Predictable Revenue

COLD EMAIL

COLD CALL

PART 1

Outbound Sales Learnings from 2018

A complete guide of Predictable Revenue's 2018 Podcasts

COLLIN STEWART

INTRO

Predictable Revenue is the "Outbound Success Company". We help companies grow faster with Outbound Sales.

Our Co-Founder Aaron Ross is the author of the book **Predictable Revenue** and was one of the first 150 employees at Salesforce where he built the outbound methodology that is practiced around the world in sales teams today. **Our other Co-Founder, Collin Stewart,** is the host of our weekly podcast where he interviews B2B sales leaders on the biggest opportunities and challenges in the industry.

We've taken all of our podcasts from 2018 and put them into a handy 6 part eBook. Learn how to overcome the biggest challenges facing B2B sales teams today, ensure you're leveraging opportunities, and learn from best practices from industry leaders.

Collin Stewart, Co-Founder of Predictable Revenue. Host of our weekly podcast.

CONTENT

PART 1

Editor's note: this is part 1 of a 6-part series.

LinkedIn Prospecting Like a Pro With Bregal Sagemount's Cole Fox

PODCAST

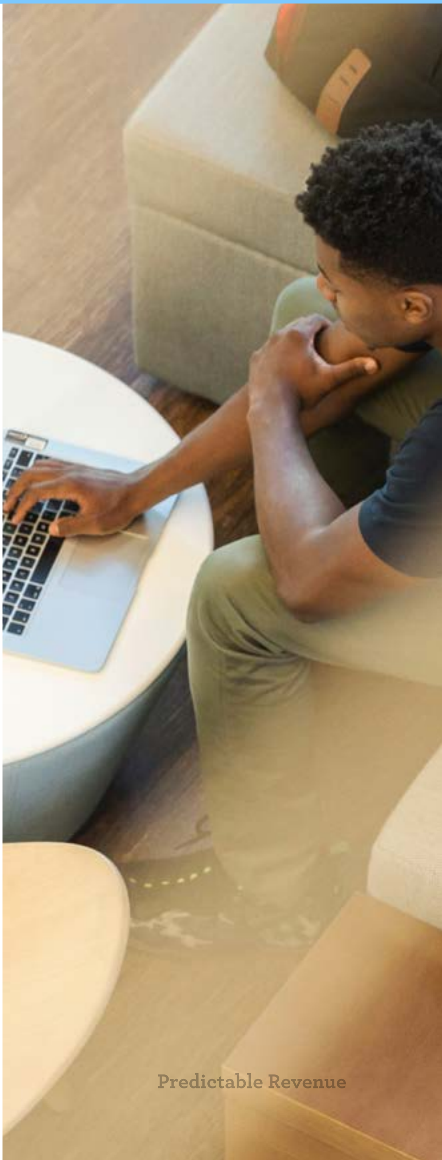
Every prospector has a favourite tool. It doesn't matter if you're a seasoned professional, a novice, or somewhere in between, everyone has that piece of sales software they just can't get through the day without.

And those tech dependencies, of which I have many myself, are for good reason: we need sales products to help us manage our leads, our outreach, and our prospecting (to name but three critical requirements). But amongst the always-growing world of sales enablement software, there is one that looms larger than the rest – LinkedIn. Sure, most people, in most industries, have come to view LinkedIn as a professional social networking platform. And they're right in that assessment – LinkedIn is a great place to display your professional experience, and connect with colleagues and other professionals in your field. But for salespeople, LinkedIn is an absolute treasure trove of sales intelligence:

who works where,

who is in charge of what,

and who is a go-to contact for thought leadership pieces on their industry.



And this applies to every conceivable vertical. Regardless of who you sell to, LinkedIn has information you can use to your advantage.

Cole Fox.
Portfolio Operations at private equity firm Bregal Sagemount.

> *It's a place where people are constantly updating their information – their current company is up to date and you can extrapolate a lot of good useful information to target them," says Cole Fox, Portfolio Operations at private equity firm Bregal Sagemount, on a recent edition of The Predictable Revenue Podcast.*

"And, you can see how you are connected to people as well. You can ask for a referral where possible, and that is huge in sales."

Photo: https://www.pepperit.com.au

Your Personal Landing Page

Sure… LinkedIn is a great place to find leads, and glean critical data about the industry you sell to.
But, before you start hunting, LinkedIn is also a fantastic platform for salespeople to build their own brand. Too often we jump to get our hands on every lead we can (for good reason, of course), but it's important for sales professionals of all stripes to also think of how they are positioning themselves to others.
According to Fox, the brand-building opportunity LinkedIn presents should be capitalized on by all sales people.

"Everyone is going to go look at your LinkedIn or your social media channels, so you want to have established some credibility there. I mean, you may even be sending a message via LinkedIn. So, you really should start your focus there," says Fox.

"A good landing page has a good headshot. Don't use your sorority photo. You want to spend, maybe, $50 on a good headshot. That will pay for itself very quickly. We make a lot of subconscious judgements about a photo on a profile. I would invest in that."

As for your headline and description – two deceptively important LinkedIn features – Fox says one should always strive to be informative and catchy.

For example, when Fox worked at LeadIQ, his LinkedIn headline was *"Innovating The Art of The Hustle."* This headline proved particularly effective because his target market was salespeople, all of whom are well-versed in the importance of hustling. Moreover, LeadIQ sold into startups

"Make sure your words are tight. You want to show that you are a good communicator, you are articulate and educated in your space," says Fox.

“We’ve had demos booked from SDR emailing the person, person looking at their profile, seeing what they do and realizing it’s relevant to them. So, combine personality and the value you give, all the better. Afterall, LinkedIn is a landing page, right?”

Content is King

To add one last powerful feature to your LinkedIn profile, Fox suggests publishing pieces relevant to your industry, or the industry you sell to.
For a fresh-out-of-school SDR, it may be difficult to write, say, a whitepaper about a complex business process. But, you can write short pieces re-capping trends, or share quotes from your prospects that you found particularly engaging and informative. This will catch the eye of people on LinkedIn interested in that specific topic, and make you a knowledgeable, trusted source.

> *Or, if that doesn’t work, you can also interview people. I’ve interviewed the BDR manager at Salesloft, for instance. It’s pretty easy to generate content,” says Fox.*
> *“People will see that. They will see that you are creating and trying. So, set a 20 minute window, do some writing, be methodical, and share information.”*

The "Hustle"

Once you've tuned up your LinkedIn page, it's time to start exploring the various ways LinkedIn can super-charge your hustle.

As I mentioned above, LinkedIn is a great way, for instance, to check in on specific contacts. But, what if you're looking to build a list of contacts? What if you don't know who to target specifically?

Fox says a methodical LinkedIn search will narrow down a high-quality list of contacts.

"You don't want to just search for a title. You want to organize and make a strategy. You want to segment a search," says Fox.

"For example, you're looking for contacts in the cloud security world. You're going to want to go deep on this. So, you can search for directors in cloud security that work for companies with 200 – 500 employees. Then, you can move on to companies with 1,000 – 5,000 people. ***The point is to be methodical,*** *know what you've searched and what you will be searching next. Leave no stone unturned."*

If you want to get fancy, adds Fox, you can also **do boolean searches** to make sure you aren't leaving anyone possibly related to your search out. For example, cloud security may be too strict a term, so you can add *"cloud data integrity"* in a boolean search so you capture people with that related term on their LinkedIn page as well.

Your search, in that case, will look like *"cloud security"* and *"cloud data integrity."*

The only trick to a successful boolean search, really, is to ensure you are combining your different search terms with *"and," "or"* or *"not."* That's how **LinkedIn** knows whether to add or subtract the terms in question.

The List

Depending on the size of the vertical you're searching, you can find yourself with an unwieldy list of contacts.
I know, I know, what's the trouble, right? The more the merrier!

But, there's only one catch – by default, **LinkedIn Sales Navigator** will only show you 25 contacts per page.

That can make scrolling through your list a little cumbersome. So, to streamline your search, click on the address bar and change the count in the LinkedIn URL from "count=25" to whatever number you wish (50, 100 – whatever makes your life easier).

If you don't have a paid LinkedIn subscription (and, subsequently, don't have Sales Navigator), you can still cobble together effective lists to prospect to. For example, the free LinkedIn tier still let's you see other people's connections. If you know your competitors, and your competitors have salespeople, they are probably connecting with their prospects and customers.

So, to see who your competitors are selling to, just click connections of your competitors, add a relevant title, and you pull up the people you are trying to sell to that are connected to your competitors.
"Those connections could be in the market for what you are selling," adds Fox.

For more on how Fox uses LinkedIn to prospect, **check out his recent edition of The Predictable Revenue Podcast.**

What happens when you let a standup comedian write your cold call script?

In conversation with Jon Selig

PODCAST

And now for something completely different.

Well, maybe not completely different. Comedy, or humour, at least on paper, seems a world away from the the grind of cold calling and sales development.

I mean, the goal of one pursuit is to book meetings, build pipeline and, ultimately, increase revenue for your company. Comedy, on the hand, is entirely concerned with making people laugh. And, maybe, getting a Netflix special.

But, if you dig a little deeper, these two, seemingly unrelated, disciplines actually share a common ethic: to connect with people over shared human experiences, and tell a story that leaves a positive affect.

> *“Comedy cuts through the noise. If you can make your prospect laugh really quickly, you’re going to be a ray of sunlight in their day,”* says Jon Selig, a veteran sales professional and consultant that teaches sales teams how to inject humour into their prospecting.

"With all of the stress and data that is coming at us, all the notifications and alerts – everyone is distracted and not too thrilled. People aren't connected to their jobs. So, if we can deliver a customer pain point in the form a joke, our prospects will know what we're saying is true, but it breaks the ice and cuts the tension."

The right mindset

Before jumping headlong into a new and hilarious cadence, the first step to involving humour in your prospecting is getting in the right frame of mind. If you're angry, tired, or irritated (or some combination of the three), you're attempts at humour probably won't land.

You might be thinking: 'my favourite comics are angry and irritated all the time.' Fair enough. But when bringing humour into prospecting, it helps to have fun with your jokes and maintain a playful approach.

"Try something new that you never would have attempted – make a game of it," says Selig. *"Being in a bad mood when you're cold calling isn't serving anybody."*

What makes things funny?

So, you've got yourself in the right frame of mind. And, you think you're pretty funny. How do you start injecting your cadence with humour?

According to Selig, there are three elements to making something funny: surprise, authenticity, and relatability.

Surprise – this is a critical element to any joke. If you lay the groundwork for a joke properly, your prospect will have certain expectations, based on that setup. A good punchline, however, will subvert those expectations.
Authenticity – regardless of what you're talking about, authenticity plays a key role in connecting with people. Audiences and prospects want to know that you understand what they're going through.
Relatability – it's no secret why we laugh at universal concepts such as marriage, relationships, raising children, work – it's experiences we all understand.
But, beyond showing your prospects that you're an authentic person, you need to take those shared experiences and present them in a digestible and relatable way.

"These are all things we can relate to and understand," adds Selig.
"Some comedians like to tell jokes about what happened in the 37th minute of Game of Thrones episode 4, season 3. Not everyone can relate to that."

Daniel Barber.
CEO and Co-Founder of Bay Area-based compliance firm DataGrail.

Predictable Revenue punchlines

In addition to the more philosophical comedic foundations listed above, there are also tactical elements to crafting a joke. For instance, a longstanding framework for joke writing is called "the rule of three."
The rule of three is built on, you guessed it, having three elements in your joke. Typically, those three elements are outcomes are scenarios, the last of which is a surprise, or subverts the previous two.

For those readers lucky enough to have been on the receiving end of our prospecting, or have read the book that is the foundation of our work,

the goal of our company is no secret: to drive qualified meetings for our customers, month over month.

As such, the biggest pain we here, time after time, from our clients is that their Account Executives aren't being fed enough leads by their SDRs.

Using that pain as our foundation, if we were to inject some humour in our prospecting, we could use lines like these one written by Selig (note the rule of three being used in each):

A sales team without leads fed to them is like an arsonist for hire – they sit around, wait for a call, and cause a lot of burn.

If sales was a game, you'd want your Account Executives to play Hungry Hungry Hippos, not Angry Birds, who fly away to other jobs.

I'm a sales guy myself, so when SDRs aren't generating leads I'm finding other ways to advance my career like developing referral campaigns, optimizing Salesforce, or figuring out subtle ways to let people on LinkedIn know I'm open to new opportunities without overtly writing ***"open to new opportunities."***

As you can see, each joke is short, relatable, and underscores the consequences of not having enough leads. Sales managers, VPs, CEOs, anyone responsible for a well-run sales org, will relate. Not enough leads means accelerating your burn rate, bored salespeople, and a potential exodus to other companies.

All of that, needless to say, should be avoided, and that's what we help you do.

The trouble with emails

If you're a sales development professional, you're used to sending emails. Lots and lots of emails. For many, including us, emails form the foundation of a cadence.

When it comes using humour in sales, however, relying on emails to get that humour across, says Selig, can be tricky. For instance, if your lead doesn't open your email (your subject line didn't catch their eye), then they're not going to laugh at your well-written joke.

To avoid your work going unnoticed, Selig suggests saving your jokes for cold calls.

> *"I've always been a phone guy. I don't intimately know the science of cold emails," says Selig. "So I call, let the prospect know I speak with a lot of people on sales teams and a common theme is their SDR team isn't feeding enough leads. Then, I would go into the joke."*

Of course, the break up email, in particular, has long been a place where prospectors tried to inject some humour in the emails.

"I've reached out a number of times, but I understand you're busy and I'm sorry we haven't connected as yet. When you have time, let me know if you went with another vendor, aren't interested, or there's a hippo in your office and you're hiding under your desk to save yourself."

Remember those emails? I bet you do (sent a couple of those myself…)

But regardless of how, and where, you deliver humorous elements remember – it's about connecting, and laughing, about a shared experience. To do so, you must understand what your prospects are experiencing. You have to understand their pain.

Because, as Selig says, *"that's comedy. And that's sales."*

For more on Selig's thoughts on how to make your prospecting more funny, **check out his recent appearance on The Predictable Revenue Podcast.**

Professional Ice Breakers: How Outreach SDRs Execute 75 Cold Calls Per Day

PODCAST

Editor's note: Last week, we chatted with Mark Kosoglow, VP of Sales at Outreach, about how their Account Executives execute the company's detailed discovery process. This week, we sat down with Steve Ross, Outreach's Director of Sales Development, to learn about how their SDRs initiate prospecting, and book those high-quality meetings. Ain't no party like an Outreach party!

As an SDR, is there anything better than calling a prospect, having a great conversation, and booking a meeting?

After all those hours building lists, pounding the phones, and sending emails (all while managing the very real pressure of hitting your monthly quota), getting a high-quality prospect to talk to you is very satisfying. Exciting, even.

But having a great call is a very different thing than just getting a prospect on the phone, of course. **You have to be ready to have that great chat. And that takes preparation.**

Do your research

“Here, we make a lot of calls – 75 per day. So, you have to be prepared to go right into a conversation. How do you open? And, how do you handle objections?,” asks Steve Ross, Director of Sales at Outreach, on a recent edition of The Predictable Revenue Podcast. “For me, it boils down to two things: gathering detailed account information, and deciding how to use it.”

Let’s start with gathering detailed account information. At Outreach, that means understanding what industry is a good fit, what size of company typically uses Outreach, and what roles or titles to reach out to directly.

Once they establish those initial parameters, then Outreach SDRs try to determine what email platform the account uses (Gmail or Outreach), and whether or not they use Salesforce because Outreach offers an integration.

From there, they turn to the sales department to establish how many salespeople work within the organization, and which of them are sales leaders (Directors of Vice Presidents). Outreach doesn’t sell to individually contributing, or bag-carrying reps.

Having all of this information collected – and, most importantly, digested – before reaching out will arm the SDRs with the basic data they need to open a conversation with a prospect.

“It’s more than just gathering the facts. It’s having them to apply in a situation where the prospect isn’t ready for you,” says Ross. *“Remember, they aren’t expecting the call.”*

How to have an exceptional call

Once you've gathered and reviewed your information, it's time to put it to work. To ensure nothing slips through the cracks – cold calls, as we all know, can be fluid experiences – Outreach provides its SDRs with a call script.

"We want them to open up strong, and not even have to think about it," says Ross.

"And that script is always going to get to the purpose of the call – we want to set up a time to meet. No matter what."

Outreach SDRs do very little discovery. As such, the script they work from is short, but includes targeted questions about the performance of the prospect's sales team. For instance, Outreach SDRs ask questions such as 'how do you grow your business today?' or, 'is your sales team hitting their quota / metrics?' By asking these questions, Outreach SDRs are able to get the prospects talking (what sales leader doesn't like talking about performance?) and isolate the pain Outreach solves: not having enough pipeline.

"If they answer no to either of those questions, that allows us to paint the picture of how Outreach can help them get there," says Ross.
"At Outreach, we deliver pipeline."

Once they paint that picture, and illustrate that pain, Outreach SDRs work to immediately book a meeting with an Account Executive. According to Ross, a good initial call should only take between 3 – 5 minutes. Longer than that, and you run the risk of saying something that will diminish the excitement you've worked to build.
"We want to keep it tight, this is important," says Ross.

"One of the mistakes people make is having SDRs talking too much. We want the AEs on a call ASAP."

Common objections

Of course, not every cold call goes as planned (surprise!). Prospects are busy, they don't want to be bothered, or they don't think they need help. Luckily, Outreach SDRs have a response ready for common objections as part for their script.

For example, if a prospect tells a rep they don't have time to talk, Outreach SDRs respond with a simple, but shrewd statement: *"give me 27 seconds to describe what we do."* By giving the prospect a time frame for how long it will take to share an Outreach value proposition, most prospects agree to the short chat.

"If they say they don't have time, it's usually right out of the gates and it's a blow-off. But, when we follow through with our promise of being brief, we have earned respect," says Ross.

"This is the most common objection we get. Remember, they aren't ready for us, they don't know who we are. We are cold calling."

Other times, prospects say they they aren't interested, or they aren't the right person to speak with. In those situations, Outreach SDRs either promise the prospect they will be brief (and then jump right in to the value prop), or they ask for a referral to the right contact.

As mentioned above, a cold call is a fluid thing, fraught with unexpected diversions. But regardless of what objection they face, Outreach reps are always focused on the end goal of booking meetings, says Ross. Sure, they have to respond to each road-block, but that's all part of the gig. That's why they do their research, that's why they have a script, and that's why they illustrate the pain they solve for each prospect.

It's a recipe for great calls.

"It's a dance, for sure. It won't always go the way you think," says Ross.

"So, be ready for the objection, and handle it."

Here you can download the Cold Call Handling Objection guide/worksheet by Outreach: www.outreach.io/old-call-objec-tion-handling.

For more on Outreach's sales development tactics, including their CRM processes, **check out Ross' full interview on The Predictable Revenue Podcast.**

Predictable Revenue cold email Q&A featuring Mailshake's Sujan Patel

PODCAST

And now for something completely different.
On The Predictable Revenue Podcast, our CEO and co-founder Collin Stewart gets to interview sales leaders from across North America about how they scale their respective companies.

But in this Q&A session with Sujan Patel, co-founder of email outreach platform Mailshake, we turn the microphone around a little bit. In this wide-ranging chat, originally recorded for a recent webinar, Collin and Sujan answer probing questions from webinar registrants…and each other.
The following discussion has been edited for length and clarity. If you want to listen to the entire webinar, head over here.
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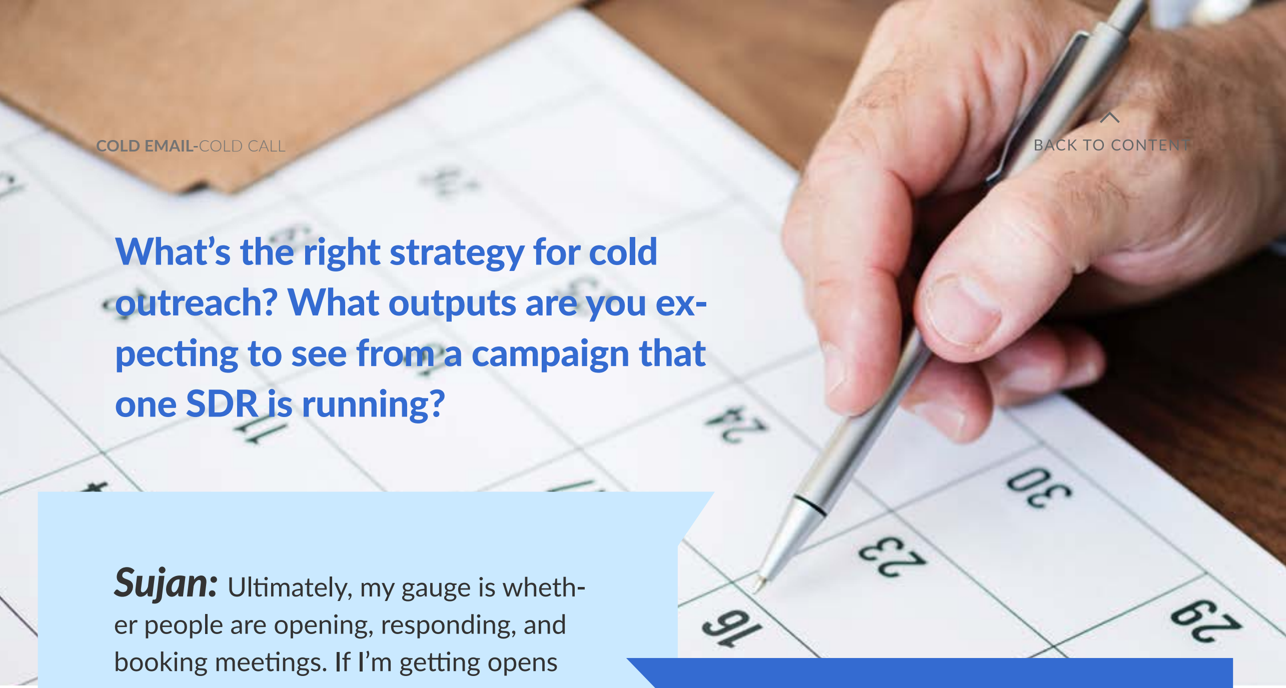


What's the right strategy for cold outreach? What outputs are you expecting to see from a campaign that one SDR is running?

Sujan: Ultimately, my gauge is whether people are opening, responding, and booking meetings. If I'm getting opens only, I'm losing people. So, in that case I'm looking at copy to see what's wrong with it, and where I can improve.

If I'm getting opens and replies, then something is off on the booking end of things. Maybe, in a situation like that, I would look into using a **tool such as Calendly to help get the booking** right then and there.

But, ultimately, it comes down to who you are going after. If you're selling tractors, you're likely talking to farmers, or farm repair professionals. Understand that market, and look at what your competitors are doing. How are they connecting with that market? Is it outbound sales? Or, door to door? Figure out who you are selling to, and what makes them tick.

Collin: That is a great point. If you are selling farm equipment, or a more traditional business, than you have to take a lot of the sales content out there with a grain of salt. It's just not an apples to apples comparison. Sales content written by companies that build sales products, will have a lot of data on open rates and replies, but what does that mean to the person selling farm equipment? On the other hand, if you're running a campaign to restaurants for Uber, you're going to get a bonkers response rate.

So, you have to understand who you're talking to, first and foremost, when you're sifting through all of the content that's out there. The best copy you -->

can use on a customer is their own. So, if you're selling to farmers, talk to farmers. That's how you will resonate. Your opportunity to nail your email is very small, so make the most of it. Make sure it reflects the person that is reading it.

What's your take on personalization in your outreach? How much is too much? And, of course, how much is just right?

Collin: I think there are two approaches: the first is you go all in and write something that is super personalized. This method will take you a lot of time, and most likely represents your top1% of accounts. For these accounts, you'll likely have a reference customer ready to go as well. This is a much higher touch strategy too – it's not just phone calls, and it's not just emails. It's everything. We call it the kitchen sink at Predictable Revenue.
For everybody else, and we're always testing a lot of tactics, we have found that personalizing into the job role works well. And you can do this at scale. A good way to visualize this is to think of the levels of personalization you can leverage. The first is to an entire industry. That is fairly easy to do. The next level down from that is a buyer persona. Again, not a specific person, but a general role. You write to that persona. The next level down from that is the company. And, finally, you have a direct individual.
The sweet spot will vary for every single company out there. There is no silver bullet. You have to test, test, test.

Sujan Patel,
Co-Founder of email outreach platform Mailshake.

Sujan: Personalization at the persona level is an area I like to play with because it is scalable. At my company, my role is Chief Marketing Officer. So, you know I'm interested in hiring, marketing, and conferences – there are things that the role, in general, is interested in. If you target me as an individual, I'm interested in skydiving and motorcycles. That will take you a bit of time to learn about me. But, how do you learn that for the people who sell tractors? That could be much harder. But you can still learn the persona level, and prospect to it.

What's an appropriate open rate for a campaign?

Collin: I think with open rates, in my experience, anywhere between 20% – 40% is good. If you're getting below 10%, you probably have a deliverability issue. If your open rates are somewhere in between, you probably need to test your subject line.

Sujan: Somewhere in the area of 3% – 10% range for response rate is acceptable. Anything below that, you have room to improve. Usually, the biggest culprit for low response rates is that you don't have a clear Call to Action, or you have a big ask in your email. For example, you are asking someone to hop on a call with you in 30 minutes.

Collin: I think you've hit on something very important here, Sujan, and that is the clarity of the Call to Action. I can't tell you how many times I've seen multiple questions in a cold email. Which question do you want the prospect to answer? That can be very confusing for people.

Sujan: **Never forget what you want the person to do.** Yes, you want the prospect to read the thing. But, is that the only outcome you want? That's the critical piece: you want your clear Call to Action to articulate what you want. Use the paragraph design to your advantage too. Have your Call to Action visible. I think of an email as a well-designed landing page, where all the design elements direct you the Call to action.

Collin: That's interesting. I think of a cold email as a conversation. A very strange, chopped up conversation. If I were to meet you in a bar, I would engage you. I wouldn't just say 'hi, I'm Predictable Revenue, I do this.' You have to get to the point, but come across as a human. And, you don't have to ask to meet tomorrow.

One tactic that has been super powerful for us has been what we call "***Insightful Questions.***" An example of that is *"do you use Salesforce?"* That's an easy question to answer, but it tells us something important, and it makes it easier to follow up. And once you've had some back and forth, then you can get to your Call to Action. It won't work for every campaign, but if you are struggling with response rates, this is a tactic to employ. Let's talk a little bit about deliverability. This is a huge issue to consider in outbound sales.

Sujan: Spam filters look out for short tracking links (Bitly links), as well as super long tracking links. Think about when you get a marketing email from Macy's, how many links are in their emails? One good way of avoiding the spam filter is just doing the exact opposite of what a company like Macy's does.

Another important thing to consider is the language you use. **Don't use dollar signs, using all caps in subject lines, or keep reusing the same copy.** You will get caught in spam filters. You need to personalize at scale in these cases, so make sure to change 10% or 15% or your copy. And, finally, be very careful about copying an email template because by the time an email template is shared, it has been used and abused.

Collin: This is super important, as deliverability affects everyone. Spam filters have been evolving dramatically. Google's spam filters look for engagement and reputation now. So, do you have a reputation for sending high quality email, and do people engage with what you send out? If you are continuing to send the same template, you run the risk of doing semi-permanent damage to your domain as someone who send lower quality emails.

Sujan: One way to solve for this is to aim to get a response in your first email. And, don't forget about your signature. Use your signature to build social proof. Show your prospects via your signature that you are an expert, and that will increase the likelihood of engagement on that first email.

What's your strategy for A/B testing?

Sujan: I always start with an A/B test. If I have 1,000 people in a list, 250 emails will be tested with two different subject lines, as well as two completely different emails. The winning one will then be refined from there. So, the first test is really about what gets a good open rate, and then we start testing for replies.

Collin: I agree. The only thing we do a bit differently is acknowledging that reply rates can be negative. We can get a 10% response rate, but everybody is asking you to leave them alone. So, keep an eye out for positive response rates and see what messages generated those.

Have either of you found LinkedIn Sales Navigator useful? And, what is your experience with InMails?

Collin: I'm a big fan of LinkedIn Sales Navigator. I hate InMails, I don't want to give LinkedIn any more money than I already do. So, I build a big list in Sales Nav, connect with a bunch of people, and as soon as people accept, I fire them the note I wanted to send. We have found this very useful for prospecting, and for talent. We used this method to hire our VP of Sales, and the two hires we made before that.

Sujan: The other thing to consider is engaging with prospects, after you connect. Engage with some of their content, and then message them. LinkedIn is doing a much better job with their feed, so use that your advantage.

What are your best practices for building a target list? And, where do you get the contact information from?

Sujan: There are so many tools. Pulling from LinkedIn, and using Sales Navigator works well. Also, I'm biased and really love Norbert. I have not had very much success buying lists, however.
What are your thoughts, Collin?

Collin: There are certain cases where buying lists can work. DiscoverOrg, if you are targeting people or companies in the engineering space, is really good. They go crazy deep. But, they are a much larger investment.
I think it comes down to who you are targeting. I think one of the best ways to build a list is on LinkedIn. You can really drill down, and there are all types of boolean searches you can do. I'm a big fan of starting there, and then using tools like Norbert for the contact information. It's really the cleanest way.

(**Editor's note:** we chatted with Cole Fox, Bregal Sagemount's Portfolio Operations Lead, about various tips and tricks for LinkedIn prospecting. **You can listen to the discussion here, or read about it here).**

Sujan: Another thing to add here is the importance of scrubbing your list. For example, if you search CEOs in San Francisco, you are probably going to get a bunch of names you do not want to bother pitching. Tools won't do the scrubbing, so make sure you look at the prospects in the list you're building.

Is there a different cold email strategy when the industry you sell to is a slow adopting industry?

Sujan: The short answer is yes, absolutely. You should be educating. And you need content because you have to convince them to make a change.

Collin: I completely agree. You need content. Case studies are a huge piece of collateral, for instance. In some industries there is a much, much higher burden of proof that you are going to have to overcome. And, don't talk about technology. Focus on the pain, and how you can help your market.

How do you craft a good subject line?

Sujan: I write 25 different subject lines. Most of those are pretty bad, but I weed out the bad stuff. Somewhere down the road, you start getting stuff you can work with.

The framework I use for writing emails is called the AIDA framework: Attention, Interest, Desire, Action.

This is copywriting 101. But, of course, there are many frameworks, so my suggestion is to choose one and work with it and see what kind of results you get.

How long does it take for a company just getting into outbound sales to get traction?

Collin: This is a great question. Honestly, it takes between 12 – 18 months. This is the time-frame for actually getting something valuable out of outbound. In the early days, you will see some responses and booked meetings, but keep in mind, when you're building an SDR team you are building something brand new. It will take you three months to get your messaging worked out. . It will take you another three months to get your process fine tuned. ---->

Beyond that, it will take about two sales cycles to start seeing results. And, we're not even factoring in hiring the right people. This process takes time.

I think the area where most companies go wrong with outbound is that the meetings they book don't go anywhere. Often, that is the result of reps not knowing that outbound meetings are a very different beast than inbound. They are so different, you almost want to have a different rep on your outbound meetings. Remember, you adding something into a prospect's schedules that they weren't expecting. You don't know where they are in their buying cycles.

How many emails are your SDRs sending per day? And, how many emails per account?

Sujan: What are your sales goals? Is it 5,000 customers? Are you a self-service product? I think the smaller the amount you can send per day, the better. You will have a deliverability issue at some point.

Collin: Depending on how deep your are going with your personalization, I think 25 – 50 net new emails per day is good. If you are going with a more persona-based approach, 100 –150 net new emails per day is good spot. If you are hitting your response rates, that will give you a lot to work with.

Check out the complete Podcast on Predictable Revenue.com

The importance of being personal: How Workfront's prospectors heavily tailor their initial email outreach

PODCAST

It's the question every sales development leader, at some point, must answer: how personal should our team's emails be?
It's the question every sales development leader, at some point, must answer: how personal should our team's emails be?

It's a huge consideration – the more personal your outreach is, the more persuasive your prospecting will be. In no uncertain terms, that is a positive. But, personalization takes time, and the more time your team spends writing tailored notes, the less volume a prospector can execute. Over time, that potential drop in numbers will affect the amount of pipeline your team generates.
It's a tough one.

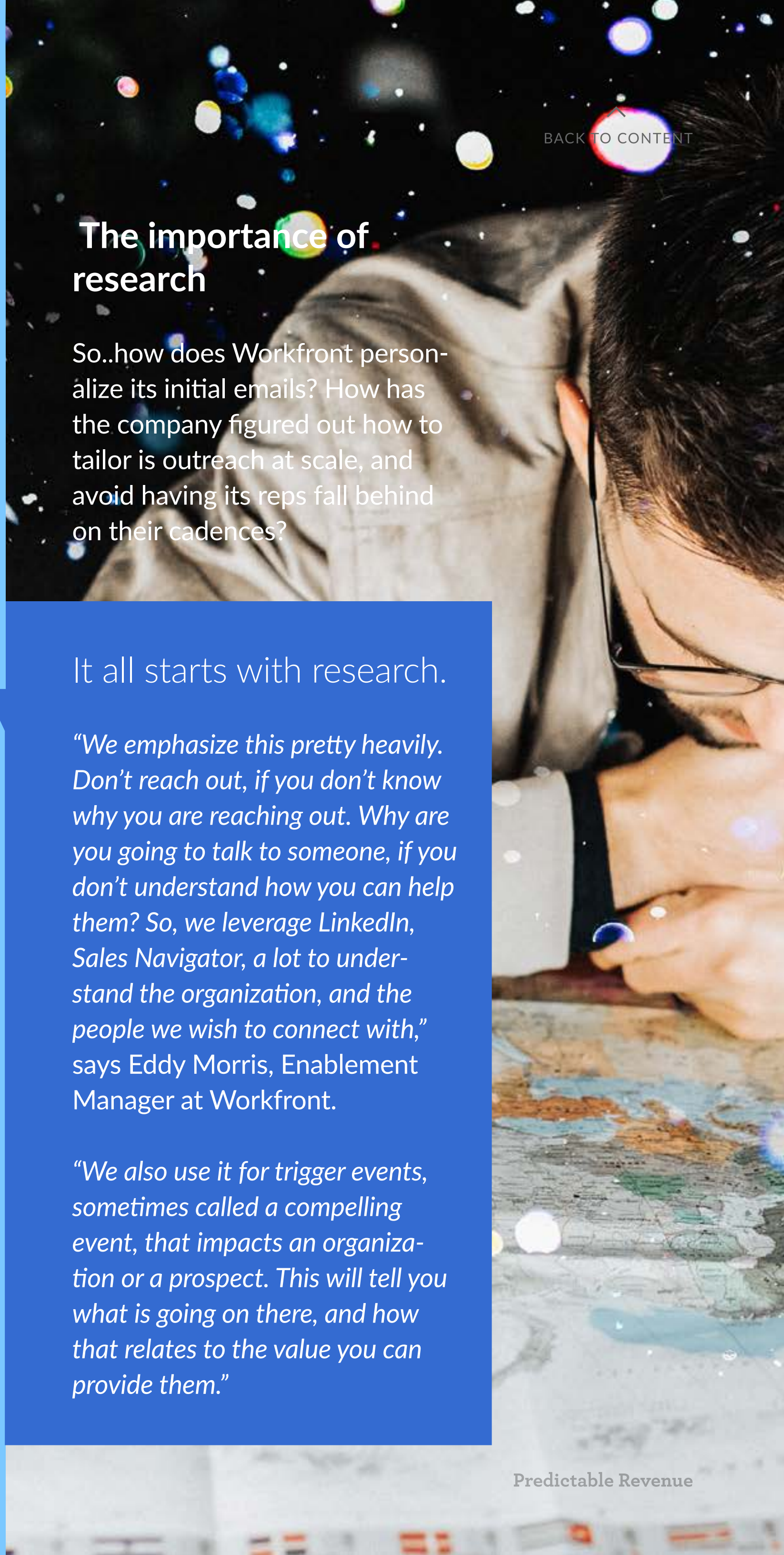
At Utah-based Workfront, a company selling modern work management software to enterprise clients, the answer has been to hyper-personalize its initial emails to a prospect. Although it does take more time to execute, tailored emails are the means by which their company *"cuts through the noise"* and separates itself from the avalanche of other tech companies sending emails, and making calls every day. *"Obviously, people get hit up a lot. I feel it every day, I get them a ton of emails. But, email still works, if you do it right,"* says Justin Hiatt, Vice President of Digital Sales at Workfront.

"We have all seen different approaches to email, as the spray and pray approach, for example. We feel that is what has contributed to the noise. So, we have made a decision to hyper-personalize at least the first touch. That is your foot in the door, and what people see first. We feel it is the right way to get Workfront's messaging through, and how to share our value because we believe we have something that can help."

The road to personalization

Workfront hasn't always enjoyed such a precise, dedicated philosophy in their prospecting. In fact, getting to a place where they decided to invest in hyper-personalizing their prospecting came as a result of trial and error. The earliest incarnations of Workfront's prospecting, for instance, was entirely automated. But, the broad approach resulted in dismal response rates and deliverability issues. In response, management decided to try the opposite, and prospectors were directed to personalize every touch point along a cadence. Unfortunately, that more labor-intensive method meant Workfront's reps were unable to finish their daily activities.

"The cadence was broken. There is a balance between personalizing, and getting enough touchpoints down and complete the motion. So, that's why we moved to hyper-personalizing the first touch and then having more automated sequences happen, as our people are making calls," says Hiatt. *"It's just a balance that works for us. We are committed to personalizing the first email to every person we want to talk to."*



The importance of research

So..how does Workfront personalize its initial emails? How has the company figured out how to tailor is outreach at scale, and avoid having its reps fall behind on their cadences?

It all starts with research.

"We emphasize this pretty heavily. Don't reach out, if you don't know why you are reaching out. Why are you going to talk to someone, if you don't understand how you can help them? So, we leverage LinkedIn, Sales Navigator, a lot to understand the organization, and the people we wish to connect with," says Eddy Morris, Enablement Manager at Workfront.

"We also use it for trigger events, sometimes called a compelling event, that impacts an organization or a prospect. This will tell you what is going on there, and how that relates to the value you can provide them."

Trigger events, according to Morris, can be a number of things:

- Job change (promotion, job change)
- IPO, new product launch
- Speaking engagements (that your prospect participated in)
- Blog posts (that your prospect wrote)

“That is a powerful gesture, showing people you have taken the time to see that you are looking and understanding what they do,” adds Hiatt.
“We have a better shot at connecting is we reach out with that trigger, for sure.”

Of course, finding a personal trigger event for every single prospect is a tall order. In the event that a Workfront rep can’t find a personal event to use in their outreach, they turn to use company news – that could be the IPO or new product launch mentioned above, or a noteworthy new hire. Finally, should the company not yield any triggers, Workfront reps use important industry news such as new legislation to personalize it’s messaging.
“Everything is a balance, you can’t spend hours and hours creating a book report on an organization, or a person,” adds Morris. “But, of course, that can be challenging. What we have found, though, is that you can always find some kind of trigger if you know where to look.”

(Editor’s note: we chatted with Tuka Das, CEO of Halifax’s LeadSift, a while back about how he uses trigger events to anchor his prospecting. **You can read about it here, or listen to the interview here.)**

Crafting an email

> *"It's easy to learn and easy to digest," says Hiatt. "And our are faster and more efficient with it. We do it for calls, emails, and target account reach outs."*

Once you've done the research you can actually start writing emails.

To make that process as efficient as possible – remember, hitting daily activity numbers are important –

Workfront has developed a five-step template for crafting tight, tailored emails.

The pillars of that template are:

1. A tight introduction (this is where you leverage your trigger)
2. Transition the (lead into the value prop)
3. Value proposition
4. Conclusion (this is where you ask for a meeting)
5. Writing your subject line (Workfront suggests doing this last, so their reps aren't boxed in by writing subject line first)

And what does a great Workfront email, based on this template look like? Here's just one example:

Hi XXXX,

I loved your recent talk at [X Conference]...the analogy you used to hithome, as putting out fires in the workplace is exhausting and unfortunately part of every team's day to day. You had some great insights into enterprise work management challenges, aligning and communicating, prioritizing projects and then tracking and reporting those deliverables. I was curious how these challenges currently are affecting your teams at Company X, and I think it would be valuable to begin a dialogue about Workfront.

Workfront is a modern work management solution that centralizes all internal projects and workflows into one platform, which enables teams like your to organize, prioritize, and track all work from one place versus multiple, disconnected tools. Because everything is centralized across teams, projects won't fall through the cracks and come back to haunt you, and you won't spend much time putting out fires.

I'd love to connect for 10-15 minutes when you're available over the next few days to see how you currently use the principles from your talk within your organization and see if we can help. I have time tomorrow or Friday, which works better for you?

Best,

XXXX

The response to this email was awesome – the prospect called it "by far the best email they had ever gotten." And Workfront got a meeting out of it. That's the power of personalization. That's the power of research. It just needs to be done in a scalable, efficient way.

For more on Hiatt's and Morris's thoughts on prospecting – including details on Workfront's cadence and SDR workload – **check out the rest of their interview on The Predictable Revenue Podcast.**

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