Date-a-Vendor

Modelling Playbook #2

Email Prospecting That Actually Connects

Cold emails shouldn't feel like shouting into the void. Your SDRs are putting effort in, but if the messaging doesn't resonate, they'll be ghosted before the second sentence.

This isn't about poetic writing. It's about relevance, timing, and data that actually helps messages land.

Why email modelling matters

- Better reply rates
- Faster time-to-meeting
- Stronger domain health
- Data-driven segmentation
- Relevance at scale

Green flags for email-optimised SDR workflows

Metric	What Good Looks Like
Email-fit ICP	Models likely responders, not just total TAM
Enrichment fields	Data to personalise and time messaging
Intent signals	Live behaviour mapped to personas
Trigger workflows	SDRs alerted on high-signal activity
Personalisation tokens	Messaging tailored dynamically by role & segment
Deliverability protection	Verified contacts and compliant sending practices

1. Build an Email-Optimised ICP: No More Cold DMs

An email-optimised ICP isn't just firmographics. It's a model based on reply probability and persona-level engagement.

ICP Attribute	Why it Matters
Email responsiveness by persona	Not all roles reply equally — focus on those who do
Domain reputation signals	Prevent bounces and spam traps
Timezone & timing logic	Ensure emails land during work hours

> **If you're sending something to someone who doesn't care about it, it doesn't matter how good your messaging is, they simply won't care."**
>
> - Joe McLaughlin, Senior Demand Generation Manager, Cognism

How to strengthen it:

- Audit past sequences for reply and meeting rates by persona
- Prioritise segments that consistently convert
- Model out low-performing industries or roles

2. Enrich Contacts: Show Up With Something to Say

Surface-level data won't cut it. If your SDRs are opening conversations, give them context that sticks.

Enrichment Signal	Data Source	SDR Use Case
Tech stack	Firmographic API	"I see you're using X — how's that rollout going?"
Job function nuance	AI segmentation	Tailor messaging to actual buyer role
Buying power indicator	Revenue band	Pitch financial ROI to decision-makers
Social & activity	Intent feeds	Reference posts, webinars, job changes

New buyers spend 70% of their budget in the first 100 days, so targeting job-joins is a great way to reach them when they're keen to make a splash."

- Joe McLaughlin

Enriched data protects sender reputation too, fewer bounces, stronger domains, better deliverability.

3. Use Behavioural Triggers: Don't Email in the Dark

Cold outreach hits harder when it's well-timed. Behavioural triggers reveal who's likely to respond now.

Trigger Type	What It Tells You
Buying intent	Prospect is researching — follow up fast
Page visits	High-value pages viewed = decision-maker doing homework
Tech changes	Tools added or removed = timing for integration messaging
Role changes	Promotions and moves = new authority and fresh priorities

Anything to do with live signals, job joins, promotions, those who have just experienced a trigger are the ones most receptive to something new."

- Joe McLaughlin

Top tips:

- Use 3+ repeat page views to trigger outreach
- Watch for CRM or competitor tech installs
- Track job joins for new buying windows

4. Make it Feel Personal (Without the Admin Headache)

Generic messages won't cut through. But SDRs don't have time to research every lead manually.

That's where dynamic personalisation steps in, blending smart tokens with enriched fields to tailor messages at scale.

> **"I'd literally just do first name only, less is more, but then make the offer so relevant they feel you really did your homework."**
>
> - Joe McLaughlin

What to model into templates:

- **Job function nuance –** e.g. RevOps ≠ Sales Ops
- **Tech stack context –** highlight integrations and overlaps
- **Trigger references –** mention funding rounds, hiring, new tools
- **Segmented CTA** – speak in their industry's language

How to scale it:

- Group contacts into micro-segments
- Pre-fill tokens from CRM enrichment
- Track conversion themes across sequences

5. Model Outreach With Compliance in Mind

Relevance builds trust, but so does playing by the rules. Avoid spam traps by enforcing a compliance-first outreach model.

Compliance Practice	Why It Matters
GDPR-ready data	Avoid risk, protect domain, respect buyer rights
Suppression workflows	Auto-exclude DNC or global opt-outs from campaigns
Verified contact info	Improve inboxing, reduce bounce rate

❌ No creepy scraping. ❌ No wild assumptions. ✅ Just thoughtful outreach backed by real signals.

Model for Outcomes: Measure What Moves the Needle

It's not just about opens and replies. Help your SDRs optimise for conversations and meetings booked.

> **"Only email the people you actually want a response from. If the offer doesn't match the person, it's a waste of time, they won't even remember you sent it."**
>
> - Joe McLaughlin

Metric	What It Indicates
Open rate	Subject line curiosity
Reply rate	Message resonance
Meetings booked	True conversion and campaign value

Track:

- Conversion by persona, segment and signal
- Message variant performance over time
- Attribution from first-touch to booked call

Wrap Up: Build a Scalable Email System That Converts

Intentional, data-led outreach wins. Every message your SDRs send should be built on three things:

- The right person
- At the right time
- With the right message

And when that happens? Cold email stops feeling transactional and starts building real pipeline.

Write messages that get replies, not rolled eyes

Build a prospecting model that turns inboxes into conversations with the right signals, personalisation, and timing to actually land.

Start connecting