow-up note, demonstrate your depth as a resource and person by varying the approach used in your initial email.

☐ Handle objections by quickly and effectively addressing the prospect's lack of need, lack of urgency, or lack of money.

Yesware TIP

Last but not least, don't be afraid to experiment, iterate, and learn from your own email data. It costs nothing to take a chance and try something new with your email communication, but the rewards of targeted, relevant messaging can be the difference between getting nowhere and landing that first meeting.

START WRITING (AND TRACKING) SALES EMAILS THAT GET RESULTS

Now that you know how to write data-driven, timely, hard-hitting sales emails, it's time to get to work.

Sign up for a free 30-day trial of Yesware for Gmail or Outlook so you can:

- See who opens your emails and clicks on links.

- Create an unlimited number of personalized email templates.

- Schedule emails to be sent later, when they're most effective.

- Optimize your messages with detailed analytics and template response rates.

- Watch your connection rates soar.

TAKE THE GUESSWORK OUT OF EMAIL TODAY

Yesware