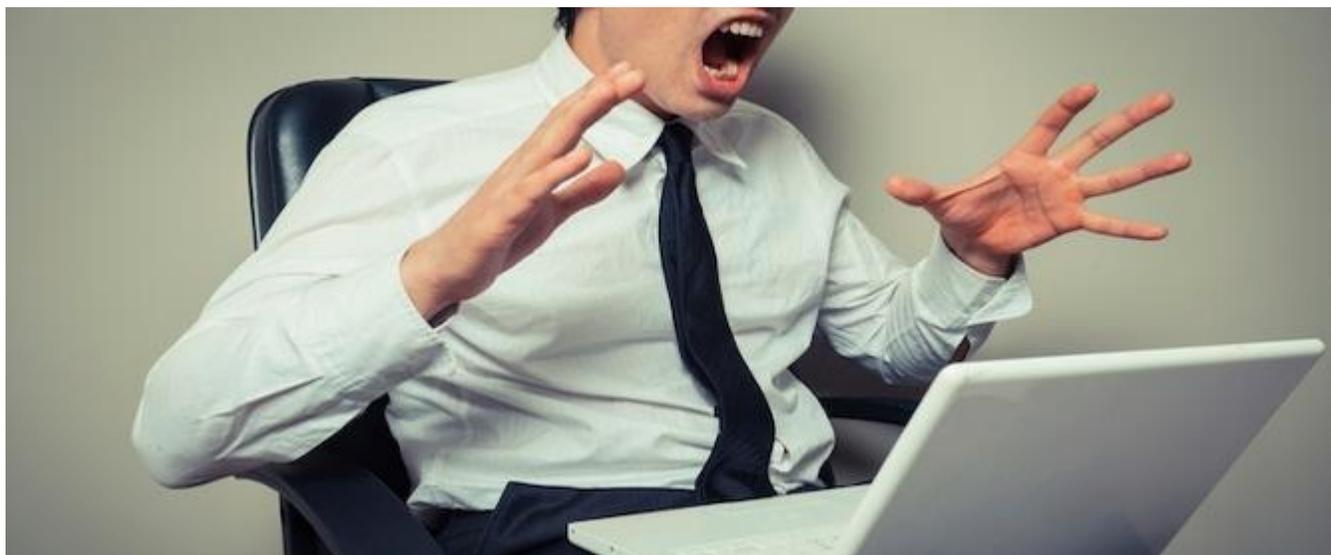# Salespeople, Please Stop Sending Terrible Prospecting Emails like This One

I don't know about you, but I'm sick of bad emails from salespeople. I am sick and tired of receiving unsolicited, un-customized, long-winded, self-promotional emails from lazy salespeople. While I could write a complete book series with a slew of bad examples, I received a particularly irritating one the other day that sent me over the edge.

I responded to the salesperson just to tell him how bad it was. This brand new sales development rep defended himself in a back-and-forth email exchange, giving me even more reasons to be mad.

Realizing I was getting nowhere with this rep, I ended the conversation telling him I'd write an article on why I found his approach so annoying and ineffective.

Without further ado, here's the email I received. (I changed the names and value props on the email to protect the guilty. But I left as much of the badness as possible.)

Peter, before the weekend

Hi Peter,

I'll be reaching out to you on the phone in the next couple of days / next week but I wanted to follow up with an email as well before the weekend.

We haven't had the pleasure of meeting but I'm reaching out to introduce myself and see if we can schedule a 15-minute conversation sometime next week.

I work for a company called BoogerPickers -- we help businesses better manage their

digital booger picking technologies, and when I came across your website and assessed the tools you're using, I realized this is a great opportunity for us to help you.

To be brief -- we are a booger indexing solution that, to name a few things:

- Eliminates the chaotic burden of hand picking boogers from your nose

- Enables access to smaller, difficult to reach boogers in order to increase successful booger extraction

- Optimizes the ROI from your existing booger pickers (reducing time and maximizing ROI)

Companies similar to yours in the industry rely on us to be the foundation for their entire booger picking stack and I think HubSpot Inc. could definitely see the value in BoogerPickers as well.

I'd love the opportunity to share this in a bit more detail and hear your feedback.

Are you available for 15 minutes sometime next week?

Can't imagine a quick chat about increasing booger picking and optimizing your booger pile would be a waste.

Cheers,
Clueless Chad

PS -- Check out this recent TechCrunch article about BoogerPickers' recent round of funding and future plans!

As you read that, you probably saw many of the mistakes. But just in case you're as dense as the guy who sent it, I'll walk you through the mistakes I saw one by one.

Don't Trick Your Prospects into Opening Your Email

I was pissed off before I even read past the first line of the email body. After reading the subject line, "*Peter, before the weekend*," I opened this thinking that it was urgent or maybe even from someone who knew me. But then realized it was from a salesperson who didn't know me at all.

This salesperson successfully tricked me into opening his email. In the subsequent email exchange, he defended his subject line by saying that it got a 78% open rate and a 12% response rate. He failed to realize that he probably pissed off at least 66% of us by tricking us into opening his email.

Don't obscure who you are or what you want. Instead, use a subject line that's obvious.

If You're Going to Call, Just Call

"I'll be reaching out to you on the phone in the next couple of days / next week but I wanted to follow up with an email as well before the weekend."

At this point, I'm already pissed off because this salesperson tricked me into opening his email. This line increased my anger. Not full-Hulk. But, getting there.

If you're going to call a prospect, just call them. If you're going to email first, send an email. Either of these avenues is acceptable. What's not is sending an email to warn your prospect that you're going to call them. Just do it.

The worst part about this line is that it leaves me with no idea why this salesperson is writing (or going to call) me. He didn't personalize the email to me in any way. He did not do any research on me. He made no attempt to build any type of personal connection.

When sending an email, your first line should mention something about the prospect, not you or your cold calling plans. Something like, *"Congratulations on your new product launch"* or *"I saw that a few of your team members recently read about topic X on our website,"* or in his case, *"I noticed you're using 12 different booger-picking technologies."* These 12 ready-to-use email prospecting templates contain examples of first sentences that connect you with something the prospect probably cares about and show you actually did research on them and their company.

The first line of a prospecting email should always be about the prospect, and never about the salesperson. Read this three-step prospect research guide to learn exactly how to achieve this level of personalization.

Don't Insert Your Call to Action Before You've Established Value

"We haven't had the pleasure of meeting but I'm reaching out to introduce myself and see if we can schedule a 15-minute conversation sometime next week."

My thought bubble after I read this line: "Really? Pleasure? Who the hell are you?" I especially love how this salesperson asked for 15 minutes well before he introduced any potential value to me. Does he think his prospects sit around all day hoping random strangers will call them? Or maybe he thinks his excitement about his product

compensates for his lack of genuine interest in me or my challenges?

I don't have any suggestions for changing this sentence to make it better. Statements like this should not be written in sales emails -- plain and simple. They're simply extra words, which can only hinder your efforts considering that most experts recommend <u>three to seven sentence sales emails</u>.

Assuming he correctly punctuated his sentences, this email is 13 sentences. If I were to try to cut this email down to the ideal length, this sentence would be the first to go, especially since doing away with it would help him get to the point faster …

Suggest Only One Benefit in Your First Email (If Any)

"I work for a company called BoogerPickers -- we help businesses better manage their digital booger picking technologies, and when I came across your website and assessed the tools you're using, I realized this is a great opportunity for us to help you.

"To be brief -- we're a booger indexing solution that, to name a few things ..."

At this point, the salesperson started to explain the problems he solves. While I'm not a fan of spitting out value propositions in the first email to a prospect who has never heard of you, I'll give him credit for getting to the point (finally).

However, the problem is that he threw a bunch of benefits at me like spaghetti at a wall. As sales prospecting expert <u>Heather R. Morgan says</u>, "Keep things short and sweet … by keep[ing] your email focused on one core idea or benefit."

And as best-selling sales and marketing author David Meerman Scott would say, this guy needs a <u>gobbledygook meter</u>. Why? This salesperson includes a lot of vague words that are overused by marketers and salespeople. At best, most prospects read phrases like "optimize ROI" and "reduce time" and ignore them. At worst, they think, "bullsh*t," and lump you into the bucket of over-sellers.

Lastly, if you're going to say "to be brief," be brief. But, maybe, just maybe, don't say it at all. Just be brief.

Realize That Your Prospects Don't Care What You'd Love to Do

"I'd love the opportunity to share this in a bit more detail and hear your feedback."

The last thing I care about is what this salesperson would love to do. In general, I don't care much about what strangers who spam, deceive, oversell, and waste my time would love to do.

This line should also be cut from the email. As I shared in my article "<u>9 Obnoxious</u>

Phrases that Get Prospects to Hang Up on You," any statement starting with *"I'd love to ... "* should be transformed into a question like *"Would you be interested in … ?"*

Don't Ask For a Phone Call in Your First Email

"Are you available for 15 minutes sometime next week?

"Can't imagine a quick chat about increasing booger picking and optimizing your booger pile would be a waste."

The rep might not be able to imagine himself wasting my time, but I can. After all, he's already wasted my time and pissed me off with this email. Something tells me he wouldn't "totally redeem himself" on the phone.

Lately, I've been advising salespeople to stop asking to schedule a call in their first email, especially if they don't know whether the prospect is in the market for a product or service like theirs. I realize this bucks traditional sales prospecting wisdom. However, I'm seeing that buyers are reaching a frustration point with these types of cold emails. It seems (not so surprisingly) that the last thing a busy executive wants to do these days is to get on the phone and hear a pitch. They can go to a website and read the pitch much more quickly -- anytime, anywhere, and in their underwear if they want.

But because salespeople are sometimes getting high single and low double digit response rates (in this case, 12%, according to "Chad"), most companies are okay with the collateral damage that results from a cold email campaign. Missing the mark 90% of the time -- even though it pisses prospects off and tarnishes the company's reputation -- seems to be an acceptable prospecting casualty rate. But I don't get it. While those types of numbers might be the status quo in prospecting, they would indicate failure in any other game. Why do we accept this collateral damage?

These low response rates indicate that it's probably too forward to ask for time on the phone. Instead, focus on simply getting a response. Do this by asking a conversation-starting question to determine their priorities. Something like, *"Do you ever get frustrated by X?"* or *"Is this a problem for you?"*

That said, I do think it makes sense for salespeople to offer to do a phone call at some point, but I'd recommend offering it as a follow up to an email response. After all, communicating via phone could be the prospect's preference. But, the offer should sound something like, *"I am available to get on a call with you at [day and time] if you believe it makes sense to explore how I can help"* instead of *"Do you have 15 minutes to get on the phone?"*

Resist Tooting Your Own Horn

"Cheers,
Clueless Chad

"PS -- Check out this recent TechCrunch article about BoogerPickers' recent round of funding and future plans!"

Interesting choice of horn-tooting PR. Any good salesperson should know that their company's funding does not do anything to validate that a prospect needs what they have.

In general, salespeople should avoid talking about themselves or their companies in the first email. Don't toot your own horn. Instead, demonstrate your expertise by doing your research, customizing your approach, making a very educated guess about one way (and only one way) you could provide value, and ask a question to see if this benefit synchs with their priorities.

p.s. Stop copying and pasting emails. Use HubSpot CRM's email templates tool to save you time and maximize your efficiency.

Reach Out to the Right Contact

This email is unquestionably bad, but I haven't even gotten to the worst part yet. The worst part is that I'm not the person managing "booger picking" for HubSpot. If this guy did a very small amount of research by looking at the size of the company and my title on Linkedin, he would have realized that I probably don't even *know* the guy that manages booger picking at HubSpot.

In the subsequent email exchange, the salesperson admitted to sending the same exact email to a bunch of people at HubSpot, since he didn't take the time to determine who the correct contact was. Don't be this lazy.

If you are going to knowingly email people who aren't the right contact, at least take Aaron Ross's decade-old advice and use his "Are you the right contact?" email templates. Just be careful -- while there is a time and a place for this approach, don't use it if you can find the right contact on LinkedIn. In the last 10 years, LinkedIn has come a long way, baby.

A Better Prospecting Email Template For This Scenario

Taking into account all of the advice above, here's an email template that this salesperson could have used to successfully get a response from me. (Since I don't really understand exactly what his company does -- despite his efforts to fill me in -- I'm taking some liberties by assuming that the wrong booger picking technology negatively impacts lead generation.)

Losing website leads because of inefficient booger picking?

Hey Pete,

I read your impressive article on lead generation and shared it with our VP of Sales. I wish our marketing team generated leads for us at that volume.

I know your team is world-class in this area, but I'm wondering whether you've ever looked at the negative impact too many booger picking technologies have on your lead generation funnel? From looking at the way your booger picking technologies are deployed on HubSpot.com, we estimate you're losing 3% of your leads.

Could this be a problem for you and your team?

Regards,
Clued-In Chad

What do you think of these two email templates? Was I too harsh or too nice? Would you make different suggestions?