

The Cold Email Teardown.

Five emails your B2B sales team is sending that kill deals — and how to rewrite them.

Pulled from a live sales huddle. Real coaching, real rewrites, real fixes.

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WRITE BACK

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Most SME teams don't have a closing problem.

They have an opening problem.

I sit in on daily sales huddles with B2B teams. I read their outbound emails in real time. And here is what I keep seeing: most teams aren't getting bad emails back — they are sending bad emails out.

The fix is rarely the product. It is almost always the first three lines.

What follows is a teardown of five emails your sales team is almost certainly sending right now. The diagnosis came out of a real coaching session with a real client team. The rewrites are the version I'd have sent in their place — written the way a founder talks to another founder, not the way a junior writes to a stranger.

Each one takes about two minutes to read. Pick the one your team gets wrong most often, fix that this week, and the pipeline will tell you whether it worked.

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Cold Prospecting

Net new outbound to a prospect who has never heard of you.

— THE SETUP · AND WHAT'S BROKEN

Your rep finds a great prospect on Apollo or Lusha, can't get them on the phone, and drops an email instead. The email opens with a polite greeting, mentions the company came up in research, attaches a corporate catalog and some testimonials, and asks to explore future opportunities.

Both opening lines scream solicitation. There is no tactical hook. There is no specific reason this prospect should care about this email today. There is no service-requirement mapping — nothing that connects what the prospect actually does to what your company actually solves. The catalog and testimonials do the selling, which means nobody is doing the thinking.

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‘Greetings from us. I hope you are doing well’ gives away that this has something to do with solicitations. We need to hit it hard in the first line itself. And try to do a service requirement mapping.

MARAN / IN THE SALES HUDDLE

— HOW TO FIX IT

1. Skip the greeting. Start with a hook tied to *their* business — a project they just announced, a process you spotted on their site, an industry shift they're navigating.
2. Do service-requirement mapping in the first three lines. Name a specific thing they do, and name a specific thing you fix about it.
3. Make one ask. Not a catalog. Not testimonials. Not three asks. One.
4. Promise *not* to do the thing they expect — the catalog dump, the pitch deck, the long demo. That single line earns the reply.

01 · Cold Prospecting — the rewrite

Read them top to bottom. The fix is rarely subtle.

BEFORE / WHAT MOST TEAMS SEND

Subject: Potential Collaboration with Our Company

Greetings from us. I hope you are doing well.

We came across your organisation while researching potential collaborations in our segment. Please find attached our corporate catalogue and recent testimonials. We would welcome an opportunity to share how our recent technological improvements could support your future requirements.

Looking forward to your response.

AFTER / THE REWRITE

Subject: Quick question about your [specific process]

Hi [Name],

I noticed you're running [specific process] at [Company]. We've helped three similar setups in [industry] cut [specific operational cost] by 20-30% using [specific intervention].

Worth a 15-minute call to see if any of that applies to your setup? I'll keep it focused - no catalog, no pitch deck, just one question I want to ask you about your current process.

Best,
[Name]

— WHY THIS WORKS

It opens with a specific observation, not a generic salutation. It names a tangible outcome with a credible number. It asks for fifteen minutes, not a sale. It promises *not* to do the things they expect, which is the line that earns the reply.

Dormant Account Reconnection

Reaching back into an account that bought from you years ago and went quiet.

— THE SETUP • AND WHAT'S BROKEN

You're going through CRM and you find an account that quoted with you four or five years back. Maybe a deal was lost. Maybe the lead just went cold. You want to re-open the conversation. Your rep writes an honest, polite, slightly apologetic email referencing the lost deal.

The email opens on a negative note. 'We lost a deal with you earlier' reminds the reader of a moment when they chose someone else. You're starting the relationship on the back foot. There is no acknowledgement of what has changed at your end since then — no new products, no new capability, no new reason to talk now.

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You should not send 'we lost a deal with you earlier'. Do not write like that. That's starting with a negative notion. Write — we have been in touch earlier for a potential opportunity. Between then and now, we have launched new products. Exciting new products that give higher output.

MARAN / IN THE SALES HUDDLE

— HOW TO FIX IT

1. Lead with the relationship, not the loss. 'We have been in touch' is neutral. 'We lost' is negative.
2. Make the middle of the email about what is *new* — new products, new capabilities, better output. The reader needs a reason this email is being sent *now*.
3. Tailor by application segment. If the account is in water bottling, the email talks bottling. If they're in STP, it talks STP. One generic email blasted to four different segments is four bad emails, not one good one.
4. Skip the 'sorry to bother you' energy. You are not bothering them. You are bringing them news.

02 · Dormant Account Reconnection — the rewrite

Read them top to bottom. The fix is rarely subtle.

BEFORE / WHAT MOST TEAMS SEND

Subject: Following Up - Lost Opportunity

Dear [Name],

We had quoted for your project some years back but the deal did not go through with us. I wanted to follow up to see if there is any new requirement at your end. Please find our catalogue attached.

Best regards,
[Name]

AFTER / THE REWRITE

Subject: New developments since we last spoke

Hi [Name],

We were in touch a few years back about a potential opportunity at [Company]. A lot has changed at our end since then - we've launched [specific new product] that's delivering [specific outcome, e.g. 20% higher output] for clients in [their segment].

Worth a 15-minute chat to see if any of it applies to where you are today?

Best,
[Name]

— WHY THIS WORKS

'We were in touch' reframes the past as a relationship, not a defeat. The middle gives the reader a real reason this email exists now. The ask is small and forward-looking. And because the email is tailored to their segment, it reads like it was written for them — not blasted to a list.

Post-Exhibition Follow-Up

You met someone at a trade show. They have now met 200 other people.

— THE SETUP • AND WHAT'S BROKEN

Your founder or sales lead met a prospect at a major exhibition. There was a real conversation. Specific interest was expressed. A few days later, your team sends a follow-up email. The email goes out cleanly, mentions the catalogue, asks if they'd like a proposal.

Most post-event emails read like first-time cold outreach. They do not reference the meeting in any meaningful way. They do not name the person who met them. They do not remind the reader what they expressed interest in. The reader has now met two hundred people. They cannot place you. Your email lands in their inbox cold, and you have wasted the relationship you spent two days at the exhibition building.

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People meet hundreds of people at exhibitions. They may not remember. Open it with that — ‘You met with our founder and expressed specific interest in our products.’ Attach the photo from the exhibition. The opening should be friendly. We have already built a relationship.

MARAN / IN THE SALES HUDDLE

— HOW TO FIX IT

1. Always assume the prospect has forgotten you. Always.
2. Name the founder or person who met them. Use real names. ‘You met with Vivek, our founder’ is far stronger than ‘we met at the event’.
3. Reference one specific thing they expressed interest in. This is the proof you were actually paying attention.
4. Attach the photo from the booth if you have one. This is the cheat code. It triggers instant recognition before they have even read the email.
5. Open with the relationship you already have. Don't restart it — continue it.

03 · Post-Exhibition Follow-Up — the rewrite

Read them top to bottom. The fix is rarely subtle.

BEFORE / WHAT MOST TEAMS SEND

Subject: Follow-up on our products

Dear [Name],

We met at the exhibition last week. Please find attached our product catalogue and pricing. We would be happy to send across a detailed proposal at your convenience.

Best regards,
[Name]

AFTER / THE REWRITE

Subject: Great to meet you at [Event Name]

Hi [Name],

You met with [Founder], our founder, at [Event] last week and expressed specific interest in [the exact capability they asked about]. Attaching the photo we took at the booth - good memories.

Since you mentioned you were exploring [their specific use case], I'm sending across one targeted resource that walks through exactly that scenario - not the full catalog.

Could we do a 15-minute call next week to take it forward?

Best,
[Name]

— WHY THIS WORKS

It reminds them *who* they met (the founder), *what* they discussed (the specific interest), and *that* the meeting actually happened (the photo). One targeted resource lands better than a catalogue. The ask is anchored in a conversation they actually had — not pulled from thin air.

International Partner Outreach

When your brand carries zero recognition in their market.

— THE SETUP · AND WHAT'S BROKEN

You're an SME from one country writing to a potential channel partner in another. They have never heard of you. Your brand has no recognition in their market. Your rep writes a polished introduction — thirty years of experience, list of countries served, company profile attached — and asks to explore a distributorship.

The email pitches the product. The reader has no reason to care. They have never heard of you. Your thirty-year history doesn't mean anything to them because they have no context for your brand. You are speaking like BMW — assuming brand equity you do not yet have. The reader will read the first paragraph and archive.

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Imagine somebody calling me out of the blue. 'Hey, slow down. Give me an easy way of engaging with you. I am not here to buy the product yet.' The best I've seen working is — can I grab 15 minutes from your calendar? 15 minutes is the time anybody will think, oh, it's worth to spend.

MARAN / IN THE SALES HUDDLE

— HOW TO FIX IT

1. Drop the product pitch entirely in the first email. The product is not the hook. The conversation is.
2. The ask is one thing — fifteen minutes on their calendar.
3. Promise value *from the call itself*, not from the product. The reader should feel that even if they buy nothing, they'll take something away.
4. Ask genuine questions — not pitch questions. 'Where do you see the market moving in three to five years?' is a real question. 'Are you looking for a supplier?' is not.
5. If you're an SME in a lower-cost market reaching out to a higher-cost market, quantify what working with you saves them — salaries, quotation bandwidth, on-the-ground technical support. Eighty thousand Singapore dollars is forty-eight lakhs. That number alone is worth the meeting.

04 · International Partner Outreach — the rewrite

Read them top to bottom. The fix is rarely subtle.

BEFORE / WHAT MOST TEAMS SEND

Subject: Distribution Partnership Opportunity

Dear [Name],

We are [Company], a leading manufacturer of [products] with 30 years of experience. We have worked with clients across [list of countries]. We would like to explore a distributorship opportunity in [their country]. Please find our company profile and product catalogue attached.

Best regards,
[Name]

AFTER / THE REWRITE

Subject: 15 minutes - one question about [their market]

Hi [Name],

I noticed [Company] is active in [specific application] in [their country]. I'm not writing to pitch a product - I'd genuinely like to understand how you see the [their industry] market moving over the next three to five years.

We work with partners in [other markets] on [specific operational support - quotation building, technical sizing, technician dispatch]. Some of what we do might be relevant to you, some might not. I'd rather find that out in a conversation than guess.

Can I grab 15 minutes on your calendar this week or next? I'll keep it focused.

Best,
[Name]

— WHY THIS WORKS

It disarms expectation — ‘I'm not writing to pitch’. It centres the conversation on them, not you. It names the operational support as the value (not the product). It's honest about uncertainty — some of this may be relevant, some may not. And the CTA is small, specific, and time-boxed.

Quote Sent, No Reply

When silence has stalled a deal you thought was warm.

— THE SETUP • AND WHAT'S BROKEN

You sent a quote last week. You sent a follow-up. Then another. The prospect has gone silent. Your rep writes a polite 'just checking in' email asking if they have any queries or would like a revised quote.

'Just checking in' gives the reader nothing new to react to. It reads as needy. It signals that you're chasing, not selling. It puts the entire burden of the next step on them — and they will keep choosing to do nothing because doing nothing is the easiest thing to do.

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Don't sell the entire product on these follow-ups. Give them a tactical reason to reply. And don't beg — give them an easy way to tell you they're out, so you can stop chasing and they can stop feeling guilty. That alone gets you a response.

MARAN / IN THE SALES HUDDLE

— HOW TO FIX IT

1. Never open with 'just checking in' or 'following up on my last email'. Both signal weakness.
2. Lead with new information — a comparison, a use case, a saving estimate, a fact you didn't share before. The email earns its own existence.
3. Reframe the quote as a starting point for a conversation, not a final ask.
4. Name the elephant. Give them an easy out — 'if you've gone in a different direction, just let me know'. This single line is the highest-converting one in the whole email.
5. Save the discount for after the conversation, not before. Discounting on a stalled deal trains the buyer to expect discounts on every deal.

05 · Quote Sent, No Reply — the rewrite

Read them top to bottom. The fix is rarely subtle.

BEFORE / WHAT MOST TEAMS SEND

Subject: Following up on our quotation

Hi [Name],

Just following up on the quotation we sent on [date]. Please let us know if you have any queries or if you would like us to revise.

Looking forward to your response.

Best,
[Name]

AFTER / THE REWRITE

Subject: One thing I should have included

Hi [Name],

Looking back at the quote I sent last week, I realised I didn't include [specific detail - a comparison, a use case, a saving estimate] that might actually change how the numbers read.

Would it help to jump on a quick 10-minute call so I can walk you through it?

And if the answer is - we've gone in a different direction - that's also completely fine. Just let me know so I can stop chasing.

Best,
[Name]

— WHY THIS WORKS

The email earns its own existence with new information. 'One thing I should have included' is a tactical hook, not a beg. The 10-minute ask is small. The 'different direction' line gives the reader a way out, which paradoxically is what gets them to reply. Direct, not desperate — that is the line.

WHY THIS MATTERS

The cost of a bad email is invisible.

The reward of a good one is not.

One great email opens a door a hundred cold calls can't. Done well, it earns a reply, books a meeting, builds a relationship — and quietly becomes your next revenue line.

BEFORE YOU GO

If you've read this far, your team is probably sending at least two of these five emails this week. Pick the one that costs you the most pipeline. Rewrite it. Send the new version to ten prospects.

Then send the reply rate to me. I read every one of these. If you want a teardown of your team's actual outbound — not a workshop, not a deck, just a live read on what's going out the door — reply to me directly.

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