The State of Prospecting 2024

The data, tactics and trends shaping successful prospecting in 2024

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A practical guide to successful sales engagement in 2024, with data from **75.2 million** emails, over **9 million** multi-channel touchpoints, insights from **377 sales and marketing professionals**, and innovative strategies from our outreach experts.

Contents

Foreword.

Welcome to the third annual State of Prospecting whitepaper, our biggest and most in-depth report yet.

As we enter 2024, the business landscape is a blend of optimism and emerging challenges. The AI revolution is just getting started, and the prospecting world is also undergoing its own seismic shifts. Amidst these evolving dynamics, it seems fitting to introduce this year's whitepaper.

Much has changed since Sopro launched in 2015, yet our focus on people remains steadfast. Success in sales has always boiled down to forging connections, and ultimately, our role is to help a person with a problem find a person with a matching solution. While this year's report shows the prospecting world is changing, that human aspect remains as central as ever.

Sopro started with email because that's how people want to be contacted. This year's survey shows that fact hasn't changed, and that email remains the top channel for driving sales conversations. But the secret is clearly out, and a fresh approach is needed to stand out from the masses and increase results.

Ryan Welmans

CEO and co-founder
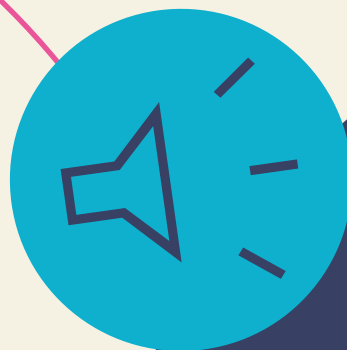
Email remains the bedrock of good outbound marketing, but the increased competition means we must innovate and adapt to keep helping the right businesses find each other. The layering of additional channels and buyer intent signals elevates outreach to new heights, bringing together the latest tech with an understanding of human behaviour.

With eight years of campaigns, we have a mountain of data from millions of emails, but this report also examines some of our new outreach formats and technologies. It's comparatively early days for these other channels, but the early insights are a promising glimpse into the prospecting future.

Good multi-channel prospecting synchronises outreach across several channels. Great multi-channel prospecting uses buyer intent triggers to send the right message, to the right person, in the right place, at the right time. It's not about casting a wider net – it's weaving a more intricate and effective one.

Enjoy the whitepaper!

Rob Harlow

Chief Innovation Officer and co-founder

Key findings.

1 ## Buyers want sellers to contact them, and they prefer email.

Prospects continue to favour email for business outreach, affirming its role as a lead generation powerhouse that delivers "excellent" ROI.

2 ## Competition is heating up. Standing out is increasingly difficult.

Studies show that the proliferation of DIY email tools is increasing competition, and rising above the competition is becoming increasingly difficult.

3 ## Messages must be personal, genuine and authentic.

Genuine, personalised messaging is key to making a memorable first impression. No hard-selling, buzzwords or pressure, just a natural introduction.

4 ## Multi-channel prospecting meets prospects in the right place.

Elevating email campaigns with multi-channel prospecting engages prospects across their preferred platforms, increasing their ability to recall your brand.

5 ## Timing is everything: buyer intent connects you with buyers at the right time.

Ensure your message reaches buyers precisely when they are most receptive and actively seeking solutions, keeping your brand top-of-mind during their decision-making process.

In the whitepaper...
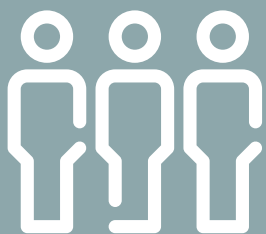
75.2 million
emails sent

8,558,947
paid social ad impressions

760,295
phone numbers, gifts, InMails, and intent triggers

22,210
prospecting campaigns

2,683
total Sopro clients

377
survey respondents

82
top industries

8 years
of data and expertise

CONTACTING BUYERS

88%
of buyers want to **hear** from suppliers when **researching and evaluating suppliers**

67%
of **buyers** prefer to be **contacted via email**
(more than any other channel)

There are an average of **4** **stakeholders** in the decision-making process (up from 3.6)

EMAIL RESULTS

86%
say email prospecting delivers "**good to excellent**" ROI

Only **3%** say prospecting delivers negative ROI

Email was again rated the **most reliable channel** for driving leads

#1

TOP THREE MARKETING CHALLENGES:

#3

Generating quality content (**36%**)

Generating enough leads (picked by **46%**)

Ensuring lead quality (**38%**)

#1

#3

#2

INCREASED COMPETITION

2023 saw a

48.5%

year-on-year increase in the number of marketing emails

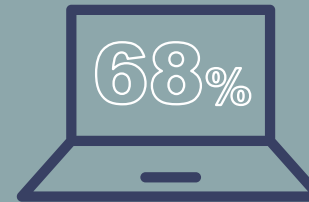The lead rates for **email-only** outreach campaigns are down **22.2%** vs 2022

75%

of B2B companies say results are better when **email prospecting** is combined with other **outbound marketing channels**

68%

say email prospecting **complements** inbound marketing channels well

+14.7% **+37.6%**

Intent-based outreach (using IP match) increased lead volumes by **14.7%**, and lead quality by **37.6%**

+4.8%

Intent-based InMail messages sent as part of a multi-channel campaign saw a **4.8% lead rate**
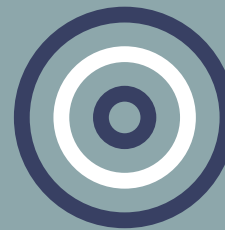
Gifting increased lead quality by

36.1%

+8%

of intent-based warm calls resulted in a booked sales meeting
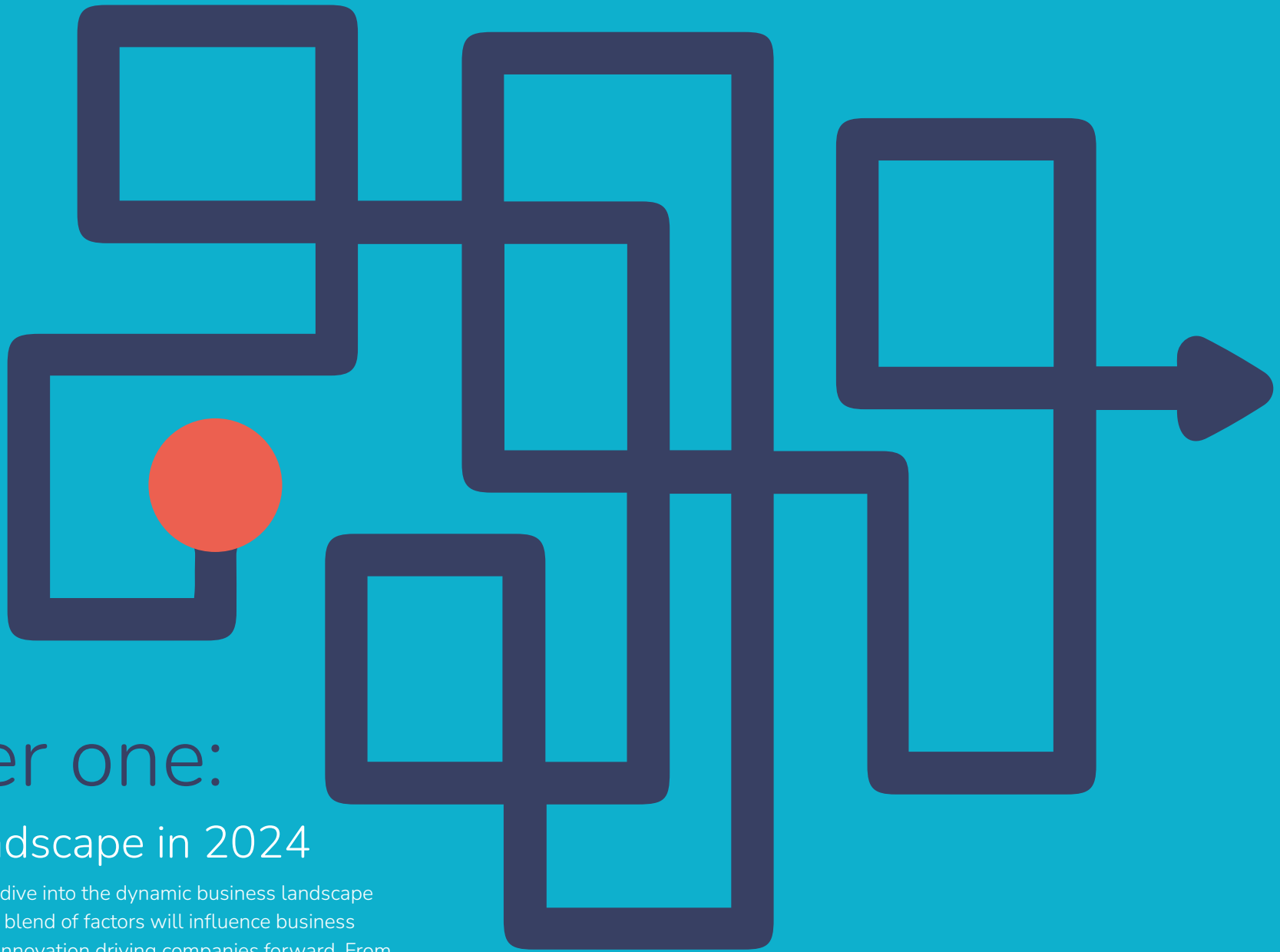
Highly-targeted paid social ads saw a

211%

increase in direct leads and a **53%** increase in deals signed, compared to standard targeting.

23%

Buyers that received personalised letters were **23% more likely** to open a subsequent email than those that hadn't.

Chapter one:

Business landscape in 2024

In this opening chapter, we dive into the dynamic business landscape of 2024. We explore how a blend of factors will influence business strategies, and explore the innovation driving companies forward. From embracing digital transformation to navigating new investment climates, this chapter sets the stage for understanding the role of strategic prospecting in this ever-changing environment.

Future challenges and opportunities

Looking ahead to 2024, both the UK and US business scenes face a mix of challenges and opportunities.

Economic climate

The economic forecast for 2024 suggests growth is expected to continue recovering after the global disruptions of recent years. However, optimism is somewhat cautious due to the twin challenges of inflationary pressures and supply chain disruptions.

Business outlook

Businesses are expected to continue adapting to the 'new normal', with remote work, flexible hours and digital transformation shaking things up. Underlying trends for personalised experiences, sustainability, innovation, high efficiency and scalability continue.

Technological advancements

Technology continues to be a powerhouse for economic development. The tech sector's boom, especially in Artificial Intelligence, automation and digital services drive new business models and efficiency.

Regulatory environment

Regulations around data privacy and environmental standards continue to be a concern. For businesses, this means extensive work on compliance - or bringing in external help - to keep everything above board and customers assured.

Investment climate

Investor sentiment is cautiously optimistic, with a sustained interest in sustainable and technology-driven investments. The funding landscape is competitive, and businesses with innovative solutions and robust growth potential are more likely to secure investment.

How businesses are responding to 2024's challenges

To get a better understanding of how businesses are responding to the changing landscapes of 2024, we conducted an extensive survey of 377 senior decision-makers in B2B sales and marketing. The study reflects the diverse challenges and opportunities across various industries and underscores the need for, and effectiveness of, strategic prospecting in the current market.

Meeting financial targets

We first asked our panel if they had achieved their financial targets in the past year. A solid **76% reported meeting or surpassing their targets last year**, a testament to their resilience and adaptability amid economic and regulatory shifts.

To what extent did you meet your financial targets this year?

How confident are you that you will hit your sales targets by the end of your financial year?

Our next question focused on the current financial year, asking about their confidence in meeting sales targets by the year's end. Encouragingly, **81% of businesses expressed confidence in achieving or exceeding their targets**, marking a notable 5% increase from the previous year.

This data isn't just charts and numbers on a page. It's a narrative of real businesses - real people, facing real challenges - and succeeding. Despite the headwinds of economic uncertainty and rapid technological changes, these figures underscore a story of agile adaptation.

Businesses are not just surviving; they're thriving, harnessing new technologies, refining strategies, and staying attuned to customer needs to enhance efficiency and engagement.

Ultimately, the increased confidence is a beacon of hope. It signals that with the right strategies, the current economic environment allows businesses to succeed and thrive. So what challenges need to be navigated, and what is the best way to arrive at the destination?

The real world digital marketing landscape

To get a better picture of the real-world challenges and solutions, we returned to our 377 B2B sales and marketing decision-makers. We first asked them to choose their single biggest digital marketing challenge.

Biggest digital marketing challenges

The main challenges picked by our panel are:

Generating enough leads
28%

Ensuring lead quality
19%

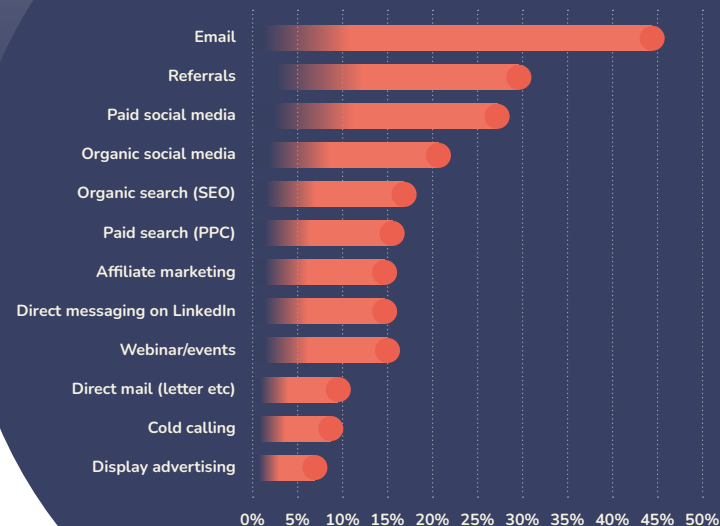Producing quality content
18%

The top two challenges in 2024 are the same as they were in 2023: and if we'd been doing this survey longer, quite possibly for a long time before that. Ensuring a steady supply of high-quality leads is an external marketing challenge.

Creating quality content comes third, replacing "proving ROI". This is an interesting challenge in the same year that we saw Large Language Models like ChatGPT, Claude, and Bard become mainstream. Perhaps there's life in the old content writer yet? (Side note: hello to my boss 👋)

Luckily for that top problem, we also asked the B2B sales and marketing panel which channels are the best for driving leads. Email once again came out top.

More people identified email prospecting as a successful channel for generating leads than PPC, LinkedIn InMail, and cold calling combined.

Which channel is most successful at driving leads?

Channel	Value
Email	
Referrals	
Paid social media	
Organic social media	
Organic search (SEO)	
Paid search (PPC)	
Affiliate marketing	
Direct messaging on LinkedIn	
Webinar/events	
Direct mail (letter etc)	
Cold calling	
Display advertising	

0% 5% 10% 15% 20% 25% 30% 35% 40% 45% 50%

Number of decision-makers

Next, we asked about the number of decision-makers that sales teams were facing.

- There are an **average of 4 stakeholders in the decision-making process** (up from 3.6 in 2023).
- **47% of B2B companies have 3-5 decision-makers** involved in their buying team.
- **11% of companies have 6 to 9 stakeholders** involved in the decision-making process!

So, generating enough high-quality leads is a challenge, and the number of people in the decision-making unit has increased, likely slowing down the length of time to close a deal at best, and causing inaction at worst.

Sellers contacting buyers

With that being the case, do buyers actually want suppliers to contact them at all? And if so, when in their journey are they looking for the suppliers to contact them?

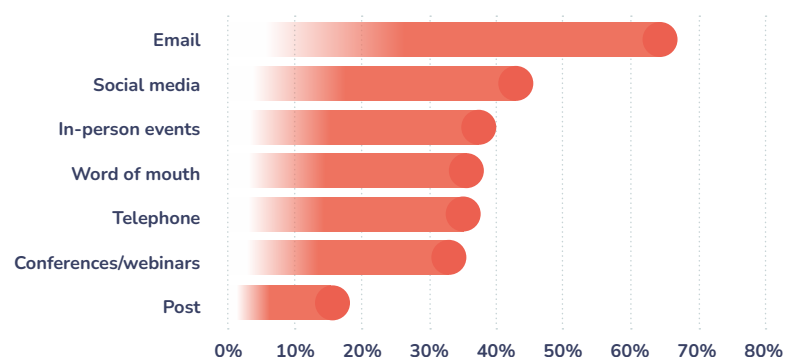Only 1% of buyers said they didn't want to hear from suppliers at all.

88% of buyers want to hear from suppliers when researching and evaluating their options (vs 75% last year)

Survey results

26%

39%

23%

9%

When I'm thinking about new solutions

When I'm actively looking for a solution

When I'm identifying and evaluating solutions

After a request for a proposal or quote

Buyer journey

AWARENESS	INTEREST	EVALUATION	ACTION
Open to fresh ideas and possibilities	Looking for new and specific solutions	Comparing different solutions	Seeking specifics and nearing the decision

Choosing the right channel

So if buyers want you to contact them to help their research, what channels do they want you to contact them on?

What is your preferred way of hearing from sellers?

Email	
Social media	
In-person events	
Word of mouth	
Telephone	
Conferences/webinars	
Post	

0%   10%   20%   30%   40%   50%   60%   70%   80%

The data indicates direct mail is making a comeback - 18% said they are happy to be contacted by post - more than double the 7% we saw in 2023.

B2B buyers' positive view of email buyers is backed up by their selling counterparts, who overwhelmingly vouch for the payback of email prospecting.

86% of companies say email prospecting delivers "good to excellent" ROI.

And that's compared to 72% last year. In fact, only 3% say prospecting delivers negative ROI (down from 4% last year).

?

Did you know...

Letters sent as part of a strategic multi-channel campaign make prospects **23% more likely** to open a subsequent email, in addition to any leads directly attributed to those letters.

The increase in competition

Although 18% of companies don't engage in email prospecting, (down from 21% last year) email marketing is on the rise, and inbox competition is growing.

Continuing digital transformation trends have increased the number of businesses using email prospecting. The pandemic further accelerated this, which in turn added to the proliferation of email marketing tools, enabling even more people access to the power of email.

Anecdotally, most professionals can see the rise in outreach when they open their inboxes. While exact numbers for B2B outreach are hard to come by, we do know the volume of all emails sent worldwide has grown significantly, from 269 million per day in 2017 to **347 million per day in 2023**.

Backing this up, **Litmus reports** there are a staggering 1.5 billion marketing emails opened each month, an increase of 48.5% from last year. Additionally, **HubSpot tells us** that 37% of brands increased their email marketing budget in 2023, with 33% of marketers sending weekly emails and 26% sending multiple emails per month.

This intensified competition in the inbox underscores the need for more strategic and creative email marketing approaches to stand out.
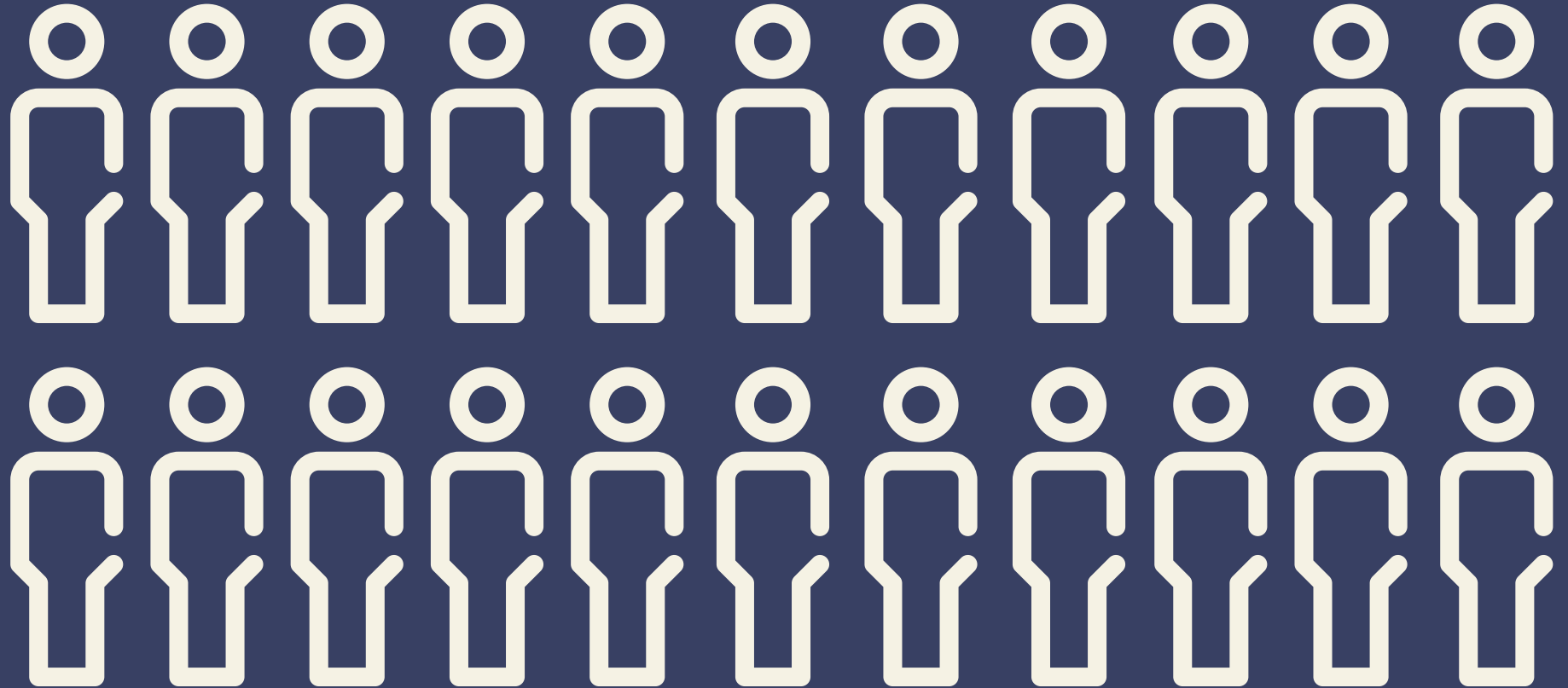
Chapter two:

Building your audience

Chapter two delves into the art and science of building your audience, exploring various strategies from buying data to manual database building and social media outreach. We'll weigh their advantages and challenges, helping you navigate the complexities of audience mapping.
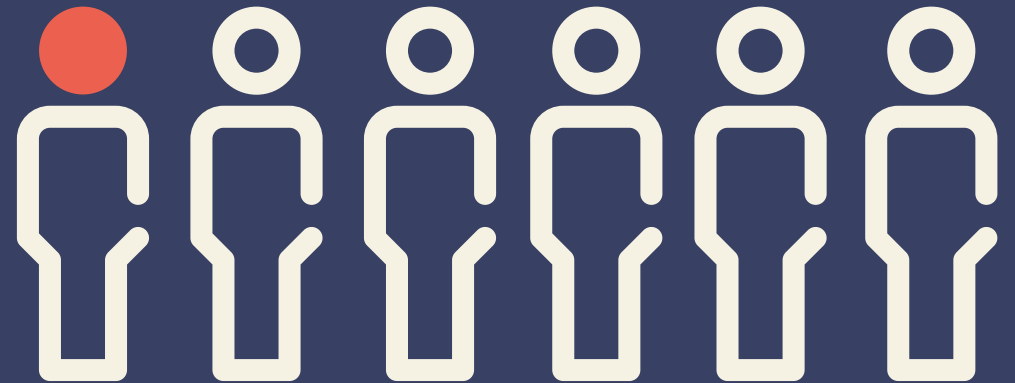
Buying data

Buying data can be the easiest way to get contact details for relevant people quickly. If you use this approach, you're not alone.

26% of our survey panel rely on bought email lists for prospecting data.

But there are several reasons why this shortcut isn't the way to get the best results.

Advantages

- **Plug and play:** Quick access to data without in-house expertise or time investment.

Challenges

- **Data decay:** Bought lists quickly become outdated.
- **Specifics:** How accurately can you target your ideal customers?
- **Legal and ethical concerns:** Compliance with GDPR. Ethical sourcing of data.
- **Effectiveness:** Needs regular auditing for relevance and compliance.
- **Limited personalisation:** An inability to make messages sound genuine.

57% of companies rate their email personalisation as "basic" or "intermediate" (only using a prospect or business name).

Building your own database

The manual approach to building a business database is a common choice, favoured by more than half the companies in our survey. It's a hands-on method, demanding significant time and effort but offering precise control over your database.

53% of our surveyed companies use manual search and outreach for their prospecting.

Advantages

- **Bespoke:** Build smaller, targeted lists without expert help.

Challenges

- **Time-consuming:** Building a database manually is labour-intensive.
- **Requires multiple tools:** Email finders, phone number finders, web scrapers.
- **Suitability:** Effective for smaller companies, challenging for larger ones.
- **Ongoing management:** Keeping a manual list up to date is resource-heavy.
- **Complex process:** Takes many manual steps to create the list (see below).
- **Compliance:** Always ensure adherence to regulations like GDPR.

Download our guide for more details on building the perfect prospecting database.

How to build your prospecting database

Social media outreach

In the B2B world, direct social media outreach often means using LinkedIn Sales Navigator and InMail to send cold approaches to prospects. It's a hands-on method which can be fruitful - so long as you don't expect your harvest to be too big.

44% of companies use LinkedIn InMail for their prospecting.

Advantages

- **Direct contact:** Contact decision makers directly on LinkedIn.

Challenges

- **Limited messages:** The number of InMails you can send is restricted, especially on free accounts.
- **Lower success rates:** The high number of outreach messages on LinkedIn decreases the success of standalone contact.
- **Profile dependency:** Success heavily depends on the strength of your LinkedIn profile.
- **Response tracking:** Managing responses is cumbersome without CRM integration.
- **Compliance:** Ensure adherence to LinkedIn's terms of service and contact regulations.

Using data specialists

Outsourcing your prospecting to experts gives you a comprehensive database that can streamline your process and yield better results. The expertise and advanced technology ensure that your business has access to accurate, current and compliant data, regardless of its niche.

57% of companies agree that prospecting is best delivered by a specialist agency.

Building a bespoke database

At Sopro, the process of building a database is complex and comprehensive:

- **Diverse data sources:** Rather than depending on a single data source, Sopro's world-class technology amalgamates and validates information from multiple channels. This multi-source approach enhances the accuracy and relevance of the data.

- **Customised client lists:** When a new client comes aboard, our experts use the technology to build a completely customised list, tailored specifically for that client's unique needs.

- **Innovative tech systems:** The backbone of data building combines extensive website crawl data, a series of sophisticated algorithms, big data solutions and multiple email verification systems.

- **Comprehensive data points:** With 160 different data points, we ensure a laser-focused approach to pinpoint your target persona. This results in a dataset that's not just large, but also highly tailored and targeted.

- **Compliance:** Our in-house Compliance Officer ensures everything we do meets all regulatory requirements.

The advantage of bringing on an expert partner means they:

- Precisely identify and target your desired audience.

- Ensure the sourcing and verification of up-to-date contact details.

- Maintain a rigorous adherence to data protection laws.
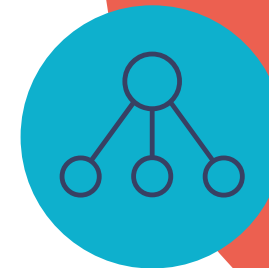
Chapter three:

The impact of targeting and testing

This chapter unpacks the art of targeting and testing in B2B marketing. We'll explore strategies that can unveil new market segments and refine customer profiles to reach decision-makers and enhance the effectiveness of email prospecting.

Mastering your
target market

Most companies have a pretty decent understanding of their target market and customer profiles. But testing on top of that knowledge can see a big impact.

Testing quickly reveals in-depth audience insights, and can deepen your understanding of existing markets, as well as uncover hidden opportunities.

73% of B2B professionals agree that email prospecting is a powerful tool for exploring new segments within their markets.

This chapter certainly doesn't advise a complete overhaul of your audience in order to chase a better lead rate listed here. Instead, we're looking at the impact of subtle, informed shifts in targeting.

72% of companies say prospecting significantly enhances their understanding of customer profiles and target markets.

Getting your message in front of the right person is, of course, critical. If done well, it unlocks one of the key advantages of prospecting:

Two-thirds of respondents agree that email prospecting allows you to contact decision-makers that other methods struggle to reach.

In fact, contacting decision-makers directly is cited as the main advantage of email prospecting by our panel, with "identifying prospects not currently in your network" coming second.

Most prospected industries

Who is everyone else targeting? When it comes to the most prospected industries, Financial Services and Construction combined take up over 20% of all emails sent last year!

INDUSTRY	% OF EMAILS
Financial Services	12.8%
Construction	8.1%
Retail	6.5%
Insurance	4.2%
Real Estate	3.9%
Telecommunications	3.8%
Hospitality	3.6%
Higher Education	3.0%
Banking	2.9%
Staffing and Recruiting	2.8%

How does market saturation impact effectiveness? Logic suggests the most prospected industries would have lower lead rates, due to increased competition in the inbox. However, four of the ten most prospected industries have above-average lead rates.

Highest and lowest industry lead rates

**So, which industries do have the highest and lowest lead rates?**

Top ten industry lead rates

INDUSTRY	LEAD RATE
Nonprofit Organisation Management	3.77%
Architecture and Planning	3.61%
Education Management	3.30%
Government Administration	3.29%
Mining and Metals	3.24%
Packaging and Containers	3.11%
Logistics and Supply Chain	3.04%
Management Consulting	3.02%
Professional Training and Coaching	2.89%
Renewables and Environment	2.89%

Bottom ten industry lead rates

INDUSTRY	LEAD RATE
Computer Software	1.28%
Investment Banking	1.30%
Banking	1.32%
Internet	1.33%
Venture Capital and Private Equity	1.34%
Wine and Spirits	1.37%
Insurance	1.39%
Telecommunications	1.41%
Accounting	1.47%
Luxury Goods and Jewellery	1.49%

There's definitely a finance and wealth theme running through those industries with the lowest lead rates, whereas the highest lead rate comes from the nonprofit sector.
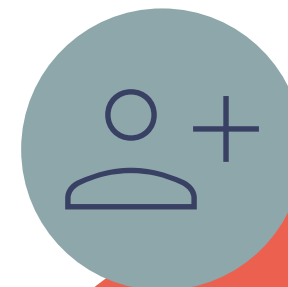
Job titles

The highest and lowest lead rates.
Impact on lead rate of different job titles.

TITLE	LEAD RATE
Key account manager	9.82%
R&D manager	9.02%
Legal manager	8.39%
Head of marketing	8.11%
Group purchasing manager	7.95%

TITLE	LEAD RATE
Executive vice president	0.16%
President and chief executive officer	0.19%
Franchise owner	0.19%
Head of marketing operations	0.23%
Director of human resources	0.25%

Company size

Looking at company size, there's not a huge amount of difference in lead rates, until you're at either end of the scale.

While the largest companies might be less receptive to prospecting, the larger deal sizes of many deals here make it more than worthwhile to continue targeting them.

Impact of company size on email lead rates
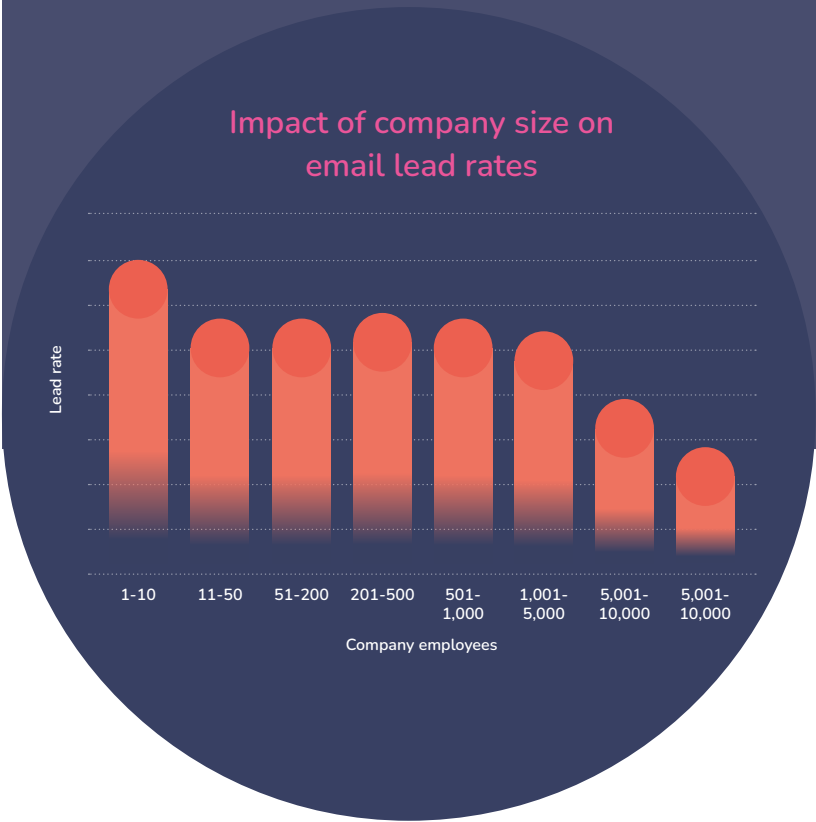
Names

Now, we're not suggesting you change your targeting because you don't like the name 'Mark'. But we thought it would be interesting to analyse how the different names of prospects impact lead rates.

We looked at a list of the most popular traditional male and female names in English-speaking countries. It's clear straight away that female prospects are generally much more receptive to prospecting than their male counterparts.

NAMES	LEAD RATE	NAMES	LEAD RATE
Jane	3.50%	Peter	2.82%
Linda	3.27%	Paul	2.75%
Helen	3.13%	Ian	2.71%
Janet	3.08%	Thomas	2.68%
Karen	3.07%	Richard	2.65%
Julie	2.89%	Mark	2.64%
Emma	2.88%	Stephen	2.62%
Patricia	2.87%	James	2.54%
Susan	2.86%	David	2.48%
Sarah	2.70%	Robert	2.46%
Christine	2.69%	Michael	2.45%
Mary	2.60%	Andrew	2.44%
Jean	2.51%	Steven	2.44%
Elizabeth	2.26%	John	2.43%
Margaret	2.21%	Christopher	2.31%

The male names have an average of 178,179 individual prospects per name, whereas the female names have 40,965 prospects per name.

Places

Next, we thought we'd have a look at the world map according to prospecting. We've only shown countries where we have a decent number of campaigns running.

While there's quite a bit of variety in the lead rates for different countries, the top five countries have really high email lead rates:

COUNTRY	LEAD RATE
South Africa	6.27%
Turkey	6.11%
Oman	6.08%
Bahrain	5.63%
Malta	5.58%

Lead rate

6.5%

0%
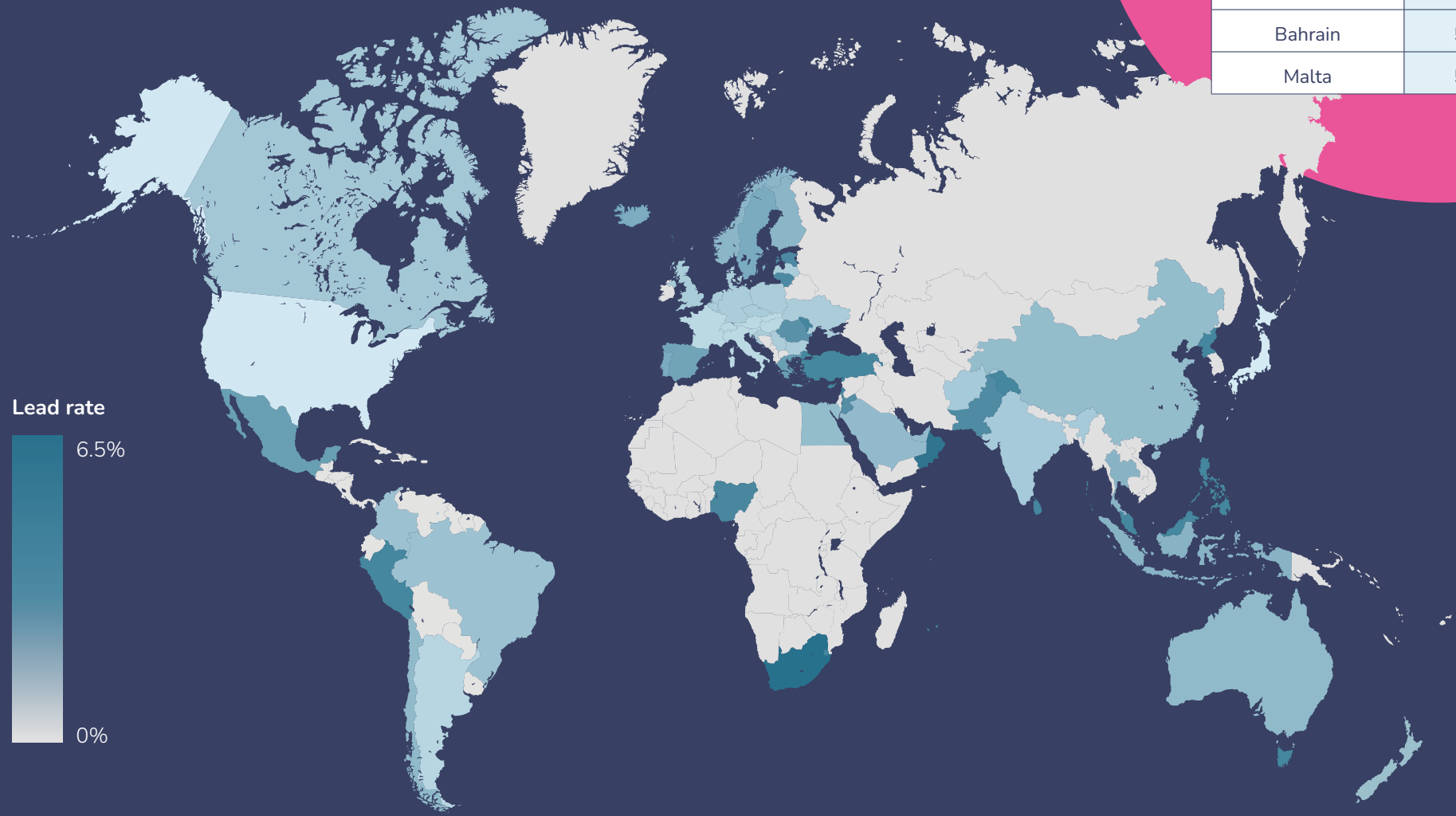
"*Great data and pinpoint targeting make sure you're talking to the right person. It keeps your audience engaged, your lead rates high, your outreach compliant, and your sales team focused on meaningful conversations.*"
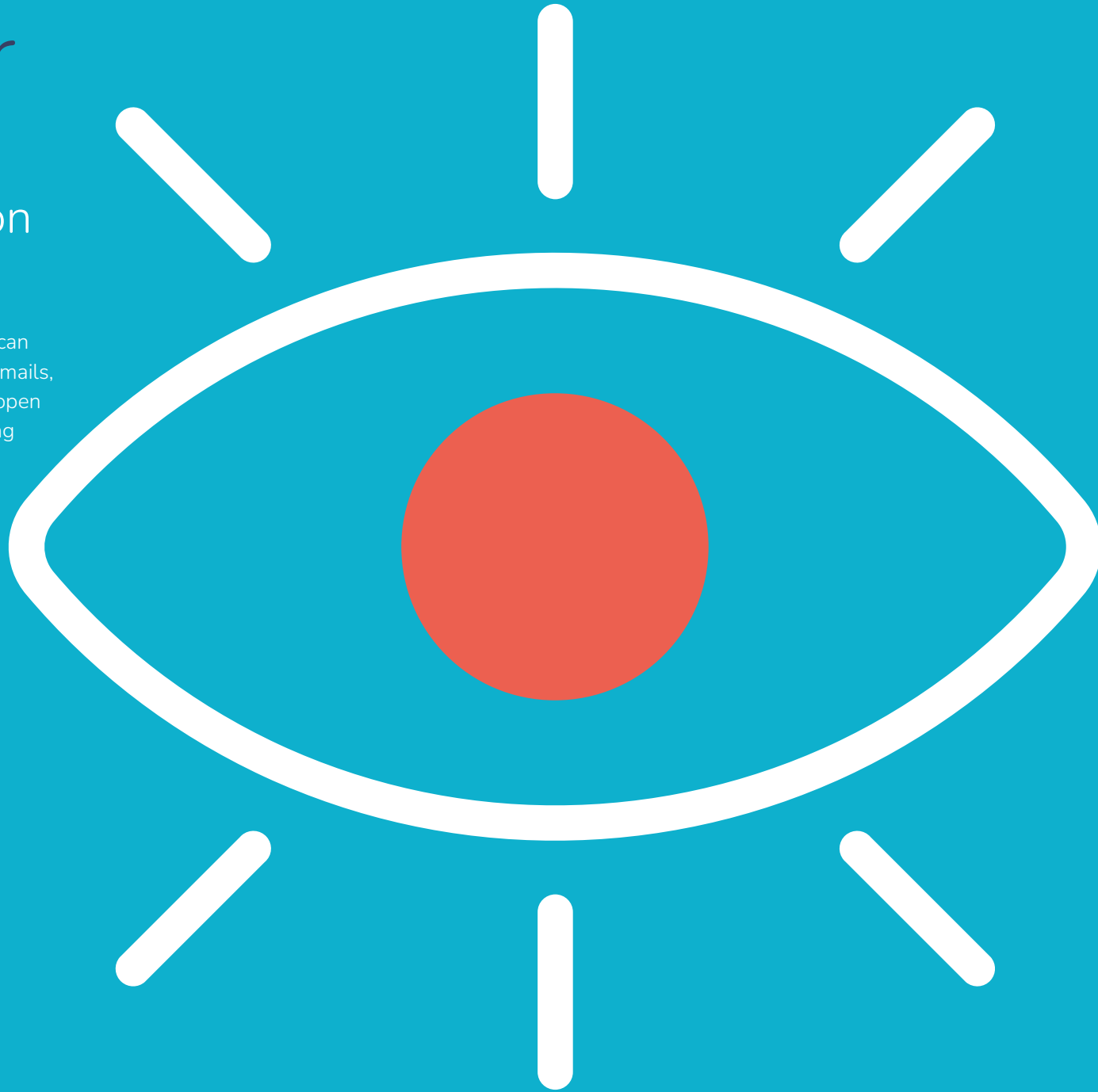
Kristijan Todorov,
Head of Operations, Sopro

Chapter four:

Getting eyes on your emails

This chapter looks at how you can get more people to read your emails, looking at email deliverability, open rate benchmarks, and optimising your subject lines.

Email deliverability

If you can't reach your prospect's inbox, you can't get their attention. Having taken the time to find the perfect prospect and write the perfect message, falling at this first hurdle is painful.

If you manually send out five or ten emails a week, you won't have a problem. But larger campaigns have always been held to a higher level of scrutiny.

Sopro's email deliverability rate in 2023 was 96.7% - up 1.5 percentage points on last year - thanks to our best practice emails and very clever technical email experts. Here are some of the many factors they consider to get an email to an inbox:

Deliverability checklist

- ☑ **One-click unsubscribe:** Ensure recipients can unsubscribe with a single click. This not only complies with Google's requirements but also enhances user experience and targets engaged prospects.

- ☑ **Spam rate threshold:** Keep your spam rate below 0.3% to maintain a good sender reputation and ensure effective delivery.

- ☑ **Sender reputation:** ISPs evaluate your email habits (volume, frequency, user interaction). Poor habits, like many invalid addresses, can lead to blocks or spam labelling.

- ☑ **Email content:** Spam filters can be triggered by certain email elements: aggressive sales language, too much capitalisation, excessive exclamation marks, or large attachments.

- ☑ **Engagement rates:** ISPs track recipient actions. High engagement improves deliverability, while low engagement or frequent deletions can hurt your reputation.

2024 SPAM UPDATE

Google and Yahoo are now teaming up to stop even more spam. The changes, new for February 2024, target anyone who sends over 5000 emails per day.

The existing guidelines recommended senders "aim" for spam rates below 0.1%, and "avoid" anything over 0.3%. Google now says it will begin enforcing this as a "clear spam rate threshold".
Check out our guide to the changes and how they affect B2B businesses.

- ☑ **List quality:** Deliverability is affected by your email list's quality. Outdated or non-consensual addresses increase bounces and spam complaints. A well-maintained list is key.

- ☑ **Authentication protocols:** Use SPF, DKIM, and DMARC to verify your sender identity and prevent spoofing, boosting ISP credibility.

- ☑ **IP address reputation:** Shared IP users impact each other's deliverability. High-volume senders should consider dedicated IPs.

- ☑ **Frequency and volume:** Balance your email frequency and volume to avoid spam filters, while maintaining engagement.

- ☑ **Email infrastructure:** Your mail server setup and domain health play a role in deliverability.

- ☑ **User engagement with similar emails:** If similar emails are often ignored or marked as spam, ISPs might filter similar content, affecting your emails.

Open rates

Subject lines are fertile ground for AB testing, with easy implementation and quick results.

Before you dive into your testing, benchmarks can give you some context. So we sourced the latest benchmarks available from four highly reputable sources, along with Sopro's own results (a stunning 39.9%).

Open rate benchmarks
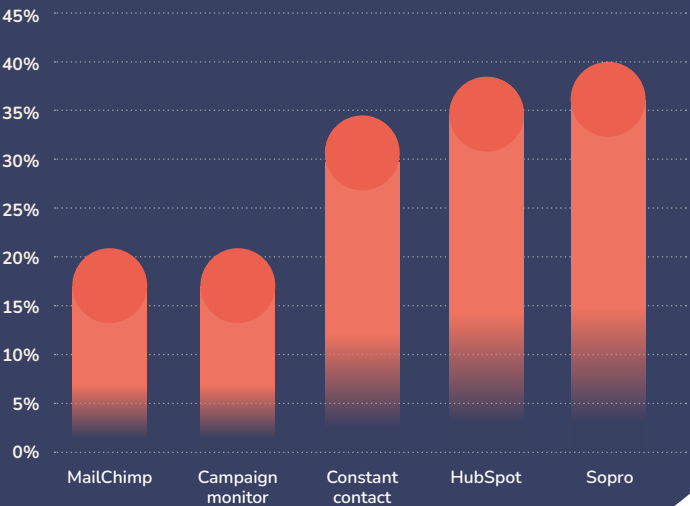
Industry winners and losers

The above benchmarks look at emails across all industries. But open rates change depending on your audience. The top and bottom five industry open rates from 2023 are listed below, with many of the same faces appearing. So don't worry if NASA doesn't open your message: it's probably not just you.

INDUSTRY	OPEN RATE
Media production	57.1%
Venture capital & private equity	53.0%
Internet	52.1%
Design	51.9%
E-learning	51.4%

| INDUSTRY	OPEN RATE
Defence & space	28.5%
Banking	31.1%
Government administration	32.7%
Electrical/electronic manufacturing	33.0%
Pharmaceuticals	33.5%
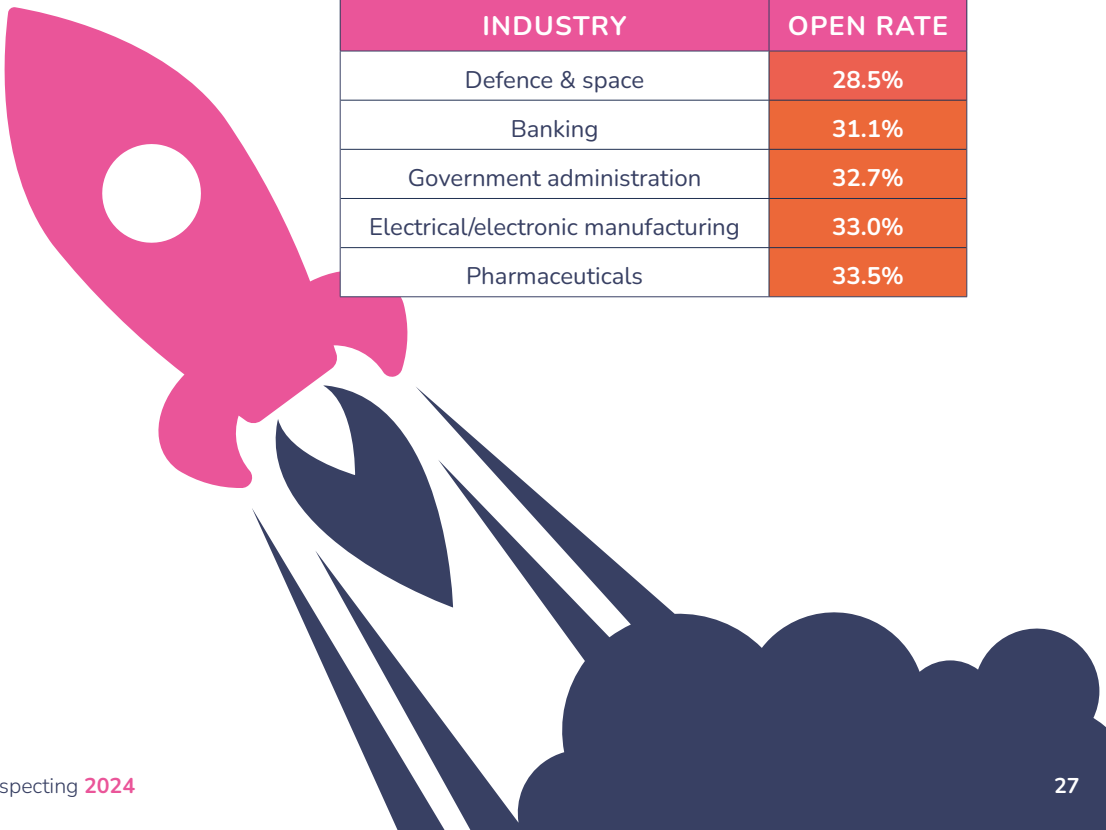
Subject lines

Your subject line is the next challenge. Assuming your plucky little email has scaled the technical castle walls and arrived safely in the inbox, it now has to be enticing enough to be opened. If it makes a bad first impression, it's game over.

So to bring some science to the art of email content, we've analysed four areas: the different types of subject line, their length, personalisation, and different words and phrases.

Word count

There's no big secret here: make your subject line too short, and it doesn't work. Make it too long, and results suffer. Four to seven words is the sweet spot, but the difference is small. Perhaps it's more about the type of subject line?

Open rate by subject line word count
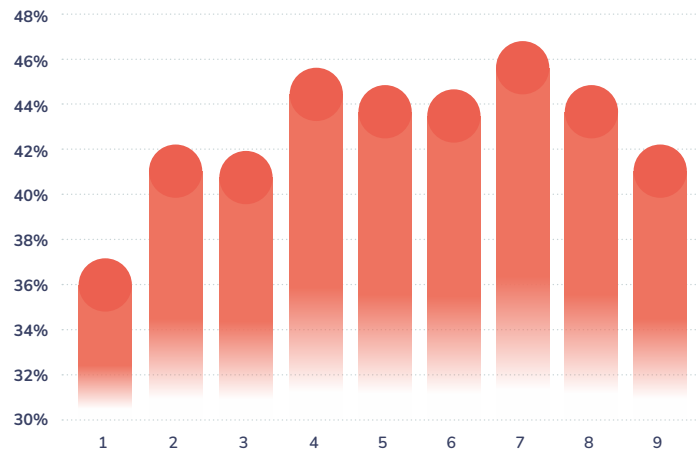
Subject line categories

We asked our panel what category of subject line would make them more or less likely to open an email.

SUBJECT LINE CATEGORY	% WOULD OPEN
Personalised (name/company name)	73%
An offer	66%
Topical/trend/current affairs	59%
A question	56%
Time-sensitive/urgent	55%
Humorous	53%
Intriguing/mystery/clickbait	35%
Shocking/alarmist	34%

Relevant and personalised emails or those with offers do well. At the other end of the spectrum, alarmist or clickbait subject lines are ones to avoid.

Personalisation

With personalised subject lines doing well in our survey, we looked at our data to see if we could see a corresponding uptake in results. Good news! They were telling the truth!

PERSONALISATION	IMPACT ON OPEN RATE	APPEARANCE RATE
Day, date and time	8.10%	12.8%
Prospect name	2.40%	51.1%
Target company name	0.06%	45.0%

Time-related personalisation sees the best results. Possibly because personalised names are now common in emails, maybe because it adds some urgency and intrigue to the message.

Words and phrases

Next, we analysed the impact on open rates when certain words appear in the subject lines.

| WORDS	IMPACT ON OPEN RATE	APPEARANCE RATE
new	14.50%	8.7%
opportunity OR opportunities	14.50%	8.6%
short	13.80%	8.8%
mins	13.70%	8.8%
discussion	11.40%	10.0%
call	8.50%	15.6%
catch-up	8.40%	12.2%
presentation	7.30%	0.1%
coffee	6.50%	0.8%
brief chat OR quick chat	4.90%	19.9%
meet	4.30%	20.2%
meeting	4.30%	20.1%
intro	3.10%	35.8%
partner OR partnership	2.50%	3.4%
you OR your OR yours	-2.10%	1.4%
demo	-4.20%	0.1%
invite	-7.70%	0.8%

The possibilities that lie within emails that reference "new opportunities" seems too good to go unopened, and a focus on not taking up much of the prospect's time does well too.

As we saw last year, people are far more open to a discussion rather than a demo: a collaboration is welcome; a lecture is not.

"The barrier for sending emails is lower than ever, but the barrier for writing great emails is unchanged. The right message can help you stand out from the crowd. Never forget that behind your ICPs, targeting and data is a real person: so be natural and connect with them."

Shayna Wu,
Customer Success Team
Lead, Sopro
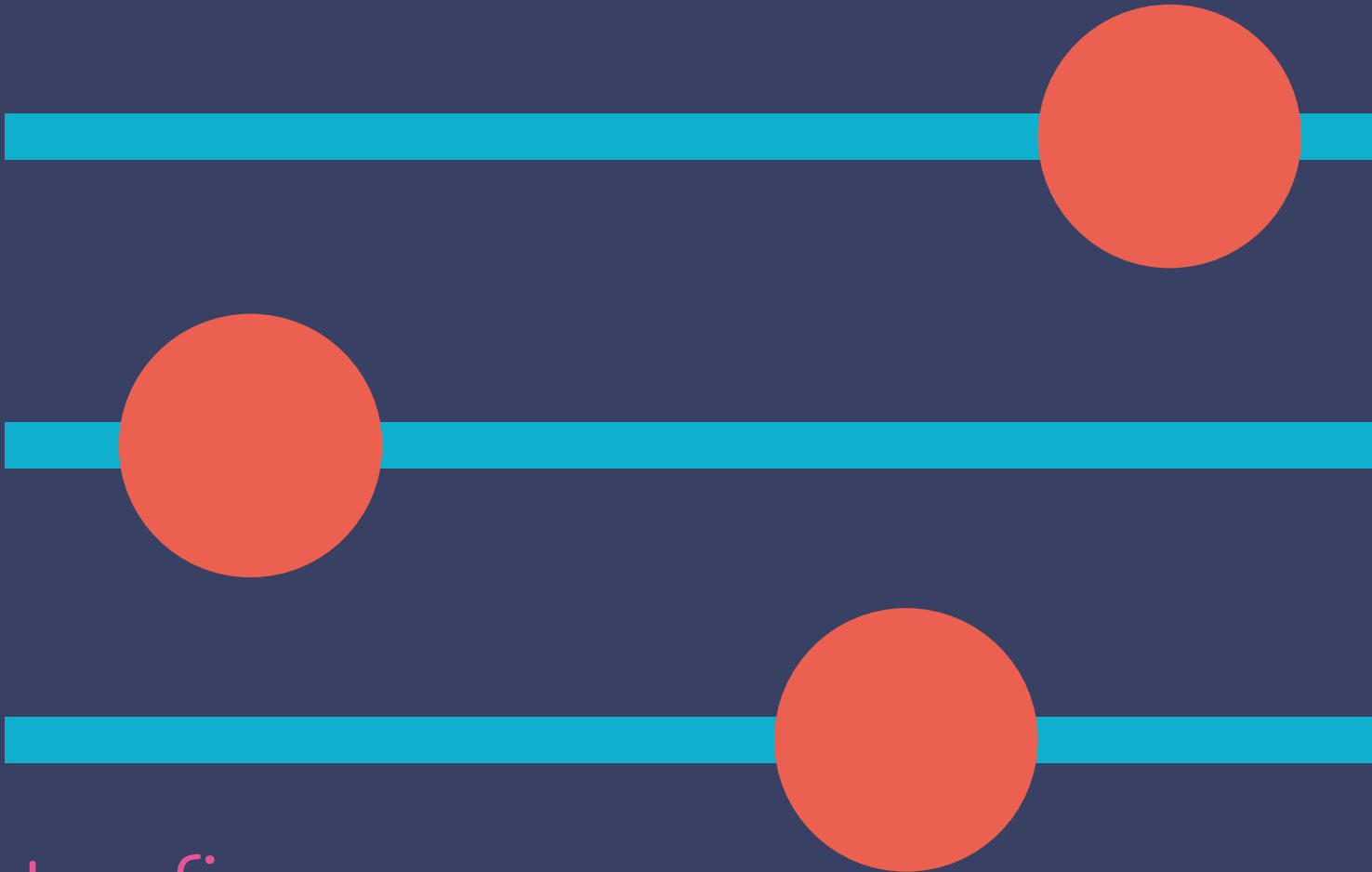
Chapter five:

Sending at the ideal time

This chapter explores when you should send your messages. But really, there's no magical time of day that guarantees a good result. If you add together every advantage you can find - from deliverability to better targeting and great content - timing (and testing!) can play a part in that optimisation.
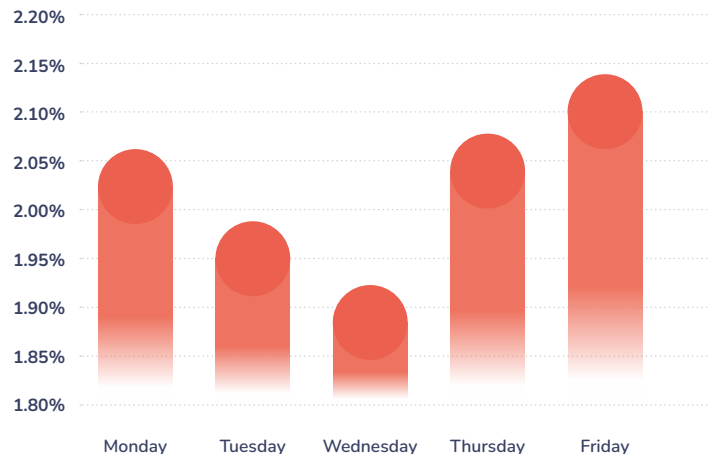
The best time to send sales emails

To find out the best times to send emails, we've looked at the time the email was sent (not opened) and the lead rates that result from those messages.

The best day

It's interesting that Friday, often cited as the **least productive day**, actually emerges as the prime time for B2B email outreach.

### Email lead rate: Day of the week

This counterintuitive trend may be due to people wrapping up their weekly tasks and planning for the week ahead, making them more receptive to new opportunities. Or maybe they are just in a better mood thinking about the weekend ahead, working with a drink from the office fridge in hand.

The best time

Looking at the hourly data, it's clear that mornings are golden for B2B emails.

Email lead rate: time of day
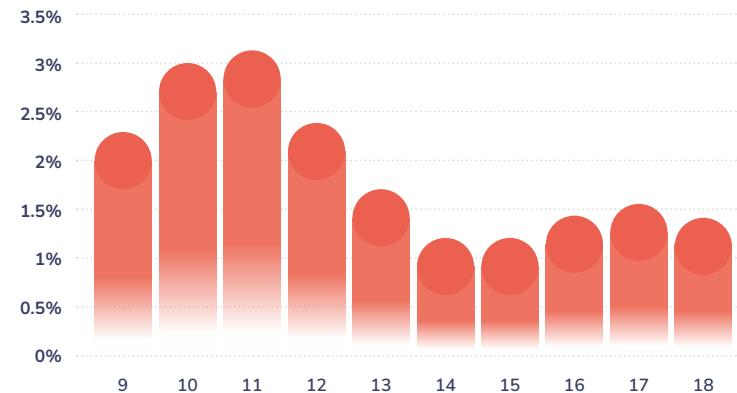
The lead rate of outbound emails, according to the time the email was sent. Based on 22.1m emails sent in 2023.

The lead rates climb steadily, peaking at 11 am. This is clearly when people are in the right space for checking their emails. They've had a coffee or two, got some pressing tasks done, and are ready to hit the inbox.

After lunch, things slow down a bit – maybe it's the post-lunch slump or just getting stuck into work. Interestingly, there's a little bump in responses around 4 pm.

A warning on emails timings!

This data is hopefully interesting. It can also be a useful starting point for you to test timings, so long as your campaign is small. But if you're reaching out to a larger audience, a higher volume of messages sent at the same time can cause a disaster.

A blast of emails going out at the same time is a big flashing signal that you are a spammer. Not only will your campaign fall flat, but you may end up damaging your domain reputation. A natural flow of emails not only protects you from that, but it also means a manageable flow of replies comes back.

The golden hour

OK, we've seen the averages for days of the week and hours of the day. But breaking it down further, which one-hour slot across the week has the highest lead rate?

	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI
8	1.92%	1.91%	1.99%	2.04%	1.97%
9	2.71%	2.62%	2.67%	2.77%	2.77%
10	3.64%	3.52%	3.56%	3.64%	3.67%
11	4.09%	3.95%	4.04%	4.19%	4.15%
12	3.69%	3.61%	3.66%	3.68%	3.71%
13	3.27%	3.05%	2.96%	3.14%	2.98%
14	2.25%	2.21%	2.21%	2.18%	2.08%
15	1.80%	1.66%	1.77%	1.74%	1.67%
16	1.65%	1.55%	1.62%	1.67%	1.67%
17	1.95%	1.95%	1.92%	2.00%	1.94%
18	2.39%	2.06%	2.15%	2.14%	2.11%

The best time to send a prospecting email:

Thursday at 11 am

The worst time to send a prospecting email:

Tuesday at 4 pm

Out of office replies

The dreaded out of office. An unsuccessful attempt at contact, right?

On the contrary, an OOO reply gives you an exact date to follow up. In a Sopro campaign, we take note of their return date, give them a couple of days to catch up, and then reach out again. It's a simple method that anyone can repeat, but one that helps to make sure your prospecting results shouldn't be negatively impacted.

But when are people most likely to be away from their emails?

Out of office replies

2023   2022

Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec
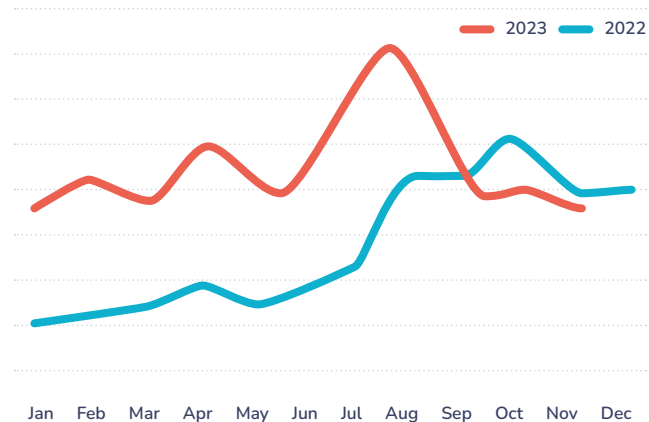
It's no surprise that August is the peak, with school holidays and beach holidays to factor in. Interestingly, 2023 saw a higher peak and a higher baseline than 2022.

The adoption of hybrid and remote work models, a growing emphasis on work-life balance, flexible working patterns, and innovations like four-day work weeks have likely all contributed to this increase.
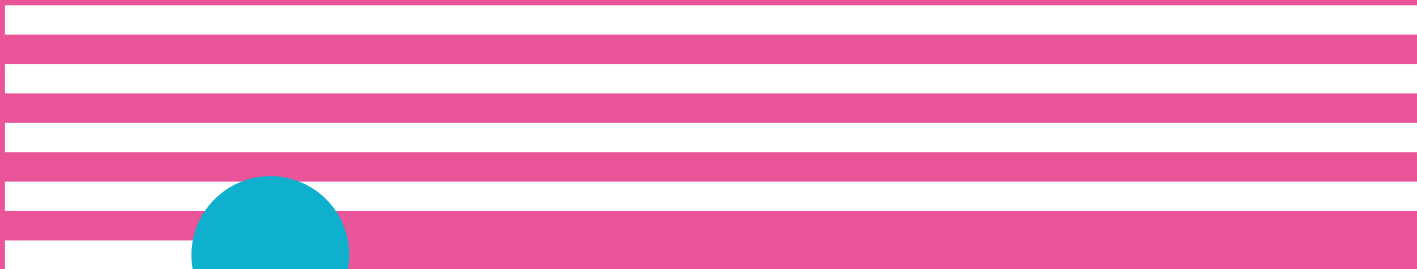
# Chapter six:
Writing the perfect message

This chapter delves into the intricate world of message composition, where every word counts. But what's the secret to a message that not only captures attention but also compels action? Through an in-depth exploration, we'll uncover the keys to writing messages that resonate, engage, and inspire your prospects to act.

Word count

How long should your outreach message be? First impressions count, and you want to blow your prospects away. Does that mean you should outline the many benefits of your offering?

Turns out, less is more.

Lead rate by email word count

26-50   51-100   101-150   151-200   201-250   251-300   300+
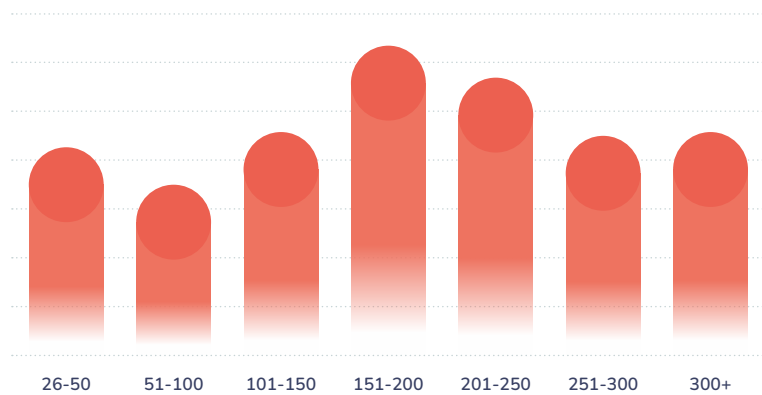
With 151-200 words, the best templates are long enough to include some persuasive content, but short enough that people are happy to read them.

Here's something to keep in mind: prospects don't want to read your email when it lands in their inbox. Why should they spend their valuable time reading a message from someone they don't know? People aren't mean. They're just busy.

The first key to getting over this hurdle? Make sure that a quick glance at your message reassures the prospect they don't need to invest much time into it.

Think of the value exchange: this email might contain a way to make their job easier, their results better, their business more successful. And in return, they have to spend time reading it.

So reduce the amount of time they have to invest, and you increase the likelihood they agree to that exchange.

Picking the right words

So, if you don't have much space to work with, what should you say?

We asked our data wizards to analyse the content in our client's 2023 templates, bringing a new level of data-backed guidance to B2B outreach content.

Of course, there is no single magic word that will double your lead rate. This section is definitely not telling you to "put the word inspiration in every email!". But it does provide clues on the approach and tone that resonate with cold prospects.

Message content: the good

Prior contact

Words that infer this isn't the first attempt at contact, imply you have researched them, know you can help them and are determined to make contact. This taps into reciprocity (the urge to repay the effort), perceived importance (there must be a reason for the repeated contact), and curiosity.

+28%

IMPACT ON LEAD RATE	
called	+268%
your colleague	+35%
referred	+34%
spoke OR spoken	+4%

Assurance

Words that provide assurance are strong performers, building trust, authority and credibility. They instantly reduce the uncertainty that may come from a cold approach: possibly from a brand the prospect was previously unaware of.

+19%

IMPACT ON LEAD RATE	
approved	+108%
accredited	+30%
trusted	+11%
certified	+8%
verified	-63%

Empathy

Empathy words demonstrate an understanding of the prospect's needs, building rapport and trust. This makes the recipient feel valued and heard, helping to create a personal connection.

This can often be in contrast to other sales emails, which may go straight too hard on the selling.

+11%

IMPACT ON LEAD RATE	
listen	+174%
care	+33%
respect	+19%
appreciate	+2%
understand	-11%

Exclusivity

Exclusivity increases the perceived value of your offering, making it more desirable, and increases FOMO. Some of these words can also be associated with a tailored approach, making the recipient feel your solution is more likely to get results.

+7%

IMPACT ON LEAD RATE	
rare	+33%
premier	+24%
exclusive	+11%
unique	+9%
bespoke	+6%
elite	-63%

The personal touch

A surprising entry, given the established sales practice of focusing on your prospect. And while your overall email should indeed focus on them and the benefits they can enjoy, personal pronouns can make messages feel less generic, and increase accountability and personal involvement, which enhances trust.

+6%

IMPACT ON LEAD RATE	
my	+7%
myself	+5%
personally	+3%
mine	+3%

A bright future

Optimistic language positively frames the potential relationship and its outcomes, encouraging a more favourable response.

It appeals to people's aspirations and hopes for the future, creating a positive association with the product or service.

IMPACT ON LEAD RATE

+6%

inspiration	**+249%**
optimistic	**+53%**
opportunity	**+25%**
hoping	**+14%**
future	**+5%**
imagine	**+1%**
hope	**-1%**

Action

These words reduce the "time to success", and play on psychology: The more immediate a reward, the more value people place on it. The energy and dynamism implied by these words can be motivating, helping prospects to imagine success and reduce the perceived period before the results come through.

IMPACT ON LEAD RATE

+6%

immediate	**+23%**
launch	**+16%**
fast	**+5%**
act	**+3%**
execute	**-40%**

Social proof

A very common tactic to enhance trust and credibility, showing that others have had positive experiences. It leverages the principle of conformity, where people tend to follow the actions of the masses. In a cold email, it can lower the perceived risk of taking action.

IMPACT ON LEAD RATE

+5%

awards	**+132%**
accredited	**+30%**
reviews	**+30%**
trusted	**+11%**
endorsements	**+3%**
testimonials	**+2%**
trust	**+2%**
expert	**-8%**

Collaboration

These words suggest a collaborative approach, appealing to the desire for partnership rather than a one-sided relationship, or that you will give them the hard sell. They imply inclusivity and teamwork, making the prospect feel like an active participant.

+5%

IMPACT ON LEAD RATE

joint	**+55%**
collaboration	**+20%**
consultation	**+17%**
cooperation	**+15%**
together	**+6%**
partnership	**-2%**

Manners

Most of us were told when we were young that manners cost nothing, which makes the ROI phenomenal.

Always be polite, remember they don't know you, and you are a guest in their inbox.

+3%

IMPACT ON LEAD RATE

weather	**+34%**
finds you well	**+11%**
many thanks	**+8%**
hope all is well	**+8%**
thank you	**+4%**
please	**+4%**
thanks	**+3%**

Message content: the bad

Urgency

These words can create a sense of pressure or anxiety, which might backfire by making the recipient feel rushed or manipulated rather than genuinely interested. This approach can be perceived as aggressive or pushy.

IMPACT ON LEAD RATE −5%

closing	+1%
now	-2%
deadline	-14%
limited	-15%
pressing	-58%

Solutions

At some point, you will want to explain your solution, but a cold email is too early to go into detail or make bold claims. These words can come across as presumptuous: people don't want you to assume you can solve their problems before you've actually spoken to them and understood their unique situation.

IMPACT ON LEAD RATE −17%

resolve	-9%
cure	-12%
solution	-18%
correct	-21%
fix	-25%

Comparison

Charging into an inbox, claiming to be better than existing solutions, is a confrontational tactic. It will naturally foster scepticism: remember the reader doesn't know you yet, so has nothing to go on but your words. And these words can paint you as overly competitive and boastful.

IMPACT ON LEAD RATE −27%

tops	+9%
better	-27%
outperforms	-34%
superior	-72%

Results focus

This one might be a surprise - after all, who doesn't want to improve performance and boost ROI?

However, these words sail close to business-speak and jargon rather than natural conversations. Prospects might feel you are making promises you don't yet know if you can deliver. So never jump to the end - instead, aim to kick-off a conversation about how you might work together.

IMPACT ON LEAD RATE −20%

boost	-13%
guaranteed	-15%
valuable	-15%
ROI	-18%
returns	-19%
profitability	-21%
advantage	-21%
performance	-26%
profitable	-29%
yield	-32%
return on investment	-41%
payback	-52%

Message content: the ugly

Pain points

At some point, you definitely want to talk about their pain points and how you can address them. But this isn't a consultation where you can discuss, it's a one-way email.

Again it's too early to talk problems: they haven't had the chance to explain their situation yet. Highlighting problems up front can make the recipient feel defensive.

−28%

IMPACT ON LEAD RATE

obstacle	**-12%**
issue	**-26%**
challenge	**-26%**
struggle	**-31%**
burden	**-46%**
pain point	**-50%**

Buzzwords and jargon

Overuse of buzzwords and jargon can make the message sound impersonal and clichéd.

It may also alienate recipients unfamiliar with these terms, making the message less accessible and potentially confusing.

All of this analysis paints a picture of the type of approach that works in an outreach email, rather than the specific words used. Many of the points that emerge echo the golden rules Sopro have used since the early days. But we've given them an update

−19%

IMPACT ON LEAD RATE

pivot	**-1%**
reaching out OR reach out	**-9%**
proactive	**-14%**
thought leadership	**-15%**
disruption OR disrupt	**-16%**
transparency	**-26%**
next steps	**-27%**
takeaway	**-29%**
onboarding	**-30%**
empower	**-30%**
supercharge	**-38%**
actionable insight	**-45%**
accelerate	**-47%**
synergy	**-50%**
scalable	**-56%**
take ownership	**-73%**
value-added OR value add	**-89%**

The ALL NEW golden rules of writing prospecting emails

1

"I'm on the train!"
Prospecting emails should, above all, sound natural. Imagine you are on a train. You are about to arrive at your destination when you stumble upon the perfect prospect. So you fire off a quick message - a natural-sounding couple of paragraphs. Pro tip: don't actually mention the train!

2

A collaborative approach
Craft each message with a personal touch that highlights your possible collaboration. Use words that hint at the research you've done - it implies that you have already established that this could be a fruitful partnership. It's essential they know this isn't a random approach but one with purpose.

3

Build trust and authority
Choose words that build trust and authority, reducing the uncertainty of a cold approach. Bolster this trust with social proof to demonstrate your previous success.

4

Focus on the future
Frame your message with a positive and optimistic tone, focusing on the potential of the future. Action-oriented words can highlight the immediate possibilities of your offering, allowing them to move forward with confidence and excitement.

5

Drop the pressure
Avoid creating a sense of false urgency or pressure in your messaging. Refrain from using language that might be perceived as aggressive or pushy, which can lead to discomfort and distrust.

6

Don't over-promise
Resist talk of pain points, solutions and how you can guarantee results. Don't assume you know the prospect's needs or that your services are a better fit than your competitors. The point of the email is to establish a meaningful dialogue so you can better understand this.

7

Clarity over complexity
Stay clear of technical jargon and industry buzzwords that might confuse (or frankly, annoy) your audience. Strive for clarity: use straightforward, concise and accessible language to ensure your message is human. It should be easily understood and relatable.

8

Short and sweet
150 - 200 words. Use short paragraphs so it's easy to scan. Make it easy to understand. If it's hard to read and takes too long, your email is heading for the bin before they get to the end.

9

Value exchange

Your prospect needs to understand the potential value you can offer: a problem fixed or more sales made. If they agree to a call, what do they stand to gain from giving their precious time to a stranger?

10

The CTA

Always ask for a call to discuss further - it's then you can get to know their specific situation and outline more detail on how you can help them. Make sure there is one clear action for them to take: don't confuse things with a secondary call to action.

Chapter seven:

Multi-channel prospecting: Reaching prospects where they are

This chapter explores the world of multi-channel prospecting, a vital strategy in today's prospecting environment. We'll uncover the power of a coordinated, multi-faceted approach that resonates with your prospects, providing actionable insights and strategies to effectively reach and engage your target audience, ensuring your message is not only heard, but remembered.
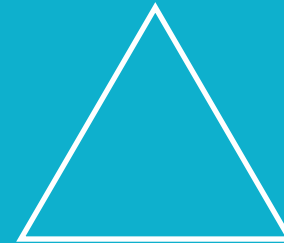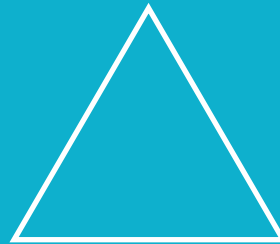
# "Right person, right message, right place, right time"

We've already discussed the importance of targeting and analysed the content that gets results. What about where you contact your prospects? And how do we evolve outreach to connect with prospects at the perfect time?

Increased competition and declining results

So we discovered earlier that 88% of buyers want to hear from suppliers, and email remains the channel most buyers want to be contacted on.

However, we've also seen that the email prospecting landscape is more crowded than ever, something you may have noticed in your own inbox. Buyers might be receptive to email outreach, but it's harder and harder to make yourself heard.

Email prospecting lead rates
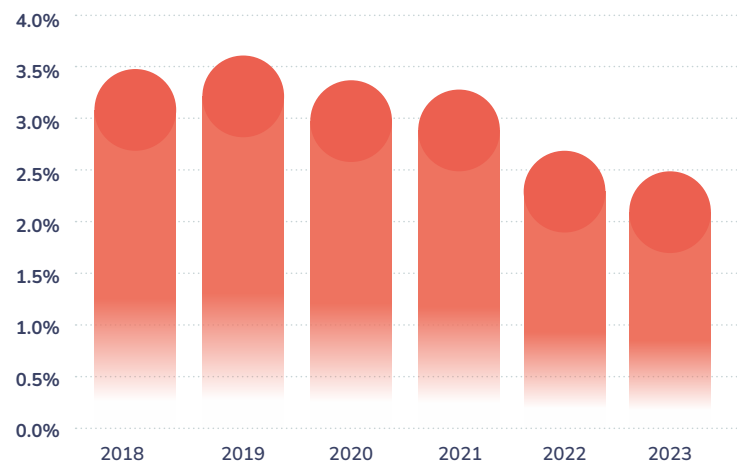
And this can be seen in the number of leads. After hovering around 3.5% for four years, it hit 2.7% in 2022 and 2.1% in 2023, a drop of 22% year on year.

So what can we do about it? Abandoning email is clearly not the answer when prospects tell us it's how they want us to contact them. Not only that, but email prospecting was again rated as the biggest driver of leads, and 86% of companies say it delivers "good to excellent" ROI. It's safe to say email has to remain a key component.

The answer is to make email the foundation of your prospecting, building a more complex campaign on top. Layering multiple channels can help you cut through the noise and make your business memorable.
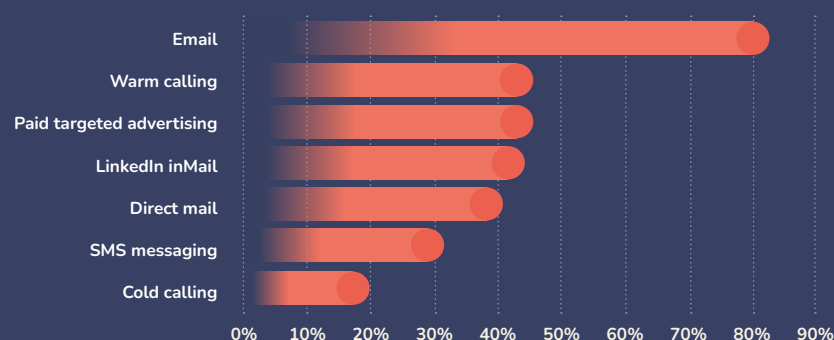
Adding in buyer intent signals gets you in front of the right people just at the point they are in-market and researching.
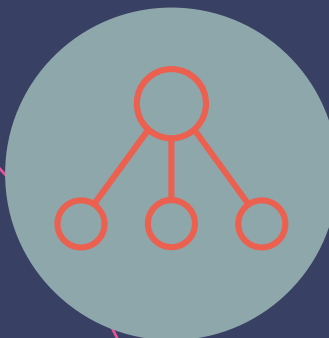
Current muti-channel uptake

We asked our panel of 377 B2B buyers which channels they currently use, and it's clear that multi-channel outreach is increasingly common.

Which channels do you use for prospecting?

Channel	
Email	80%
Warm calling	45%
Paid targeted advertising	45%
LinkedIn inMail	45%
Direct mail	40%
SMS messaging	30%
Cold calling	20%

When asked which channels they wanted to be contacted on, they picked **an average of 2.8 channels** - up from 2.3 channels in 2023.

So the multi-channel approach also seems to be well received and increasingly established, with buyers happy to be contacted on more channels than they were last year.

Why multi-channel?

Even if you only use email for your prospecting, it doesn't exist in isolation. Interested prospects are likely to check out your website. Others might have recently seen a social post before receiving your email.

68% of B2B companies agree email prospecting complements inbound marketing channels well

But while inbound channels support prospecting, combining multiple outbound marketing channels can really make an impact, and it's here the trend for complex campaigns is emerging.

75% of B2B companies say prospecting results are better when email is combined with other outbound marketing channels

The theory behind multi-channel prospecting takes in decades-old wisdom and cutting-edge research.

The rule of seven

The marketing **rule of seven** is a principle dating back to the 1930s. It states that a prospective customer needs to come into contact with a brand's message at least seven times before they make a purchase.

Its origins are murky, and the science behind it is unknown. But don't focus too much on the number seven. Instead, the key lesson is the need for repeated and consistent messaging to cut through the noise and create familiarity and trust with your business.

The encoding variability hypothesis

The **encoding variability hypothesis** states that when people are exposed to information more than once, they are more likely to remember the information if they have encountered it in different contexts.

This means delivering outreach messages through various mediums allows for different "encoding" experiences, which increases the chances that information will be recalled. In short, multi-channel prospecting makes your brand more memorable.

Mental availability

Byron Sharp's "How Brands Grow" and subsequent research from the Ehrenberg-Bass Institute, state there is no room for brand love, loyalty, or hyper-targeting. There is only "mental availability" and "physical availability,": buyers choose brands that are "easy to mind" and "easy to find."

Marketing works by building and refreshing the memory of buyers. These small nudges add up to big sales effects when done at scale through sophisticated mass marketing.

Not only does multi-channel prospecting make your brand "easy to mind", but messages triggered by buyer intent signals ensure you are "easy to find" when a prospect is in purchase mode.
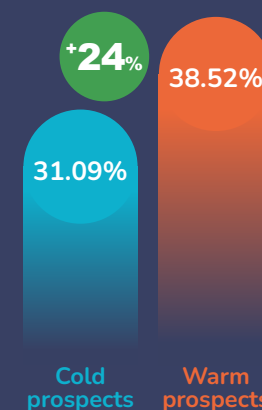
The impact of brand marketing efforts on outbound sales

InMail acceptance rates for sales teams

when prospects were previously exposed to brand marketing

+36%
6.02%
4.44%

Cold prospects | Warm prospects
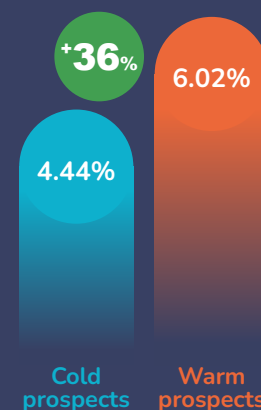
Accepted connection requests for sales teams

when prospects were previously exposed to brand marketing

+24%
38.52%
31.09%

Cold prospects | Warm prospects

Data taken from The CMO Scorecard, a report by LinkedIn's B2B Institute. Data Left: Sales Navigator InMail outreach to saved prospects and leads. Data Right: Sales Navigator connection requests to prospects and leads.

Mental availability in action

Research carried out by the B2B institute at LinkedIn (see graph above) shows the results this can have in practice.

Buyers who were previously exposed to brand messages were 36% more likely to accept an InMail from a salesperson and 24% more likely to connect with them.

"Meet prospects across the channels they already use. With more touchpoints in different contexts, you become more memorable. It might seem too simple, but that really makes a difference when the time comes to buy."

Jade Paris, Customer
Success Team Lead, Sopro

The rise of the DMU

Decision-making units (DMUs) are now commonplace in the B2B world. While the average is four buyers, many companies have even more stakeholders involved in the process.

11% of the companies have 6 to 9 stakeholders involved in the decision-making process

With good data, every relevant prospect from each target company can be added to your outreach campaigns.

This increases mental availability for each prospect. So when the primary buyer brings other stakeholders into the process, there is an increased likelihood that your brand is top of mind for more than one decision-maker.

Buyer intent

We believe buyer intent (also known as purchase intent) is a key part of multi-channel campaigns, even though it's not in itself a separate channel.

What is buyer intent?

You can think of buyer intent data as the digital footprints users leave as they navigate online, offering insights into their activities. This data can be instrumental in identifying when a buyer is actively engaged in your industry, researching and evaluating options, or even nearing a purchasing decision.

Intent tracking and IP matching

There are two ways we've been bringing intent data into Sopro campaigns. The first is to ensure that prospects can be fully tracked from the email onto a client's website. That includes who they are, which pages they are visiting, and when.

70% of companies say they can track the website activity of a cold prospect if they engage with their campaign.

The second way is IP matching. Our web plugin monitors traffic to our clients' websites. When they get visited by a company that isn't in their campaign but matches their customer profile, we'll add any relevant people into an engagement campaign.

62% of companies say they are able to identify the companies that visit their website using IP matching.

IP matching

We looked at some of the biggest campaigns using our IP Match and Engage feature. In 90 days, IP match increased their total lead numbers by 14.7% compared to if they were using email alone.

Not only that, but the quality of those leads was higher. In addition to a positive response (where the prospect wants book a sales call), leads can be an expression of interest at a later date, or a referral to a more relevant stakeholder.

The IP match leads were 37.6% more likely to be a positive response, demonstrating again that reaching people while they are researching drives better results.

IP match increased lead volumes by 14.7%, and lead quality by 37.6%

"You can find the right person, send the right message, and be in the right places, but if you are not there at the moment they start searching for solutions, it all comes to nothing. Buyer intent ensures you engage them at the right time."

James Weller,
Client Director, Sopro

Phone numbers

There's a reason Sopro was built on cold emails and not cold calls. The low success and limited possibility for optimisation can make cold calling tough to get results. And for most salespeople, it's not a fun day in the office.

But intent-based warm calling is a different beast. Imagine your prospect is doing their research, visiting lots of websites in your industry to assess their options.

From your side

They have a look around your website. You get pinged - 🚩 Elizabeth Shaw from Unit Inc. has visited your pricing page! 🚩 - and give them a call.

From their side

They have recently researched you. They might have a couple of outstanding questions. And crucially, they have the mental availability to talk. Isn't it a stroke of luck you should call now, and not one of your competitors?

To check the real-world results, we examined all client campaigns with more than 100 calls logged.

8% of intent-based warm calls resulted in a booked sales meeting.

When you consider cold calling has a **reported 2% success** rate, that makes warm calls four times more effective.

Gifts

Redeemable gifts can be added to email outreach, with everything from a cup of coffee to a bottle of champagne helping you stand out. Gifts leverage the reciprocity principle, often inspiring recipients to engage or respond more positively. It also adds a perceived value to the interaction and fosters a positive emotional association with your brand.

According to our survey panel, the top three most successful gift types are gift cards or vouchers (58% of respondents saw success), branded merchandise (49%), and beers, wines, or spirits (44%). For those who want to stand out, the least used gift option is planting a tree (45% of survey responders have never used it).

Gifting increased lead quality by 36.1%, despite few people actually claiming their gifts.

Monitoring the impact of adding gifts requires a nuanced approach. Gifts are best used in a targeted manner as a way to stand out and entice high-value accounts. As these large contracts nearly always have lower lead rates, comparing like-for-like lead rates with non-gifting campaigns doesn't work.

But looking at the leads generated from gifting campaigns, there was an increase of 36.1% of positive responses wanting a call, compared to campaigns without gifts (as we saw with IP match earlier).

Interestingly, these successful campaigns had a gift redemption rate of only 0.15%, but prospects still responded to the emails and scheduled meetings. This suggests prospects value the gesture of a gift and often agree to meet without actually claiming it, saving any additional costs of actually sending a gift.

LinkedIn

Our panel rated social media second only to email as the channel they would most like to be contacted on. And yet when we asked which channels were the most effective for driving leads, LinkedIn InMail performed poorly, in 7th place.

The low success rate of standalone InMails is partly due to the high volume of outreach on LinkedIn. The absence of a prior relationship or relevant context, and the perceived impersonal nature, lead standalone messages to be associated with spam.

So Sopro uses buyer intent as a trigger to send InMail messages and connection requests. And a whopping 4.8% of the trigger events ended in a meeting booked.

In addition, 55% of the InMail responses progressed into an active dialogue, where the client continued to nurture the lead.

4.8% of intent-based InMail messages ended in a booked sales call.

Paid social ads

Social display ads act like targeted digital billboards. The problem is B2B targeting is limited on Meta's Facebook and Instagram networks, which forces ads to be served to a much wider audience than you want to target. This make them highly inefficient and decreases the qualification rate of any enquiries directly from paid social.

So, in partnership with Clearbit, Sopro has added a new feature to our internal campaigns. This feature directly matches your prospecting audience onto social platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram and Google Display Network.

Although the cost per 1,000 impressions (CPM) can rise due to the more specific targeting, the results are clearly worth it. Based on 8,558,947 ad impressions, the early results are impressive.

Our highly targeted paid social ads saw a 211% increase in direct leads compared to standard targeting, and an increase of 53% in deals signed.

Their impact also goes beyond directly attributable outcomes. The beauty of this feature is the increase of mental availability of your brand in the mind of your exact target audience - making them more receptive to subsequent outreach.

Sopro letters

Direct mail, particularly a personalised letter, offers a tangible, human touch in an increasingly digital world. This rare physical contact method can create a memorable first impression, setting the stage for subsequent digital interactions.

18% of companies said they are happy to be contacted by post - more than double the 7% we saw in 2023.

Sopro ran an internal campaign that sent highly personalised introductory letters to our audience before we sent them emails.

Buyers that received letters were 23% more likely to open that email than those that hadn't.

"Expanding beyond email, and embracing a diverse mix of channels is becoming more and more important. It's also vital that brands focus on creating narratives through their content that resonate seamlessly across platforms and remain consistent.

"Ultimately, each channel you choose should play a supporting role, coming together to create a journey that's both cohesive and engaging for your audience. In 2024, effective use of the entire spectrum is going to be key to making a lasting impact!"

Kathryn Strachan,
CEO CopyHouse

Chapter eight:

What next?
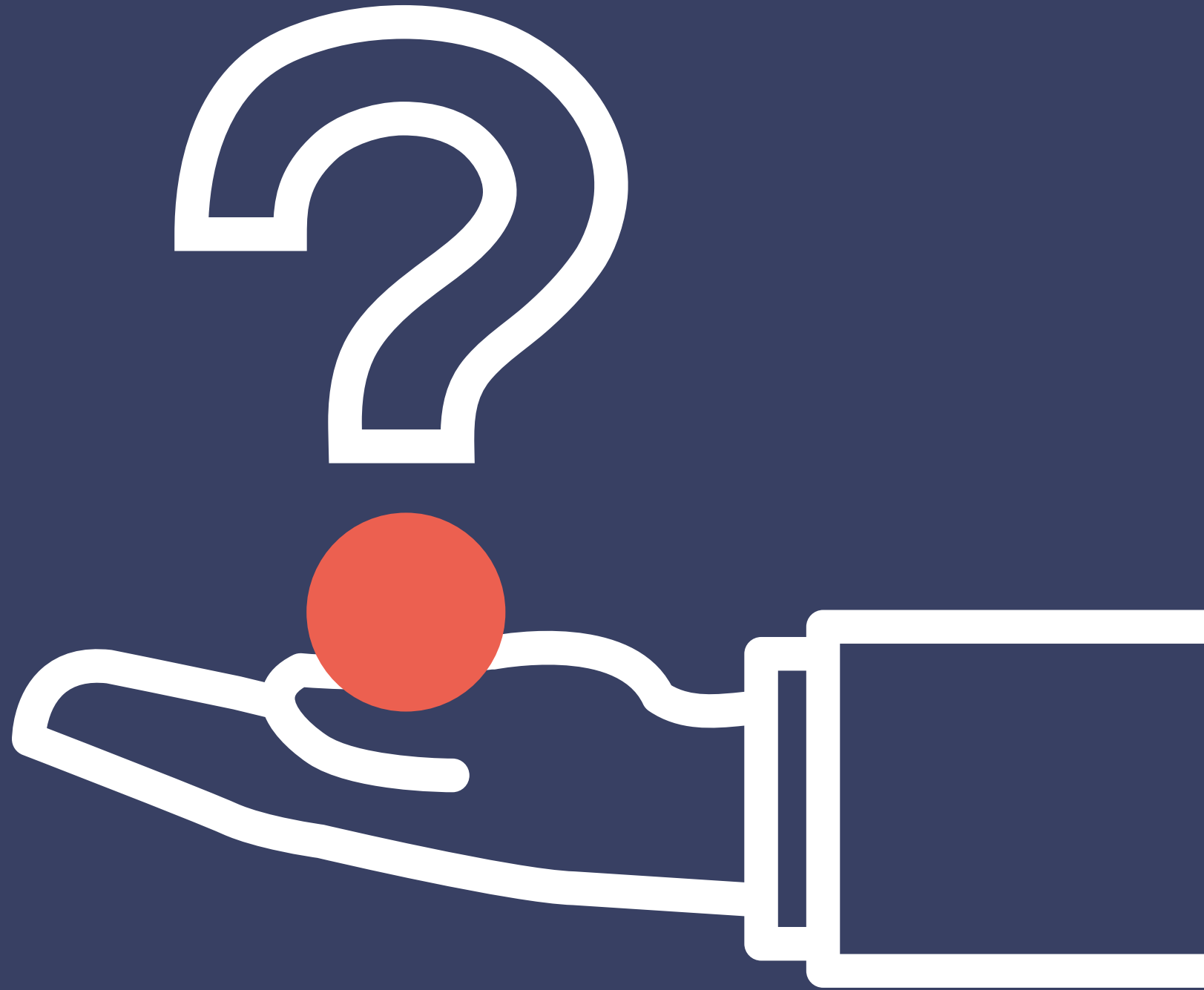
As we wrap up this exploration into the state of prospecting for 2024, it's clear that multi-channel prospecting is the future of effective B2B outreach.

How to stay ahead in 2024

As the tactics outlined in this paper become more embedded across the industry, there are plenty of exciting opportunities to exploit and stay ahead of the competition in the year ahead.

Expanding channel diversity

Exploring additional channels to diversify outreach further.

AI-driven personalisation

Utilising artificial intelligence to refine targeting and message personalisation across channels, offering more relevant and individual interactions.

Personalised websites, webchat and forms

Creating more dynamic, personalised web experiences tailored to individual prospects.

These advancements present exciting opportunities. As we continue to innovate, multi-channel prospecting will undoubtedly become even more integral to successful outreach strategies, perfectly aligning with the evolving needs of modern B2B buyers.

We're Sopro

And we're our best case study.

We launched in 2015, with a mission to revolutionise B2B outreach, using world class data and tech, and a team of experts.

We started with email, but innovation and an understanding of human behaviour has always been at the heart of our service. Grounded in these fundamental beliefs, Sopro has evolved to offer a comprehensive, intent-based prospecting service, fully synchronised across various channels, serving over 600 companies worldwide

We used nothing but our own service to grow our business for over four years, and even now, 60% of our new business still comes from our own prospecting campaigns. We've grown a lot in that time, with over 300 employees and offices in Brighton, Miami, Skopje, Dubai, and London.

Sopro helps you sell more by starting new sales conversations with the people that matter. We source your ideal prospects, engage them with personalised messages, nurture them across multiple channels, and connect them directly to you when they are ready to talk business.

Fully managed service

Leave prospecting to the experts. Your dedicated team run and optimise your campaigns.

Set up in three weeks

Get a new source of leads in as little as three weeks, synced to your CRM.

Intent-based multi-channel outreach

An intelligent and timely mix of personalised messaging connects with your ideal clients.

600+ clients

Over 600 businesses currently trust Sopro to deliver a reliable sales pipeline.

Want to know if Sopro's multi-channel prospecting service can help your business sell more? **Book your discovery call**

G2	Capterra	Trustpilot	GetApp	Software Advice
4.8	4.9	4.6	4.9	4.9

Appendix:

Our data

The data in this report is sourced from Sopro client campaigns. In most cases, the analysis only looks at 2023 data to give insight into the latest trends.

There was a total of **22.1 million** outreach emails in 2023. Where it makes sense, the analysis looks at all Sopro client data, March 2016 - 22 November 2023, a total of **75.2 million** outreach emails.

For our analysis of multi-channel campaigns, we looked at **760,295** datapoints, including phone numbers sourced, LinkedIn InMails sent, gift links sent, and companies identified via IP match. Paid social ads had **8,558,947** impressions on Meta's Facebook and Instagram.

Chapter 3
- Industry, job title, and company size data all relate to the industry targeted, not the industry the email has come from.

- For job titles, any job with under 100 prospects in our data is excluded from the report.

Chapter 4
Open rate benchmarks

HubSpot: **38.5%**

MailChimp: **21.3%**

Campaign Monitor: **21.5%**

Constant Contact: **34.5%**
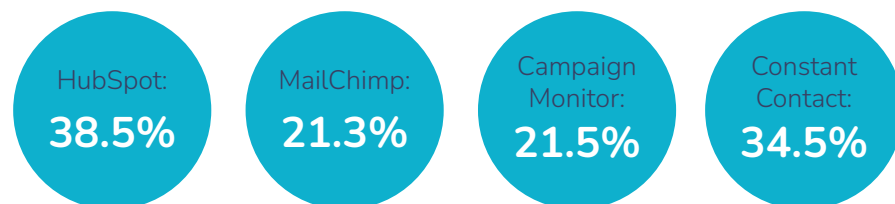
Types of subject lines

The panel of 377 B2B buyers were asked: "What kind of subject lines work to make you open a cold business email?" The percentages listed are people who said they would "definitely open" or would be "more likely to open" the email.

Chapter 5

The best time to send is based on when the email is sent, not opened.

Chapter 6: The impact of particular words and phrases in emails

We searched for instances of each word, and noted the impact the appearance of that word had on the lead rate of those emails compared to the average of all emails sent. Words were only included where they had featured in at least 0.1% of the emails sent (at least 20,000 emails), and in multiple different templates.

This reduces the likelihood that a particularly successful template could skew the results. However, it should be noted that this is still possible. For the percentages of groups of words, the number of emails sent were taken into account, so that a word with a +50% impact but a 0.1% appearance rate would not materially change the results if another word had a +0.1% impact but a 50% appearance rate.

This analysis is designed to provoke ideas for testing. Use experimentation and experience to discover what works best for you.

Chapter 7: B2B institute report

The full report is available **here**

Full list of industries analysed

Accounting
Airlines/Aviation
Apparel & Fashion
Architecture & Planning
Automation
Banking
Biotechnology
Broadcast Media
Building Materials
Business Supplies and Equipment
Commercial Real Estate
Computer & Network Security
Computer Games
Computer Software
Construction
Consumer Goods Electrical/Electronic

Cosmetics Entertainment
Defence & Space
Design
E-learning
Environmental Services
Events Services
Facilities Services
Financial Services
Food & Beverages
Food Production
Furniture
Government Administration
Health, Wellness and Fitness
Higher Education
Hospital & Health Care
Hospitality

Human Resources
Industrial
Information Services
Insurance Information
Internet
Investment Banking
Investment Management
Law Practice
Legal Services
Leisure, Travel & Tourism
Logistics and Supply Chain
Luxury Goods & Jewellery
Machinery Mechanical or Industrial Engineering
Management
Management Consulting
Management Education

Manufacturing
Marketing and Advertising
Market Research
Media Production
Medical Devices
Mining & Metals
Nonprofit Organization
Oil & Energy
Online Media
Packaging and Containers
Pharmaceuticals
Printing
Professional Training & Coaching
Public Relations and Communications
Publishing

Real Estate
Renewables & Environment
Research Civil Engineering
Restaurants Chemicals
Retail
Security and Investigations
Sports
Staffing and Recruiting Consumer Electronics
Technology and Services
Telecommunications
Transportation/Trucking/Railroad
Utilities
Venture Capital & Private Equity
Wholesale Automotive
Wine and Spirits

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