Foreword by **Aaron Ross**, coauthor of the bestseller *Predictable Revenue*

PREDICTABLE PROSPECTING

HOW TO RADICALLY INCREASE YOUR B2B SALES PIPELINE

MARYLOU TYLER

Coauthor of the bestseller *Predictable Revenue*

JEREMEY DONOVAN

Author of the international bestseller *How to Deliver a TED Talk*

ISBN:
ISBN-13:

Contents

Part II: Engage

Chapter 4: Crafting the Right Message

In Part I of this book, we explored *whom* to contact. In Part II, beginning with this chapter, we turn to engaging those right people with the right message (*what*).

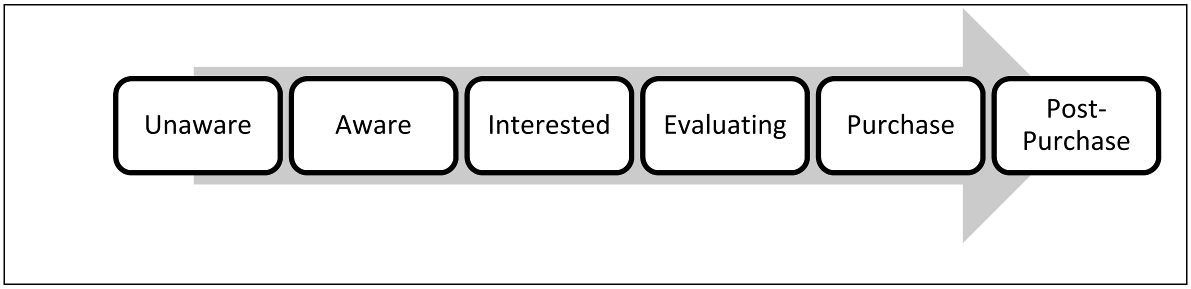


Figure 4-1: Stages of the buying cycle

Crafting the right message begins with recognizing that prospects exist at different stages of purchase intent in the customer buying cycle as illustrated in Figure 4-1. Effective messaging paves the way for authenticity, starting with initial contact to explore joint values and proceeding through product implementation, delivery, and finally post-sale engagement and satisfaction.

- In the first stage, a prospect is *unaware* of a problem standing in the way of their ability to increase profit, save time, reduce effort, or bolster their reputation. Moreover, at this stage, a prospect is likely oblivious or unconscious of the salesperson’s company and products.
- In the second stage, the prospect is *aware* of, yet apathetic to the problem as well as to the salesperson’s company and products.
- In the third stage a prospect is *interested* and begins to grasp the magnitude of the opportunity and actively seeks more detailed information.

- At the end of the fourth stage, the prospect is *evaluating* the magnitude of the opportunity and has a strong, though not yet complete, sense of the vendor's ability to help. Since people are habitual, risk-averse creatures who resist change, a prospect in this stage engages in deliberate rational and emotional consideration, learning more about solutions from various potential partners. The evaluating stage can end with a decision to do nothing, to build, or to buy.
- In the fifth stage, the prospect makes a *purchase* and becomes a customer.
- In the sixth and final stage, a prospect seeks information *post-purchase* to ensure she gets a high return on her investment.

When making initial contact via phone or e-mail, a sales representative must understand and acknowledge the prospect's current level of purchase intent and work to advance that intent one or more stages into the buying cycle. Since prospects contacted during an outbound campaign are typically in the unaware stage, messaging should focus on education directed at the problem rather than on the features of the salesperson's products or the bonafides of her company. One may conjecture that inbound leads are aware, interested, or evaluating. However, all inbound leads are not created equal. While an inbound prospect requesting a demo will at least be interested, another prospect who merely downloaded a whitepaper on industry best-practices may be equally as unaware as a random outbound contact. Hence, both content and context matter in crafting messages for Predictable Prospecting.

Find the Pain

Before we start drafting content for prospects at each stage of the buying cycle, we first need to develop a holistic understanding of the pain they are facing. McKinsey Consulting offers an excellent framework for gaining this insight known as an Issue Tree[20]. The first level, or root, of an issue tree poses a question at the highest level of business impact. For instance, a Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) might ask, “How can we increase our return on investment (ROI)?” Most issue tree questions begin with “How,” though “What” and “Why” are acceptable as well. These question starters are typically followed by “can” or “does.”

As prescribed by McKinsey, each subsequent level of the tree should articulate a mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive (MECE, pronounced me-see) set of issues—in the form of questions—at the next layer of granularity. Mutually exclusive means each of the issues are independent. Collectively exhaustive means *every* possible issue is explored at each level. Practically, we work hard to apply the mutually exclusive rule but relax the collectively exhaustive requirement to prevent the issue tree from becoming too unwieldy.

In Figure 4-2, the second level of the CMO issue breaks ROI into its two components, revenue and cost, and the third level breaks those two components down further: revenue is equal to volume times win rate times revenue per transaction; costs can be controlled either by reducing spend on program and people or by increasing productivity.

Issue trees need not be “balanced,” it is just coincidence that the third level lists three items each. In addition, issue trees can, and generally should, go several levels deeper than the one shown in Figure 4-1. But to keep the tree manageable, we can stop expanding it vertically or horizontally whenever the issues are too granular to be of interest to the individual we are attempting to reach. If we were reaching out to a CMO, we would stop expanding early. However, if we were reaching out to a Digital Marketing Manager with the hope of getting a referral to their CMO, then we would expand the tree even more. For example, the question “How can I increase volume?” leads to generating business through direct marketing (postal mail), digital marketing, and phone outreach channels. Digital marketing generates leads via paid traffic from search engine marketing, organic traffic from search engine results, and direct traffic to a website. Organic traffic can be boosted by increasing content volume, content quality, and search engine optimization. And so on . . .

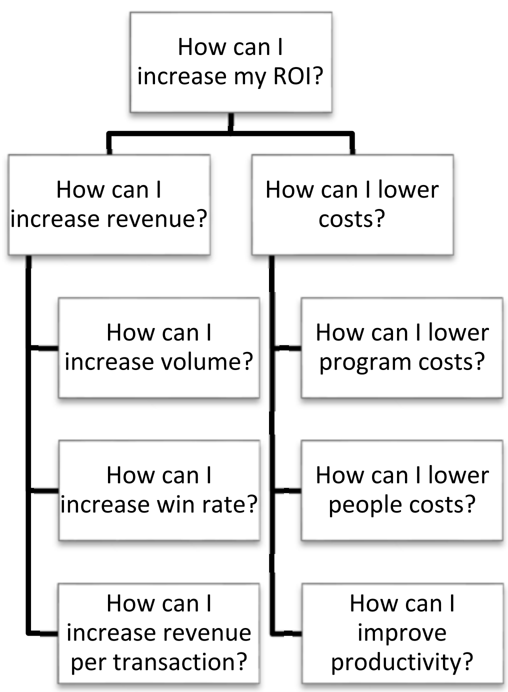


Figure 4-2: Issue tree for a Chief Marketing Officer

Resources to Validate Prospect Pain

The old adage of measuring twice and cutting once works well here to illustrate our point. Since it is generally agreed that planning is cheap and execution is expensive, taking the time to validate the importance of any given issue is of the utmost importance. This validation step ensures that sales teams not only work the right issues, but also express those issues as key in the language of the buyer.

Time-permitting, interview and survey prospects to validate the pain. In a pinch, the Internet offers countless free tools that provide nearly the same benefits in far less time.

The first set of resources is discussion boards, especially those on LinkedIn Groups and Quora. More broadly, sales professionals should search anywhere they know their prospects and customers congregate such as blogs and industry/trade websites. Among all of the options we find Quora especially useful because participants formulate issues in the form of questions that get Upvoted by other readers. Building upon our CMO example, imagine a salesperson focused on selling marketing automation solutions. Entering "marketing automation" in Quora's search yields a link to the topic "Sales and Marketing Automation" which has 8,800 followers. Since it is currently not possible to sort the page by the number of Upvotes, we must scan the page to find the most popular questions. The top five are as follows:

1. Are my marketing automation hopes too high? (64 Upvotes)
2. What is a good online marketing automation tool for B2C startups? (61 Upvotes)

3. What is the best marketing automation tool for small and mid-size companies? (60 Upvotes)
4. What are some of the best sales strategies for SaaS products? (47 Upvotes)
5. What is the best marketing automation tool for B2B lead generation? (42 Upvotes)

These five most popular questions are clearly being asked by prospects at later stages—interested or evaluating—of the decision cycle. We find the phrasing of the questions most valuable because it suggests audience segmentation. Notably, business-to-business (B2B) and business-to-consumer (B2C) prospects are in distinct segments as are prospects from small and medium-size companies versus those from large enterprises. We also get a sense of two core issues, setting key metrics (from question 1) and lead generation (from question 5).

Outside of the most popular questions, many other key issues appear, including: e-mail marketing, lead nurturing, lead scoring, marketing automation process flows, etc. When scanning the less highly rated questions, salespeople must be very careful to suppress the tendency to focus only on the topics of most interest to them. To overcome this phenomenon, known as confirmation bias, we recommend cataloging the questions in descending order by the total number of Upvotes each collected. That way you can rule out more esoteric questions such as, “What are some tools similar to Yozio?” (which was posed as veiled self-promotion by one of its cofounders, albeit with full disclosure) and to rule-in questions such as, “What are the key challenges in marketing automation?”

The second set of resources involves language. These are the words that marketers use to leverage the generation of the keywords used in search engine optimization (SEO) and search engine marketing (SEM). There are two subsets of tools: the first suggests keywords using a website URL as input and the second suggests more specific keywords using less specific keywords as input.

The Google Adwords Keyword Planner is a great starting point since it is a hybrid of both subsets and relies on an incredibly sophisticated algorithm. In its current incarnation, we entered “marketing automation” for “Your product or service,” “www.marketo.com” (a pure-play marketing automation vendor) for “Your landing page,” and “Sales & Marketing Software” for “Your product category.” In ranking the keyword ideas generated from highest to lowest and based on average monthly searches, the issues that bubble to the top include: CRM software, e-mail marketing, demand generation, lead management, lead generation, lead nurturing, sales tools, lead scoring, and so on. As expected, these reinforce the topics we discovered on Quora.

Get a second opinion by using one of the countless internet options by simply searching “keyword generator” (without quotation marks). Our favorite sites are Ranksonic.com, Keywordtool.io, and ubersuggest.org. We even built one of our own which you can check out at keyword-oracle.com. In contrast to Google’s Keyword Planner, these tools are narrower in scope, allowing users to view suggestions after entering *either* a URL *or* a phrase.

The Compel with Content™ (CWC) Story Framework

The effective crafting of any content is highly context and time dependent. Though we are about to share best practices, frameworks, and a number of real examples, we encourage you to craft your own original content using our templates as starting points. With this caveat, let's get started with the "Compel with Content" (CWC) framework.[21]

The CWC framework applies classic storytelling techniques to Predictable Prospecting communications. As with any writing exercise, the CWC framework begins with planning. Our favorite planning method involves thoughtfully filling in the following blanks:

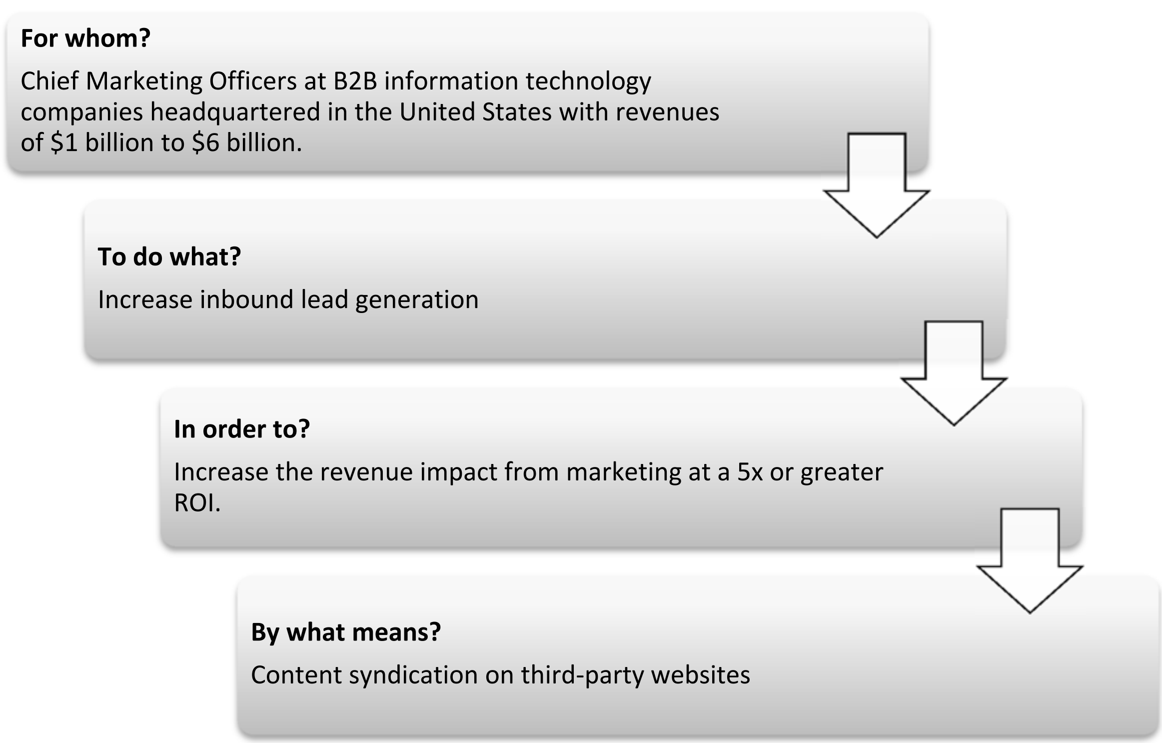
For whom? _____

To do what? _____

In order to? _____

By what means? _____

To illustrate, let's pick the "How can I increase volume?" question from the issue tree in Figure 4-2:



The Trigger

Next, you must decide on the *trigger* (or tone) of the message you want to convey because the buying stage determines whether the trigger should be emotional or rational. Keep in mind that messages designed to move prospects from unaware to aware and from aware to interested are primarily if not wholly emotional. Messages designed to move prospects from interested to evaluating and from evaluating to purchase are predominantly rational.

The Three Os

As with many story frameworks, CWC relies upon a three act structure with the handy mnemonic of three Os: obstacle, outcome, and opportunity.

Obstacle presents a *single* problem/challenge from the prospect's perspective. Often, one can leap right into the problem; other times, a sentence or two is necessary to provide situational context.

Outcome presents the solution. Dramatic examples of how a salesperson has helped other customers turn their businesses around, particularly those similar to the target prospect, represent better solutions than product benefits.

Opportunity refocuses attention on the prospect and provides a *single* call to action. We emphasize single because sales professionals often cram multiple calls to action into a single e-mail or voice mail. As we will explore deeply in the next chapter, Predictable Prospecting involves many touches, providing ample time to try out different problem-solution sets and a variety of calls to action in front of any given prospect.

In an example of how this all comes together, the following e-mail was designed specifically to move a prospect from unaware to aware:

Subject: Inbound Lead Generation Survey Findings

Hi <Prospect_First_Name>,

We recently surveyed 500 CMOs at information technology companies about their marketing strategies and I thought you'd like to see the results.

The survey reveals the #1 priority for marketing leaders is increasing the number of inbound leads. However, only 10 percent of those same leaders felt their programs were highly successful.

You can download the report now to discover the best practices of companies with winning inbound lead generation programs.

Warm regards,

<Rep_First_Name>

From Unaware to Aware

One of the biggest mistakes sales professionals make is assuming that prospects are ready to buy from the moment of first contact. These beliefs are reinforced by selective memories of one-and-done deals and by admonitions to "always be closing." Over the course of several days, we saved and analyzed 281 unsolicited sales and marketing e-mails. Among those, 43 percent asked for a meeting! Although it is possible for individuals to skip buying-cycle stages, we recommend crafting Predictable Prospecting messaging with the goal of moving forward one stage at a time. To that end, we begin by crafting content designed to move a prospect from unaware to aware. This process, especially if it contains great messaging, increases the prospect's awareness of the problem and his or her trust in the ability of a company and salesperson to provide a low-risk, high-return solution.

During outbound campaigns, salespeople should start with the expectation that prospects are unaware or unappreciative of the problem or of the salesperson's ability to solve it. When a prospect is unaware, it is too soon to ask for a meeting. Instead, the relationship should be initiated by the salesperson by sharing resources that are brief, high-value, educational, and product-agnostic such as blog posts, infographics, and video clips.

Personalizing Communication

There are three degrees of personalization:

- fully generic
- mass-personalized
- hyper-personalized

The salesperson must rely on experience and intuition to accurately gauge the degree of personalization to apply. The more personalized the communication, the higher the likelihood of a response, however, personalized communications take time to research and write, but with plenty of inexpensive and sophisticated e-mail marketing tools available, mass-personalized communications easily eliminate the need to ever deploy fully generic messages. In the earlier stages of the buying cycle, particularly in the unaware stage, mass-personalized communications will almost always be optimal. The exception to this rule is when a salesperson is targeting a very limited number of accounts in the unaware stage, in this case, *every* communication must be hyper-personalized.

Regardless of territory strategy, the level of personalization must increase during the later stages of the buying cycle.

So, what does a decent, mass-personalized e-mail to an unaware prospect look like? Here is a good example:

From: <rep_e-mail_address>
Subject: Mobile optimization renaissance

Hi <Prospect_First_Name>,

I thought you'd find this article on mobile optimization helpful—about 50 percent of consumers say they won't return to a website if it doesn't load properly on their mobile device, meaning nearly half of potential customers could be turned away if a website isn't optimized correctly.

<Blog_Post_URL>

If you'd like to learn more about our approach to optimizing and creating breakthrough mobile experiences, I'd love to set up a short call. Are you available anytime in the upcoming weeks? Or, if you don't oversee the digital agency selection process, would you please refer me to the best contact?

Thank you,

<Rep_First_Name> <Rep_Last_Name>
<Rep_Phone_Number>
<Rep_Company_URL>

*<Rep_Company_Name> is a digital agency that lives at the intersection of marketing and technology. We design and develop award-winning mobile solutions for clients such as FreshDirect, IDT, and Hewlett-Packard.

This e-mail demonstrates many best practices for engaging prospects in the unaware stage. We appreciate that the e-mail appears to have been sent by a real person: it has a nongeneric sender address, is written in simple text without images, and has a normal signature. Of the 281 unsolicited sales and marketing e-mails we received, 66 percent came from what appeared to be a real person's e-mail address. The other one-third were the equivalent of pre-sorted postal mail and faced the same fate of being sent straight to trash without a moment's consideration.

We also appreciated that the e-mail was written the way normal people format their e-mails, in simple text. Of the 281 e-mails, 35 percent used simple text, 25 percent used enhanced text (distinguished from simple text by the use of bold, italics, color, or highlighting), and 40 percent used image-heavy formatting.

MailChimp, a popular e-mail marketing service provider, analyzed 40 million e-mails sent via their platform and concluded, "This might sound dead-simple, but here you have it: Your subject line should (drum roll please) describe the subject of your e-mail. Yep, that's it . . . When it comes to e-mail marketing, the best subject lines tell what's inside, and the worst subject lines sell what's inside."[22] We agree.

ReturnPath, an e-mail optimization and fraud protection provider, which analyzed subject lines and the resulting read rates of e-mails received by over 2 million subscribers from over 3,000 senders.[23] Here are ReturnPath's most valuable key findings relevant to Predictable Prospecting:

- Urgency is king.

  "Subject lines that convey a sense of urgency were the top performers." Effective keywords include: "still time," "limited time," and "expiring." Though ReturnPath did not comment on the word "urgent," other studies confirmed it works well, too.

- Subject line length does not matter!

  While the majority of e-mails have subject lines between 41 and 50 characters, there was no correlation between subject line length and read rate. The only noticeably bad length is anything over 100 characters. In our 281 e-mail sample, the average subject line length was 44 characters and only 3 percent were over 100 characters—the longest of which, 115 characters, read as follows: “[Live Webinar] Must Sees at Dreamforce: The Latest Sales Effectiveness Insights and Trends from Smart Selling Tools”

- Prospects want new, fast, elegant, and easy but not cheap solutions.

  The keywords “new,” “fastest,” “prettiest,” and “easiest” had positive influence on read rates. However, almost every word describing price had a negative impact, including: “cheapest,” “clearance,” “sale,” percent,” “$,” and “free.” As an unusual and unexplainable aside, “fastest” works, but “quickest” does not.

- Prospects can smell clickbait from a mile away.

  The provocative subject line, “Shocking secrets you won’t believe,” is about as ineffective as it gets because the words “shocking,” “secret,” and “won’t believe” all perform well below average. The only phrase of this ilk that works moderately well is “what you need to know,” probably because it hints at education.

- Call-to-action words are effective.

  Imperative words, such as “register,” “open,” and to a lesser extent “download,” have a positive influence on read rates, but “buy” and “call” have a negative impact and should be avoided.

- Nobody wants to read about you or your news.

  "Announcing," "introducing," "learn," "read," and "see" all perform poorly since they ask recipients to expend effort with little implied benefit, as did the personal pronouns "I," "me," my," and "our." By the same token, please do not send out press releases which, fortunately, accounted for only 1 percent of the e-mails we analyzed.

- Convey concrete, immediately actionable recommendations.

  "Steps" and "ways" work better than "how to" and "why."

ReturnPath's findings are consistent with an earlier study by MailChimp analyzing approximately 24 billion (yes, billion) delivered e-mails.[24] In addition to the findings above, MailChimp's study also revealed:

- Subject line name personalization, particularly using both first *and* last names, is highly effective.

  In our study of 281 e-mails, 89 percent had no subject line personalization, 5 percent included only one of our company names, 5 percent included only the first name for one of us, and 1 percent included *both* of our first names *and* both company names. None included both first and last names, suggesting this practice may have gone out of vogue. (Note: Another study by MailerMailer,[25] however, found subject line personalization to be highly ineffective, so test carefully and proceed with caution.)

- "Thank you" is highly effective, but this may be because the phrase is common in confirmation e-mails and therefore not appropriate for a first touch e-mail.

- Capitalizing the first letter of every word is better than capitalizing only the first letter of the first word. (Exclamation marks and ALL CAPS should be avoided at all times.)
- "Sign up" is not effective. It implies effort with uncertain reward.
- Subject lines that pose questions perform well.[26]

As with everything in the Predictable Prospecting process, "always be testing" because response rates are contextually dependent on the buying stage, vendor, product, prospect demographics, etc. For instance, MailChimp found that first name personalization in the subject line is highly effective for government recipients, but highly ineffective for legal industry recipients. In addition, ReturnPath found "last chance" had a positive effect while MailChimp found that same phrase had a negative effect. Making matters even more complicated, techniques rise and fall in effectiveness as they cycle through periods of under- and over-use.

Let's get back to our sample e-mail. First off, we appreciated the personalized salutation, even if it was computer-generated. In our sample, 59 percent of e-mails used the recipient's first name.

The body of the e-mail was also well crafted. Rather than starting with the overused and ineffective, "My name is <rep_first_name> from <rep_company>," the text opens with value by offering exactly what we prescribe - a short, educational, and product-agnostic resource. The text immediately establishes the problem—"nearly half of potential customers could be turned away if a website isn't optimized correctly."

E-mails to unaware prospects can certainly end without any call to action other than the link to the free resource. A good marketing automation platform will capture the click, migrate the prospect to the next stage in the campaign, and alert the salesperson; the click is a *signpost* that signals advancement to the next stage in the buying cycle. This e-mail even goes a few steps further in the event the prospect is already more advanced in the buying cycle. The final body paragraph applies the ubiquitous tactic of asking for a short call or a referral to a person who would benefit from solving the problem. Additionally, the postscript after the salesperson's signature introduces the company and provides links to case studies without cluttering the body of the e-mail. These extras are not inherently good or bad; they should be A/B tested to determine their effectiveness.

Let's turn briefly to hyper-personalized messaging for unaware prospects. In broad brush strokes, the e-mail should read as follows:

From: <rep_e-mail_address>
Subject: <hyper-personalized subject line>

<Prospect_First_Name>,

I noticed <relevant professional or business finding from pre-cadence research>. The reason for my e-mail is that I'd like to share how we partnered with <company similar to prospect's organization> to achieve <results relevant to prospect.>

Do you have time for a quick call to explore whether or not we might be a fit for <accelerating a specific prospect initiative or solving a specific prospect problem>.

Please advise,

<Rep_First_Name>

<Rep_First_Name> <Rep_Last_Name>
<Rep_Phone_Number>
<Rep_Company_URL>

From Aware to Interested

During a prospect's journey from aware to interested, she is willing to invest more time getting educated about the problem and any potential solutions. To meet her needs, the salesperson should serve up more detailed content, including: reports on topics, trends, and best practices; product-agnostic webinars; information-rich landing pages; and diagnostic tools. Reports and webinars are well established so we need not expand on them here. Information-rich landing pages provide insights on trends and best practices. Diagnostic tools are a relatively new phenomenon and the best ones offer compelling value to the prospect and are virtually free of cost to the vendor. Hubspot's Marketing Grader[27] is a frequently cited example which scans a website and then provides a prescriptive report on the site's digital marketing effectiveness complete with actionable recommendations. Many companies are putting their high-value tools online to enhance lead generation.

The following is a good example of a mass-personalized e-mail designed to move a prospect from the aware stage to the interested stage:

From: <rep_e-mail_address>
Subject: Simplified Analytics

Dear <Prospect_First_Name>,

I thought you would find this Gartner Market Guide valuable as the quarter is still at an early start.

Predictability for the Sales Executive: Simplifying Machine Learning Analytics for Sales & Marketing

Expectations for growth and revenue have never been higher for sales teams as they are today. Fortunately, technology we now have available is making it possible for companies to have a predictable pipeline. <Company_Name> is revolutionizing the sales process by making the forecast more reliable, enriching data in the CRM, and applying smart analytics to define, align, and evolve.

Find out how you can start closing 90 percent of your forecasted deals HERE.

Thanks,

<Rep_First_Name> <Rep_Last_Name>
<Rep_Title>

This example has much in common with the unaware to aware e-mail. It delivers value immediately in the form of a research report from Gartner, a respected, independent, objective third party. Next, the body states the problem: “Expectations for growth and revenue have never been higher for sales teams as they are today.” With the problem established, the text shares that solutions are available: “Fortunately, technology we now have available is making it possible for companies to have a predictable pipeline.” After setting up the problem and suggesting that various solutions are available, the e-mail has earned the right to highlight the company and the value proposition of its products: “<Company_Name> is revolutionizing the sales process by making the forecast more reliable, enriching data in the CRM, and applying smart analytics to define, align, and evolve.” Though the line “Find out how you can start closing 90 percent of your forecasted deals HERE" is unnecessary content-wise, it is considered a best practice to include links three times: once at the beginning, once in the middle, and once at the end.

To recap: provide value, set up the problem, suggest the existence of multiple solutions, present the company/product and its high-level value proposition, and embed a single (though fine if repeated) call to action. In all, the body of this e-mail is a mere 104 words. By comparison the average body length of the 281 e-mails we studied was 253, or more than double that.

From Interested to Evaluating

Once a prospect is interested, the salesperson has the opportunity to provide an array of resources proving the company's differentiated ability to solve the problem. Effective assets designed to move a prospect from interested to evaluating include: case studies, testimonials, product reviews, product-centric webinars, on-demand demonstration videos, comparison charts, and discovery meetings.

While messaging at this point often should become more customized, mass-personalization is sufficient if the salesperson has a large number of prospects. Here is an example of a mass-personalized e-mail we received which encouraged us to register for a product-centric webinar:

From: <rep_e-mail_address>
Subject: Exclusive invitation for <Prospect_Company_Name>

Hi <Prospect_First_Name>,

On behalf of <Rep_Company>, I would personally like to invite you to an exclusive preview we are hosting on <Event_Date_and_Time>, where our <Exec_Title>, <Exec_Name> will be giving a tour of <Company's_Product>. This <short_product_description> is being released on <Release_Date> and we are pleased to offer you a first peek at this new and exciting subscription-based service.

Please join us to see firsthand how <Company's_Product> empowers you to enhance your market research and deliver tangible results by:

- <Benefit_#1>
- <Benefit #2>
- <Benefit #3>

Please reserve your spot at: <Registration_Page_URL>.

(Please note: Space is limited. Deadline to sign up is <RSVP_Date>.)

If you're not able to attend on this date, please reach out to me directly and we can arrange a personal demonstration.

Sincerely,

<Rep_First_Name> <Rep_Last_Name>
<Rep_Title>, <Rep_Company>
<Rep_Phone>

This e-mail applies many of the best practices we have already discussed concerning the sender address, the subject, and the body. However, the call to action appropriately shifts from product-agnostic to product-specific. The bulleted list reinforces and adds to the prospect's understanding of the company's ROI-driven value proposition. The last sentence engages prospects who prefer a personal touch, "If you're not able to attend on this date, please reach out to me directly and we can arrange a personal demonstration." Asking for a discovery meeting is appropriate when moving from interested to evaluating and this offer of a one-on-one product demonstration conveys a gentle means to that end.

From Evaluating to Purchase

Since this is a chapter on messaging in a book about prospecting, we will only touch briefly on communications designed to move a prospect from evaluating to purchase. As one might expect, e-mails and voice mails in this stage must be completely personalized and must offer superior value in the form of trials (free or paid), consultative diagnostics, ROI calculators, references, and ultimately, proposals. Many of these assets are scarce, expensive, time-consuming, or all three. Hence, they should only be leveraged when a salesperson has a reasonably high degree of confidence that a prospect is near purchase.

The following e-mail is from a sales executive who completed a consultative analysis, an audit of inbound sales response effectiveness for one of the authors:

From: <rep_e-mail_address>
Subject: Results of interviews/<Prospect_Company_Name> sales process

Hi <Prospect_First_Name>,

Per our conversation a couple of weeks ago, I've taken the "response audit" we provided and have taken it a couple of steps further.

I took information gathered from you/your team, and we've come up with some recommendations and a couple of case studies (see attached).

A couple of points:

• Each rep is spending at least 40 minutes/day leaving voice mails (7,280 hrs/year for the team). We can help you get much of that time back.

• Inbound calling time is not measured/monitored, and that seems to be where a lot of sales value-add is occurring (or being lost). We can help you track/measure/tune inbound activities.

• Inter-team conflicts (different teams going after the same business); we can help draw clear lines within the Salesfore.com environment.

• Sixty dials is a great metric. Ten percent contact rate isn't. We can help you increase that contact rate.

Take a look at the doc and let me know your thoughts. Based on what we've learned, I'd like to talk further about the possibility of implementing <Rep_Product> concurrently with Salesforce. I believe we can present a strong business case.

Sincerely,

<Rep_First_Name> <Rep_Last_Name>
<Rep_Title>
<Rep_Phone>

While the sales representative who crafted the above e-mail started with a template, the e-mail is hyper-personalized and offers tremendous value in the body and in the attachments (not shown).

* * * * *

Figure 4-3 summarizes the compel-with-content (CWC) strategy by buying cycle.

Buying Stage →	**Unaware to Aware**	**Aware to Interested**	**Interested to Evaluating**	**Evaluating to Purchase**
Industry / Role Problem Focus	High focus, low detail	High focus, medium detail	High focus, high detail	Low focus, low detail
Prospect-Specific Problem Focus	None	None	Low	High
Vendor / Product Focus	None	Low	Medium	High
Personalization	Mass-personalized	Mass-personalized with data-driven intelligence derived from previous interactions	Mass-personalized or lightly customized	Hyper-personalized
Triggers	High emotional; Low rational	High emotional; Med. rational	Med. emotional; Med. rational	Low emotional; High rational
Prospect time commitment with content	< 10 seconds	< 5 minutes	< 20 minutes	< 60 minutes
Content	- Blog post - Infographic - Short video	- Report / Whitepaper - eBook - Diagnostic tool - Webinar	- Case study - Testimonial - Product review - Comparison chart - Discovery meeting	- Trial (free or paid) - ROI calculator - Reference - Consultative analysis - Proposal

Figure 4-3: Content crafting strategy by buying cycle stage

We have explored a method (how) to engage the right people (who) with the right message (what). In the next chapter, we turn to connecting with prospects over the right channels (where) with the right frequency (when).

About the Authors

Marylou Tyler is the CEO of Strategic Pipeline. She is a renowned sales process improvement expert, author, and speaker. Her proven teachable systems help businesses grow their revenue by increasing their sales pipelines. Applying her keen engineer's mind to the sales process, Marylou teaches how to identify and engage ideal prospects. Her clients include Apple, Bose, AMA, Talend, CIBC, Prudential, UPS, Orkin, AAA, and Mastercard. Marylou is passionate about helping B2B sales professionals advance sales conversations from cold to qualified opportunities.

Jeremey Donovan is Head of Sales Strategy at Gerson Lehrman Group (GLG), the world's largest membership network for one-on-one professional learning. Previously, Jeremey was Chief Marketing Officer and Senior Vice President of Sales at American Management Association International. Prior to joining AMA, Jeremey served as Group Vice President of Marketing at Gartner Inc., the world's leading information technology research and advisory company. Jeremey is the author of six books, including the international public speaking bestseller *How to Deliver a TED Talk*. He holds a BS and an MS in electrical engineering from Cornell University and an MBA from the University of Chicago Booth School of Business.