EMAIL POWER PROSPECTING

SALES KIT 1

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KLA group

knowledge – learning – achievement

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Is the Glimpse Factor Stalling Your Emails?

Email prospecting is hot.

It feels much less threatening than cold calling. No one will hang up on you. You have time to think about exactly what to write. And, if prospects like your message, they'll respond.

But just as easily, prospects can delete your email – and never read a word.

Within three seconds of noticing it, they make a decision to read or delete. I call this the Glimpse Factor. You need to be able to break past it before they'll ever read the great content you've toiled over.

Here's how the Glimpse Factor works.

When prospects first glimpse your email they have three questions top of mind;

1. **Do I have time for whatever it is now?**
2. **Can I delete it and do nothing at all?**
3. **Do I need to hold on to it to do something later?**

Because they're busy people, they're secretly hoping that they can delete it with no further action. But your objective is to craft emails that make contacts feel like they have to read and respond immediately. Before you can accomplish that, you have to break past the Glimpse Factor.

To make their delete decision, the first place your prospects look is at the email address. They're checking to see who the email is from, If they don't recognize your name and note an email extension from a generic provider such as gmail or yahoo, odds are they'll hit delete.

Approach prospects using your company email address. While they may not know your company, it reinforces your credibility and they'll jump to read the subject line.

In the split-second that they read the subject line they'll ask and answer, "Is this for me personally? Is it junk that I can ignore?"

They're looking for any excuse to quickly hit delete.

Use subject lines that require prospects to read your email.

- **Can we talk Tuesday at 10:30?**
- **A quick question**
- **A thought about IT spending**

If your subject line doesn't feel relevant to your contact, it's gone.

Next they hop to the opening salutation looking to see if it begins with their name. Including your prospect's name alerts them that the email was sent for them specifically. Without it, discard.

While you've made it into the body of the email, your contacts don't yet begin to read. Instead, their eyes drop to your signature at the bottom to check out your authenticity.

If they didn't recognize your email address or company, prospects want to find out who you are. They're scanning for marketing hype at the bottom. It's okay to have links to your social networks and website, even a tag line about your company or a link to a free resource. But a blatant advertisement is their signal that this email isn't one they need to address.

Is the Glimpse Factor Stalling Your Emails? (continued)

Prospects' final test is to determine how difficult your email appears. They're assessing to see how much effort it'll take to address.

Simply by glimpsing the format of your content, they'll make their decision!

To break through, keep emails brief. Use short paragraphs so they appear quick to address. You may be tempted to use bulleted lists to accomplish this, but resist. In prospecting emails bulleted text implies marketing content or action items, both of which have negative connotations to busy people who don't know you.

If you make it past all these check points, they'll finally begin to read the compelling message you've written just for them.

In just three seconds, your prospects make a choice: read or delete. Remember the Glimpse Factor as you compose your messages, and you'll see both your response rates and your new sales pick up steam in no time.

Within three seconds the prospect will read or delete your message.

The Prospecting Dilemma

When you approach a new prospect, what do you have to offer? Whether you're sending an email or cold calling, you need to grab the attention of your contact and make them want to talk with you. But too often sellers spew on about their product or lead off with a trap question that screams sales person.

The solution to this prospecting dilemma used to be to start your discussion as a business conversation rather than a traditional semi-scripted cold call. You based it on needs you uncovered in research before ever approaching your prospect.

But even that isn't enough any more.

Business owners and executives are busy people, with too many responsibilities, too little time, and too few staff to pick up the slack. They don't have time for a conversation unless it will help them do their job more efficiently and effectively.

Too often the prospecting business discussion is one designed to gather a prospect's needs and covertly qualify if an opportunity exists. While you begin the conversation discussing the business issue you uncovered in your research, it quickly deteriorates into a series of questions that feel much like a sales call.

Your contact ends the conversation without agreeing to a first appointment and you don't know why.

You never mentioned your product and you were only talking about them. So what happened? It used to work. What changed?

If you want to catch your prospects' attention, you must go beyond even the business discussion. You have to have something important to talk with them about, something that feels almost life changing for them.

Here's how it works.

1. **Know your purpose.** In your first call or email, your purpose isn't to close for an appointment. I know you're shocked, but it isn't. Rather, it's simply to have a conversation to get to know each other, begin building a relationship, and see if you should have a meeting.

   While you're feeling the pressure to fill your pipeline this moment, many of the people you'll speak with won't be ready to make any immediate changes. But if you leave a positive impression as a thoughtful, intelligent person who may be able to help their business in the future, they'll want to stay in touch. That gives you a lead for 3, 6 or 9 months from now.

   Better still, they'll probably call you because they'll remember your discussion.

2. **Offer to share your expertise freely.** Research is important but it's how you apply it that is truly distinguishes you. Determine the business issue you could assist with, then offer your expertise on what they should be thinking about to address that point.

   Don't hold back because you think a prospect should pay for your advice.

   Few companies you speak with will be able to implement your suggestions without your company's help. Let go of that concern and open up. Share the great knowledge you have.

   If you have ideas about how a company could better control their IT costs, tell them. Some will be recommendations that directly connect to your offerings, but others should not. If, for example, during your discussion you believe that some basic training would help their office manager to administer better system back-ups, tell them. You can sell them a full-scale business recovery solution later.

   Guide them with ideas they can implement right now while positioning what you can assist with in the future.

The Prospecting Dilemma (continued)

3. **Make them think about the possibilities.** As you share, discuss what you've seen other companies do to address a similar problem. Think about your clients, the challenges they're facing and what they're doing about those problems.

   Show prospects the possibilities of what they could be doing to improve productivity, cut costs, or address that need you uncovered in your research.

   Share one or two simple-to-implement ideas, as well as one or two more complex, suggestions. Base your ideas on how you've observed your clients address those matters in their organizations, or how they have implemented your solutions to change their businesses.

   The executives you're calling are so busy they haven't had time to consider other possibilities. They're surviving with the issues when they may not have to.

4. **Help them re-examine their status quo.** By not pushing prospects into a change with your first call, you're freeing them up to rethink their status quo. Your conversation of suggestions and possibilities allows them to take time out and think for a moment about what could be.

   Suddenly training the office manager may not be enough. They may want your recommendation on how they can protect their business during hurricane season, or secure their data, or better manage their whole IT infrastructure.

   They won't want to wait 3 or 6 months to talk again. They'll want to pick your brain some more and consider ways to eliminate the issues they've been living with now that they know they don't have to.

I know, you're thinking that this sounds like a deeper conversation than you usually conduct in a cold call. And, you're concerned that you interrupted the person. They'd never stay on the phone for this type of discussion.

But, it works.

It works because you've grabbed your prospect's attention and made them want to talk with you. After a conversation like this, they either want to schedule time for a deeper conversation, or they want to hear from you again sometime soon.

You can solve your prospecting dilemma but elevating your conversation to one based on your expertise and ideas. Before you know it, not only will your pipeline increase, but your relationship database of potential new prospects will be overflowing, too.

Cool Sales Tools to Make Prospecting Easier

Prospecting has never been harder—or easier. Yes, it's hard to get responses, but you have all the tools at your finger tips to increase your odds of grabbing the attention of your top contacts and getting a reply.

Gone is the dialing for dollars mentality. You can do better than that.

You can use these tools to do everything from identifying who your best-odds prospects are to deducing why they'd want to speak with you, writing a powerful email, and ultimately attracting them to you. Here are some of my favorites.

1. **Identify the who.** Once you know the profile of the types of contacts and companies you want to approach, use Zoominfo.com, NetProspex.com, Insideview.com or Hoovers.com to search and get the names of the best contacts to talk to.

2. **Delve in.** Go a step further and do some research for the contacts you've uncovered on those same sites. What have they written? Where have they been quoted? You can quickly get a feel for what's top of mind with them and where their passions lie. Use this information to craft your grabber value proposition for phone calls and emails. Use it to write blogs or articles that'll attract their attention and peak their interest. Comment about your ideas on social networks.

3. **Secure contact info.** Start with these same sites to find the most current contact information for your target prospects. Jigsaw and NetProspex are maintained by people like you and me, so they've often got very current information. While you're there, add a few contacts of your own and earn points for free contact information downloads. You can also use LinkedIn, Facebook and other social networks as a tool.

4. **Find elusive email addresses.** If you still can't find an email address here's a trick to try. From your search engine type "@their website domain" and it'll pull up anywhere on the web where email addresses for that domain appear. Now you'll have the email protocol for that company and can more effectively guess your contact's email address.

5. **Watch your prospects.** No, we aren't talking stalking. Watch what your top prospects are doing using alert services like Google Alerts for free. Set up a daily alert and see all the tweets and comments they've made and where they're mentioned. You'll know what to talk about when you call and more importantly, when they need you to call.

6. **Make your emails stand out.** Use Gobbledygook.grader.com to pick out trite or hype-filled words and phrases you don't even know you're using. It's a great tool to increase the impact of your brochures and online copy, too.

7. **Know if they're listening.** One of the biggest challenges with email prospecting is knowing if anyone has read what you sent. Use ReadNotify.com to trace email opens and forwards, numbers of times read, and URL clicks. Use Bit.ly to shorten long links for social network comments and emails. You can track how many times the links are opened, forwarded and by whom.

8. **Increase your own productivity.** If you're a Microsoft Outlook user Xobni.com is a plugin that makes searching your inbox and finding information about your contacts fast and easy. You can even search social networks for information about your contacts.

Getting people to reply is the most difficult aspect of prospecting. These tools give you new levels of information and insight to increase your odds of success.

Create Email Subject Lines That Draw Prospects In

Email is now the preferred prospecting tool, far surpassing the phone to the relief of many sellers who hate cold calling. Yet it hasn't necessarily made prospecting any easier. Response rates are low and many sellers are discouraged by how difficult it is to engage contacts.

Often the culprit is the subject line. It's one of the most important keys to getting people to open your emails.

Many sellers love to use fun subject lines like "Enticing Ideas: Kendra Lee, Did You Catch the Wave?" They think that a bit of humor will lighten the recipient's day, prompting them to open it.

Wrong!

Remember who you're writing to and what you're trying to accomplish. Your email is no different than a cold call. You're interrupting the day of an already overworked person.

Picture Steve. He has six meetings and eleven action items to conquer today. In fly forty, fifty, possibly even one hundred emails throughout the day. While humor is fun, it's a waste of valuable time Steve doesn't have. Instead of laughing at cute subject lines and enjoying his mail, he's looking for reasons to hit "delete" and avoid another thing landing on his plate. If he doesn't recognize your name immediately, your lighthearted subject line instantly hits the delete barrier.

Regardless of how busy he is, you want your subject line to draw Steve in with a **personal and compelling** message.

If you're attempting to secure an appointment or invite a prospect to a web event, try:

- **Shall we meet Tuesday?**
- **Can you talk Wednesday at 2pm?**
- **Can you attend Friday at 12?**

What makes this work when the contact doesn't know you? It feels personal to him.

You're requesting a meeting at a specific date and time. He needs to read enough to determine what you want, then check his calendar to see if he can meet. These subject lines are successful because even though people no longer feel a sense of obligation to return every message, they do feel more obliged to RSVP to a meeting invitation.

Another subject line approach you might use is to share an insight or tip you have for the prospect. Try:

- **A hiring idea**
- **A thought about managing distributed files**
- **An idea about using your IT to grow client satisfaction**

People love a new idea related to their job. Don't share the thought here though. Tease your prospect with enough information about it to entice a response and start a conversation. Suggest a time to discuss it in more detail with them.

Bottom line, make it personal to them, but in a way that doesn't sound like a marketing email.

Steer clear of gimmicks like "Enticing Ideas: Kendra Lee, Did You Catch the Wave?" This didn't have anything to do with me even though it put my name in the subject line. It was clearly a marketing message. No action was required on my part. There was no sense of urgency or compelling reason to open it.

In three seconds it hit my delete barrier. Gone without reading more than the subject line. Don't let that happen to your emails.

Email is the New Phone

If you're like I was, you believe email should be answered after hours when you're not on the phone or in customer meetings. That's how I handle client proposals. They can't be written during valuable customer "face" time, but should be saved for that time of day when customers aren't available.

But, expectations and how email is used have changed. Many customers now expect you to hold whole conversations via email, sometimes with emails flying within minutes of each other, just as if they were instant messages or a phone call. With these changes email is now as important as face-to-face meetings and phone calls.

Here are some tips to consider when making email a primary customer interaction tool:

- **View email as the new prospecting tool.** After you leave a voicemail, follow-up with an email, giving prospects 2 easy ways to respond. Remember, your goal is to connect with the person. Even if they respond "no", you've connected and can respond to try to generate an interest.
- **Keep the sales process moving forward.** Use emails to ask requirements gathering questions, get referrals, make recommendations, and provide updates.
- **Respond to all emails with action items promptly.** You return phone calls within 1-24 hours. The expectation now is that you'll return emails within 30 minutes – 12 hours. If you can't respond completely, send an email setting expectations about when you will send a full response.
- **Think – and proof – before you send.** Sometimes it's best to draft a response, then wait 30 minutes before sending. You may choose to soften, shorten, or otherwise change your response.
- **You may need a hand-held device such as a Blackberry to keep up.** Consider what tools you need to stay on top of your emails, responding to your customers more real-time, and make the investment.
- **Schedule daily time on your calendar to respond to emails.** Consider this equal to customer meeting time. If you're holding complete customer conversations via email, you really are holding a meeting. What's the difference? Give it equal time for well thought out responses and next step requests.

There are many benefits to using email: ease of connection and a better way to communicate are only a few. I recently had a prospect that was interested in having us do some training development work for her firm. She emailed me and explained exactly what she needed and requested a quote. When I requested a phone meeting to learn more like every good sales rep, she declined. She was the decision maker and I had to have the answers. So, I asked her all my questions through email and prepared a proposal based on her answers. With my proposal in hand, and without a single verbal conversation, she not only accepted it, but increased it by 20% to cover any changes in scope!

While this situation's unusual, it's becoming more and more common for customers and prospects to prefer to answer questions and move opportunities forward through email while limiting their number of meetings. Be prepared and you'll soon find yourself reducing your sell cycle and closing opportunities through email, too! Now isn't that cool?

Increase Prospecting Results By Integrating Your Touches

Connecting with prospects for the first meeting requires persistence, consistency – and simply wearing them down. You can speed your access time by integrating your communication strategy with multiple connection methods without frustrating prospects.

We've spent many hours working with clients on ways they can refine their prospect touch points, and improve their overall prospecting results. Touch points include phone calls, emails, direct mail, and any other forms of communication.

Most sales people I've worked with have a solid cold calling strategy to gain access to their prospects. They cold call once every 2-3 days, and send follow-up emails every week or so. This approach gives the sales person a chance to project their professionalism and their interest in working with the prospect, by voice over the phone, while also providing the prospect with the opportunity to respond easily via email. This thorough approach helps get a more immediate response, letting the sales rep know if they have a real opportunity or if they should move on.

While this successful communication strategy is very effective, there are several ways to enhance it and speed access to new prospects.

First, rather than periodically following a call with an email, integrate email into your cold call strategy. Send an email following every 2 calls, or in place of every other call. The prospect is still hearing from you, knows you are interested in connecting, and has an easy way of responding. A reminder tip: remember to email no more than every 3 days.

Second, consider integrating events, articles, or other marketing news that may be of interest to a prospect into your strategy. As you spot information that may be useful to a prospect, pass it along with a quick note. This will grab the prospect's attention in a more personalized way, further demonstrating your interest in meeting, and helping you to stand-out from your competitors.

Some items you might want to pass along to a prospect include:

- A newspaper or trade publication article with information impacting their industry. This shows that you are paying attention to their business, and have solutions for their needs.
- If you are a member of a city chamber, industry organization, or other relevant organization, consider events a prospect might be interested in attending and invite them.
- Newsletters or news releases from your own company – sharing information that would be important to a prospect – should be sent with a personal note keeping the prospect current on the options available to them.

Third, let the message you use for voicemail and email evolve. Begin with your initial value proposition, and integrate in new knowledge you have gained from gatekeepers, voicemail and email messages, events you are aware of, and information you have sent or read. Your prospect will become immune to the same tired message no matter how many times you reach out, so let it evolve just as you will during the sales process.

The more frequently – within reason – your contact hears from you, the more he will recognize you are not going away and are serious about meeting. The more you integrate your touches, the easier it will be for your prospect to respond.

To gain speedy access to new prospects, treat them more personally while staying in front of them. Finding ways to demonstrate you understand their potential needs, and communicate in a more personalized manner, will grab attention and yield the prospecting results you desire.

Meet Kendra Lee and the KLA Group

Kendra Lee is the driver of the Email PowerProspecting Sales Kit and president of KLA Group. She's also a top IT seller, prospect attraction specialist and sales advisor who knows how to shorten time to revenue in innovative ways—even in a challenging economy. She's the author of the award winning book Selling Against the Goal and is a popular speaker at annual sales meetings and channel events

Specializing in the IT industry, KLA Group works with manufacturers, distributors, and channel resellers to break in and exceed revenue objectives in the Small and Midmarket Business (SMB) segment.

Under Ms. Lee's direction her organization has assisted sellers in:

- Increasing referrals more than 328% in just 7 weeks,
- Penetrating SMB markets in just 6 weeks, and
- Driving new client acquisition more than 31% year over year.

Clients frequently send emails to share successes such as:

- "With your help, I reached an elusive executive in just 1 day after two months of failed attempts. Now we're taking over management of their IT system across multiple locations with a 12-month contract."
- "I secured an appointment for a $175K opportunity by changing my prospecting approach with your techniques."

To find out more about KLA Group or have Kendra speak to your organization:

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Specializing in the IT industry, KLA Group works with companies to break in and exceed revenue objectives in the Small and Midmarket Business (SMB) segment.
To find out more about the company, read the latest articles, or subscribe to our weekly tip and e-newsletter visit www.klagroup.com

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