

The Untapped Selling Power
of Contact Marketing

**UPDATED
EDITION**

with AI tools and
strategies for virtual
meetings

HOW TO GET A MEETING WITH ANYONE



STU HEINECKE

“It’s an audacious promise, but if you read Stu Heinecke’s new book, *How to Get a Meeting with Anyone*, you’ll find plenty of solid, down-to-earth examples of how to make good on that promise.”

—**FORBES**

Praise for *How to Get a Meeting with Anyone*, *Updated Edition*

“This book isn’t just about meetings; it’s a battle plan for rebels who refuse to be ignored.”

—David Brier, bestselling author of *Brand Intervention* and *Rich Brand, Poor Brand*

“In an AI-driven world, Stu’s book proves human connection is still the ultimate sales tool.”

—Frank Bastone, president of [FrankTalk.com](https://www.franktalk.com)

“In *How to Get a Meeting with Anyone*, Stu Heinecke masterfully distills the art of networking into practical strategies that anyone can implement. The book offers actionable insights on how to build meaningful connections, and ultimately secure that elusive meeting. With a blend of real-life examples and highly creative techniques, the author empowers readers to break through barriers and establish relationships that can transform their careers. A must-read for anyone in sales.”

—Gerhard Gschwandtner, CEO of *Selling Power* magazine and Sales3.0

“This new edition nails it: virtual meetings, work-from-home burnout, AI clogging up our lives—it’s all here, and the author still managed to make getting a meeting feel like an art form. This book is a manual for not just reaching people, but for actually making them want to hear from you.”

—Tommy Schaff, managing partner at Major League Sales

“SalesDaily just published its Top 72 Sales Books for Prospecting ranking. *How to Get a Meeting with Anyone* is our #1 pick.”

—Haris Halkic, editor and publisher of [SalesDaily.com](https://www.salesdaily.com) [URL inactive]

“Creative, actionable, and effective—Stu delivers the ultimate guide to getting your foot in any door.”

—John Jantsch, author of *Duct Tape Marketing*

“Getting human-to-human meetings, no matter how they are done, is the sales professional’s priority and Stu shares wonderful ways to get them, to make them valuable for the customer, and help your sales efforts move forward.”

—Fred Diamond, cofounder of the Institute for Excellence in Sales and host of *Sales Game Changers* podcast

“While working with Stu to develop a campaign to gain access to C.H. Robinson’s most valuable prospect segment, we utilized his big board campaign with tremendous success. The unique approach and call follow-ups by our SDR team exceeded all of our KPI’s on setting up introductory sales meetings.”

—**Drew Schwartzhoff, senior vice president of strategic marketing at Wabash**

“Struggling to book meetings? Unlock new AI strategies in this easy-to-read book and start filling your calendar with opportunities today!”

—**Brandon Bornancin, CEO of [Seamless.AI](#) and bestselling author**

“Stu Heinecke is the perfect description of ‘Where there is a will, there is a way.’ His ingenious creations and original ideas open the door to meetings with practically anyone.”

—**Rick Dees, legendary radio personality**

“The only how-to manual you’ll ever need to get all of the meetings you could ever want—updated for today’s AI-driven world.”

—**Kris Rudeegraap, co-CEO of Sendoso**

“While many salespeople chase the next high-tech shiny object, the smart sellers know what has always been true, and always will be: humans crave authentic attention and interaction from other humans. Stu Heinecke’s first edition of *How to Get a Meeting with Anyone* was a master class in how to appeal to this fundamental psychological principle to cut through the noise, grab attention, create intrigue, and get meetings with interested prospects. He has made his new edition even better; he shows us how to take the very technology that is making others LESS human and provides strategies and techniques on how to use it as a tool to create more and better connections. If your business relies on prospecting, this book will help you to actually TALK to more people. Get it now.”

—**Art Sobczak, author of *Smart Calling***

“Stu Heinecke’s *How to Get a Meeting with Anyone* is a must-read for breaking through in today’s noisy, AI-driven world. His focus on creative, human-to-human connection makes this updated edition more relevant than ever. It’s a game changer for building meaningful relationships.”

—**Jon Ferrara, CEO of Nimble CRM**

“Welcome to the yin and yang world of AI and sales. AI is the yin and sales is the yang, offering us major opportunities to differentiate ourselves. Stu gives us the playbook to be the yang. Choosing not to read it will allow AI to overrun you. Reading it allows you to leverage it.”

—**Mark Hunter, author of *A Mind for Sales***

“I love this book and the new edition is even better! Reading this book inspired me to be creative and helped me generate countless meetings that resulted in multiple seven- and eight-figure enterprise deals. AI is changing the world and meeting with the right people is more important than ever. Stu goes above and beyond in helping us navigate these new uncharted waters.”

—**Mareo McCracken, author of *Really Care for Them***

“In a time when few pick up the phone, their voicemail is stuffed, and emails are deleted, you need the set of strategies Stu is known for.”

—**Anthony Iannarino, author of *Elite Sales Strategies***

“Stu Heinecke does it again! *How to Get a Meeting with Anyone* isn’t just a book—it’s a revolution in prospecting.”

—**Alice Heiman, sales strategist and host of *Sales Talk for CEOs***

“My all-time favorite book on prospecting just got even better!”

—**Alexandra Watkins, author of *Hello, My Name Is Awesome***

“In an impersonal, high-tech world, the differentiator won’t be the product or the price, but the person who gets the meeting. And, to get the meeting, you need to get this book.”

—**Victor Antonio, founder of Sales Velocity Academy**

“In a super-connected world, we’re actually anything but. Stu reminds us that in business, you actually have to connect on a human level to really succeed, and he is the Master guide on how to do that.”

—**Bob Guccione, Jr., media entrepreneur and founder of *SPIN* magazine**

“In a time of great need, it’s too late to start a relationship. Stu has bridged that ominous chasm between lack of access and the beginning of an important relationship using clever approaches to discharge the everyday tensions we all experience in business.”

—**Russ Klein, CEO of the American Marketing Association**

“It’s true that many a truth is said in jest but not all are guaranteed to make you laugh out loud or provide attention for your message from a high-level decision maker. Stu Heinecke can show you how in *How to Get a Meeting with Anyone*.”

—**Pete Wilson, former Governor of California**

Also by Stu Heinecke

Get the Meeting!

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UPDATED
EDITION

HOW TO GET A MEETING WITH ANYONE

The Untapped Selling Power
of Contact Marketing

Stu Heinecke



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This book is dedicated to all the crazy, wonderful souls who believe in the magic of audacity, creativity, and intelligent mischief to get life-changing meetings that lead to explosive growth. They are the cliff divers, the wingsuit flyers, and the bungee jumpers of the business world. Without them, this book couldn't exist.

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Foreword

I am deeply honored to be introducing this new, updated edition of *How to Get a Meeting with Anyone*. People often say a certain book changed their lives—well, this is the one that changed mine. In fact, it gave me the idea to start a multimillion-dollar company called Reachdesk.

After *How to Get a Meeting with Anyone* was first published in 2016, author Stu Heinecke heard from readers around the world whose lives also had changed. One read the book and instantly improved their business by \$300,000. Another used one of the strategies within and immediately changed his sales results, which led to a stunning ascent from newly hired sales development representative to running the \$4.7 billion startup's entire sales department.

My story was a little different. When a friend recommended that I read Stu's book, I was a sales rep for a large European technology conglomerate. And I wasn't having much fun, which is to say, I wasn't breaking through to nearly enough top prospects. Which is really to say, I wasn't breaking through at all. None of us were.

Every successful entrepreneur starts with a vision, based on an unmet need. And sales teams had a huge unmet need: getting the important meetings they needed to meet their numbers.

This book offered everything I needed to step out of my former life into a new one.

I started attending trade shows, making the rounds of the sales booths to ask reps what their biggest pain was. Every one of them answered, "Connecting with valuable prospects!" I pitched them my idea of sending custom gifts to prospects to stand out from the crowd. I immediately got a lot of interest.

That was the start of Reachdesk, the gifting platform I founded with three friends and colleagues, with no budget, no investment, but very high hopes. Today, it works with more than five hundred enterprise clients, helping their sales and marketing teams open critically important doors across the entire European and North American markets. Our most recent funding round was \$47 million, from backers that include HubSpot and Highland Capital.

The book really did change my life. In the meantime, everything about business-to-business selling also changed, well beyond the effects of AI.

As people shifted to working from home during the pandemic, it got much harder to surprise them with a gift. But as with many challenges we've met, this led to an opportunity. When someone was due to receive a gift, we emailed them to announce it and confirm the correct shipping address. We also gave them the opportunity to choose another gift or donate it to charity.

Once we improved our way of contacting recipients, our data got better and our response rates improved. The announcements improved the effectiveness of the entire platform. And so many other sellers have found just this sort of surprise amid the changes they've endured over the past several years.

Yes, work from home made things more difficult. LinkedIn became overrun with junk DMs. Inboxes exploded with spam. And our phones have been ringing off the hook, so to speak, with spam calls. Although rules about these things have tightened, AI-powered platforms will surely change the game again, running well ahead of whatever safeguards emerge.

Getting meetings is still—and will always be—about getting the attention of another person in a way that leaves them thinking, perhaps even smiling. AI can't do that and never will.

As AI permeates virtually every aspect of life, Stu Heinecke contends we will treasure things that are uniquely human: astonishing things conceived by talented humans and made by practiced hands. Things that are impossible for AI to imitate, presented in ways only very clever, human senders can. This awareness of human connection will only help savvy sellers, who have always been in the business of creating highly profitable human-to-human connections.

And that awareness captures the spirit of the opportunity you hold in your hands now. This updated edition of *How to Get a Meeting with Anyone* will help you navigate the changed waters of business-to-business selling, just as the first version did for me.

The book still contains many of the original stories and strategies, but the whole has been updated to help you take command of your selling outcomes. It contains the best lessons of the original, because those haven't changed. It still makes sense to use art and personalization and metaphors and audacity and more to make the connections you need to write a new story for your own career or business.

As I did when I held my first copy of the book, you now have an opportunity to create fantastic new results in your life. I wish you well in the exciting journey you're about to take.

Alex Olley
Cofounder, Reachdesk



Introduction

When I wrote the introduction to the first edition of this book in 2016, I started by asking, “What’s a cartoonist doing writing a book about sales?” Then I shared a story that would change my life.

When I started my marketing agency years ago, I set out to use cartoons in direct mail campaigns. Personalization had just become a force, so I combined it with the magic of cartoons to create an effect that had never been seen before. The industry’s top experts advised against the use of humor, but I knew editorial readership surveys were indicating cartoons were already the best-read and remembered part of newspapers and magazines. And it worked.

My first two marketing clients were *Rolling Stone* and *Bon Appetit* magazines—prestigious clients and sophisticated marketers. So when my

first two campaigns set new response records, that was my opening to introduce the concept to the rest of the magazine industry. But how would I reach those decision makers? I needed to connect with the top circulation-marketing executives at some of the biggest media companies in the world. These were sharp, busy people with pressure-cooker New York careers. They would not be easy to reach.

That's when the marketer in me responded to this challenge: How would I achieve a near 100 percent success rate at breaking through to two dozen critically important prospects? My plan was to use the same personalized cartoons that had driven the record response in the direct mail campaigns, but in a different form. There wasn't even a term for what I'd planned to do, so I called my outreach effort a "Contact Campaign."

Since the audience was so small, I could afford to budget more per person, while spending far less than what a typical marketer does on a campaign. So I produced a set of twenty-four prints, each suitable for framing and featuring a cartoon personalized with the recipient's name, and sent each with a letter.

The results were astounding. All of my prospects responded, all of them agreed to meet, and all became clients. That's a 100 percent response rate, a 100 percent meeting rate, and a 100 percent conversion rate. Suddenly my small agency had a roster that included Time Inc., *Forbes*, *Harvard Business Review*, *The Wall Street Journal*, Condé Nast, and Hearst Magazines, all paying up to \$25,000 per assignment.

And it all stemmed from a campaign that cost less than a hundred dollars. It changed my life, and as it turned out, through the publication of this book, it changed many lives around the world.

One reader reached out from Croatia to tell me my techniques had produced a quick \$300,000 in new business. Another told me the book helped him leap from a new-hire sales-development-representative position to being sales manager of a \$4.7 billion startup in less than a year.

Then, *How to Get a Meeting with Anyone* was named by RingDNA as one of the top sixty-four sales books of all time. The American Marketing Association dubbed me the "father of Contact Marketing." And then the biggest surprise came when I met Alex Olley, who wrote the Foreword for this updated edition.

Alex read the book and was so inspired, he founded Reachdesk. Based in London, the company specializes in targeted gift-giving, to help sales teams break through to their top prospects and accounts. The company just closed a \$47 million funding round, backed by several of the top names in customer relationship management and marketing automation.

I still hear from people every week who say the book changed their lives. So, why does it need an update?

Well, times have changed. Resources have changed. The pandemic and working from home changed how we connect. Those changes forced a greater dependence on digital channels, which have become overcrowded and less effective. It's getting harder and harder to stand out, and harder to get meetings.

But that's nothing compared to the impact of AI. We all know it is changing the sales profession, along with every other profession and sector of society. It's already been infused into the tools we already use as sellers, while others are being added to the tech stack. AI is changing job descriptions, but it will do more than that: It will force a transformation of our identities as sellers.

But this is not a book about AI. It's a book about getting meetings in the Age of AI. To update this edition, I returned to several sources from the original book to ask for their insights on getting meetings and how AI might affect our ability to make critical connections. Their thoughts may surprise you.

AI won't kill our jobs but will surely enhance our productivity as sellers while redefining the nature of selling. It promises to make us far more refined in our processes and focus, making us more productive sellers. But AI is so much more than that. It's a collaborator in a journey that will take us places we've never been.

So, the first chapter of this book creates a new AI-aware framework in which to work, sell, and get meetings. I think you'll enjoy the conclusions about how AI will enhance your career or business, along with how it points to much more of what we've been doing as Contact Marketers. As the experts all noted, getting meetings has always been about creating human-to-human connections. That will continue in the Age of AI.

Thus, the tactics and strategies in this book are just as valid as they ever were. Creating surprise and delight, and using audacity and creativity to elicit a very human response, are perhaps even more relevant in the Age of AI because they're so human in nature—because they're not AI.

You'll find three sections in the book. "What Is Contact Marketing?" explains the nature of using audacious and clever means to connect with people at the top of your list. It explains the wonderfully odd world of Contact Marketing, where everything about traditional marketing is turned upside down. Contact Marketing is not mass marketing; because it's highly targeted, campaigns tend to be far more affordable. The metrics are also foreign to other forms of marketing, with response rates reaching as high as 100 percent or more. This section is filled with helpful insights into the nature of CEOs, how to create your own VIP makeover and VIP statement, and generally sets a foundation for your use of Contact Marketing.

[Section two](#), "Contact Campaign Tactics & Methods," is probably the one you'll spend most of your time with. It's filled with contact strategies, tips, and techniques, as well as stories of incredible breakthroughs using Contact Marketing. I detail Dan Waldschmidt's sword campaign, Rick Bennett's contact letter as a full-page ad in *The Wall Street Journal*, and the sales rep who used a carrier pigeon to connect with one of the most famous CEOs in the world. You'll read about my use of personalized cartoons to reach presidents, prime ministers, celebrities, countless C-level executives, and so much more.

The final section, "Your Contact Campaign in Action," explores the steps you'll take and considerations you'll encounter as you build and run your own Contact Campaigns. It will help you strategize messaging, add a secret weapon to boost response, and learn how to turn every executive assistant into an ally. It will brief you on how to speak to the CEO (in this case, the "Center of Enterprise Opportunity," no matter their title) and will set the foundation for building a repeatable process that supercharges your entire team.

Updating a book like this is a delicate proposition. What do you leave in? What do you replace? How do you maintain the fine balance of a book that has changed tens of thousands of lives and was named one of the top sixty-four sales books of all time by RingDNA?

My approach has been to keep all of the good stuff—the tactics and strategies that work just as well now as they ever have—even in the face of enormous change. That’s pure gold. But I have also included new material to modernize the approach. As Contact Marketers, we must adapt to new tools and realities brought by AI, working from home, and an increasing flood of spam on all digital fronts.

There will be many books written about the use of AI in selling. If their focus is on the latest tools, they’ll quickly become obsolete as AI continues to move at lightning speed. This edition is different. It embraces a strategy of constant learning and adoption, whatever may come in the AI landscape. That approach will never become outdated.

As you sharpen your approach to Contact Marketing from this new edition, I suggest you also add my later book, *Get the Meeting!*, to your reading list. It was written after the original edition of this book, and contains many more campaign tactics for breaking through to your most important prospects. That book and this new edition are meant to serve as a companion set.

In *Get the Meeting!* you’ll read about the amazing stories of what Kris Kristofferson did to meet Johnny Cash, the current record-holding campaigns that produced over a 300 percent response rate and a 69,500,000 percent return on investment (ROI), and so much more.

But right now, your mission is to update your Contact Marketing strategy. I expect this book will change your life, just as the first did, by helping you get the meetings you could only dream of getting before. That is how rapid growth occurs and how fortunes are made.

SECTION I

WHAT IS CONTACT MARKETING?



“Do you ever find yourself wondering, ‘What would Batman do in this situation?’”

CHAPTER 1

Getting Meetings in the Age of AI

Many books have been (and will be) written about AI, specifically AI's magical footprint in the sales field, but no book will be able to keep up with AI's explosive rise and evolution. Fortunately, this book doesn't need to.

Instead, the mission of this new edition is to help you navigate how AI will change Contact Marketing, while staying ahead of your peers in terms of getting million-dollar meetings. After all, that's how success is won in sales. So while AI can help us identify our ideal prospects in ways never before possible, including up-to-the-minute intel on trigger events, buyer intent signals, and propensities to buy, we still have to connect with very human souls on the other end. AI will continue to evolve, and in a way, our humanity will as well.

What AI promises is human transformation. Already, we're better at finding the right buyers at the right time than ever before in human history. Thanks to AI-powered tools such as text-to-image, text-to-voice, text-to-video, and text-to-song, we've already transformed into very talented illustrators, voiceover artists, filmmakers, and singer-songwriters. Who knows what magic AI will bring to our lives next?

Human evolution is unlike that of any other life form on the planet. We have evolved not just biologically but also through technology. We've become the earth's dominant species through our weapons, our modes of travel, and more recently, our digitized world of instant communication and information. But think for a moment if someone were to say about these advances, "That stuff's too scary. I'm not going to participate." That would be silly, right? They wouldn't drive a car or take a plane; they'd walk. They wouldn't use a phone; they'd talk only in person with the people in their immediate surroundings. They wouldn't take the stairs or elevator; they'd climb the building.

“AI will not only change society, it will change each of us. It’s part of our evolution now, part of our DNA. It will make each of us super-sellers.”

Obviously we can’t function in society without integrating our lives into the mesh of technology that makes us so uniquely human. The same will be true for AI. Resisting it would be like resisting stairs. The way to keep this book relevant in the Age of AI is simple. We embrace the transformation, the rapid rate of change, while remaining focused on what makes us human. We laugh, we cry, we brim with curiosity and dreams, we explore and we aspire. We build and perfect and create.

AI will not only change society, it will change each of us. It’s part of our evolution now, part of our DNA. It will make each of us super-sellers. I’m fond of saying, if you can’t get meetings, you can’t sell. If you don’t embrace AI, you can’t sell.

An Equal and Opposite Reaction

There is a natural tension between AI and everything that makes us human. The more things become automated, artificial, and impersonal, the more we’ll crave authenticity, audacity, insight, and expertise. We’ll savor things born of ingenious minds, deep talent, and practiced hands. Things and actions that are uniquely human.

“There is a natural tension between AI and everything that makes us human.”

Most B2B AI platforms, as I write this, are focused on identifying ideal prospects. Some even offer to automatically open new accounts.. But here’s where they’re missing the mark: Every one of these platforms still relies on tactics that haven’t been working, such as email sequences that offer endless, boring copy that no one reads.

Now, compare these useless tactics with those used by sellers and entrepreneurs who broke through to create extraordinary results. For instance, Jason Rende is an IT security founder who decided he wanted to

penetrate the startup market in Manhattan. Overheard on Alice Heiman's *Sales Talk for CEOs* podcast, Rende recalled his earlier experience in the film industry, when urgent deliveries were made via bike messenger. Whenever one showed up, everyone stopped what they were doing to examine the delivery.

Having been a messenger himself, he suited up and started making "pitch deliveries" on his bike. He'd show up, ask for the founders, and deliver his pitch. They were spellbound by the fact that the bike messenger was also the company's CEO—and by the audacity of the whole enterprise.

He quickly generated a large new base of startups. But here's the most clever part. In Manhattan, as in most cities, every visitor must check in with lobby security, who calls the person to be visited for clearance to come up. If there's no appointment, the visitor is turned away. But not Jason. You see, messengers check in, announce their delivery, and are free to go up without an appointment. It's a brilliant way to do a drop-by, in-person meeting without a lot of fuss—with a roughly 100 percent penetration rate.

Then there's Stuart Saunders, who surprised me one day before going onstage to speak at the Outbound conference. He told me he was a fan of this book, and then explained how it inspired him to purchase a wide-format printer and a computer-controlled router to produce deeply personalized Contact Campaigns.

Saunders deals with home builders. And home builders are used to receiving blueprint drawings, which are always a high-priority form of communication. So he devised a blueprint-style expression of his value proposition to provide seamless mortgages to sell the homes. The response has been strong and positive, enabling the business to rapidly expand. He also noted how builders always seem to have a "take one" box in show homes, to dispense brochures to home buyers visiting developments. So he crafts fine wooden boxes engraved with the development's logo, which serve as both customized take-one boxes and his ticket for entry with builder executives.

Dale Dupree is someone you ought to get to know. The founder of The Sales Rebellion and former "Copier Warrior," he is a master at crafting contact devices that create irresistible experiences and cost almost nothing. He's sent crumpled letters (which convey, "I knew you've been throwing

away my letters, so I thought I'd save you the trouble"), letters with coffee cup stains (which suggest, "I've been up all night working out this deal"), and more.

My favorite of Dale's tactics is an empty doughnut box, delivered to the prospect's office with a note scrawled under the lid. When the prospect opens the box, the note inside explains that the sender had bought the doughnuts to celebrate receiving the client's Request For Proposal (RFP), which never came. Taped inside is a gift card for another dozen.

Food is often at the heart of effective Contact Campaigns. I wrote about Rick Tobin's birthday cupcake surprise in my book *Get the Meeting!* In the story, Rick had an elusive prospect who remained hidden behind a particularly tough front-desk gatekeeper.

One day, he noticed the prospect's birthday was quickly approaching. That morning, he stopped by the bakery and bought a cupcake with a birthday candle, packed in a baker's box. He walked into the prospect's building with a big smile as he approached the receptionist.

"He's not in," she grouched.

"That's okay," he countered. "Just wanted to drop this off for Bob. It's his birthday."

He handed her the box, and as she peeked inside, her scowl turned to a smile. "Hang on, let me see if he has five minutes for you." The prospect quickly appeared, they had a very friendly chat, and Rick walked away with a \$200,000 deal.

There are many stories like this, in this book and in *Get the Meeting!* The point is, these are prime examples of how to forge human-to-human connections. And they don't change because AI is now in play. In fact, they're even stronger because of AI, which is why this book is more relevant than ever before.

Engineering Your AI Reframe

Imagine you are now a futuristic version of yourself, the personified ideal of what business, selling, and branding should be. You are now a creative elite who produces original content that constantly builds your personal

brand and draws people all over the world for your advice and expertise. You are a supremely productive agent of change in your career, business, and industry. You are laser-focused on selling to the people who need your services, connecting just as they realize their need, with personalized solutions predetermined by deep intel on anyone, anywhere.

There has never been anything like what you have become, thanks to your swift and relentless embrace of AI. And that is the purpose of your reframe. You're about to experience a career makeover that will change your life.

The tools and platforms in which AI presents itself are rapidly evolving. Text-to-speech, text-to-image, text-to-video, large language models, and more will give way to even more fantastic modes of work. It will be your job to jump in, learn, play, and create. At the same time, AI will infuse itself further and further into the tools you use daily to manage your selling activities. It will help you find more of the right people, based on your ideal customer profile (ICP), trigger events, and other buying signals. It will help you become a more efficient seller, on a level never before seen.

So where do you start?

Atom8 cofounder Nathan Lippi says we should think of AI as a collaborator, and I agree. He's using it heavily to support his company's mission to create smart, automated sales outreach. ChatGPT is helping his team create personalized copy points, ideate client podcasts, scrape LinkedIn profiles, even write programming code. His other favorites include [Clay.com](#), [Lob.ai](#), [Lavender.ai](#), and Zenrows, which enable his team to produce deep intel on target prospects, greatly improve email efficacy, and quickly scrape websites and social media for useful personalization cues.

"It takes a lot of practice to get AI dialed in to what you want it to do," says Lippi. He's right again. AI needs good inputs to produce desired results.

Which brings us to the next step in your transformation. You need to join as many AI platforms as you can—and practice. To do your bidding, AI requires carefully written prompts. An example of that is how you direct Midjourney to produce art from your instructions. Give it a try, and you'll quickly see how far it veers from your intended result.

The prompt, Desert scene with a person taking a stroll, produces a very different outcome than, A springtime desert scene, with wildflowers erupting in the distance, and a smiling young woman facing camera with arms outstretched, minimalist, reduced palette, cinematic, low angle—at 16:9. In the first prompt, we're telling the AI to create whatever it wants. In the second, we're defining the character, scene, shot angle, color palette, and photographic style and effects—and specifying the aspect ratio of the art as 16:9, a standard video format.

Even if you use the same prompt several times, you'll get different results with each pass. Getting what you want takes practice, but you'll notice something else, something that is part of the transition just described. The art you produce with Midjourney becomes *your* art. You created it with your AI collaborator. Can you see how useful this can become when producing your own personal brand-building assets?

Try joining other platforms for generating images, speech, music, and video from text to practice producing what you imagine, then be amazed by what you create with your new collaborator. Try the same approach with a large language model like ChatGPT to explore how it can extend your abilities as a writer, researcher, speaker, thought leader, and thinker.

Next, start sharing your newly flourished creative chops on social media. LinkedIn reports only 1 percent of users produce original content. Can you see how collaborating with AI can help you develop your own unique voice in your marketplace?

Your transformation also requires you to become a practiced expert in the use of AI-enhanced sales tools. If you're an employee, stand out as someone who is always the first to train on new AI platforms the company adopts. Being first sets you ahead of the pack, and increases your value to the company. But it also transforms you into someone who sells more, because you're suddenly wielding the power of deep insight from enormous data troves. You've transformed into something that hadn't existed before—a sales professional powered by AI.

It's Still About Human-to-Human Connections

To produce this updated edition, I returned to some of my favorite sources from the original book. Famous authors, B2B marketing platform founders, thought leaders in sales, and a new classification in the sales realm, AI superusers. I wanted their insights on AI, thinking it was the driving reason for this update. After all, AI is already changing everything about everything.

They were all excited about AI. But each reminded me of the essential truth about getting meetings. As long as humans make buying decisions, getting meetings will always be about creating human-to-human connections. The premise of this book, of using clever means to surprise, delight, and captivate our most important prospects, remains intact. If we want to succeed in business, we must be able to get meetings. The ability to get a meeting with anyone is still the superpower it has always been.

Dan Waldschmidt is one of my favorite people in business. He is an ultra-competitive athlete and a top sales writer/blogger. He is also a turnaround specialist who sends thousand-dollar personalized swords to connect with CEOs of troubled companies. You'll read more about his astonishing story in [Chapter 3](#).

One reason why Dan's story is so popular with readers is because he's getting a 100 percent response to his campaign. It's also one of the most imitated campaigns from the original book. "I hear from people all the time telling me, 'I tried the sword and it didn't work.' But that's not the point," Waldschmidt says. "The sword is uniquely fitted to my brand and strategy."

Waldschmidt says producing a Contact Campaign is like producing a play. Every element must be carefully thought out and executed. "What made *Hamilton* a special play wasn't just one element," he explains. "It was everything together, the historical characters, the backgrounds, effects, costumes, lighting, actors, and tight script."

He still uses swords, but tempers that with newer campaigns, using seven-foot-long Masai spears and copies of his favorite books with handwritten notes. But he never strays from the tenets of his personal brand. He is a warrior, and his entire reason for sending battle implements is to immediately communicate his intentions. He knows the CEOs are in the fight of their lives, and he is there to march into battle at their side. He's telling them he has their backs.

Today, Waldschmidt is using AI in some aspects of his outreach efforts, but he is still a firm believer in producing a surprise-and-delight experience for the people he wants to meet. “It’s more important than ever before,” he says. Still, the AI component in our outreach campaigns can make them far more efficient.

6sense CEO Jason Zintak says his company is already well down that road, with AI having powered the platform for more than eleven years. The company analyzes more than one trillion buying signals every day to help their customers prioritize the right in-market accounts with the right message at the right time, and even initiates personalized email outreach with members of the buying team. “The goal is engagement,” Zintak explains. “The 6sense AI agent will patiently nurture openings, even writing and sending multiple email responses before a sales representative gets involved.”

PitchFire founder and CEO Ryan O’Hara has always been good at making someone care about taking his meetings—and taking his outreach efforts to new extremes. In *Get the Meeting!*, I wrote about his incredibly clever video campaign to reach sales leaders. Hiring a classical string quartet to play renditions of Led Zeppelin songs, he used the clips to great effect, delighting many prospects to pick up the phone and connect. But his most recent stunt—recording a contact video from stage during a keynote speech—went even further. “I told the audience, ‘Let’s make a video to reach this guy,’ and turned the camera toward the crowd,” he explained. “Making it public created a higher possibility of getting the meeting.” And it worked, with the connection made before he left the stage.

Heart & Sell author Shari Levitin is sold on video as a Contact Campaign channel, too, counseling her readers and clients to use it throughout the sales cycle. “You need a pattern-interrupt,” she says, adding, “You don’t have to be better, but you do have to be different.” Levitin’s favorite trick is to send personalized, animated videos, delivered by email. “If you can get a prospect to say, ‘Wow, that’s unusual,’ you get the meeting,” she says. She also uses AI to help guide her outreach efforts, but worries about making a tough situation even worse. “Getting meetings today is so much harder than it was, even during the pandemic,” she explains. “With so much more noise from AI and bots trying to get

meetings, starting conversations will be much more difficult than before. We're losing our humanity in the quest for efficiency."

That quest will surely thin and change the ranks of sales teams, which seems to reinforce Levitin's position. *She Sells* author Lori Richardson says AI will shrink the field a bit, but the result will be better salespeople. "It's no different from when automation started," Richardson says. "It's a big level-up and those who can't cut it won't survive."

But Richardson has an even bigger point. "Soft skills and active listening are highly sought-after traits in sales," she says. "It's still about creating human-to-human connections." This is an interesting point, and not just because human connections enable meetings. Richardson is a long-time advocate of bringing women into sales forces, because they bring different interpersonal skills than men do.

A Mind for Sales author Mark Hunter prefers LinkedIn as his channel for finding prospects and getting meetings. Even though LinkedIn is a very crowded channel, Hunter finds value in narrowcasting to the people his message attracts. "I used to think in terms of sheer numbers, but now I'm focused on how many people I can reach meaningfully," he says.

You can find Mark Hunter's story in [Chapter 9](#), which includes some of my favorite tips for connecting by phone. Hunter is more committed to using the phone than ever before. This tracks with my thinking as well. Along with LinkedIn, other social media platforms and email are also crowded. It's useful to focus some effort there, but even better to use multiple channels, especially those that remain uncrowded.

"Senior people aren't leaving bread crumbs out there," Hunter explains. "The typical CEO is not sitting there posting on LinkedIn every day." To reach them, he favors calling their offices on Friday afternoons. "Fridays are absolute gold," he says, because no one calls on Friday afternoons and it demonstrates an extraordinary level of commitment. Otherwise, he finds great success reaching executives early Saturday morning or Sunday evenings with brief emails.

Sell Less, Win More author Andy Paul truly captures the essence of this human-focused approach to getting meetings. "What has changed about getting meetings? Nothing," he asserts. "It's always been hard and it's still hard." Paul isn't convinced AI will change anything about the sales

profession, or at least getting meetings. “All the sales automation tech hasn’t made salespeople better,” he says, “and there’s an even bigger potential of that happening with AI.”

Claim Your Superpower

So, what has changed about getting meetings? Everything and nothing. In the years since the first edition of this book, the world went into lockdown, workers moved semi-permanently home, and no one knew where to send anything to reach a prospect. Our phones were swamped with spam calls, junk caller IDs, and single-ring voicemails. So we pivoted to digital channels and automation, which quickly became overcrowded and misused.

Now AI is rapidly permeating every corner of business and society. It is enabling fantastic new levels of efficiency, creativity, and productivity, changing us in very unexpected ways. It is certainly changing selling, and how we get meetings, too. Never before has there been the opportunity to find precisely the right people to sell to, at precisely the right time, who precisely fit our buyer criteria.

But will all of that make us better sellers? Right now we’re all in the process of discovering that. And this is why this updated edition of *How to Get a Meeting with Anyone* exists. We need to embrace AI and evolve with it. But we must also remember that, in order to get important meetings, our primary goal is to create very human connections, with humans.

We still need to interrupt patterns. We still need to be thoughtful, audacious, and clever in our outreach. We still need to surprise and delight our best prospects to get the meetings we want. That hasn’t changed at all.

For that reason, all of the methods in the following chapters are valid and still just as powerful this time around. When you read about how Dan Waldschmidt opened doors with his sword campaign, or when Rick Bennett used a full-page ad in *The Wall Street Journal* to reach Oracle founder Larry Ellison, you will still be inspired to try your own out-of-the-box tactics.

“We still need to surprise and delight our best prospects to get the meetings we want. That hasn’t changed at all.”

There are new techniques in this updated edition, but everything from the original edition remains, because everything still works. This is still the book that inspired countless sales reps to change their results and connect with ultra-high-value prospects they never thought they could reach.

If you want even more Contact Campaign techniques, I suggest you also read my other book, *Get the Meeting!* That's where I wrote about the amazing stunt Kris Kristofferson pulled to meet Johnny Cash. And the ingenious campaigns that set the all-time records for response rate and ROI to a contact campaign, at 300 and 69,500,000 percent, respectively.

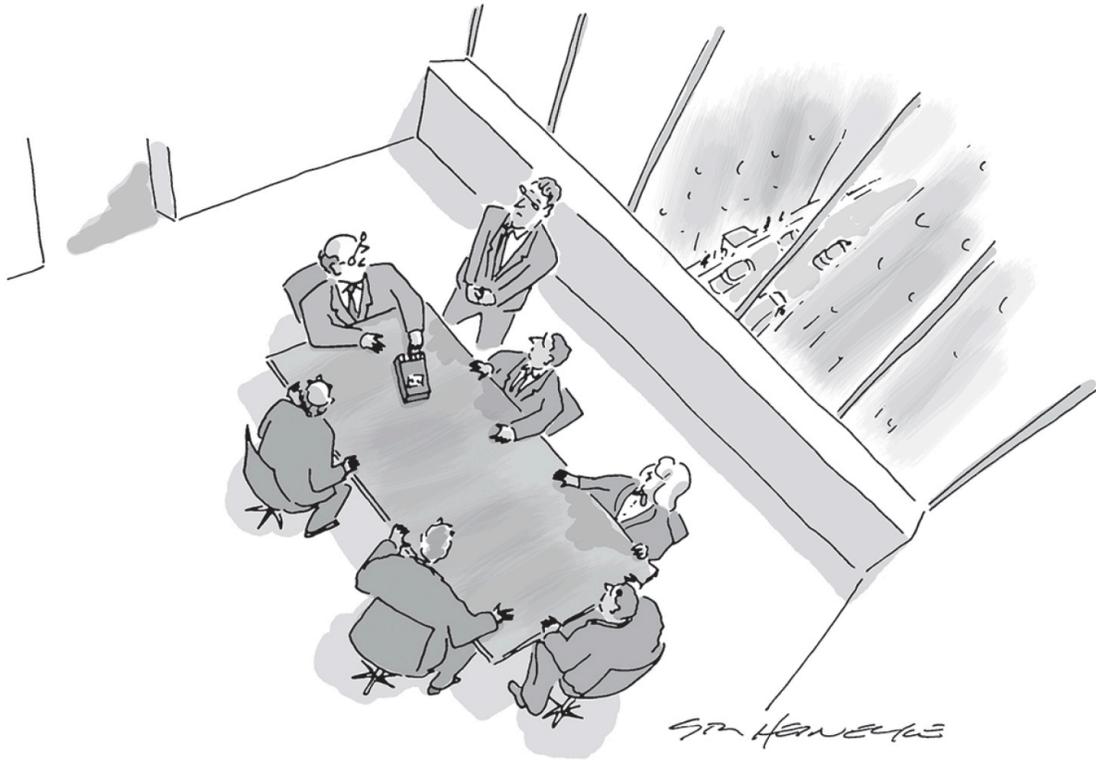
How to Get a Meeting with Anyone and *Get the Meeting!* are meant to be a companion set. If you're serious about Contact Marketing, you should have both. For now, I invite you to read on, get inspired by the campaigns ahead, and discover your own, true superpower—the ability to get a meeting with anyone.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- ✓ There is a natural tension between AI and everything that makes us human.
- ✓ Still, AI is part of human evolution. It's essential that you integrate it into your life.
- ✓ There has never been anything like what you will become, thanks to your swift and relentless embrace of AI. You're about to experience a career makeover that will change your life. You're suddenly something that has never existed before, a sales professional powered by AI.
- ✓ Putting current AI platforms to their greatest use requires practice. Inputs for generating text, images, video, and music rely on precise prompts. It's your job to explore, play, and learn with AI apps meant for sales and beyond.
- ✓ AI should be thought of as an unprecedented set of new tools, a productivity multiplier, a creative resource, a researcher, a

programmer, an assistant, and especially, a *collaborator*.

- ✓ As powerful as AI is, we must remind ourselves that getting meetings is still about creating human-to-human connections.
- ✓ A Contact Campaign isn't just a simple device, but an intricately orchestrated production, working on many levels.
- ✓ Getting meetings requires an emotional investment by the prospect.
- ✓ In the Age of AI, the strategies and tactics in this book are even more valid, relevant, and effective.
- ✓ The ability to get a meeting with anyone is a true superpower.



“Sorry, Bob, the music stopped, you didn’t find a chair, you’re fired.”

CHAPTER 2

What Is a Contact Campaign?

When I first started using Contact Campaigns, I used to think of them as direct mail on steroids. After all, I was sending a giant postcard, a blown-up version of what I often created for mail campaigns. Still, these “mailings” measured 18" × 24", were produced on quarter-inch foam core, and instead of using a wad of postage stamps, delivery was accomplished in person via courier.

Clearly this was not direct mail.

The method for generating a response was entirely different as well. I wasn't asking the recipient to return a business reply card, make a phone call, or visit a web landing page. *I was the response device.* My call or face-to-face meeting was the means for cultivating a response to the campaign.

I thought of it as direct mail on steroids, but the list of recipients was minuscule. It could be focused on as few as a single individual, designed to advance a singular goal. Or it could be pointed at a group of a dozen or so at a time, but never more than 100.

Since I was constantly reaching for highly important people, I was often dealing with their executive assistants to complete the contact. The Contact Campaigns evolved to include assistants as an integral part of that outreach. That's not the way a direct mail campaign works, either.

But Contact Campaigns aren't simply a form of marketing—they're really more about selling. The campaigns exist to support the sales process, and to help reps and others break through to their toughest, most important prospects. They're designed to create leverage to get a critical meeting or conversation to take place.

“The campaigns exist to support the sales process, and to help reps and others break through to their toughest, most important prospects. They're designed to create leverage to get a critical meeting or conversation to take place.”

People don't enter the sales profession because they're shy. And they don't last long if they're not resourceful. So there are many fascinating stories of what I would consider "sales stunts" used to break through. Two of those involve colorful parking violations.

Sales Manager Survival Guide author Dave Brock tells the story of a rep who'd been trying to reach a C-level executive at a large consumer goods company, one of the *Fortune* 50. No matter what she tried, the executive remained inaccessible. One day, she tried stopping by in person to request a meeting. Still nothing. But on the way in, she noticed a reserved parking spot with her target's name on it. So the next morning, she parked her car in the spot and waited. Sure enough, the fellow found his spot occupied and fumed as he entered the lobby, telling the receptionist to call a tow truck. The rep stood up, introduced herself, and said she'd move her car if he would walk with her. She explained that she'd tried numerous times to connect, and this was the only way she could think of to get his attention. He agreed and they continued on to have a meeting.

Guerrilla Selling coauthor and Guerrilla Marketing trainer Orvel Ray Wilson tells another story of a rep who'd been trying for months to reach the CEO of, as Forrest Gump would say, a certain "fruit company." In similar fashion, she reasoned that the way to gain access would be to camp out in the CEO's parking space in a lawn chair, armed with doughnuts and coffee. When he pulled up, she explained her purpose, and he gave her ninety seconds to speak as they walked to the lobby. When they reached that destination, he waved security personnel aside and took the meeting to his office.

Entertaining as they are, these aren't Contact Campaigns. They're stunts that are just as likely to get their perpetrators arrested as they are to precipitate a valuable meeting. Moreover, they carry the risk of souring your brand to the target executives, which is obviously not desirable. Sales trainers all seem to warn against basing your efforts on stunts, because they're not sustainable. I would add they're manipulative, and some are deceptive and dishonest.

So then, what exactly is a Contact Campaign? To start, they share these elements:

- **Micro-focused:** Truly a one-to-one campaign targeting just a single, high-value individual or all the members of your “Top 100” list.
- **Operates in direct support of specific sales or alliance-building actions:** Revolves around putting the sender in direct contact with the target executive.
- **Sender is always the “response device”:** No business reply cards to pop in the mail, micro-sites to visit, forms to fill out, or toll-free numbers to call; the purpose of the campaign is always to get the target exec to take the call or meeting with the sender.
- **Flexible, inclusive, and involving:** Flexible strategy that evolves and responds to factors as they happen, and involves all stakeholders, especially executive assistants and, at times, fellow executives.
- **Audacity, fascination, and intrigue:** The best Contact Campaign techniques exhibit some measure of audacity, sometimes a lot of it. At the very least, a proper Contact Campaign should elicit fascination and intrigue in the mind of the target executive, within the parameters of the mission and recipient’s interests.
- **Highly personal:** Contact Campaigns are the truest form of one-to-one marketing; each is a campaign of one, targeted to the specific interests, needs, fascinations, or pain points for each recipient.

But sometimes it’s easier to explain what something is by examining what it is not. So let’s take a look.

How Contact Campaigns Differ from Traditional Marketing

Contact Campaigns obviously have elements in common with direct marketing. It goes to a targeted audience, so it’s a lot like direct response. It

operates in support of sales, so it's also closely related to lead generation. It can involve print, email, websites, and social media, so these are touch points as well. All forms of marketing have common elements, because they're all part of the same thing: moving the enterprise forward in the marketplace.

But if all forms of marketing simply were alike, if they all accomplished the same thing with the same efficiency, there would be no reason to use one versus the other or in any combination. We all know that just isn't true. If you need to reach a broad consumer audience, you use traditional, social, and digital media. If you're selling to a broad business audience, trade media, direct response, social media, and lead-gen make the most sense. For younger audiences, digital, mobile, and certain social media are your best bet.

If all that's true, then where does Contact Marketing fit? And why should you consider diverting your energies and budget to this form of marketing? Let's take a look at what differentiates Contact Marketing from these other forms of marketing and how it defines an entirely new role for your marketing spend.

Contact Marketing vs. Sales Promotion

Sales promotion is considered part of the traditional promotional mix, which also includes advertising, personal selling, direct marketing, and publicity. Its mission is to stimulate market demand using methods that include contests, coupons, rebates, sweepstakes, and the like. In some sense, Contact Marketing could be considered part of the sales promotion mission, because the goals for both are to increase sales volume. But while sales promotion is broadly applied, Contact Marketing focuses only on the most important prospects, and only on producing direct contact, for sales or alliance building.

Contact Marketing vs. Demand Generation

The demand-generation mission is closely related to that of Contact Marketing. It uses targeted marketing programs to generate awareness of and interest in a company's offerings, leading to easier sales penetration, shorter cycles, and greater presale market acceptance. Contact Marketing easily supports this mission, with a pure focus on getting reps in the doors of the company's most important prospects. If the "80/20 rule" says the top 20 percent of your prospects account for 80 percent of your sales potential, Demand Generation would address those top 20 percent to precipitate sales. In contrast, Contact Marketing would address the top 1 percent to precipitate the biggest possible deals as quickly as possible.

Contact Marketing vs. Lead-Gen

Lead generation uses various marketing forms to accomplish its goal, which is to get interested parties to identify themselves as qualified sales prospects. That can take place through the mail; web search; and digital, traditional, or social media. Lead-gen campaigns can often look like Contact Campaigns, especially when dimensional mailings are used, and when there is a built-in incentive to agree to a sales meeting. A dimensional mailing containing a remote-control model Ferrari with a letter explaining that the rep will bring the missing control unit to the proposed meeting actually is one of the Contact Campaign forms described later in this book. But the two approaches diverge in the method of generating a response. If the campaign relies on a response device, it's not a Contact Campaign. If the campaign goes out to a mass audience, it's not a Contact Campaign. Contact Marketing is based on reaching out to as few as a single strategically chosen target contact, about which at least some specific information is known. And the method of response is always to speak or meet with the sender. Mass lists and business reply cards aren't part of the Contact Marketing mission.

Contact Marketing vs. Direct Response

The advantage of direct marketing has always been the ability to target a specific audience and get a precise read on response. That's also true of Contact Marketing, but the focus is much tighter. It's a laser beam to direct marketing's floodlight. In direct marketing, the prime directive is to find combinations of lists, offers, and creative to produce the highest result and best ROI. And this may be the biggest point of departure between the two: Direct response typically produces low response rates and ROI, while Contact Marketing produces just the opposite. In fact, most direct marketers will find it impossible to believe that Contact Marketing is capable of producing 100 percent response rates and ROI figures in the hundreds of thousands of percent. That's because in direct marketing, those numbers really are impossible. The final difference is that direct response uses "response devices"—business reply cards, forms, micro-sites, landing pages, and more—to harvest orders and leads, while Contact Campaigns operate in direct support of actual sales activity. So the rep is the response device, always superior in that role to a business reply card.

"Contact Marketing is capable of producing 100 percent response rates and ROI figures in the hundreds of thousands of percent."

How Contact Marketing Functions, and Its Components

Okay, so Contact Marketing differs from other forms of marketing that are often tied directly to sales. But what exactly is a Contact Campaign?

Let's start with the mission of Contact Marketing. There is always a relative handful of key people who, if you're able to break through to them, can change the course of your career and the fortunes of your enterprise. These may be large potential buyers of your product or service, mega-potential referral sources, or potential alliance partners who can change the scale of your company by giving you access to vast new sales channels.

You should know who these people are at all times. And you should keep a list. If you're in sales, call it your "Top 100" list of prospects. If you

are a business owner, entrepreneur, or C-level executive, call the list your “Strategic 100.” Either way, you need to have a firm sense of who these people are at all times—and a firm commitment to enlist them as part of your success network.

Armed with your list, you’ll need to create a profile for each person or group of people you will be contacting. It is critical that you take the time to research these people, to understand what they’re experiencing, what their goals are, what they’re doing to get there, who their competitors are, and the framework of their situation. You need to involve yourself in their social media messaging, to understand what has their attention, what they admire or dislike, what they do in their free time. The purpose of all of this is to have a full understanding of how you can help them, where you fit in. This is what will enable you to turn a quick start of a conversation into a dialogue, a dialogue into a relationship, and a relationship into deals and referrals. You must be able to express your value proposition in just a few seconds, with the aim of cultivating a critically important relationship. Wasting someone’s time with an unclear purpose is a terrible way to start that off.

Then it’s time to create your campaign. In [Section II](#), I have listed twenty Contact Campaign categories, but you must resist the temptation to simply pick out a technique someone else has used and jam it into your purpose. If this were a book about advertising and I listed the top twenty campaigns of all time, you wouldn’t simply say, “I like the ‘That’s a Spicy Meatball’ Alka-Seltzer ad, let’s do that.” Neither should you react the same way to the campaigns you will read about shortly. They’re there to give you inspiration, to help you formulate your own specific campaign, something that addresses your goals and the information you’ve gathered on your Top 100 or Strategic 100 lists.

Contact Marketing is like having an advertising agency create a specific campaign to support a single, critical sales or business development approach to each VIP contact. Like any form of marketing, you’ll need to test, then sharpen your approach. I tend to test in rounds of ten contacts, then evaluate and adjust the approach as needed.

Most VIPs have executive assistants, and your Contact Campaign strategy needs to include them. It’s surprising to me that most salespeople

think of assistants as gatekeeping obstacles. They're actually some of the sharpest people in the organizations, and their job is as much about letting certain people in as it is keeping others out. Your campaign needs to reflect that view by including the assistants in your strategy. You need to treat them as allies and address them in your campaign.

Most of my contact calls start by seeking out the target executive's assistant. When I call, I immediately ask if my target has an executive assistant I can speak to. When I make contact, I have a script in mind, and start by explaining that I'm one of *The Wall Street Journal* cartoonists and I have a print of a cartoon I want to send to the executive. I tell them that, while it's meant to be a surprise for their boss, I don't want it to be a surprise to the assistant. I ask if I can send an email to confirm the details, which gives me direct access to the assistant, provides a written explanation of my reason for contact, and gives them something they can easily pass along. Writing my story means I get to control its telling; there are no lost details or mistranslated points.

Once the assistant has rendered his or her help, I include them further by sending a handwritten card with a personalized cartoon. Likewise, you should plan to send something of modest value but great personal significance to thank them for their help in your campaign. It will keep the door open and influence your target. As I interviewed CEOs for this book, it became quite clear that their assistants are considered key members of their team, and the executives notice how they're treated by outsiders. It could be a thank-you card, a gift certificate, or something else that says in the kindest, most appreciative terms, "Thank you for your help."

While I tell stories of Contact Campaigns that have produced 100 percent response rates, don't expect that to happen in your campaign. At least not initially. It's more likely you will see lower response rates as you adjust your approach, but that doesn't mean you should give up on the contacts that didn't connect. So your campaign should include at least a second effort, to address those who haven't responded. In my campaigns, that usually takes the form of another card, this time with a rather pushy cartoon. Picture a guy on a pay phone at a broken-down gas station in the desert, saying, "*Hi ((insert name)), it's me again. Listen, I don't know if you've been checking your voice mail all last week, but I'm still here at the*

same number, waiting for your call.” That usually breaks the cycle of not answering or returning a call.

Not every Contact Campaign will include these elements. Some can be as simple as a phone call or social media contact. But this will serve as a basic template. A Contact Campaign should include a list of critically important target contacts, pre-contact research, and a strategy-driven creative package that addresses the executive, assistant, and anyone who doesn’t respond to the first effort. Contact Campaigns can embody much more as well. Some strategies call for simultaneous contact with multiple contacts in an organization. Others deploy to target contacts based on triggering events. Just like an examination of advertising campaigns, Contact Campaigns can take many forms, as long as they remain focused on establishing specific, critically important contacts for sales and alliance building.

How Do Contact Campaigns Fit with Modern Marketing?

When I wrote the original version of this book in 2016, I knew some would judge the tactics of Contact Marketing to be out of step with “modern marketing.”

Back then, social selling, Sales 2.0, mobile marketing, email sequences, and other forms of digital marketing were considered bleeding edge for outreach. Meanwhile, I was advocating sending physical items, stoking curiosity, and taking bold actions to create instant personal connections.

As AI sweeps across the selling landscape, the tactics of Contact Marketing might seem even further out of step, but really, the opposite is true. Suddenly AI allows us to find precisely who we need to connect with, prioritize them, track trigger events and buyer intent signals, and compile a dossier of personal markers in minutes and at scale.

But with all that power of perception comes an inevitable explosion of outreach overreach. Dialers will continue pinging millions of phones daily. Email sequences, already an overcrowded channel, will somehow exceed

oversaturation. The amount of useless chatter will become unbearable. And surely, new AI tools will then emerge to tune out the din.

That leaves us where we've always been. We still need ways to stand out, break through, and connect. We still need to make human-to-human connections.

Even without the framework of digital and other media—and of course, AI—Contact Marketing will always make sense. I believe we're all just ten major accounts away from living very different lives. Focusing intently on connecting with and selling to our Top 100 prospects always makes sense. Using a form of marketing that has produced response rates beyond 100 percent, and return on investment (ROI) in the tens, even hundreds of thousands of percent, will always make sense.

“Even without the framework of digital and other media—and of course, AI—Contact Marketing will always make sense.”

Employing all of that in the Age of AI makes even more sense, as the world seeks more and more touches that are audacious, clever, insightful—and authentically human.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- ✓ Contact Campaigns aren't just a form of marketing; they're a unique fusion of marketing and selling.
- ✓ Contact Campaigns are not sales gimmicks or tricks; they are a viable and legitimate form of one-to-one marketing.
- ✓ Contact Campaigns are micro-focused on as few as a single, high-value contact.
- ✓ Contact Marketing operates in direct support of sales or building alliances.
- ✓ The sender or sales rep is always the “response device.”

- ✓ Contact Campaigns are flexible, inclusive, and involving.
- ✓ Contact Campaigns are highly personal and often involve a great dose of audacity.
- ✓ Contact Marketing is related to, but not the same as or part of, sales promotion, lead generation, or direct marketing.
- ✓ Contact Marketing does integrate with the demand-generation mission, but concentrates on the highest-value potential clients or alliance partners.
- ✓ Contact Campaigns typically include a Top 100 or Strategic 100 list, pre-contact research, and a strategy-driven creative approach that addresses the needs, wants, and concerns of the target contact and executive assistant.
- ✓ Contact Marketing fits perfectly with other forms of modern marketing.
- ✓ To ignore the enormous potential for response and ROI from Contact Marketing in favor of marketing and sales trends of the hour would be foolhardy.



“I used to be a turnaround specialist, then I was a meltdown specialist, now I’m a turnaround specialist again . . .”

CHAPTER 3

The Nature of CEOs and VIPs

Calling on CEOs is not easy. They're hard to reach, impatient, judgmental, and intense, and they don't want to take your call. Their assistants fiercely protect their time and routinely prevent access. So why bother at all?

It's pretty simple. This is where the money is. It's where the power to transform your business is. It's where the greatest rewards of your career are.

This is about making quantum leaps as a way of life.

If you are a sales professional, selling to the C-suite may be daunting, but once you're used to it, once you're prepared for it, you'll be able to sell to anyone. Think for a moment what that can do for your career. You become known as a rainmaker, someone with abundant connections who is able to penetrate nearly any account, starting at the top. Does that sound like someone you'd want to hire if you were a sales manager or vice president of sales? Does it sound like a future CEO? Many CEOs started their careers in sales, and this is how they got there, by being exceptionally effective.

The higher up the ladder we go, the more obvious this is. Sales managers, vice presidents of sales, and chief sales officers dream of finding someone who can easily break through to any company of any size, at any level, especially the top. They know CEOs have the ultimate discretion to make decisions for the company, and when the CEO wants something done, it gets done. There may be discussion about where the funds may come from, but the CEO is not asking anyone if he or she can spend the money. If you convince the CEO, chances are you've got a deal. And you have visibility and power throughout the organization to generate even more business. After all, you've been vetted by the CEO. Having an army of sales reps capable of breaking through and speaking thoughtfully, relevantly, and

quickly, who also deliver value to C-suite executives, is a sales manager's dream.

“Selling to the C-suite may be daunting, but once you're used to it, once you're prepared for it, you'll be able to sell to anyone.”

Now think of this from the vantage point of the C-suite executive, owner, or entrepreneur. Yes, they want the kind of sales and deal-making power I've just described, but they also know how important it is to build their own direct network of VIP contacts. Relationships at the top levels, between top people in various fields, are critical to their mission. And Contact Marketing is an exceptionally effective tool to make *that* happen.

I don't know about you, but I tend to be motivated by more than business or financial success. I'm also motivated by mischief, by achieving things I should never be able to pull off. It makes business fun. When I send one of my cartoons to a CEO or someone of great importance in some other respect, I can't wait to hear their reaction. I love hearing how one of my BigBoard contact pieces was carried throughout the office by the company president, as he showed it off to anyone who would listen (and they all have to listen to the president). Or how a CEO still keeps the cartoon piece in her office, tilted slightly to the side on the credenza because it doesn't quite fit. I like hearing about the constant comments the BigBoards prompt among the visitors to the CEO's office. I love the fact that it continues to produce awareness of the sender and their company for years.

When I describe reaching CEOs, it's important to remind you that I don't always mean just the actual CEO. As I explained in [Chapter 2](#), we're engaging the “CEO of the problem you want to solve.” So when I say “CEO,” from this point forward, I'm talking about the person with the ultimate authority for whatever you're trying to achieve with the target company, the “Center of Enterprise Opportunity.” It could be the CEO, or it might be someone else in the C-suite. It could also be someone further down, who has been tasked with achieving a particular goal for the company.

The “CEO” might also be several stakeholders simultaneously. Sometimes, an approach to the CEO is made to secure their top-down

referral to the real decision maker. And sometimes, it is simply the actual CEO.

So as you read further, think of the “CEO” in this discourse as the person with the ultimate authority and interest in what you want to accomplish with a given company—the Center of Enterprise Opportunity. And be prepared to touch virtually anyone. Fortunately, you’re about to equip yourself to do just that.

The Time-Compressed World of a CEO

CEOs can seem gruff, even mean-spirited, when you first get them on the phone. Can you blame them?

CEOs receive hundreds of emails a day. They receive just as many phone calls. They’re tasked with running the company while plotting a course that achieves stellar growth. They don’t quite see the world the way the rest of us might. The typical person focuses on what’s immediately ahead in the next few months. A CEO inhabits the world as it will be five years from now. They’re trying to see around corners, looking for what’s ahead and how they can turn that into a strategic advantage for their company. And they’re pushing to exceed the goals they’ve set for the company every day.

Can you see why, if you can’t quickly establish your value, something of great importance to whatever has the CEO’s focus that very moment, your call is no more than an annoying distraction? It’s even worse if they perceive you’re not on an equal level of importance to their own. If that is the case, they can’t wait to get rid of you and they won’t be shy about it, either.

Let’s think of this another way. We constantly hear how obscenely well paid CEOs are. If you’re calling on a CEO of a *Fortune* 500 company, and if his or her annual compensation is a relatively modest (in CEO terms) \$30 million, each minute of their time is worth \$240. Actually, that’s just what the company pays the CEO. Their actual worth may be a hundred times that number, because they’re responsible for making the enterprise climb to new levels, open new markets, and achieve new levels of valuation.

This means, when you ask our hypothetical CEO above to spend twenty minutes with you on the phone, you're asking them to invest \$4,800 of their time and perhaps half a million dollars of the company's potential on your call. It had better be worth it, and it had better be quick.

Their Focus = Your Focus

To do an effective job as a CEO requires extraordinary vision and an extreme ability to tolerate uncertainty and risk. These people live pressure-filled lives and thrive in it. Their job is to set, achieve, and exceed goals as they plot the course for the company.

That means your focus needs to shift if you're going to work with CEOs. If you're a sales rep, you need to start thinking in terms of providing value, not selling. Make that your focus—not *pitching*. That alone is a tough transition for many to make. Some might say, "If I get the CEO's attention I'm going to make the most of it. I'm going for the sale right away." But that will only lead to closed doors and sparse sales, if any.

If Sales 2.0 is inbound-based selling, make this "Sales 3.0"—selling by providing value and becoming an indispensable member of the target executive's inner circle. Can you see how selling from that position becomes a lot easier, once you have the respect and trust of the person at the top?

Beyond setting, achieving, and exceeding goals, CEOs are locked in a constant battle to best their competition. They do that by studying what their competitors are doing and looking for weaknesses. They're also reading the marketplace and society at large, looking for new ways to exploit trends before they happen. Your job is to help them do that. From the CEO's perspective, if you are someone trying to invade their space to make a pitch, you're not helping. If you're someone who provides exceptional value and intelligence, you've got the CEO's ear and you will sell. A lot.

"If you're someone who provides exceptional value and intelligence, you've got the CEO's ear and you will sell. A lot."

To accomplish exceptional goals, the CEO must also build an exceptional team. The C-suite executives are his or her “A-team,” but effective CEOs consider all of their players critical. Your focus should be figuring out how to become part of that team. It doesn’t matter that you’re not on the payroll. If you’re a trusted source of critical insight, information, and creative thinking, you may also become a trusted source—perhaps the only source—of whatever it is you sell.

Author Anthony Parinello says CEOs have five critical missions: increasing revenue, improving efficiency, cutting expense, increasing stock value, and regulatory compliance.¹ He’s right, but I think it can be boiled down even further to one vital mission: winning.

Helping the CEOs you’re about to contact to win is how *you* will win. That needs to be your new focus.

Determining How You Fit in Their World

There is only one way to figure out how you fit in a particular CEO’s world: Do your homework. Become an expert in who the CEO is, what their unique challenges and successes are, where their company is heading. Understand who their competitors are and where they’re vulnerable. Survey the same weak points for your target’s company. Most of all, understand who the CEO is as a person.

The Internet and social media make this task exceptionally easy. A quick search will produce volumes of information, starting with the target’s social media pages. Take a look at their LinkedIn page, for example, to see how they describe their mission in their current post. Take a look at whom they’ve connected with already. Could you see yourself being one of them?

Then check out their X (formerly Twitter) page and get a quick sense of what has their attention. What articles are they favoriting or retweeting? What are they interested in personally? What are their favorite causes and passions? Do they reveal anything about their work as CEO?

Search newsfeeds to find recent articles featuring the CEO. Use tools like [Seamless.ai](#), [Clay.com](#), ZoomInfo, Hoovers, or RocketReach to get all of the correct contact information and learn who the key players are in their

organizations. These will be critical later when you're formulating your contact strategy, starting simply with where to deliver your campaign.

With that information in hand, take a realistic look at how what you sell or do can make a difference to the company, or perhaps to the CEO personally.

When I approached Constant Contact to form an alliance with my CartoonLink service, I had several key pieces of intelligence in hand. I knew the CEO, Gail Goodman, had just written her first book, *Engagement Marketing*. And I knew the test results from my “cartoon device”—a personalized cartoon within the email—would fit her mission perfectly. I knew that because our “cartoon devices” had been routinely doubling open rates, and her mission is to make sure her 700,000 users remained engaged in the Constant Contact platform.

My Contact Campaign included outreach first to the CEO, then to the person she referred me to. As a result, I gained access to a vast sales channel I never could have duplicated on my own. That success came from understanding how what I sell fits the CEO's mission, then reducing it to as few words as possible: “My cartoon device doubles open rates. Are you interested?”

Your job is to understand the CEO's world well enough to know how you can create an unfair advantage for their company. Unless you can do that, you should not be calling. But let's put it another way. Your job isn't about selling your product or service. It's about giving the CEO an overwhelming advantage through what you know or do.

Just as I approached Constant Contact, you will need to strike a nimble stance to determine who ultimately needs contact with you. It could be the CEO or someone else in the C-suite. It could be someone you'll be referred to by the CEO, or it could be several people simultaneously, to create maximum impact among all stakeholders.

Determining in whose world your offering fits is what will determine your Contact Campaign strategy. And it all starts with doing your homework and knowing the people thoroughly before you ever make a call.

How to Talk to a CEO

In the preceding example, I described my approach to the CEO of Constant Contact. My expression of value was made using just nine words. In those two brief sentences, I told her how I could support her mission while bringing something uniquely intriguing and beneficial to her platform. I paid great respect to the value of her time by keeping it short and absolutely on target. That's what you need to do.

SHiFT coauthor and *Shift Selling* blog author Craig Elias goes even further. He says you must express your value proposition in seven or fewer words, and in a way that leaves the CEO asking, "How would you do that?" I suppose I could have shortened my message to, "I can double your members' open rates." Still, I broke through and have a valuable alliance to show for it.

I really like Craig's advice, though. Keep your first spoken words to seven or fewer and leave the CEO asking how you can accomplish what you're describing. And make sure that whatever you're promising helps solve a problem the CEO is facing.

It's also important to know that some conversations with the CEO will actually take place entirely through their executive assistant. You may end up speaking directly with the CEO, or you may not. If the CEO likes what you're bringing to the company, they can always direct a course of action through their assistants. I have the greatest respect for executive assistants, and we'll cover these amazing players more in [Chapter 15](#). For now, keep in mind that assistants will always be a critical part of your success in your contact mission, and that they actually do speak for the CEO.

Regardless of how it takes form, contact with the CEO is critical to your new mission. You're about to make great new bounds in your career. And you're about to become a VIP yourself, deserving of contact with any CEO you choose.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- ✓ While CEOs are not easy to reach, they're worth every effort to make the connection happen.

- ✓ CEOs hold the promise of quantum leaps in your career and for your business.
- ✓ The more able you are to routinely reach CEOs, the more valuable you are to your company.
- ✓ By “CEO,” I mean the “CEO of the problem you want to solve,” who may or may not be the actual CEO.
- ✓ In this book, “CEO” is a euphemism for anyone with the ultimate authority and interest in what you are offering—the “Center of Enterprise Opportunity”—including the actual CEO.
- ✓ “CEO” can also be several stakeholders simultaneously, each of whom you must address in your Contact Campaign.
- ✓ CEOs live in a time-compressed world and you must find a way to fit in, offering unique value to their mission.
- ✓ To sell to a CEO, you must first understand their mission and make it your own.
- ✓ If you add value and provide unique intelligence, you will be accepted as part of the CEO’s team.
- ✓ Being part of the CEO’s inner circle will allow you to sell a lot more than if you were to simply pitch your product or service.
- ✓ If possible, limit your value proposition to seven words or less, structured in a way that causes the CEO to ask, “How would you do that?”
- ✓ When you speak to a CEO’s executive assistant, you are also speaking to the CEO.



“Still, the question remains. Am I a brand, or am I a person?”

CHAPTER 4

Your VIP Makeover

If the world of Contact Marketing weren't foreign enough already, we're about to depart in an even less familiar direction. I don't recall ever encountering a chapter on transforming yourself into a VIP in any other book about sales, marketing, or business.

But this is not simply an unusual feature of this book; it's something you should have been doing all along. A life and career well lived should result in some measure of importance and notoriety, but now it's time to turn up the heat.

If you're going to adopt Contact Marketing as part of your strategy, you'll be rubbing shoulders with important people, and the more you build your network, the more connected and important you will become. Can you see how becoming important yourself makes it easier to open the doors most critical to your success?

So sit down, relax, and get comfortable. We're going to give you a VIP makeover.

When we're finished, you will have a unique VIP statement, something you can use to quickly establish your importance so your calls are not only taken, but taken seriously. Here's my own VIP statement: *I'm one of The Wall Street Journal cartoonists, a hall of fame-nominated marketer, and an author.* That's it. It's short, to the point, and in just a few words delivers a convincing argument that I am someone to be taken seriously. Not only that, as one of *The Wall Street Journal* cartoonists, I plop something wonderful in their laps. I become someone the VIP can brag about that evening to their spouse: "You'll never guess who I talked to today . . ." That's the effect I want you to generate.

Establish Equal Business Status

The moment you reach out to a VIP, two questions flash in their minds. *Who are you? And what do you want?* They are the most basic questions any person asks when approached by a stranger. We're programmed to continually evaluate people based on those two questions.

But as we have seen, in a CEO's case, those questions become all the more critical because of the demands and value placed on their protecting their time from unnecessary distractions, especially from people they don't know.

The question of what you want is obvious. You want to sell to their company or form an alliance. You'll make them aware of that fact when you express your value proposition in a single sentence containing no more than a dozen words. Still, they don't know who you are. More to the point, they don't know your worth. They don't know if they can invest their trust in you, your company, or what you're selling. They don't know if they should even invest the next few seconds with you on the phone.

Imagine how that all changes if you were Tom Cruise, the actor, on the line. Let's forget for the moment that it would be odd if Tom Cruise actually were on the phone, looking to complete a sale. The fact that a movie star is on the phone greatly increases the value of the call, and the target will grant a bit more time to understand its purpose. If Tom were to ask the CEO to join an alliance for a charitable cause, Mr. *Top Gun* would likely get what he wanted.

Can you see how the perception of importance becomes a critical factor in whether or not a contact is made?

We don't have to be movie actors, cartoonists, or famous at all to create the perception of a greater or equal status. Our importance in the business world is not only a critical element of our success; it is already under our direct control. You can change yours anytime you want.

Let's look at steps you can take immediately to increase your visibility beyond social media posts, tweets, and shares. The aim is to build a brand around your name by greatly boosting your exposure.

Start a Blog

One of the surest ways to elevate your status is to find something you're good at and passionate about, then create a blog. Ideally, for purposes of your career, it should relate to the business you're in to attract the sort of audience you want to influence. *A Sales Guy* blog author Jim Keenan advises finding your passion and writing about it a bit every day. "Eventually, people will catch on to what you're saying, they'll start connecting with you, and before you know it, you have your own following," he advises. Keenan says the exposure you create is the most valuable asset you can build in your life. He adds that it's "even more valuable than your house."

Starting a blog is easy enough, either from your company's website or on one of several excellent platforms, WordPress, Medium, Blogger, and Wix among them. Blogs have the added benefit of giving you a legitimate platform to use to interview some of your top contact targets.

"Blogs have the added benefit of giving you a legitimate platform to use to interview some of your top contact targets."

Guest Blog

Starting your own blog is nice because you control access to your audience, but it takes time to build. The solution may be also to write as a guest expert on other well-circulated blogs. I used to write monthly articles for the Salesforce and Constant Contact blogs, which gave me instant access to roughly 750,000 readers. And they're not just readers—they're marketers, sales reps, and managers, even C-level executives with sales and marketing responsibilities. It's a perfect example of the quick access you can create in your own industry. Before long, you'll achieve useful name recognition, with the added benefit of having articles you can send directly to your contact targets, branded with the credibility of a big-name blog and the hosting company or organization.

Start an Association

This is a big undertaking, and you must do it with the clearest intentions of building something bigger than yourself and your company. It needs to be a service you make available to an entire industry or profession, including companies in competition with your own. You also must do it in response to an unmet need that such an association of like-minded professionals can fill. If you meet all of those conditions, starting an association can bring a new abundance to your career, because you become a central figure in your industry. Contacting a CEO on your campaign list as the founder and president of an association gives you newfound credibility and status, something you can easily leverage in your Contact Marketing strategy.

Join the Board of a Charity

Many charities are in constant need of capable volunteers to move their missions forward. Doing charitable work in your free time not only does good in the world, it also transforms you into a more important person. The mission of many charities is critical and serious, and I am not suggesting that your involvement be made in any sort of calculating way to gain personal importance. That's not the spirit of it. But you will notice that it allows you new access to VIPs, and that may be helpful if blended with your Contact Marketing strategy.

Become an Author

Being an author carries great status and is particularly useful in Contact Marketing. Authors are recognized as celebrated experts, and as you will see in [Section II](#), having a book of your own can form the basis of a powerful Contact Campaign strategy. Even as you're writing the book, you can gain special access to VIPs for interviews. It gives you the power to include anyone you want in the book. The world of publishing has changed

drastically in the past few years, opening the possibility of becoming an author to anyone with the time and discipline to share their unique expertise. It can be as easy as pouring a thoughtfully written and edited Word document into a converter to create a paginated book. Entering the world of big-time publishing and best-selling books is still quite challenging. If you do write a book, be sure to have it produced in print as well as e-book formats. Printed books allow you to send autographed copies, along with a note directing the recipient to a particular page. Being an author produces instant respect among CEOs, because they understand the level of expertise and amount of effort involved, and many harbor fantasies themselves of writing a best-seller someday.

Start a Podcast

As the host of your own interview show, you get instant credibility, because you're not selling anything—you're giving CEOs a chance to speak about their company, their goals, their lives. It's an honor to be asked to be an interview guest, and it gives you several touch points. The first comes when you're making initial contact. You get through because this is the sort of surprise opportunity executive assistants love to bring to their executives. Posting the recording of the show gives you another reason to get in touch and simply offer value, but it also gives you an opportunity to talk about direct business together, if the CEO doesn't ask first. Podcasts are also an excellent way to generate and accumulate valuable content that, as *Life After the Death of Selling* author and *Whale Hunting: How to Land Big Sales and Transform Your Company* coauthor Tom Searcy suggests, can easily be transcribed and turned into a book.

Start an Industry Recognition Award

Consider the example of Richard Blackwell. Although he had moderate success as an actor and fashion designer, he achieved worldwide fame for his annual "Worst Dressed List," which became one of the most-quoted

“awards” in history. You don’t have to push it that far, but starting your own industry recognition, positive or negative, can give your name a big injection of importance. For some reason, I always gravitate toward the positive, but Mr. Blackwell’s Worst Dressed List and the Razzies (the Golden Raspberry Award for terrible cinema) demonstrate that negative can also be enormously powerful. Whether the award is positive or negative, imagine the impact of calling to ask a CEO for input or for an interview to evaluate them as an honoree. If you start such an award, be prepared to keep it up indefinitely and consistently. And be sure to promote it relentlessly to the news media and through social media. You might even become legitimately famous, which will certainly help your chances of breaking through to most VIPs.

Become a Trusted Source of Insight

Changing the Sales Conversation author Linda Richardson advises sales professionals to recognize the shift in buying behaviors brought on by the ubiquitous feeds of information on the Internet, and realize they must evolve to become trusted sources of insight rather than product information. Just as in social media, you can benefit by scouring the Internet for news items and articles your CEO contacts will find useful. Over time, you will become someone they will see as a trusted source of information, intelligence, and insight.

What It Looks Like

When I set out to write this book, I wanted it to be inclusive, to involve many of the top thought leaders in sales and marketing. It turned out these people are also excellent examples of self-made success and importance.

The New Rules of Marketing & PR author and *WebInkNow* blog author David Meerman Scott restarted his career after being cut loose in 2002 from his position as vice president of marketing for NewsEdge. His makeover is still underway, I suspect, but all of the descriptors one would use to describe

who he is—best-selling author, top sales blogger, keynote speaker—are things that happened *after he lost his job*.

The same can be said for many of the people included in this book as sources. Matt Heinz, Anthony Iannarino, Tibor Shanto, Linda Richardson, Dan Waldschmidt, and many others certainly have made their marks through their work, but also through their widely read blogs. When a CEO receives a call from any of these people, they connect because they know the call will be worthwhile and may even lead to some new strategic advantage.

Live the Intrepid Life author Todd Schnick takes a slightly different path, by interviewing CEOs at will for his family of podcasts. His approach is simple: a quick call to say, “I’m interested in what your company does and I’d like to give you a chance to tell your story to our audience.” When he calls, executive assistants make sure he gets through to their bosses, and by the time they’re finished with the interview, they have shared a full hour of bonding. From that point on, they’re connected. Tom Searcy takes that a step further, by recording and transcribing his VIP interviews so they become content for books and gifts to the CEOs he has interviewed.

All of these people have something very important in common. They all have put enormous effort into adding new dimensions to what they do, and in the process, they have thoroughly burnished their own status as VIPs.

Being a VIP Causes Business and Opportunities to Flow to You

The more important you become, the more people seek you out. And that makes your contact mission a lot easier.

Your VIP makeover becomes a Contact Campaign in itself. The more important you are, the more people are drawn to you, along with opportunities you may have otherwise never known about.

Still, you shouldn’t abandon your outreach efforts. You must be free to steer your own course and connect with whomever you want. Having a VIP statement that has the CEO saying, “Wow, I’m honored you called,” will

carry you a long way toward your goals, and help produce rapid growth in your career or business. Putting effort into your VIP makeover will be well spent. It will be something you will hone the rest of your career to great effect.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- ✓ Having a short, twelve-words-or-less VIP statement can make an enormous difference in the success of your Contact Marketing efforts.
- ✓ A VIP statement is a quick way to establish equal business status with CEOs and VIPs.
- ✓ You will want your VIP statement to be so powerful, the CEO will brag to their spouse about your call that evening.
- ✓ Without establishing equal business status, the probability of connecting with your target VIP drops sharply, as will the quality of any resulting call or meeting, if it happens at all.
- ✓ Fortunately, the ability to change your VIP status is already well within your grasp.
- ✓ Some of the most effective methods of raising your status, such as blogging and Internet radio shows, are ways to offer the target CEO an opportunity to tell their story to your audience.
- ✓ Involvement with charities is a powerful way to enhance your standing, while offering a real benefit to your community.
- ✓ Becoming a trusted source of information, intelligence, and insight is an invaluable way of connecting deeply with your Top 100 list members.
- ✓ Becoming a VIP is often a process of reinventing and strengthening your reputation and career.



“Let me explain something to you, Jimmy. When you give us a lead, we put it into our CRM, we nurture it, we score it—and then we nail the bastards.”

CHAPTER 5

Identifying Your Top 100 Prospects

Our mission should be getting clearer and clearer by now. A well-executed Contact Marketing plan can change the scale of your career or business. You're on your way to becoming a connected, powerful person, a VIP yourself. You're about to make thrilling breakthroughs in your life, as you achieve things you thought were impossible.

But first, you must give careful thought to who holds the keys to that new level of success. If you're a sales rep, you may already have a list of named accounts. If so, your job of defining your Top 100 list is already done. Or is it? Are there still high-value prospects in your territory who haven't yet been identified and included on your list? Do you have the autonomy to dig further and mine more opportunities from your area? Are you free to develop relationships that lead to referrals?

If you don't have an assigned group of VIP prospects, it's time to figure out who should be receiving your powerful outreach efforts. I tend to have a mixture of direct sales, strategic alliance, and wildcard contacts on my list. It's a blend of Top 100 and Strategic 100 lists, with a bit of mischief thrown in.

NoWait, a tech startup, launched their restaurant app with a stellar Contact Campaign. It involved sending an iPad preloaded with a video addressed specifically to each recipient. The total investment was \$35,000, a lot for a new business. It's a lot for any business, really, so it needed to pay off. Can you see how the choice of recipients is critical to a successful outcome?

Remember, the philosophy of Contact Marketing is simple. There is a small group of people who, if they become your clients or strategic partners, will transform the scale of your business. NoWait set their sights on the CEOs, CFOs, and COOs of twenty of the top restaurant chains and franchises. Part of their list strategy was to determine which person in the

organization would be most receptive to their approach. They discovered that COOs were their best targets, and as a result, the company's coverage exploded, while cultivating a strategic alliance with Yelp that led to a \$40 million exit. All from a Contact Campaign targeting just thirty-five people—thirty-five carefully considered people.

“There is a small group of people who, if they become your clients or strategic partners, will transform the scale of your business.”

My own list continues to evolve over time. Some people fall off because there wasn't a fit after all. Some graduate off the list because they have become clients or partners. Others come off the list as my priorities change.

You will find that formulating your Top 100 or Strategic 100 list is an inspiring, exciting, and ever-evolving exercise. You may struggle at first, but you'll soon see this for what it is: your opportunity to reach virtually anyone you choose. You can put anyone on the list you want. It doesn't matter if they seem completely out of reach. You're about to start achieving the impossible anyway.

Dream Clients and Dream Partners

The tech startup in my example was off to a great start, but it was just the beginning of the process. As a result of their outreach, they knew their efforts should be directed to COOs of large chains. But they also learned their penetration of restaurant franchises would be most effective if they targeted the franchisor rather than individual franchisees.

Then it was time for their list to evolve and expand. They needed to identify which restaurant chains and franchises held the most promise for quick growth of their revenue base. But they shouldn't simply jump at the fifty biggest chains, because clearly some of them, such as McDonald's, Burger King, and Wendy's, don't need an app to help their guests make reservations and manage table availabilities.

The list must be carefully composed to represent the deepest core of the company's market opportunity. Their list of target contacts will grow as

they repeat what has worked in the initial round of their Contact Campaign. Still, the process is just getting started.

Once the COOs of the top chains and franchises have been addressed, it's time to look for new sources of gain. Did all of the COOs respond to the campaign? Those who didn't should be addressed again, this time emphasizing they're falling behind their competitors who have already adopted the app. Perhaps the CEOs of those companies should be added to the list, while the COOs who have become clients come off the contact list and go onto an engagement list.

And what happened with the franchise contact efforts? Did they all become adopters of the app? Probably not, so the company must evolve their Contact Marketing strategy to address those opportunities. They should be addressed at the franchisee level, but it doesn't make sense to mount a Contact Campaign to several thousand franchisees. So wouldn't it make sense to cultivate relationships with thought leaders among the franchisees? Absolutely. A few strategically placed supporters among the group will give the company a big advantage as they push into the network. And what about the franchisors who didn't respond? They should be approached again, to tell them they're in danger of falling behind, and the whole process repeats.

Contact Marketing isn't about contacting everyone. It's about reaching out to just the handful of people who can make the biggest difference to your efforts. *They are the multipliers of your success.* The COOs and franchisors represent hundreds, possibly thousands, of sales of the company's app system. Once the company reaches the point of addressing single-point sales, Contact Marketing no longer fits and other forms of marketing and direct sales should ensue.

"Contact Marketing isn't about contacting everyone. It's about reaching out to just the handful of people who can make the biggest difference to your efforts."

Still, they weren't finished with their Contact Marketing mission. While pursuing direct sales opportunities, they should also be looking for strategic partners who can open new sales channels to the company. Who are the major restaurant supply chains, and how can they create a partnership? Are

there noncompetitive software providers who already have a broad penetration in the market? How can the company create a win-win partnership that increases its own penetration nearly overnight? Roll out the Contact Campaigns there, too, to establish relationships at the tops of those organizations.

Are we done yet? Not even close. Since we're talking about an app, consumer uptake is critical to the company's success as well. And as in so many other areas in life, there is always a small group of people who can greatly expand the company's efforts. They may be influential food bloggers, news media figures, cooking show hosts and producers, and tech-trend thought leaders, all of whom can give the company a critical boost in consumer acceptance and participation with the app. Think about what that does to their market position among the chains and franchises who have resisted the company's app system. Now they'll resist at their own peril, so it's time to address them again in the company's Contact Campaign strategy. And what happens when the company develops a new app for another market?

The point is, there is always a core group of people who can offer a critical boost to your success, who can multiply your efforts with large sales and quick access to even more of them. They are, as *The Ultimate Sales Machine* author Chet Holmes used to say, your "Dream Clients." You should always know who they are and keep your list of them current. New clients exit the list while new prospects and opportunities take their place. Others come on to the list as priorities shift.

Each company's list will be composed differently as well. The strategy for the restaurant app company was driven by the potential value of each sale, which in their case, was a \$10,000 lifetime value per restaurant location. In other cases, the lifetime value of a sale may be millions of dollars, warranting a direct Contact Marketing approach to each qualifying prospect.

The point is to know at all times who qualifies as your own unique set of Top 100 and Strategic 100 list members. Even if you never use Contact Marketing as part of your strategy, it is critical to know who these people are and find ways to address them.

Your Top 100, Strategic 100, and Engagement 100 Lists

The process of defining the group of people who can most effectively multiply your efforts will reflect your mission. If you are a sales rep, your focus should always be establishing new high-value client relationships. If your employer had ten people doing this job, they'd be producing the results of a hundred typical reps, because the focus is always on addressing the people who can compound their efforts. If you become the kind of rep who regularly engages big-value companies at the highest levels, able to connect with anyone you need to, your value to your company also multiplies.

As a sales rep, you need to have a clearly defined Top 100 list. The list may not contain 100 people; it may be fewer. But it should never exceed that number. Keeping it at or less than 100 members allows you to focus on the greatest multipliers on the list. It also keeps the process affordable.

C-level executives and company owners should also engage in a contact strategy, but their mission is a bit more complex. Part of a CEO's job is to be plugged in. Their connections have a lot to do with their value to the enterprise. They should know enough of the right people to pick up the phone and quickly solve a problem or capture an opportunity. They should have allies, supporters, and followers everywhere. This speeds progress by making strategic movement easier. It connects them with the people who can open doors or help them in their critical mission of seeing where markets, tastes, trends, and other controlling factors are headed and how they can capitalize on them. And all C-suite members and business owners should never forget their duty to sell for their companies.

So they must construct a carefully composed Strategic 100 list. Their Contact Campaigns should also reflect their elevated mission. Whatever they do to connect should feel *presidential*. Careful attention should be paid to every detail, to communicate how special it is to be on the sender's Strategic 100 list. Notes should be written by hand on bespoke engraved cards or letterhead. Branding should be conspicuously tasteful or even

absent. At this level, it's not about branding; it's about connecting, human to human, peer to peer. And the enterprise will be all the stronger for it.

In addition to addressing your Top 100 and Strategic 100 lists, there should be an Engagement 100 list. Who are the people who are already contributing to the company's sales and market standing? Who are the nonpaid champions of your brand who promote you and convince others to flock to your offerings? Who are the top 100 people already multiplying your efforts out there in the marketplace? Who are your top clients who are always telling others about you and your company? They should all be addressed in your Contact Marketing strategy, too.

At the sales rep level, it makes sense to continue to thank your best clients, but you should also be serving as a trusted source of intelligence. Include gift baskets in your engagement strategy if you must, but your efforts would be better spent helping the client "see." The more you help them succeed, the more successful you will be.

On the strategic level, C-level execs and company owners should be constantly engaged with their top clients and influencers. Similarly, their engagement strategy should be built around providing value, but that value can also come in many forms. Send articles that provide helpful information, but keep in mind, people at the top levels already have access to a lot of information. The real worth of your engagement strategy should stem from providing specific value to the members of your list. Are you writing articles for your blog? Find ways to feature your important contacts in your articles. Interview them, get to know them. Include them at events as fellow speakers. Watch for ways to pass along value. Better yet, engage a Contact Marketing agency to constantly percolate fresh ideas, approaches, and opportunities. It'll be well worth the effort and investment.

Get to Know This List

It's clear that even if you don't intend to use Contact Marketing in your company's growth strategy, it's critical to have a clear sense of who the people, companies, and organizations are that can transform your business

or career. Whether it's a Top 100 or Strategic 100 list, these are the people who represent the quickest path to your ultimate success.

But how do you get to know them before you know them at all? We've had powerful tools on the Internet and social media before, to research and produce dossiers on our targets, and now AI is transforming the entire process. In the next chapter, we look at how you can use incredible new tools to rise to an entirely new level of contact, but also how to combine them with traditional sleuthing to gain a competitive edge.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- ✓ Contact Marketing is a powerful tool, but only if directed to the right people.
- ✓ You must give careful consideration to who goes on your Top 100 and Strategic 100 lists.
- ✓ Members of your lists are the people who can multiply your efforts, either with bigger sales or access to bigger opportunities.
- ✓ Your Top 100 list should address your highest-value sales prospects.
- ✓ Your Strategic 100 list should cover the people who can help your enterprise and market stature grow.
- ✓ Your Contact Marketing strategy should also include an Engagement 100 list of your top 100 current clients and brand champions.
- ✓ The lists can contain fewer members, but never more than 100 at a time.
- ✓ Your lists will constantly change as you connect with new contacts and as your priorities shift.
- ✓ Contact Marketing is not just for sales reps; it's also critical for CEOs, C-level executives, and company owners.

- ✓ It is vitally important to get to know the members of your lists and find ways to constantly provide them with extraordinary value.



“Hey listen, we got your proposal, and we like everything except having to pay you . . .”

CHAPTER 6

Preparing to Launch Your Campaign

If I were to replicate myself—and this book—as an AI, I know exactly what I would do.

I would create a Software as a Service (SaaS) platform that would ask for your ideal customer profile, preferred trigger events, and buyer intent signals, and then get you life-changing meetings.

In fact, it would do everything I do in my consulting engagements. These always start with cultivating a killer Top 100 list. Knowing the types of companies, industries, and individuals who represent the best probability for sales and advancement toward your goals is paramount.

What kinds of companies present the best fit with your offering? Are they startups, small and medium-sized business (SMBs), or *Fortune* 500 giants? Who do you need to reach within those companies? Why would they find your value proposition unique and compelling?

That's always been the starting point, but here's how that process has changed as AI has come online. It's now a simple ask on platforms like ZoomInfo, Apollo, Seamless, 6sense, and Clay, which will quickly find contacts that fit those initial criteria. Many now incorporate trigger events (such as “recently started new leadership role”) and buyer intent signals, based on searches made by targeted prospects and surrounding players in their organizational chart.

The result is a list like no other, something that has never existed before, thanks to AI's ability to index and draw insight from the worldwide torrent of relevant data points. You'll receive a list of prospects at the right levels of authority, with the right kinds of companies, at the right point on their growth arcs, that have recently experienced critical changes and have exhibited clear signs of intent to buy what you sell.

And then comes the magic: the campaign strategies and tactics you'll use to make those human-to-human connections. This is where most

outreach platforms fall short, by relying on the same email techniques that have fostered the frustration about getting through to prospects in the first place. The last thing a prime prospect wants is more email from sellers they don't know. (And we can only imagine how much worse the use of AI will make the flood of unwanted messages.)

What prospects do want is to be surprised and delighted by experiences that introduce them to new vendors with new solutions that offer new, unfair advantages in their markets. That is not what they get from an endless stream of unwanted, automated emails. So my AI alter ego would use anything *but* long-copy emails to open doors. Instead, it would draw upon much of what you'll find in the next section, to deliver concise, compelling insights and reasons to connect. But it would also start with as big an impression as possible. After all, the goal is to shorten the cycle of contact and hasten the sale.

As I noted in [Chapter 2](#), I believe we're all just ten major accounts away from reaching our most ambitious growth goals. If a \$10 million company is looking to grow to \$15 million over twelve months, I can't think of a more direct route than acquiring ten new scale-busting accounts. To do this, I would program my AI alter ego to start every campaign with a huge push to get in front of ten-million-dollar accounts as fast as possible (in my consulting engagements, that happens in the first twenty-one days). It means spending extra effort, time, and money to create outsized results, like Dan Waldschmidt's thousand-dollar swords, or my own hand-personalized cartoon boards large enough to serve as lobby art. Or maybe handwritten messages coupled with items of fascination, like personal gifts based on the recipient's interests. Very few sellers are doing anything like this, which is why it stands out and impresses prospects into acting. It's all very different from the endless automated emails your competitors are relying on to break through.

But I would include an AI component for making these very human connections, too. Because I would build in a functionality like we saw in the original [X.AI's](#) "Amy," the AI service that posed as a very realistic executive assistant, who would pleasantly and efficiently arrange calendar appointments.

If you never had the pleasure of using that platform, here's what it was like. After setting up your account and syncing the platform with your calendar app and preferences (no meetings in the middle of the night, please), you could start activating Amy by cc-ing her in an email.

For instance, you might have promised during a conversation to have your assistant follow up to arrange your next meeting time. A quick email to your contact, instructing Amy to follow up, is all it would take to activate her process. The AI understood the meaning of the language in the message, checked your schedule, and sent an email to your contact, suggesting three times when you're available. They would either agree to a time or tell Amy none of those were a fit. She'd then check your schedule and respond with another message containing three more availabilities. This would continue until a time is agreed upon. From the user's perspective, all of this happened behind the scenes. All you knew is you sent the email, cc'd Amy, and now you have an appointment in your calendar.

That is exactly the functionality I'd want to include in the fictional AI Stu platform. It would find your Top 100 best prospects, campaign them with high-impact outreach messaging, and arrange the meetings for you, like your own private assistant, dedicated to getting you meetings and changing your life.

Still, we're not quite ready for outreach just yet. While we may already know a lot about the people we're about to contact, we must examine what they're likely to know or discover about you. Your brand strength and digital reflection will quickly determine whether someone will engage with you. Fortunately, there are several steps you can take to multiply your results. Let's take a look.

Brand Strength and Digital Reflection

Warren Buffett once said, "It takes twenty years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it." Fortunately, AI is changing that, too. Thanks to the few techniques that follow, you can now redefine your brand quickly. Still, why should you bother to do that?

I've witnessed Contact Marketers use identical techniques and experience very different outcomes. In some cases, targeted contacts respond with selfies, glowing social media posts, and conspicuous displays of their contact device all around the office. I once had a CEO walk through his workplace showing off the cartoon board I'd sent to every employee. I heard about it from the receptionist when I called to make contact. Mark Cuban has one of my personalized cartoon contact devices framed and mounted on his office wall. And one of my commercial insurance clients discovered their cartoon boards had been placed on easels in meeting rooms and mounted to the outside of office doors. But other marketers get completely ignored, even while sending the very same campaign.

"I've witnessed Contact Marketers use identical techniques and experience very different outcomes."

What makes the difference? It's what your contacts can easily decipher about you, through direct knowledge, or a quick web search or visit to your LinkedIn page.

Jeff Bezos says, "Brand is what other people say about you when you're not in the room." The trick is to quickly give them something exciting to say, to create a "flip moment" that turns their skepticism into outright fascination to meet you. This idea is touched on in [Chapter 4](#), "Your VIP Makeover." Let's extend that further by assessing your digital reflection. What are prospects likely to conclude from your LinkedIn profile? Do you have a compelling headshot and headline? Does it look well thought out? Is there a simple message about how you help your clients succeed?

Looking further, are you regularly posting original content, related to how you help your clients? By that, I don't mean self-serving posts that push your product, service, or brand, but helpful information, shared with an insightful point of view. These posts should depict you as a leader, a helper, a contributor—not a self-promoter or a taker. You don't want to look like someone who pitches all the time, rather than listening, learning, and serving.

More to the point, you should look like someone prospects could imagine working with and benefiting from. Someone they would love to

meet. And then there is your company website. If the business is not your own, you should at least be aware of what the site projects to any prospective VIP contacts. If it is your company, make sure it reflects your values, the unfair advantages you convey to your clients, and remains up to date.

An honest appraisal of your brand strength can be transformative. It can help you adjust your strategy to produce greater results and grow the company faster. If you're not well known in your industry, it's time to do something about that. If you have a negative reputation, it's time to do something about that, too.

Digital reputation services like InMoment, Birdeye, or BrandYourself can help remove negative search results, which might be preventing you from getting business. And if you're not well known, arrange a media blitz to guest on podcasts your prospects are likely to be listening to. If you have a compelling origin story, write it out and be ready to share with prospective interviewers. Get it out there!

Another option would be to target referral sources as your entrée to your top prospects. I've seen it before—a marketer will struggle with direct outreach, but flourish once they align with trusted sources in their industry. If your brand strength needs shoring, there are ways to fix that.

One of the most interesting ways to give your brand an immediate boost is to use account-based marketing (ABM) platforms like 6sense, Demandbase, or RollWorks. They're not cheap, but what they do is quite magical, especially in the quest for top-level meetings.

Drawing from your Top 100 list, they can run digital display ads for your company that will show up wherever your prospects go on the web and social media. Suddenly, your brand appears to be everywhere, just as major advertisers like Nike, Netflix, or Coca-Cola do. ABM platforms can also identify the likely influencers surrounding the target contact from their org chart, and run the ads to those people as well. The effect is that your brand becomes quickly burnished to attract precisely the people you need to connect with. And that's the proper way to launch a Contact Campaign that is about to change your scale.

Flip Moments

“Flip Moment” is my own term for something that causes a sudden change in attitude, belief, or intention. Flip Moments are precisely what we’re looking to create in our contact campaigns. Whatever we do or send, the effect should be changing someone from indifferent to ecstatic. We want to thrill our prospects into meeting us.

For a long time, I could see that my personalized cartoons were having a very positive effect. In direct mail campaigns, the cartoons set new records that doubled and sometimes tripled the clients’ previous records for response. I heard about recipients posting the mailings on refrigerator doors and office walls. In one case, I heard about one of my cartoons being posted to the wall in the back office of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, giving me the highly sketchy claim that one of my art pieces was “hanging in the Met.”

But I never got to see the effect live and in action. I was never there to see what it looked like the moment someone opened and reacted to one of my cartoon pieces. That is, until I sent one to Billy Gene, the Instagram marketing influencer. His assistant received the package, started opening it, and thought, “I should film an unboxing video of this.” The result is a fifty-second clip that shows exactly what a Flip Moment looks like, as it happens. (Go to <https://tinyurl.com/3b65t5yv> to view it.)

If you view the video, you’ll see his assistant opening the piece, then reading it to Billy. By the end of the clip, she’s saying, “Kind of in love with this guy! Mad respect”—meaning me, the sender. Mind you, that was Billy’s executive assistant. You know, the assistants so many think of as gatekeepers, whose only job is to keep us from making contact (which I cover in depth in [Chapter 15](#), “The Critical Role of Executive Assistants”). This is exactly the effect we’re looking to achieve in these campaigns. We want the target recipients thinking, “Wow, who *IS* this? We need to connect!”

Flip Moments are the key to both creating human-to-human connections and a successful Contact Campaign. But what actually causes them? I think they’re a lot like the formula for creating a cartoon, or any other form of

humor, which relies on a setup, then a quick reversal, which reveals a kernel of truth or point of agreement.

“Flip Moments are the key to both creating human-to-human connections and a successful Contact Campaign.”

I often use a particular cartoon when a client proposal stalls. The scene is of an executive thumbing through pages on his desk, phone cradled on his shoulder. He’s saying, “Hey listen, we got your proposal, and we like everything except having to pay you . . .” (the same cartoon that heads this chapter). Everything up through “we like everything except” is the setup. It’s like so many conversations we’ve had throughout our careers with clients objecting to something in our proposals. When he finishes the caption with, “except having to pay you,” that’s the Flip Moment right there. That’s the instant when everything changes, when we start laughing, when we blurt, “That’s so true!”

We might use a cartoon in our campaigns, which would be a direct translation of a Flip Moment to getting a meeting. But there can be so many triggers for Flip Moments in our campaigns. The sudden realization when you and the prospect have something in common. Or that you’re famous. Or what you sent was incredibly clever, but also a direct illustration of the insight you want to share. It could be the sudden realization that they were wrong about something fundamental to their business. Or that you have critical intel about their competitors or an as-yet undiscovered market trend.

The setup is that they don’t know you quite yet, but maybe they know your brand, or maybe not. And the Flip Moment is when they suddenly realize they’re thrilled you reached out.

I’ve mentioned the story of how Kris Kristofferson met Johnny Cash, which is told in my later book, *Get the Meeting!* But I think I should share it here, too, because it is a perfect example of the power of Flip Moments in Contact Campaigns.

When Kris was in the Army, he was stationed in Germany, serving as a helicopter pilot. That’s when he realized his life’s dream was to become a singer-songwriter and collaborate with Johnny Cash. As soon as he finished

his tour of duty, he headed off to Nashville. And sure enough, a friend was quickly able to secure a backstage pass at one of Johnny's shows.

Backstage, he was introduced just as Johnny was about to go on. He quickly turned to Kris, shook his hand, and turned away. Not much contact there, but Kris was undeterred. His next step was to get a job as a janitor at the studio where his idol recorded. All employees were given strict orders not to hand demo tapes to Mr. Cash, so Kris slipped them to Johnny's wife, June Carter Cash, instead. But still, no progress.

So one day, he decided to take one of the helicopters from the National Guard base where he still served as a pilot and land it on Johnny's front lawn. That changed everything.

Johnny swore Kris had landed the helicopter and stepped out with a beer in one hand and a demo tape in the other. But Kris constantly corrected his friend's recollection, saying there was no way he could fly with a drink in his hand, and besides, Johnny wasn't home when he dropped by. So the demo tape went into the hands of his house manager.

The details didn't matter. Johnny loved telling that story, and it got bigger and bigger every time he told it. And from that point forward, the two became lifelong friends and collaborators, just like Kris imagined.

Let's look at this as Contact Marketers for a moment. Kris identified his top prospect, Johnny Cash, as a dream collaborator, someone who could change the scale of his career. Like so many prospects, especially these days, Johnny ignored him. Kris hadn't yet presented the right combination of value, presence, and audacity to get his attention. But once he made that bold move, Johnny's impression of Kris completely changed. Suddenly, Kris was someone Mr. Ring of Fire just had to integrate into his own mythology. Kris had given him something invaluable—a story that was fun to tell and amazed everyone who heard it. Kris became a muse in Johnny's life song.

All of which shows the magic and relevance of creating Flip Moments in our own Contact Campaigns. It's how we break through. It's how we change the scale of our careers, businesses, and lives.

Getting to Know Your Prospects as People

One very sure way of creating a Flip Moment is knowing something about your target recipients and crafting something of great personal interest in your outreach. The dossiers you'll gather from the AI tools mentioned in this chapter (and in [Chapter 21](#)) will be substantial, well beyond any other prospect list that has ever existed. It will contain details only known through the magic of AI. Still, in the spirit of combining personal human touches with AI, it can be quite useful to do your own sleuthing to uncover golden nuggets to personalize your campaign.

That's what happened when Dom Steinman used this book to change the trajectory of his career. He started researching some of his key assigned prospects and discovered one who was deeply interested in family, cooking, and technology. He used that info to fashion a personalized gift. The barbecue apron embroidered with an Arthur C. Clarke quote won him a six-figure deal.

The discovery of another prime prospect's interest in falconry led Steinman to more six-figure deals. And it snowballed from there, lifting his entire team of sales development reps, and his own position to sales manager, even though he was a new hire just out of college.

Gleaning every possible detail about your VIP prospects can only enhance your chances of getting more life-changing deals. So, in addition to what your automated AI tools gather, I suggest taking a few extra steps to spot the picture of the prospect's daughter playing tennis for the University of Texas, or the logo sticker of an obscure coffee brand on the prospect's bulletin board in the background of one of their posted pictures.

"Gleaning every possible detail about your VIP prospects can only enhance your chances of getting more life-changing deals."

Take the time to visit their company website, research their bio, and find other AI tools to help you gather more intel. Follow them on social media. Read and interact with their posts. Find out what they're talking about, what has their interest, what makes them passionate, what makes them laugh, what makes them cry.

Go the extra mile. Use every possible tool, AI or otherwise. These are *your* VIPs. They're your new success circle. The more you get to know

them, the more effective you'll be at making contact.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- ✓ AI has made building your Top 100 list simple and quick, resulting in something that could never have existed before—a list based on your Ideal Customer Profile (ICP) and real-time buyer signals hidden deep within the worldwide torrent of data points.
- ✓ Base your outreach on touches that are unexpected, unique, and certainly not based on crowded channels like automated email sequences. Stand out!
- ✓ AI, automation, and human ingenuity can be the perfect combination to produce very effective Contact Campaigns.
- ✓ Brand strength and digital reflection can heavily affect the response to your Contact Campaigns.
- ✓ You can boost your brand/reflection quickly by improving your LinkedIn profile, posting original content, updating your website, and managing your digital reputation.
- ✓ Another way to boost your brand is through ABM platforms that enable ubiquitous ad placement on every website and social media platform your prospect visits or uses.
- ✓ Flip Moments are sudden changes in attitude, belief, or intention, caused by an external stimulus.
- ✓ The purpose of Contact Campaigns is to produce Flip Moments in your prospect's mind and make them suddenly anxious to meet you.
- ✓ Flip Moments are similar to any form of humor, in that there is a formula for setup, a sudden revelation, and an immediate internalization of a statement of truth or point of agreement.

- ✓ These are *your* VIPs. Go the extra mile. The more you get to know them, the more effective you'll be at making contact.

SECTION II

CONTACT CAMPAIGN TACTICS & METHODS



"I hate seeing you suffer like this, Neil. Knock it off."

CHAPTER 7

Contact Campaign Methods and Tactics

In the Introduction, I told you the story of how I became a Contact Marketer, and what eventually inspired me to write this book. Through the use of my cartoons, I discovered I could connect with virtually anyone. But the more I thought about it, the more I realized there had to be many others out there facing the same challenge, producing similar kinds of solutions to break through.

The more I reached out, the more amazed I became. The Contact Marketing solutions I discovered were astounding in their brilliance, audacity, and ingenuity. I discovered I wasn't alone in producing 100 percent response rates and ROI figures in the tens of thousands of percent.

When I decided I had to write a book about Contact Marketing, it was obvious it had to be an inclusive and collaborative effort. So I set out to gather the greatest assemblage of brilliant Contact Marketing ideas I could find. To do that, I interviewed many of today's top thought leaders in sales, who generously shared their brilliant concepts. Sometimes, they'd start the interview by saying, "I don't do anything particularly clever," and then reveal yet another ingenious method for reaching VIPs.

One comment I heard consistently, something I wholeheartedly agree with, is that the use of sales stunts is a losing proposition. To be fair, some of these do create contact with some very difficult-to-reach folks. Some even generated sales.

But I believe whatever you do to reach these people reflects your brand, and I certainly would not want a stunt to define who I am or what I'm capable of delivering. So, while I hold some admiration for the tactics involved in sales stunts, I am resolute that they have no place in Contact Marketing.

What follows in this section could be thought of as the core of what Contact Marketing is, but that would be a mistake. I don't want you to approach this chapter as a menu of ideas to quickly deplete. They are presented not to suggest that you copy what these Contact Marketers have done, but to let their creativity inspire you to come up with your own unique solutions. As with any form of marketing, the point is not to copy what someone else has executed, but to allow the best of what's been done to motivate you to tell your own, unique story in your own, extraordinary way.

Ideas for Your Inspiration, Not Imitation

Remember the "Got Milk?" ad campaign from the early nineties? It was obviously a clever campaign, and when it appeared, it caused a sensation; drinking milk became cool, and it significantly increased milk sales. If you were studying advertising for the first time, you might conclude that if you cloned this slogan with your own product substituted for "Milk," you'd have the makings of a winning campaign yourself. But, when you see billboards, T-shirts, and trucks emblazoned with slogans of, "Got Junk?", "Got Oranges?", and "Got Refrigerators?" how clever do these marketers seem to you?

To me, this approach says, "We're unoriginal; this is the best we could come up with." How much room is there in the marketplace for endless takes on "Got [fill in the blank?]?" None. Imitation may be the sincerest form of flattery, but it is no way to build your own unique brand and voice.

"Imitation may be the sincerest form of flattery, but it is no way to build your own unique brand and voice."

I also want to impress upon you that this list is in no way complete. It's just a survey of what has been happening out there, a snapshot, a beginning. At the end of this book, I provide information on how you can reach me to share your own Contact Marketing experiences and solutions. I also invite you to visit my author site, StuHeinecke.com, join my email list, and

connect with me on LinkedIn, where I post four times a week about getting meetings, creating Flip Moments, and growth strategy.

Campaign Costs Vary

For all my talk about the ingenuity and audacity of the methods you're about to read, the metrics are what may be most astounding about Contact Campaigns. Simply looking at the cost per effort figures associated with each solution is a testament to how broad the spectrum of thinking behind them is.

It's wonderful that many of these techniques have no associated cost, other than a bit of your time. *It means Contact Marketing is within anyone's grasp.* That, again, is unlike virtually any other form of marketing, because really, none of that is free. It certainly complicates ROI calculations, too, because how do you get a meaningful number from dividing by zero? But all that means is that something extraordinary is taking place if you're using zero-cost tactics to produce lots of income. We'll just have to somehow grapple with ROI figures of "infinity" and wear a Cheshire Cat grin.

Still, the most memorable campaigns are the ones that involve at least some spending, sometimes what would seem like a scary amount per contact. This should be tempered with an understanding of what each VIP contact is worth. If you're trying to sell your company for millions of dollars, spending \$10,000 to engage the right buyer or stimulate a buying frenzy among competitors is worth every penny—which is exactly what happened with one of the techniques you will read about in the pages ahead.

You're about to gain a significantly unfair advantage in your marketplace. And the good news is, you can spend whatever you want to get there.

"You're about to gain a significantly unfair advantage in your marketplace. And the good news is, you can spend whatever you want to get there."

My Own Personalized Cartoon Method

My personalized cartoons were what got me started as a Contact Marketer, so I want to share my method with you first. Again, when I was starting my career, I wanted to combine the stunning effect of cartoons with direct marketing, and I wanted to work with the biggest, most prestigious clients I could find. That meant the big magazine and newspaper publishers: Time Inc., *The Wall Street Journal*, Condé Nast, *Forbes*, and so forth.

My first Contact Campaign consisted of an 8" × 10" print of a cartoon, with the caption personalized using the names of each recipient. That was accompanied by a letter explaining what I'd just accomplished for my first two clients, and a suggestion that we put it to the test for their titles. The campaign launched my business; I broke through to *all* of the publishers and *all* of them became clients. It was worth millions of dollars to me, and it all started with a campaign I spent less than \$100 to produce and mail.

Over the years, that original concept has morphed and evolved. I tried cartoons in lots of formats, including framed prints, suitable-for-framing prints, odd-sized outer envelopes framed in special corrugated cardboard packaging, and more. The format that has emerged as my favorite is what I call BigBoards. These are 18" × 24" × ¼" foam core boards that use digital indoor signage technology to produce what is essentially a giant postcard, which is then delivered by courier.

On the front, the BigBoards feature a cartoon, with the caption personalized using the name of the target executive. The rear panel includes a message from the sender to the recipient, proposing a meeting and explaining why it's worthy of the CEO's consideration. The panel also includes the sender's branding, the recipient's address, and an inset showing the hold-back device. (Hold-back devices are covered further in [Chapter 14](#).) In my case, that device is usually an autographed copy of one of my books on getting meetings or growth strategy, offered as an incentive for agreeing to the meeting.

The BigBoards are part of a larger system, which includes a series of cards, also featuring personalized cartoons. These are used to thank and engage executive assistants, and for various follow-up applications as the contacts progress.

I've found that the cartoons allow a very special set of advantages in my Contact Campaigns. If I am the sender, I'm able to call the target

executive's assistant and explain that I'm one of *The Wall Street Journal* cartoonists, and I am sending a print of one of my cartoons about their boss. That usually gets them very excited and eager to participate.

When the BigBoard arrives, it often sparks an excited reception by the target contact. I've heard stories of company presidents walking around the office, showing off their cartoon boards, even taking selfies with them, then dispatching the photos to the sender to express their elation and gratitude.

One of the truly unique benefits of this approach is that cartoons are always about something. They're not just some goofy little drawing; they are an expression of deep truth. When the recipient sees it, the effect I'm looking for is a smile and an immediate, "Yes, that is so cool, that is so true." They probably don't even realize that I have already gotten them to agree with my central point for reaching out.

But I need to offer a word of caution. Cartoons are not easy to create and even more difficult to properly target. Without fail, every initial conversation I have with new clients starts with, "Can we change the caption?" Or, "How do we get our brand in there?" Injecting your brand into a cartoon ensures failure, because it disables the gag and strips away any personal value to the recipient. The trick is to steer the choice of cartoon based on the truth it reveals, and how that relates to the issue you want to address with the recipient.

I once created a campaign for *Outdoor Life*, a magazine about hunting and fishing. *The New Yorker* cartoonist and friend Leo Cullum created a brilliant cartoon showing two fishermen on a dock, one holding an enormous fish in his arms, the other remarking, "*That looks like the one ((insert recipient's name)) threw back.*" The response was amazing; we nearly doubled the paid orders the earlier control had produced. And we never mentioned anything about *Outdoor Life*, subscribing, or the savings off the newsstand price. If we had, the piece would have failed.

If you'd like to explore the use of cartoons in marketing and other business missions, you will find my earlier book, *Drawing Attention*, quite useful. It contains the collective wisdom of thirty years and millions of dollars' worth of utterly unique test experience, and reveals everything you need to know about using these amazing engagement devices in your own campaigns.

For now, I'll leave you with one final observation about the cartoon BigBoards. Among the many techniques contained in the following sections, I am still amazed at the staying power of the cartoon-based contact pieces. They're too big to file away and too valuable to throw away. They're also too big to easily place somewhere in the office, so they often end up sitting on the executive's credenza, cocked to one side because there just wasn't enough clear space. From there, they remain on display indefinitely, where they'll often spark conversations among the CEO's visitors. "Hey, where'd you get that, what is it?" is enough to have the VIP recount your story over and over again. It amounts to a totally unfair advantage for you as a marketer.

But enough about my own techniques. Let's get to the good stuff, the wonderful Contact Campaign secrets shared by the many experts interviewed for this book. What follows are four chapters and twenty Contact Campaign types. As you read through these, you may notice that Contact Campaigns are not easily confined to one category or another. Many involve elements of several categories. Some cost little to nothing, others a lot. There are gifts and events and full-page ads in *The Wall Street Journal*, even a live carrier pigeon dropped off at a target executive's lobby to arrange a lunch meeting.

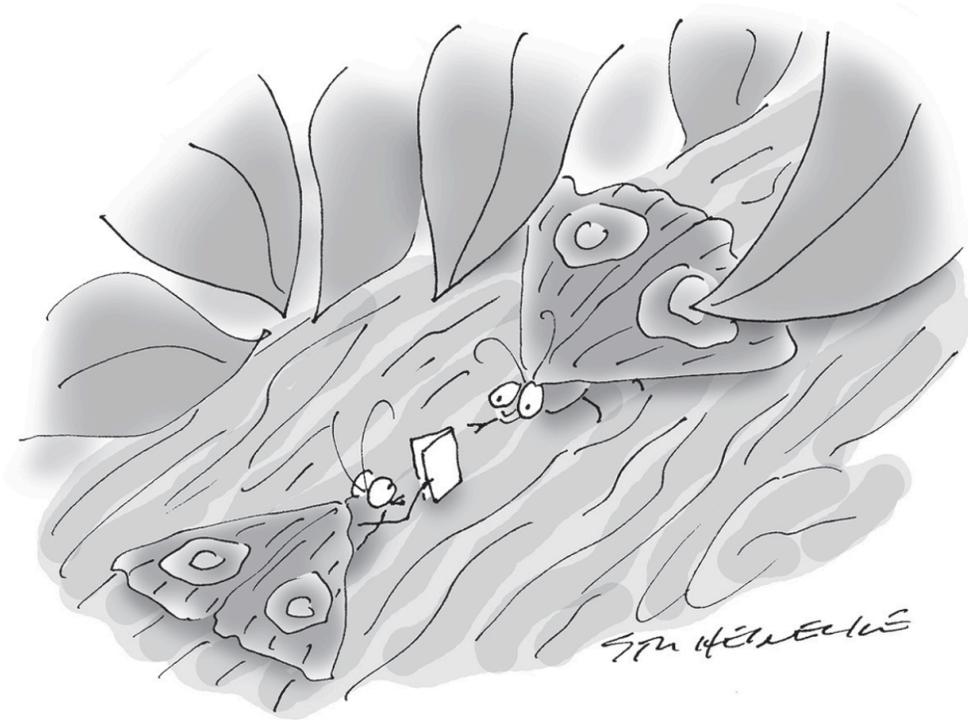
Simply keep in mind, as you read through this treasure of ideas, that there are many ways to achieve your goal of breaking through, and that your own solution should be something completely different and unique.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- ✓ The methods described in this section are not meant simply to be copied, but to inspire you to create your own, unique Contact Marketing solutions.
- ✓ They are gathered from interviews with the top sales thought leaders throughout the world.
- ✓ While some sales stunts may be effective in the short run, they have no place in Contact Marketing and ultimately reflect poorly

on your brand.

- ✓ The techniques described in the following chapters are simply a snapshot of what Contact Marketers have done to break through to VIP contacts; there's much more to be discovered.
- ✓ The range of costs per contact—\$0 to \$10,000—reflects the expansive range of thinking behind the Contact Campaign techniques presented here.
- ✓ My own contact techniques consist of personalized cartoons with unique, oversized formats such as the 18" × 24" × ¼" foam core BigBoards that are delivered to their intended targets via courier.
- ✓ One of the great aspects of using cartoons and the BigBoard format is that they tend to be kept as career heirlooms in the recipients' offices for years to come, giving this technique exceptional staying power.
- ✓ Cartoons are not goofy drawings; they're expressions of truth. When the recipient laughs and says, "That's so true," you have already warmed the contact and have them agreeing with your key premise.
- ✓ It is never a good idea to inject your brand, offer, or any other aspect of your own identity into the cartoon; it needs to focus solely on the identity of the recipient.



“I couldn’t find you a Moth’s Day card, so I got you a Mother’s Day card instead.”

CHAPTER 8

Gifts and Visual Metaphors

In this first category, we examine several forms of gifts used as the basis of Contact Campaigns. Gifts are a natural solution because they so often make the recipients feel excited. But they must be carefully planned; some VIPs aren't allowed to accept gifts over a certain value. For example, when I furnished a print of one of my cartoons to Ben Bernanke, former chairman of the Federal Reserve, we had to make sure its value did not exceed \$20.

Private-sector executives generally have less stringent rules about accepting gifts, but can become suspicious if the offering seems simply like a bribe. You might conclude that cheaper is better, but even that is not a reliable rule to follow. Some gifts can be quite expensive and enormously effective. As with personal gift-giving, it is the thought that counts most, and in your Contact Campaign, you must carefully consider the concept and message behind the offering. Let's take a look.

Category #1: Art, Humor, and Film

Estimated cost per contact: \$1 to \$500

As I discovered in the interviews for this book, cartoons have played a major role in many of the thought leaders' Contact Campaigns as well. Dave Stein, author of *How Winners Sell* and a columnist for *Sales & Marketing Management* magazine, was lucky enough to have met *The New Yorker* cartoonist Mick Stevens one day, while walking on the beach on Martha's Vineyard. The two hit it off and Stein ended up using a lot of Mick's work in presentations and as Contact Campaigns. As Stein points out, "We want the customer warmed up by the time we get there and humor does that."

Author Orvel Ray Wilson has also employed my personalized cartoon trick, using a cartoon he licensed from The Cartoon Bank. He notes, “Endorphins are released in the brain from laughter.” Again, just don’t give in to the temptation of changing the caption to highlight your brand. As I’ve mentioned, injecting brand into a cartoon kills the humor and often removes the meaning of the gag. The best path is to start with a cartoon that already makes a point you can amplify in your accompanying message.

Humor comes in many forms. Blogger Dave Brock says he occasionally uses Dr. Seuss’s book *Green Eggs and Ham* to break through to his VIP prospects. “It’s one of the best books on selling there is,” he explains, “because in the first half, Sam-I-am is unsuccessful, but in the second half he changes his approach and succeeds.”

Brock includes a personal letter with the opening, “Hello, I’m Dave-I-am.” The letter continues with a brief, Seuss-style poem about why they should meet. When he calls, he identifies himself as “Dave-I-am,” which often causes them to laugh. It humanizes Brock to the assistant and target executive, making the call considerably more productive. Dr. Seuss may not be your idea of sophisticated humor, but the message from the book, even though it’s intended for children, is undeniable and leads to discussions about how Brock can produce the same kinds of transformations in the VIP contact’s sales team.

The category of presented art certainly is not limited to cartoons. *Smart Prospecting That Works Every Time!* author Michael Krause suggests having a professional photographer snap a portrait of something important to the prospect, then present it as framed art. He tells the story of a landscape photographer who made the rounds in his city, presenting beautiful framed portraits to commercial property owners of their buildings as a way to break through for new business.

Personalization is a key element in most uses of art as Contact Campaigns, which *The Wall Street Journal* has used to great effect to support its ad sales operation. The publication is famous for the hand-drawn, engraved-style portraits used in its editorial coverage. Only a handful of artists are employed exclusively by *The Journal* for this purpose, and when they really want to get an advertiser’s attention, they have used framed, engraved-style portraits of their target executives to great effect.

“Personalization is a key element in most uses of art as Contact Campaigns.”

Not everyone can draw in that style, but I have discovered a simple, inexpensive method for producing *The Wall Street Journal*–like portraits, using a four-dollar Photoshop plug-in. Since most people have profile pictures posted as part of their social media accounts, finding source material is quite easy. Once captured, the “Super Engraver” action set (a Photoshop script of actions within the program to produce the effect) from creativemarket.com will render the photo in a very similar style. These can then be produced as framed portraits, but I prefer a more mischievous approach: They can also be used to produce a dummy story that looks like it came right off the pages of *The Journal*. Frame that, or use it as card art. Either way, it’s an undeniable attention-getter.

The most important factor when giving art of any kind, which is true of all gifts used as Contact Campaigns, is to follow a *theme* to support the *value* you plan to bring to your Top 100 VIP list members. Without that focus, the art is meaningless and the campaign will fail.

Movie DVDs can form the basis of powerful Contact Campaigns, in that they usually present compelling stories and engaging characters who are always involved in some sort of transition in their lives. The stories always seem to include an element of conflict, which motivates us as humans to respond in some way that resolves the plot.

These story elements can combine to prompt a target contact to share a deep understanding of what you hope to do for them and why. The challenge is to find the right film that imparts precisely the message you want to convey.

Although you can’t change the films, they provide plenty of opportunities for messaging within your campaign. Like cartoons, the stories define obvious themes you can pick up in your letter copy. When I send copies of the movie *Contact*, I include a greeting card with a personalized cartoon and handwritten message inside. The cartoon shows a group of scientists standing somewhere in the desert among several radio dishes. One of the scientists is telling the others, “So far, our search for intelligent life has turned up a couple of false alarms and someone named

Bob from New Jersey,” and as you know by now, “Bob” and “New Jersey” are placeholders for any recipients’ name and home state.

The card briefly explains why they’re receiving the DVD. But the DVD packaging itself is another opportunity to customize the messaging to your campaign. Most come in a shrink-wrapped plastic box, which, when opened, reveals several promotional flyers for other movies and merchandise. Take those out, substitute your own branded elements, and reseal the case to complete the effect of having sent what ends up looking like a customized version of the movie.

CartoonLink BigBoards

These are my Contact Campaign system, based on the use of my “CartoonLink” image bank of more than a thousand personalized cartoons on 18" × 24" × ¼" foam core BigBoards delivered via FedEx or UPS. Includes full creative, training, and coaching, plus personalized PDF greeting card generators to address executive assistants and other stakeholders.

<https://StuHeinecke.com>; \$250 per contact, minimum order 100 units

CartoonStock

Repository of all the cartoons published in *The New Yorker*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *National Lampoon*, and other publications. Roughly 750,000 cartoons are available for license or as various gifts.

<https://www.cartoonstock.com>; \$24.95 and up for a simple license or finished merchandise

Creative Market

Super Engraver action set for use with Adobe Photoshop. Use it on any photograph to produce a *Wall Street Journal*–style engraved rendering.

<https://creativemarket.com/ridvanpars/6788825-Engrave-Halftone-Pro-Ps-Action#fullscreen>; \$17

OfficeMax/Staples

If you have custom art to print, Office Depot/OfficeMax/Staples has a surprisingly easy and inexpensive option. Their Impress desk at the back of most store locations can print digital art on various substrates and products, including mugs, mouse pads, and stretched-canvas prints ready for hanging on your target executives' walls.

<https://www.staples.com/services/printing/>; \$15 to \$100

Metacritic

Metacritic maintains a database of virtually all movies released on home-view (DVD and Blu-ray) formats, along with a user scoring system to provide viewer ratings of each film. A helpful resource to search for the right film for your campaign.

<http://www.metacritic.com>; free

Redbox, Moviefone, Fandango

Find updated selections of the latest movies released on DVD and Blu-ray on these companies' sites. They index movies by genre, popularity, and release date. If you only want to consider recent popular releases, they're the ideal places to search for that perfect title.

<http://www.redbox.com>, [URL inactive] <http://www.moviefone.com>, <http://www.fandango.com>; free

Amazon, Walmart, Movies Unlimited

Purchase most DVD and Blu-ray titles on Amazon or Walmart. Check out Movies Unlimited for hard-to-find, classic films.

<http://www.amazon.com>, <http://www.walmart.com>, <http://www.moviesunlimited.com>; \$9 and up

Category #2: Gifts & Re-Gifts

Estimated cost per contact: \$50–\$1,000

The giving of gifts is a broad subject and there is already a well-established industry based on corporate gift-giving. So why is this claimed as part of Contact Marketing? Because it is a great way to get someone's attention, which is the core of the Contact Marketing mission.

Included in this section are a fascinating range of gifts and “re-gifts,” gifts given as something to be given away by the target executive to others. In fact, many of the gift concepts that follow focus not just on the recipient, but on the people around them.

John Ruhlin, founder of the Ruhlin Group, is a master at this, and his Contact Campaign techniques certainly involve a good measure of audacity. One of his favorite methods for reaching VIPs starts with a card delivered through the mail, informing the target that someone has gifted a \$150 custom-fit shirt, and they will be contacted shortly by a clothier. His clothier arranges a time for the fitting, then shows up with fabric samples and takes the necessary measurements. Naturally, the target executive is full of questions—who sent this and why? The clothier explains it's being sent by Ruhlin, but she's not here to tell him why—she's just here to fit him for the shirt.

Two weeks later, the shirt arrives with a note from John explaining, “It's not about function, it's about fit, and I think we may be a good fit for you. Let's have a talk about it.” As author Tom Searcy explains, “The technique creates an opportunity not only to talk, but to establish a strong personal brand before the contact ever takes place.” Ruhlin says, “If I don't get a

call, I have an open door to connect, even if it's just to ask how the shirt fits.”

Ruhlin believes personalization is the key to success with gifts as Contact Campaign devices. His company is also the largest sales producer for Cutco knives, which he uses as gift campaigns as well. He's able to have the knives laser-engraved with the recipient's logo and often turns them into a serial gift; he starts with the knife block containing a few knives, then sends the missing knives over a few weeks' period. “What's so ingenious about this is that the CEO's spouse becomes part of the campaign,” says Searcy, “so the sender creates allies around the target executive.”

When Bridget Gleason was Yesware's vice president of sales, she had a different take. She preferred to give gifts that could be shared in the office or with select members of the target executive's team. In an earlier phase of her career as a sales consultant, she often used this technique to break through. “I'd send a half a dozen coffee cups with the words ‘Top Producer’ silkscreened in big bold letters,” she told me, “and they'd always get me through to my targeted executive.” The accompanying letter explained they were intended as awards to be given to the contact's top sales performer each month. Meanwhile, she made her pitch to do a whole lot more than the cups could to help push sales performance up, up, up.

Do YOU Mean Business? author and *Sales Aerobics for Engineers* blog author Babette Ten Haken advises giving gifts if a client has done something positive, but warns that some people are embarrassed by receiving gifts. “Gifts tend to embarrass engineers and IT people,” she reports. Still, even the smallest gift can make a difference and they certainly don't have to be expensive. They just have to project meaning.

Blogger Dave Brock recalls the story of a top saleswoman who'd been trying to break through to a certain CIO for a long time, but kept coming up with a fistful of excuses instead. After being told repeatedly, “I don't have time to meet with you, even for lunch,” she sent a pizza one day with a note saying, “I'm worried about you, would you like to have a pizza sometime with me?” That gift, while obviously inexpensive, was a significant humanizing gesture, which finally helped her break through.

Sales blogger and trainer Tony Cole tells a similar story of less expense equaling big results. The district president of KeyBank in Cincinnati came

up with a list of 100 companies he wanted to break through to and devised what he termed the “Flower Power Campaign.” The campaign consisted of twenty flower arrangements at a time, sent to target company owners on his list, along with his business card. He followed up with a call asking, “Is there a nice arrangement of flowers on your desk?” The campaign consistently netted a 20 percent or greater penetration.

The Hacker Group founder Bob Hacker reports an almost inconceivable result from one of his agency’s Contact Campaigns. Getting key background details was critical for the campaign, as they noticed all of their VIP list members happened to have offices near baseball stadiums. The resulting campaign consisted of a set of 125 invitations to sit in box seats with company officials, which produced not only a 126 percent response rate, but a 6,000 percent ROI. How was that possible? It turned out the invitations were so treasured, many of the targeted executives brought their bosses along—the very people you’re ultimately wanting to reach!

While there might be conflicting advice among Contact Marketers regarding cost, it is clear the old adage holds true for gifts used as the basis of a Contact Campaign: It’s clearly the thought behind the gift that counts.

Category #3: Half of a Gift

Estimated cost per contact: \$40 to \$4,000+

An interesting variation on the theme of gift-giving as Contact Campaign is the idea of giving just half of the gift up front, with the promise of the other half when the requested connection takes place. I’m a little wary of this approach, but it certainly has merit. The trouble is, what happens if the incentive outshines the value you hope to present to the target executive?

Author Michael Krause shares a familiar tactic that came up often in my research: sending a remote-control model Ferrari without the control device. The gift is accompanied with a letter explaining that the missing element will be delivered when the proposed meeting takes place. Krause believes this approach may work best around the Christmas holidays, but others say it’s valid at any point on the calendar.

The Fundamentals of Business-to-Business Sales and Marketing author John Coe reports that this approach works well, but cautions that it can also backfire. He's heard of more than one instance in which the executive agrees to the meeting, but only with the intention of nabbing the prize, then ushering the sales rep quickly out of the office. "Sometimes, they tell their assistants to interrupt five minutes into the meeting with an 'important phone call,'" he explains, "just so they can end the meeting."

The remote control toy theme extends to flying models as well, and some of these can be pretty interesting. Helicopter and miniature drone models can be had for as little as \$50, but I think the concept can be stepped up a notch with FPV (first person view) drones that are able to shoot video. These are more spendy, but carry a tremendous appeal because of the thrilling total-immersion views through the drone's camera lens. The target executive might not have a real use for a video-capturing drone, but their curiosity is likely to overrule any objections they may have to your meeting.

Author and Guerilla Training keynote speaker Orvel Ray Wilson offers an interesting take on the theme if your quarry happens to be a baseball fan. He advises sending a stand for three signed balls, with the last one omitted; that will be the reward for taking the meeting. He once used this tactic to get VIP prospects to stop by his booth with the offer of having legendary Yankee outfielder Mickey Mantle signing the ball right there in person.

National Association of Sales Professionals CEO and *Are You Up for the Challenge?* author Rod Hairston offers yet another take on the half-of-a-gift theme, sending a set of golf balls, a ticket to play at a top course, and a single shoe. The package arrives with a note explaining, "Oops, I forgot your other shoe. I'll bring it when we meet." Coe offers yet another take on the concept, this time simply sending the left shoe of a fine pair of dress shoes, with a note saying he'd like to get his foot in the door, and will bring the other shoe when the meeting takes place. I have to wonder if a set of remote-control golf balls might make this approach even more interesting, because it would give the VIPs a chance to have a lot of fun during their next few rounds.

The danger in this approach is obvious. If the CEO simply wants to grab the remote-control toy for a grandchild and send you on your way, the gift isn't doing its job. Hairston points out that the gift must reflect that you

have done your research, that you will be delivering something of far greater value than the gift itself.

Tower Hobbies

A complete selection of remote-control model cars, planes, boats, and miniature drones—even a remote-control blimp that looks like a shark swimming through the air.

<http://www.towerhobbies.com>; \$40 and up

DJI Mavic 3 Pro

A nearly professional-grade drone with gimbal-stabilized HD video onboard.

<https://store.dji.com/product/dji-mavic-3-pro>; \$2,199

DJI Avata

The ultimate drone/toy guaranteed to bring out the kid in all of us. FPV goggles provide a totally immersive experience, giving the sensation of flying while still on the ground. The Motion Control steering device provides a simple point-and-go interface that will have the user up and flying right away

<https://store.dji.com/product/dji-avata-2-three-batteries>; \$1,199

Category #4: Visual Metaphors

Estimated cost per contact: \$10 to \$10,000

Some gifts offer the sender a greater opportunity to brand or express the value of their proposition. These so-called visual metaphors create a Flip Moment that can instantly plant a point of agreement in the mind of the target executive, much like the humor in a cartoon does.

To achieve this effect, you must give your concept a lot of thought and search for some pretty unusual gifts, some of which may need to be individually commissioned by an artist or craftsman. Author and turnaround specialist Dan Waldschmidt provides a wonderful example of a unique and effective visual metaphor. In his business, Waldschmidt is tasked with scanning the news for stories of missed earnings reports; that's his cue to reach out to his next VIP prospect.

What Waldschmidt does next is truly audacious. He has a full-size medieval sword made by a famed Hollywood prop maker, complete with the target executive's name engraved on the blade. It's packed in a fine wooden box along with a handwritten note saying, "Look, I understand more than ever that what you're going through is war, and you need the best weapons to lead your people to victory. I'm sure your internal people are capable, but if you ever need additional warriors, I've got your back." He reports that recipients take his call 100 percent of the time, though not all of the target VIPs end up as clients.

What's brilliant about the gift is that it delivers a message. Waldschmidt isn't just sending a gift—he's sending a physical representation of the ferocity with which he does battle for his clients. He reports that the typical spend is \$1,000 per contact, but that the resulting million-dollar contracts completely justify the cost. But he also warns, "If you don't go big enough, it's a complete bust."

That may be true, but a lot of the thought leaders I interviewed found success at a much lower price point. *High-Profit Selling* author and *The Sales Hunter* blog author Mark Hunter has sent a sack of nails to make his point, visually demonstrating that the target had been hard as nails to reach. Lottery tickets have often brought up to 100 percent response rates when teamed with his message that you can play the lottery and *hope* to hit it big, or hire Hunter as a sure thing to increase sales.

Author and blogger Babette Ten Haken has had success with a range of down-market visual metaphors—everything from lemons, horseshoes, and

roses to worn-out running shoes—to convey messages of turning around adversity, making your own “luck,” and asking why you’d intentionally run at a disadvantage, respectively. Since she specializes in selling to engineers and IT professionals, her focus is on using gifts that especially resonate with that group. Two favorite items are abacuses and slide rules—old tools for the jobs these people do. They’re novelties, but they also make a strong point about using outdated tools.

If you’re a poker player, you’ll appreciate Orvel Ray Wilson’s approach. He sends a single playing card in an envelope, with no markings, no note. The next day, he sends another. This continues for two more days and on the fifth day, he shows up at the target’s office. When he’s asked for his card, he pulls out the fifth and final card, the Queen of Hearts, completing a royal flush. Wilson reports, “It works every time. I not only get through, but I’m warmly welcomed.” There is an element of sales stunt in his technique, but there is also a strong metaphor about his presence completing a winning hand. The target executive won’t be framing the playing cards; it’s not that kind of gift. Yet they will surely remember Wilson and think of him when they need to boost their sales game.

While Wilson’s visual metaphor positions him as part of a winning poker hand, George Petri, author of the SymVolli blog, tells the story of a Contact Campaign that used the opposite approach. A printer wanted to gain new clients quickly, so they produced a standard letter package that was actually a blooper. The letter was produced upside down, the envelope was addressed upside down as well, the stamp was crooked, and so on. The copy theme in the letter was, “If you work with us, this is the last thing that will get screwed up.” Petri insists the Contact Campaign must break the pattern the target executives are in, but how do you break through? Through clever execution that brings your message to the next level. “You need to be the person they can’t afford not to listen to,” he says, “and they get the message because you’re already demonstrating value in your Contact piece.”

“The Contact Campaign must break the pattern the target executives are in, but how do you break through? Through clever execution that brings your message to the next level.

—blogger GEORGE PETRI”

How to Sell Anything to Anyone Anytime author Dave Kahle talks about the small visual metaphors he uses to highlight aspects of his sales training sessions: sending an egg timer to set a theme around time management, for instance. But his favorite visual-metaphor Contact Campaign came from an ad agency. They identified 100 high-potential prospects and launched a multi-wave campaign. Each wave was delivered weekly via UPS, in a custom box wrapped in plain brown paper, addressed by hand in female penmanship.

The first box contained a lemon, with a note saying, “Don’t let it go sour,” but with no identifying features. Next came sugar cubes accompanied by the message, “Keep it sweet.” By the time the third box had arrived, the office workers began to gather around to see what was in the box. Tinsel marked that next theme, “Make it sparkle.” When the fourth box arrived, it had everyone’s attention. Inside was a business card with a Post-it note explaining, “I’ll call you on Monday the 4th.” The agency reported that 100 percent of the target executives took the calls, but more importantly, the box campaign had already demonstrated their bold marketing prowess; it had served as a vivid visual metaphor for the quality of their thinking.

Top Sales Dog blog author Steve Meyer tells a story of famed iconoclast designer Tibor Kalman. Kalman was not only the founder of M&Co Labs, once the hottest graphic design studio in Manhattan, but he also designed the “10-One-4” watch that was accepted for display in New York’s Museum of Modern Art. Kalman mounted an interesting Contact Campaign for his studio, in which he sent a blank book with patterns cut in the pages in the shapes of scissors, rock, and paper. He followed up with a letter stating, “I’m the guy who sent you the rock, paper, scissors book,” and connected with his contact targets. His design prowess, rooted in simple yet effective design, was demonstrated by the book.

I think Kalman and Dan Waldschmidt exemplify the best use of visual metaphors as Contact Campaigns, because their contact pieces not only make compelling gifts; they also make a bold statement about their sender. These are still gifts, but at their best, they should be uniquely involving, intriguing, and come with a well-focused purpose. For that reason, my favorite approach to visual metaphors is to find something people can’t put down, perhaps even something they’ve never seen before.

Favorite sources for these are museum and scientific stores, which often feature unusual and fascinating products. Browsing through their catalogs, you're sure to find items that can serve as a thoughtful gift that also imparts a strategic message about you, your brand, or the value you hope to bring to the prospect. At their best, visual metaphors deliver all three.

Here's a great example: The logo for my Contact Marketing agency, "Contact," shows a set of points and concentric circles spanning a globe. It's meant to show how just a few of the right touch points can have a global effect on the scale of your business, referring to the kinds of extraordinary results Contact Campaigns can produce. I explain this in my contact letter, but when I accompany it with a Hoberman Sphere—the popular kid's toy of hinged pieces that form a fascinating expanding ball—I don't need to explain the logic of leveraging just a couple of key points to expand the scale of an enterprise. They pull once on the toy and get the point immediately. It ties perfectly to my brand, too, because it looks so much like my logo.

Even better, when they play with the toy while we speak, it continues to reinforce my value proposition. At their best, visual metaphors should do just that—be a fascinating item people can't put down, while serving as a physical representation of both your brand and what you can accomplish for your prospect.

The MOMA Store

A fascinating collection of museum-quality interpretations of everyday items: staplers, calendars, chairs, lamps, bottle openers, and more. Each piece will have your target executives engaged in your message—and fascinated by your gift.

<https://store.moma.org>; Under \$25 to \$1,000+

Guggenheim Store

This museum store also offers a fascinating range of gifts, although the theme is decidedly art-focused.

<http://www.guggenheimstore.org>; \$10 to \$5,000+

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art Museum Store

Similar to the MOMA Store, this West Coast variant offers a variety of inspiring gift items for the workspace and more, plus an assortment of print-on-demand art reproductions—even 3D-printed jewelry and candy.

<http://museumstore.sfmoma.org>; Under \$30 to \$400+

Uncommon Goods

A bit down-market from the preceding shops, it's still a fascinating collection of novelties that are less likely to break your budget. Most of the items shown in their catalog are under \$50, but there are many bits that can serve well as visual metaphors.

<http://www.uncommongoods.com>; Under \$25 to \$200+

Touch of Modern

An online store of wonders, Touch of Modern hosts a parade of fascinating gadgets, objects, and doodads that are sure to yield a few visual metaphors for your Contact Campaign. There's really no way to describe it, because the product selection is always changing. Best just to visit and see for yourself.

<https://www.touchofmodern.com>; Under \$10 to \$2,000+

Scientifics Direct

Devoted to inquisitive kids of all ages, a quick look reveals gifts addressing alternative energy, rocket science, robotics, and more. You could spend hours looking through their catalog, and you'd find a multitude of visual metaphor ideas for your Contact Campaign.

<https://www.scientificsonline.com>; [URL inactive] \$15 to under \$200

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- ✓ Gifts are a natural solution for Contact Campaigns, but must be considered carefully.
- ✓ Some executives are embarrassed by or suspicious of expensive gifts, especially if they appear to be bribes.
- ✓ Government and many private organizations have strict limits on the value of gifts an executive is allowed to accept.
- ✓ The thought behind the gift is the critical element.
- ✓ As discussed in [Chapter 7](#), cartoons make wonderful gifts that often melt the ice immediately with target executives.
- ✓ Art of all types, especially when combined with personalization, makes an excellent Contact Campaign gift item.
- ✓ Some gifts are calculated to appeal not only to the recipient, but their staff or family members, who influence the executive's thinking.
- ✓ Gifts can be bestowed with the purpose of being given to others by the recipient, with great effect.
- ✓ Giving half of a gift can be effective, but is also risky if its value exceeds the perceived value you bring to the proposed meeting. Some executives agree to meet simply to get the remaining

element of the gift, and then usher the Contact Marketer swiftly out the door.

- ✓ Remote-control models and drones can make especially alluring gifts, with the control unit held back until the meeting occurs.
- ✓ Gifts that double as visual metaphors may be the best type of gift to use in your Contact Campaign.
- ✓ An effective visual metaphor subliminally communicates a positive message about your brand and value proposition.
- ✓ The best visual-metaphor gifts are items that are so fascinating the recipient can't put them down, while serving as a constant illustration of the value you offer.
- ✓ Visual metaphors do not need to be expensive to work: A bag of nails, lottery tickets, and other low-dollar items can be very effective at communicating your point.



CHAPTER 9

Free and Nearly Free

Now we'll take a 180-degree turn from gift-based Contact Campaigns to look at some of the steps you can take at zero cost, starting with the phone. Sure, it costs money to have phone service, but the assumption is that you'd have that fixed expense no matter what.

Category #5: Phone

Estimated cost per contact: free

In the previous sections, we looked at methods to break through to VIP prospects by sending something of value, something that may even plant a subliminal impression in the target executive's mind about your brand. With costs ranging from \$10 to \$10,000 per contact, the obvious question is: Why would you spend *anything* if you didn't have to?

The phone has been a longtime staple of sales operations everywhere, so it might also seem presumptuous to claim use of the device as the basis of a Contact Campaign. But Contact Marketing is itself a form of outbound sales, just done at a stratospheric level to reach CEOs and VIPs.

For this section, I'm confining the discussion only to the techniques related to breaking through to the top. Even I, the author of a book on Contact Marketing and prolific sender of cartoons and other items to great effect, will often bypass the more involved route in favor of simply picking up the phone and connecting directly. In fact, it's often quite easy.

One of my favorite techniques is to ask repeatedly to be directed to the right person. I start with the receptionist, asking to be referred to the right person and asking if I can explain the reason for my call. Because I'm asking for help rather than pitching, I find that people are usually quite willing to listen patiently, without putting up their guard.

Once the receptionist has referred me, I run the same procedure with the next person, and so on. Eventually, I end up speaking to the person I need to reach, but I continue to ask for help. The benefit here is that I still get to explain the reason for my call, without pitching, and without the other person locked in a defensive mode. When I've finished with my explanation, I often hear, "Well, I'm the person you need to speak with and this sounds pretty interesting."

That's great if you're not going after the CEO of a *Fortune* 1000 company, but what if they *are* your target? *Predictable Revenue* coauthor Aaron Ross says, "While most people train their sights on the top fifty of that list, I go after the other 950, where I usually find more success." If he doesn't make it through to the CEO, he uses a technique similar to my own, which he calls the "lost lamb" approach. He starts by asking the executive assistant for help to determine who he should contact. "Have a short answer about what you do," he explains, "then pause and let them digest and acknowledge."

Several experts point to the timing of your call as a critical element for breaking through. Blogger George Petri and *Music Scene Magazine* publisher John McDermott both suggest calling early or late in the day, outside of normal working hours, if your goal is to bypass the executive assistant. "You can try calling at 7:30 A.M. or after six, because the assistants usually aren't in the office," Petri explains, "but that may not work due to voice mail." McDermott adds, "If you call after hours, the target is sometimes likely to return the call early the next morning."

But as *Dirty Little Secrets: Why Buyers Can't Buy and Sellers Can't Sell and What You Can Do About It* author Sharon Drew Morgen points out, "The receptionist and executive assistant can be your best friend, because they're there to let the right people in." I agree. Your objective should not be to circumvent the executive assistant, but to turn them into an ally. Still,

there are always difficult assistants and these are excellent suggestions to counter a surly personality.

“Your objective should not be to circumvent the executive assistant, but to turn them into an ally.”

Author Mark Hunter has a really interesting take on timing. He recommends calling between five minutes before the hour to three minutes after. Why? As Hunter explains, “That’s when the CEO will often pick up the phone directly, because most scheduled calls start on the hour.” My suggestion would be to use this tactic especially around 10 A.M. and 2 P.M., two of the most commonly chosen times to start those calls.

Hunter goes on to emphasize that no one guards their time more closely than a CEO, so when you do get them on the phone, ask for a twenty-minute slot for your own arranged call. They’ll usually block out thirty minutes and often have the latitude to go longer if the call is important enough.

Beyond the time of day of your calls, *The Truth About Leads* author and *ViewPoint* blog author Dan McDade says you should establish a cadence to your calls and follow-up emails. He suggests four to five phone calls and three to five emails over the course of ten days. Then go back six to eight weeks later to follow up. He says the routine regularly helps him break through to his top prospects.

Blogger Dave Brock agrees with some of the earlier comments about timing, suggesting calling between 6 and 7 A.M. or 6 and 7 P.M., and adds new meaning to the term “ambush call.” At one point, he’d read an article in *The Wall Street Journal* about Jerry Johnson, then the number-three person at Kodak, talking about restructuring the way they sell. Brock dispatched a letter, only to find that Johnson had already received seventy other letters on the subject.

“Furthermore,” Johnson explained, “I don’t take calls from consultants.” But he went on to say he remembered Brock’s letter and gave him ninety seconds to explain himself. Rather than taking the bait, Brock suggested that he patch in his client at Gillette, knowing Johnson had expressed admiration for what that company had achieved with their sales.

They connected with the client, who gave a glowing report on Brock, and the call eventually resulted in \$3 to \$4 million in business.

If you find yourself having to leave a voice mail, how do you make sure it isn't ignored? Author and blogger Craig Elias recommends that you never leave a voice mail on the first call, while Sales4Startups cofounder Bennett Phillips advises mixing in a bit of email with your first message. "Send an email that gets cut in the middle of what you were saying," he advises, "then send another immediately saying you hit the 'Send' button too early." He says this tactic may make you look sloppy, but more importantly, it humanizes you. He even advises mixing in a few typos to reinforce the sense that this is you typing, not you running a campaign.

Elias has another trick up his sleeve, in that he advises watching for triggers before reaching out to anyone. He spends his time looking for people who are in a new job. "That's when they are most open to new ideas," he says, "because they're ramping up their tenure quickly and don't necessarily have established vendor relationships yet." He says if someone in that position is spending \$1 million or more on something, they'll likely make the buying decision within three months—and 80 percent of the time, the first person in gets the business.

His method for breaking through involves a weeklong plan aimed at getting the target executive on the phone that Friday morning. It starts with an initial call on Tuesday. If there's no answer, he doesn't leave a voice mail, but calls again on Wednesday, usually before or after the assistant's work hours, to leave a voice mail. He follows that with an email with just two words in the subject line to create curiosity. Inside, the email contains something short, something easy to say "Yes" or "No" to—but he never sells a product; he "sells verbs." His focus is on useful actions, not canned solutions, and he says by the time he makes the call on Friday morning, he generally gets through.

Once you do break through to the target executive, you'd better be ready to have a quick, substantive call, one that grabs the CEO's interest immediately and moves the conversation where you need it to go. That's not easy when you're under pressure, but our experts offered several methods for overcoming the challenge.

If the target contact is an active blogger or an author, that's easy, says blogger Steve Meyer. "Just tell me you read something I wrote," he says, "but tell me you have a question you'd like to ask." He says it is a sure way to get the conversation started. *Amp Up Your Sales* author and *The Sales Fix* blog author Andy Paul puts it another way: "How do I ask the question that he or she wants answered?" He focuses his time on developing what he calls "killer questions" before making the call, giving himself the opportunity to understand what the target executive's problems are and find ways to define them in new terms. "That's the surest way to get their attention," he says.

Zoominfo cofounder and CEO Henry Schuck made an interesting discovery while calling IT decision makers. His company sells access to a marketing database of these executives, so it was important to understand how they like to do business with vendors. When asked, "When do you respond to a cold call?" their answer was, "Never." When Schuck pressed further, they explained they only take calls when the vendor happens to be calling about something they're working on at the moment. So timing, pre-call research, and new AI tools are critical.

That's an important view, but Avidian vice president of sales David Archer has an even more direct perspective. He says words matter, as does the focus of your call: "It's always about them, never about you." Archer relates an interesting story that may help. There was once an insurance rep who was calling his list, using a script to generate insurance quotes. But he wasn't having any luck, until he dumped the script and tried a more human approach. "Hi, this is Jim from Prudential. We haven't spoken before, but may I tell you how you can stop getting calls from people like me?" That got their attention. He went on to explain, "The reason you're getting these calls is because you're on a list of people who have put their families at risk. May I explain how you can get off the list?" And that led to an avalanche of new quotes.

Matt on Marketing blog author and Heinz Marketing CEO Matt Heinz says a lot of people are reluctant to use the phone because they don't have certainty about what to do next. But as *Inside Sales Experts* blog author Trish Bertuzzi puts it, "Content is the new spam. We've forgotten how to have a conversation, but using the phone is the new way to be human, to

make a real connection.” When making that connection, Scott Plum, president emeritus of the Professional Sales Association, reminds us that persistence is key when using the phone. “The worst thing you can do is not follow up,” he says, as “it leaves the CEO thinking, ‘See, I was right. It wasn’t important.’”

“We’ve forgotten how to have a conversation, but using the phone is the new way to be human, to make a real connection.

—blogger TRISH BERTUZZI”

Category #6: Email

Estimated cost per contact: free

The phone is one way to mount a no-cost Contact Campaign. Email is another. In fact, they’re often used together to great effect. I frequently use my personalized cartoons here, too, capitalizing on a simple trick to install the cartoon at the top of the message, personalized with the target executive’s name.

My favorite tool for this is my trusty Gmail account. Gmail allows me to insert the cartoon graphic, center it at the top of the page, then write out the centered caption immediately below in a nice italicized font. The effect is wonderful and it often grabs attention, especially from the executive assistants who are often the first recipients of my emails. Putting a cartoon about the target executive in the message is a great way to get the email opened and passed along.

This isn’t a book just about using cartoons, however, so let’s take a look at some of our experts’ email tactics for breaking through to VIP prospects. There is a recurring theme throughout this book of getting the timing just right, and our experts’ email tactics follow that pattern.

Skaled CEO Jake Dunlap specializes in fast sales growth strategies for mid-stage startups, and his primary goal for each new client is to establish ten to fifteen top-level connections immediately. To do that, he uses a seven-touch format: email the target executive on a Tuesday, call on Friday,

then repeat the process for the next two weeks, ending in a call the final week. He reports that each wave tends to produce 5 percent increments of contact, with a cumulative 35 percent or so as the final outcome of each Contact Campaign. That's plenty to get his clients rolling in some serious new business.

Dunlap also advocates making a clear request in the email, stating the time and date the sender will call, and a subject line of "It's time to connect —((insert date))." He also advises using referral-style language and building the email for mobile devices first, meaning it should not go long. He finds that if the copy says, "My CEO asked me to reach out to you," the response rate goes up, but it is critical to find the "X factor," something that differentiates you and your reason for connecting, something that focuses on solutions to their immediate problems.

Authors and bloggers Mark Hunter and Craig Elias get even more specific about timing. Hunter says top executives don't have time to read emails during the week, so he advises sending one either at 5 A.M. Saturday morning or late Sunday afternoon. He says, "Who are the senior-level people you can't reach? You'll reach them on the weekends with an email." But he also cautions, "Don't send a pitch; be informational."

Elias tells about a certain C-level Dell executive who would only respond to emails sent Sunday afternoon, and an 8:30 A.M. Saturday conversation he had with a CFO who'd been unresponsive for weeks, all from a simple, well-timed email that morning. Hunter says CEOs often receive 300 to 400 emails a day and simply can't keep up. During the weekend, however, those same executives receive thirty to forty emails a day, making your chances of breaking through far better than during the week.

Author Aaron Ross advocates prospecting without cold-calling, using the referral approach mentioned in Category #5, but his preferred method is to send the request directly to CEOs in email form. In the email, he asks who handles sales, with the goal of obtaining a top-down referral. When calling, he asks for help rather than blurting out a sales pitch.

Blogger Bennett Phillips takes a similar approach. "Aim to be pushed down," he explains. "Aim above the person you want to speak with, so you'll end up with a referral from above." His approach is also similar to

Elias's, in that he advocates a multistep process. His strategy takes shape with a three-part message, starting with a mention of something the target executive already has in process—perhaps something in their X (formerly Twitter) newsfeed. Part two focuses on the issue he can help the CEO accomplish, and the final effort requests a referral or meeting.

Phillips says subject lines are critical as well. He tries to include something the recipient may not know, with particular focus on what he calls “FUD”—Fear, Uncertainty, and Doubt. He often highlights developing a new skill, uncovering news, or providing a valuable insight, but always with a view toward something the CEO should be afraid of, and with an idea of what they can do about it together.

Phillips also advocates very short copy, and backs it up with the story of how he once connected with Salesforce founder Marc Benioff. “I sent him an email saying just, ‘We’re doing this, is that something Salesforce should be involved with,’” he says, “and Marc responded within thirty seconds.” Phillips also advises using symbols in subject lines, such as, “((the recipient’s company name)) + ((your company name)) = ((something desirable)).”

The content of the message is also of supreme importance, but some of our experts had some very interesting insights beyond the “never pitch and make sure you provide value” mantra. *Hello, My Name Is Awesome* author Alexandra Watkins likes to keep it entertaining. If she finds herself facing a string of unreturned phone calls, she sends her “Magic 8 Ball” email. The email says, “Dear John, every Monday I ask my 8 Ball, ‘Will John return my call this week?’ And today, the answer was ‘Most Definitely.’” She says it works nearly 100 percent of the time.

Insight Selling coauthor John Doerr says he once saw the chairman of Ford walking by and later wrote an email saying, “I passed you in the hall and didn’t get a chance to talk.” He continues, “I know what you’re trying to do and I think you’re going down the wrong road. I think I have something to offer.” That email helped him break through, but what is significant is the tone and reference to something very personal: *I saw you today and didn’t get a chance to tell you something important.*

Blogger Steve Meyer says the personal touch can also extend to something the CEO has written, tweeted, or posted. But SalesLoft CEO

Kyle Porter and author Aaron Ross take an even simpler approach. “We just email them,” says Porter, “but with smart information related to something happening in their lives.” Ross adds, “I just ask a very direct question.” His email campaign to CEOs while serving as vice president of sales for Salesforce has achieved near-urban legend status due to its unusually high response rate, and all it said was, “I’m at Salesforce, can you direct me to the person in charge of CRM?”

Category #7: Social Media

Estimated cost per contact: free

Social media is a broad topic, and I certainly do not consider myself an expert in the field. Still, in my discussions of Contact Campaign types, the subject has come up a lot. Social media is changing so much of our lives, and certainly how we connect with the world. It also makes connecting with VIPs far easier than it has ever been before.

Social media functions like a combination of old-fashioned personal introduction with a 24/7 networking event in hyper mode. If you’re a user of LinkedIn (and you should be), the interface includes a diagram showing how you are already connected with people you don’t know through people you do know. It even maps out how you can secure introductions from several sources. It’s a roadmap for making important connections.

Social media contacts fall into two categories: those who come to you and those you seek out. It is clear that nearly all of the thought leaders interviewed for this book are convinced that the first category, those who *come to you* as a result of your activities in the various channels, are fundamentally changing the way we buy and sell goods and services. But Contact Marketing takes the opposite approach. We’re concentrating on those you seek out: the high-level, high-value VIP prospects we have identified through our research as members of our Top 100 or Strategic 100 list.

So that’s where we’ll focus, on the social media activities that support the Contact Marketing mission. To assess the adequacy of social media as a

Contact Marketing platform, you must consider the following three questions for each VIP on your list:

1. Does your target contact write articles, books, or a blog?
2. Is your target active in social media, and if so, which platforms?
3. Who do you have as common connections?

Armed with these three critical bits of information, social media can be a powerful ally in your Contact Marketing activities. Imagine, for example, if you were to discover that several of your Top 100 list members are active writers. Their articles are essentially invitations to have a conversation. They're showing you what they're interested in, what they think, and where they stand. It's the perfect entrée for striking up a conversation and, from there, a relationship.

Even as you're employing other Contact Campaign methods, combining them with smart social media usage makes a lot of sense. It helps you warm any cold-call situation and opens doors that otherwise may have remained closed. Remember, people buy from people they know and like. Social media gives you a head start and should always be part of your Contact Campaign strategy. Even the simple act of praising something a target VIP has said in a tweet, or favoriting, retweeting, liking, or sharing something they've already posted to Twitter or Facebook, can open the way to positive interactions.

Category #8: Triggers

Estimated cost per contact: free

Author and blogger Craig Elias says he focuses on triggering events, or simply, "Triggers," a variation on the use of social media and Google Alerts, for his Contact Campaign strategy. And he has a solid argument for it.

Elias says he searches for people who've just taken on new jobs, because they're most open to change. "If they're spending a million or more

dollars on something, most make their decisions within the first three months on the job,” he says, adding, “Eighty percent of the time, the first person in the door gets to shape the problem, develop the solution, and win the business.”

ZoomInfo’s Henry Schuck agrees, but widens the scope of target triggers to new funding. He says it’s wise to recognize pain points but also to strike at the right time based on identifying triggers. Reaching out to a vice president of sales of a startup that has just received funding with a simple message of, “Congrats, but now how will you make your sales grow?” is enough to break through and win their business, notes Schuck.

Unlike other methods, triggers can’t be made or launched by the Contact Marketer, but they can be a powerful determining factor in breaking through to prospects who become VIPs, based on their timing. Elias and Schuck both say determining when to connect is as important as strategizing what you’ll send to break through.

Category# 9: Google Alerts

Estimated cost per contact: free

Google offers a wonderful, free service called Google Alerts. Are you using it? You should be. In case you’re not familiar with it, Google Alerts allow you to set up an ongoing search for mentions of whatever you tell it to watch for. Once an Alert term is triggered, Google sends you an email detailing the mention. You should at least have alerts set up for your name and your company name; to do that, simply go to www.google.com/alerts.

Google Alerts, it turns out, is also a powerful tool for gaining the attention of your target VIPs. Best-selling author David Meerman Scott says they’re almost foolproof connectors, and you don’t even have to try to reach the target executive or get past their assistant. All you have to do is *mention* the person in a blog post and *they’ll call you*.

Scott has plenty of examples of the tactic working brilliantly. “I once wrote a blog post that was critical of General Motors,” he recalls, “and I ended up being invited to meet with their CEO for an in-person interview.”

In another instance, he wrote a review of recording star Amanda Palmer's new book, which resulted in direct contact and a tweet to her million-plus followers. He explains, "If a famous person has a book and you're the first to review it, they will see it and they will respond."

Scott says his *Marketing Lessons from the Grateful Dead* coauthor and HubSpot CEO Brian Halligan is always hearing from people trying to get a job. "Ninety-nine percent of them go the usual route, which doesn't break through in today's world," he explains, "but only a few have written blog posts explaining why they'd be worthy of a job." He says that not only shows the writer has marketing chops, but it breaks through directly to Halligan, because his Google Alerts feed directly to him. "What's different about this," he asserts, "is that people end up finding it and then finding you."

Author and blogger Mark Hunter agrees. He tells the story of a target company having just acquired a tech startup. "I posted a blog comment congratulating my target prospect," he says, "and added that integration is always a critical issue and I can help. It got me the call and the client."

Google Alerts are a "must do" for your Contact Campaign. They're simple, they're easy, and they're automatic. All you have to do is speak up online to start breaking through.

<https://www.google.com/alerts>; free

Category# 10: Mail

Estimated cost per contact: \$1 to \$35

Mail-based Contact Campaigns are at the core of what I do, so I have a great affection for this category. Remember, I started out creating campaigns for many of the world's biggest direct marketers, and even earned a nomination to the Direct Marketing Association's Hall of Fame for my work.

When you're engaged in mailings that reach millions, the strategic choices are quite different from what you'd use for a Contact Campaign. Because the list of recipients is minuscule, you can afford to add production

values that would be out of the question on a large campaign. To put that in perspective, a mailing that goes to a million recipients must cost pennies apiece to break even. But a mailed Contact Campaign piece can easily cost even a few hundred dollars each and still make sense if it nets a few hundred thousand dollars' worth of business.

For me, this has been an invitation to go wild, to totally distort what a mailing is. If you think about it, the 18" × 24" BigBoards are really giant postcard mailings. Bending the usual parameters of mailed pieces can yield some pretty awesome results. In one campaign, I produced a folded letter that went into the envelope the long way. The envelope featured a colorful personalized strip cartoon (multiple panels, captioning done within the artwork in my own handwriting), which was then placed in a custom-designed, corrugated cardboard carrier. The carrier was made of fine, E-flute cardboard and included an exact-fit recess for the envelope and letter, creating a jewel-like presentation. The effect was stunning and very effective.

Another variation was the fold-over piece that formed an inner pouch for the letter and an attached gift card. When the piece was folded, a strip cartoon was visible on the upper flap, which then showed through a translucent vellum outer envelope. Completing the effect, I hand-addressed the outer envelopes below the cartoon showing through from inside. It was an impressive piece of mail no one could ignore. In fact, the recipients didn't ignore it at all; it produced a 7,500-fold return on the campaign based on sales.

Much of what is used as mailed Contact Campaigns takes the form of "dimensional mail," usually something delivered in a box. Author Chet Holmes gives us a great example with his "Trash Can" mailing.² Enclosed in the mailing box was a miniature metal trash can containing Holmes's wadded-up letter. The message started, "I knew you'd throw my letter away, so I thought I'd save you the trouble." As you might guess, a high percentage of recipients flattened out the letter, read it, and connected with Holmes.

Author Alexandra Watkins adds, "You've got to do something unexpected, something that makes people smile." She recalls the Contact Campaign she sent to the chief marketing officer of Altec Lansing,

consisting of a bright pink envelope, pink mints, and hand-picked stamps, which resulted in a hit. Postage stamps in particular can be a striking element of your campaign. I've used crops of the artwork of the cartoon inside to form a custom stamp, which gives it an amazingly coordinated appeal. Almost any custom stamp can be produced through Stamps.com.

J. Barrows Blog author John Barrows and *Nonstop Sales Boom* author Colleen Francis have found success adding gift cards and lottery tickets to their contact letters. Barrows used Dunkin' Donuts cards featuring his company's logo, along with a note asking for a meeting over coffee. Francis enclosed a lottery ticket in her Contact Campaign for a startup agricultural sales company. The accompanying copy theme was, "Don't take a chance on our offer, take a chance on the lottery instead." The copy went on to explain their chances of "winning" were far greater with her client, which closed not only a lot of meetings, but a 1,700-fold return based on resulting business.

Francis also emphasizes consistency in her mailed Contact Campaigns. She says 60 percent respond after the sixth touch, so in her sixth card she asks, "Do you really want me to go to the seventh card or will you talk to me now?" She says most salespeople give up before the sixth or seventh touch, which is a big mistake. When interviewed for this book, Bridget Gleason, Yesware vice president of sales, said that for her consulting practice, she sends quarterly postcards with odd, disarming themes and handwritten notes. As a result, on her second or third call, she gets through. Often the vice presidents of sales on the other end would tell her, "I know who you are, now I'm ready to talk."

Author John Doerr says when he has a list of 100 people and wants to produce a 100 percent connection, he sends a series of dimensional mailings, first containing single darts; then, finally, the dartboard arrives with his message. Of course, his copy theme is aimed at hitting sales targets for his prospects, all of which produces a 30 to 40 percent response. "Still," he says, "the secret is the list, list, list!"

Author Dave Kahle and *Who the Hell Am I to Start a Business?* author Tara Truax focus on message and consistency, but their secret to breaking through is the mode of delivery. Both say pieces delivered in FedEx packs do best, because they look like important correspondence.

Kahle recounts a campaign he once received. “The FedEx guy walks into my office and says, ‘Sign here,’” he explains, “so I stopped everything, opened the box, and found inside a 16-ounce bottle of Pepsi, a pack of microwave popcorn, and a yellow envelope.” Inside the envelope was a note inviting him to relax and attend a twenty-minute webinar. “They’d done their research and invested in me,” he says, “and because they were willing to spend \$35 to talk to me, I made the appointment.”

Other experts talk about the importance of handwritten notes as a way to break through and humanize yourself to your quarry. Magazine publisher John McDermott has a particularly clever take on the theme. He finds advertisements in magazines and newspapers, tears them out, and sticks them in an envelope along with a handwritten comment on a sticky note saying, “I saw your ad and a lightbulb went off in my head. If you’re interested in what that was, give me a call.” He says at least 40 percent call back and convert to relationships. When they call back, he tells them about a problem with the ad and how to fix it. “At that point,” he says, “they ask, ‘What do you do?’ and I usually get their business.”

Motivate People and *Objections! Objections! Objections!* author Gavin Ingham and *Score More Sales* blog author Lori Richardson have other uses for handwritten notes. Richardson likes to use custom cards saying, “Congratulations” and “Aspire, Shine” on the outside and a handwritten note inside, with her logo and business card. Usually, her notes are just a few well-chosen words, “Way to go!” when passing along her congratulations.

Ingham likes to pair his handwritten notes with cartoons, and in that way, he and I are a lot alike. We once produced an appointment-generation campaign for an insurance client, composed of a greeting card featuring an individually personalized cartoon on the outside and a handwritten note inside asking for the appointment. The outer envelope was also hand addressed. The campaign produced a 100 percent response against a list of 1,200 recipients.

Cards can also be quite useful for dislodging stalled sales situations. I often use a card with one of my cartoons showing an angry butterfly seated at a desk on the phone. If I were to send it to someone named Bob, the caption would read, “*Don’t put me on hold, Bob. I only have a two-week*

lifespan.” Nine times out of ten, the target executive returns the call. I think this cartoon is particularly effective because it delivers the message, “Hey, we’re wasting precious time—pick up the phone and call me,” but it does it in an entirely disarming way.

CEO and blogger Matt Heinz and author Michael Krause say including executive assistants in your mailed Contact Campaign makes a lot of sense as well. Krause makes a habit of sending handwritten thank-you notes to whomever he meets, especially the receptionists and assistants along the way. “I sent one to this particular receptionist,” he recalls. “Everyone was shocked, and she had it pinned dead center on her work desk.” He feels strongly about including assistants, because as he points out, “CEOs often ask their admins how certain callers have treated them on the phone. It’s important to them and it’s important to the assistant.”

Heinz says executive assistants never get mail and they should. “These people are not obstacles, they’re allies,” he says, “and they’re keenly attuned to the CEO’s interests and priorities.” He advocates creating content for executive assistants along with their CEOs, based on making their bosses look good and improving their own career paths. “Think of the EA as your target as well,” he says. “Care about what they care about; start there, and create value for them.”

Mailed Contact Campaigns have produced some of the biggest results I have encountered thus far. One of the most extreme cases is the campaign I mentioned earlier that was produced by author and blogger Paul McCord. Before he became a top sales author, consultant, and speaker, McCord worked as a mortgage broker, and at one point, wanted to enlist the help of seventy local home builders as referral sources.

Drawing on previous experience in that industry, he devised a mailing consisting of a cardboard tube, a flow chart, and a simple note asking for a phone meeting. He knew builders were accustomed to receiving architectural plans in tubes, so they weren’t likely to ignore his mail piece. And he knew they were used to following the progress of their projects on flow charts, so he also devised a way to express his value proposition as a flow chart.

The results were astounding. Of the seventy builders contacted, thirty became referral sources, and over the course of the following year, they

generated over \$1.1 million in mortgage fees. That came from a mail campaign that cost \$175 all in, yielding a 628,571 percent ROI. If anyone doubts the value of Contact Marketing as a way to leverage a few dozen key contacts to quickly expand the scale of any enterprise, refer them to Paul McCord's example.

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<http://www.stamps.com>; \$19.99 monthly service fee, plus postage

Compendium

An array of inspirational greeting cards and other items for all occasions, including addressing any of your Top 100 list—including assistants—for your Contact Campaign.

<http://www.live-inspired.com>; \$7.96 and up

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- ✓ It's not necessary to spend anything to use Contact Marketing; thus, anyone can afford to use it.
- ✓ The telephone has been used in sales all along, but there are some specific techniques you can employ to reach senior executives.

- ✓ One technique is simply to ask for help finding the right person rather than pitching.
- ✓ Another critical element to reaching CEOs on the phone is timing.
- ✓ Persistence and a mixture of voice mails and email is often effective, as long it's about providing information rather than pitching.
- ✓ When you reach the CEO, be prepared with relevant information, or better still, "killer" questions that immediately engage the executive.
- ✓ Emails can also be quite effective at breaking through.
- ✓ My own trick is to plant a personalized cartoon at the top of the message, which often gets a lot of attention and encourages pass-along.
- ✓ Personalizing the cartoon with the target executive's name also ensures it will be passed along by the executive assistant.
- ✓ Timing is a useful consideration with email; senior executives are often most apt to respond to a message received early Saturday morning or early Sunday evening.
- ✓ Subject lines are vital to breaking through; make them personal, relevant, and fascinating, or focus on something that may be causing the executive to experience fear, uncertainty, or doubt.
- ✓ In email, it's often best to be extremely brief, perhaps as few as one or two lines.
- ✓ Social media has become a force in our lives and a critical element at any level of selling, especially in Contact Marketing.
- ✓ Social media can help you create a relationship with your Top 100 list members before you actually reach out to them in your Contact Campaign.

- ✓ Triggers tell you precisely when to connect with certain VIP prospects, based on events in their lives and resulting needs for solutions and help.
- ✓ Google Alerts provide an easy method for reaching top executives; the alerts cause the VIPs to call you.
- ✓ Mail-based Contact Campaigns can be extremely powerful, posting some of the biggest returns discovered during the research for this book.
- ✓ Cartoons—particularly personalized cartoons—work extremely well in mailed Contact Campaigns.
- ✓ Dimensional mail, usually packaged in custom boxes, also grabs a lot of attention.
- ✓ Mailed pieces, due to their low cost, can be used effectively as multi-wave elements that project professional perseverance and break down a VIP's resistance to connect.
- ✓ Handwritten notes of all kinds are effective methods for humanizing yourself to your target contacts.
- ✓ Always think of ways to include executive assistants in your Contact Campaign mail plan.



“Now, hang on a second. So what you’re saying is, ‘Take a look at these charts and graphs, and then give you all of our money?’”

CHAPTER 10

Media, Insight, Exposure, and Events

Switching gears again, let's examine a completely different tier of Contact Campaign categories, focusing on information, insight, and media. As you have read in earlier chapters, CEOs respond in their own self-interest and to any information that may give them a competitive advantage. One of their primary missions is to get their story out to their marketplace; helping them get there will help you get where you want to go, too. Let's take a look.

Category #11: Interviews and Media Presence

Estimated cost per contact: \$0 to \$1,000

Interviews are a tremendously effective method for gaining access to VIPs, and also for quickly fostering a warm relationship based on providing immediate value that is anything but a sales pitch. Interview requests can range from asking for advice to offering a valuable opportunity for the target executive to tell their story and share their thinking through meaningful media exposure.

American Marketing Association CEO Russ Klein says students often ask him during his college addresses how to connect with potential employers. His advice is to call the company and ask for an advice interview. "You start by contacting someone above your target, so there's a chance of producing a top-down referral from above," he says, "then you ask for fifteen minutes and explain that you don't want anything but advice." Klein says top executives rarely turn down a fresh graduate with a sincere request for advice, and at least one out of every ten interviews can result in a job. And he advises, "Never leave an advice interview without asking for the name of someone else who can give you advice."

“Never leave an advice interview without asking for the name of someone else who can give you advice.

—RUSS KLEIN, CEO of AMA”

Blogger Steve Meyer reminds us that checking first if the target executive has published an article or has been quoted recently in the press is a great way to connect. “The easiest way to reach me,” he reiterates, “is to tell me you read something I wrote.” Meyer says it’s easy to find something the VIP has said with a simple Internet search, and it provides an immediate conversation starter, in addition to a valid reason for connecting.

The New Handshake coauthor and *Social Centered Selling* blog author Barb Giamanco favors acting as a connector between her target VIPs and the press or other authors. She watches for opportunities to make those connections simply by checking for releases of books, articles, and other interviews that relate in some way to her target executive’s business, then offering an introduction to the author. If they bite, she has a reason to call her target and has something of great value to pass along.

Magazine publisher John McDermott amplifies Giamanco’s point, saying, “Almost anyone can write and publish an article, and if it’s written as a newsworthy piece, it can get picked up by various media outlets and promoted in social media.” McDermott suggests turning the interview into a news event, and says he has never encountered resistance to the approach, either from the target’s assistant or their PR handlers. “If you are able to get your article placed in the more esteemed media outlets,” he says, “people become very excited to share their stories and, more to the point, engage with you.”

But you don’t have to be a member of the press or have deep editorial connections to offer real value through your interview requests. “If you don’t have a show, start one,” says Sales Lead Management Association president and founder James Obermayer. “Become your own media company.” As part of his duties as president of the association, he hosts a weekly live web radio show that is then archived as a podcast. He says his show makes it easy to break through to virtually any VIP, and he finds their PR people are anxious to make the connection happen.

Sales Gravy CEO Jeb Blount agrees. He finds that the technique of interviewing VIP prospects works consistently, but you must have a platform. “If I’m one of a hundred people trying to reach the target executive,” he says, “saying I’d like to spend thirty minutes interviewing them for a book, white paper, or podcast always gets me through.” He points to a recent Harvard study in which researchers found that blood rushes to people’s brains when they talk about themselves. “It makes them feel important,” he explains. “It makes them feel good.” He reports that his interview requests produce a “roughly 100 percent penetration rate,” and says he once landed a \$250,000 consulting job simply because he’d interviewed a VP of human resources for his blog.

Of all the possible formats for self-generated media, podcasts seem to be ideal for the Contact Marketing mission. As author Tom Searcy points out, a podcast can be simply a recorded phone interview, which can then be transcribed and compiled into a “Best Practices” book.

For one of his clients, that was their strategy to establish a beachhead in a new market for their new construction division. “We contacted the biggest developers in the area, interviewed them, and published the transcripts as a book,” Searcy explains, “and that got them hooked as clients.” He points out that interviews leave the door open for callbacks to review any questions before publication. “It gives you a golden opportunity to send information on what you do.”

Author Todd Schnick seems to have honed the podcast interview format into a Contact Marketing marvel. CEO of The Intrepid Group, Schnick recorded his first podcast in 2008, when he started interviewing recently laid-off executives who were embarking on unexpected consulting careers. “It was easy to connect with them,” he recalls, “and it gave us some terrific content to offer our listeners.” It wasn’t long before he realized this would be his method for breaking through to everyone he wanted to do business with.

Today, Schnick produces and hosts roughly a dozen regular podcasts on a variety of subjects, making his company a virtual contact factory for clients. And he’s found that hosting a marathon of interviews at trade shows can transform the scale of his clients’ businesses almost overnight. “We re-engineer their show booth into a broadcast booth and invite sixty to seventy

executives they want to connect with at the show,” he says, “and it creates an immediate connection they can easily convert into client relationships.”

Schnick says anyone can do this and advises, “If your goal is to reach business leaders, start a business show.” He says there are many advantages to this contact approach. “It’s an easy ask; people are desperate to tell their stories,” he says, adding, “The gatekeeper always wants to get the interview to happen.” Best of all, the target executives will usually promote the podcast to their audiences, so your own audience grows with every podcast release.

“The target executives will usually promote the podcast to their audiences, so your own audience grows with every podcast release.”

Podcasts are such a good fit, I recommend that you start your own immediately. Requests for interviews are powerful contact devices and the cost is negligible, even if you decide to add professional production values, even commercials. Being the host of your own podcast adds an important new factor to your VIP statement, and consider this: If you run your own commercial during the show, the most important set of ears is already tuned in. Those would be your target contact’s ears. And you’ll have their full attention.

FreeConferenceCall

A free service, offering online meetings with up to twenty-five attendees, an iOS or Android app for on-the-go interviews, and that all-important easy-record feature to make podcasting easy . . . and did I mention it’s all free?

<http://www.freeconferencecall.com>; free

Podbean

A one-stop shop for recording, editing, and publishing your podcasts—even hosting your own podcast site. Also includes a public-facing roundup of hosted podcasts, so you can share your content with a broader audience and even earn extra income from your content.

<http://www.podbean.com>; \$0 to \$79/month

Category #12: Books and Articles

Estimated cost per contact: \$1 to \$150

If you're already an author, it's probably no surprise that a signed copy of your book can be a very useful tool for breaking through to CEOs, and it makes a substantial impression as part of your VIP statement. So you might think this category is only for published authors. I'm happy to tell you that is not the case.

Today, anyone can become an author in as little as a few hours. Or you can take a year to write and publish a solid book based on your experiences. A ten- or twenty-page e-book is a snap to put together and publish as a PDF, which you can attach to an email or offer from your site. Print-on-demand services such as CreateSpace and Lulu enable you to publish a beautifully produced book that you can sell on Amazon and other outlets. Blurb goes a bit further, enabling you to produce impressive hardbound books with photographic book jackets. And then there are the extensive marketplaces for e-books; Amazon's Kindle, Apple's iBooks, Barnes and Noble's Nook, and more. Becoming a published author has never been easier or more accessible.

The gold standard is still the traditional route of signing with an agent, who then markets your book to one of the publishing houses. What you lose in control of a self-published work you gain in terms of greatly enhanced credibility in the marketplace and quality of the end product. Having a major publishing brand, not to mention the might of their marketing, PR, and distribution channels, adds a great deal of weight to your VIP statement and market presence.

If you decide you want to use a book as part of your Contact Campaign strategy, the first choice you must make is whether to send your own or use someone else's. Obviously, there is far more leverage from using your own book, perhaps with your picture worked into the cover design. As author and columnist Dave Stein puts it, "Your book is the best business card you could ever have." Stein likes to make his book deliveries highly personal. "I like to go through the target contact's annual report to find a challenge I can help them overcome," he explains, "then add a sticky note to the cover, pointing them to a particular page, and write a note in the margins of the page." But, he points out, you can easily do the same thing with any book or even an article you or someone else has written.

"Your book is the best business card you could ever have.

—author DAVE STEIN"

Most of the authors I interviewed echo Stein's sentiments regarding the use of their books as the ultimate calling card. Author Jill Konrath finds that her books not only prompt VIP executives to visit her site, but copies sold through bookstores also result in a lot of calls and letters asking for further discussion. Author Dave Kahle points out that you may not make money from the sales of your book, but it pays enormous dividends from the engagements that result from having a book on the market. "Whether you use it as a door-opener or someone finds it on the shelf at a bookstore," he says, "it makes a powerful impression of credibility and shows what you do."

Baseline Selling author and *Understanding the Sales Force* blog author Dave Kurlan says it goes a long way with CEOs he'd like to meet if he simply autographs his book, along with a quick handwritten note asking to talk. Author Dan McDade uses the occasion to send not only his book but also a \$25 gift certificate and a coffee mug, with a note asking to have a cup of coffee together while talking on the phone. Alen Mayer, who wrote *Trigger Events* and *Selling Is Better Than Sex*, says VIPs often challenge him on the title of the latter, while he uses actual trigger events to make his bids for contact always relevant to their circumstances. "I try to be non-invasive," he explains. "I just want to see if there is an opportunity to help."

Author Alexandra Watkins turns the equation completely around and seeks out VIPs who also happen to be authors, using *their* books as her Contact Campaign. “I take a selfie in front of my pink refrigerator, which doubles as a bookshelf in my office,” she says, “and then I send a note saying, ‘I keep all of my coolest books in the pink fridge, and I’m glad to have yours included.’ ” She has reached *The New York Times* bestsellers Adam Grant, Sandy Carter, and *Shark Tank* cohost Barbara Corcoran that way, which netted high-profile tweets from all three about her own book.

Authors John Doerr and Andy Paul caution that sending a book—any book—without specific cause can be a mistake. Doerr says one of his clients sent 500 copies of his book, but didn’t see a lot of response. “One of the recipients’ assistants told him, ‘Oh sure, we get about forty of these a week,’ ” explains Doerr, “which means you don’t stand out.” He says if you’re not addressing specific concerns in your cover note, sending your book won’t get you through. Paul says he uses social media before sending his book to ensure a higher level of engagement.

Still, author Colleen Francis says sending your own book is important, because if it resonates with the target executive, they want more of you. “Consultants worry that giving their books away for free discourages further sales or engagement,” she says, “but nothing can replace you as a personality.” She also insists that sending any book must be supplemented with a bookmark or sticky note explaining why it’s relevant.

Francis also recommends sending articles with the same sticky notes explaining why the article has been sent. She tells the story of wanting to reach ad agency executives. “We sent copies of a *Fast Company* story on the shake-up among ad agencies,” she says, “and at least 50 percent called me back.”

ROI Selling author and *ROI4Sales* blog author Michael Nick says writing your own book can have other benefits, which bring VIPs to you. He reports having sold his company recently, and the buyers insisted on using his book as an ongoing contact device for the company as part of the deal. Since he makes royalties on each sale, the book added value to the transaction for both sides.

CreateSpace

A true miracle of the age of self-publishing, CreateSpace offers a complete, print-on-demand–based publishing platform for authors. And since it is a division of Amazon, it’s already plugged into all of the print-based, bookselling platforms. The dashboard does a beautiful job of sales tracking, and the print-on-demand (softcover only) books are first-rate quality, looking like any other you’d find on any bookshelf.

<http://www.createspace.com>; \$2 and up per book if you buy them; otherwise, you *make* money

Blurb

Blurb is also a self-publishing platform, dedicated to producing high-quality hardcover books with fine, photographic paper jackets. Although the company caters to the “here’s a book of my vacation photos” market, this is a great platform for producing one-of-a-kind books—even one-off custom magazines—that will help you impress and break through to your toughest VIP prospects.

<http://www.blurb.com>; \$2.49 and up

iStockPhoto

If you’re going to publish a book, it should reflect the level of professionalism you bring in your own business. iStockPhoto is one of many stock photo, illustration, and video sources that can supply the graphics you’ll need to produce a gorgeous cover and a sparkling design inside. Google “stock photography” to find others.

<http://istockphoto.com>; \$12 per credit, most royalty-free licenses are 1 to 3 credits

Bowker

Every published book must have an ISBN (International Standard Book Number), and Bowker is the only official US ISBN agency. But they're so much more. Visit their sites to obtain your ISBN number and matching cover barcode, as well as help with cover design, self-publishing strategies, publicity, and more.

<http://www.myidentifiers.com>, www.selfpublishedauthor.com, www.bowker.com; **\$125 for a single ISBN, other prices vary by service**

Category #13: Video

Estimated cost per contact: \$5 to \$1,000

With the amazingly rapid pace of change in our lives, it's easy to forget that simple and inexpensive access to video has only been around for relatively few years. Even at that, it seemed to be the province of teens talking to their smartphone cameras, cute videos of kitties, and stupid human tricks. But I'm happy to report that video has become a prime tool for Contact Marketers as well.

I've mentioned it in [Chapter 5](#), but the NoWait campaign serves as a truly inspiring example here, too. NoWait is an app designed to help restaurants and their patrons manage wait times for tables by turning diners' smartphones into "your table is ready" buzzer pucks. You check in at the podium and your request for a table is entered into the app, leaving you free to continue shopping, take a walk, or wait at the bar. What you don't have to do is wait in a crowded seating area for an hour.

NoWait's CEO tasked Luke Panza, the company's cofounder and vice president of marketing, with delivering an individually customized video to each of the thirty-five restaurant CEOs on their list. The twist was their method of delivery: Each video was distributed on a brand-new iPad. Every unit arrived in the original Apple packaging, but with a few alterations. The tiny instructions booklet was replaced with a NoWait mini brochure, and the

protective screen sheet was replaced with a sheet of instructions: Step 1, turn it on; Step 2, tap the NoWait video icon.

What awaited was a video, individually shot just for each target executive. It started with hidden lapel-cam footage, clearly showing the “interviewer’s” point of view, walking up to one of their restaurants, then into the overcrowded waiting space within. When the interviewer finally reached the reservations desk, he was told it would be an hour-long wait. The interviewer continued, engaging in conversations around the room, asking how patrons felt about waiting so long for a table.

Then the video switched to a segment introducing the NoWait app, and explaining how it does away with annoyingly long waits. It was a beautiful delivery of the company’s value proposition, using slick video production to present it in a fashion no sales rep could match in person. The video concluded with a segment showing the NoWait CEO speaking directly to the target executive, telling them how he loves eating at their restaurants, but hates having to wait an hour for a table. He then invites the target executive to connect with them and put the app to the test.

Panza says the campaign more than exceeded their expectations, with a 75 percent response, 38 percent in trial, and 17 percent of the largest restaurant chains in the country already clients. Panza also says that due to the long sales cycle involved, they expect to see the trial and close rates climb much higher over the coming year.

One of the more interesting aspects of the NoWait campaign was the marketers’ experimentation with reaching various people in the organizations and reaching out to one versus a handful at the same company. They discovered that the CEOs and CFOs were not the right target, but the COOs were their sweet spot. “After all,” Panza explains, “NoWait is an operational solution.” They correctly identified the “CEO” of the problem, which became their recipe for explosive growth. Still, they found that it was effective to include the CEO on their contact lists, to ensure buy-in at the very top.

Author Tara Truax offers a fascinating variation on the practice of delivering personalized videos on an expensive tablet. “I send the iPad with a note saying I will pick it up at a certain date and time,” she says, “and I ask for a few minutes of their time while I’m there.” This is a brilliant

tactic. You still get to deliver your personalized video message in an impressive form factor, but you also create a reason for stopping by and meeting the target executive. What are they going to say? You've reached out in an entirely clever and audacious way, and they're not going to steal your iPad. This is a powerful way to create an instant connection with the VIP.

But let's not get carried away. You don't have to spend hundreds of dollars apiece for an iPad to deliver your video. You can just as easily load it onto YouTube, Vimeo, or your own site. Better yet, embed it in an email to your targeted CEO. As author Gavin Ingham points out, "People love videos. A five-minute video will get you farther than a five-minute call will."

"People love videos. A five-minute video will get you farther than a five-minute call will.

—author GAVIN INGHAM"

Even if you aren't comfortable on camera yourself, Find New Customers president Jeff Ogden and National Association of Sales Professionals CEO Rod Hairston have a few suggestions. Ogden's approach is to create a slide show presentation with a voiceover using SlideShare. Hairston's suggestion is to try the animated characters found on Live Spark to present your message. He says he used an animated rhinoceros character to sell a training program for Honeywell that helped the division grow by 15 percent.

Investor, social selling evangelist, and keynote speaker Jill Rowley points out that YouTube is the second most popular search engine, but it has no tracking ability. She became an investor in Vidyard because of the tracking technology it includes, allowing users to see view counts and how many times a video was viewed by a particular person. The platform also allows users to personalize videos on the fly, as they're being viewed. "It merges video assets with CRM data," she says, "so the viewer sees a video that was truly made just for them. It's incredibly effective as an email embed."

And finally, social selling strategist Julio Viskovich offers yet another use for video in your Contact Campaign. He uses the StoryQuest video

platform to quickly record a fifteen- to thirty-second video summary of the call, which he embeds in a video after the first contact. “I often hear, ‘Wow, I’ve never seen anything like this before,’ ” he says, “which reinforces the impression that I have really put some work into the reasoning behind my outreach.”

Contact Marketing surely will find many more uses for video. I think this is one of the best ways to accomplish what we’re all ultimately striving for in our campaigns: to humanize ourselves, to create an instant connection, and to quickly transform the contact into a highly profitable relationship.

SlideShare

A quick and easy platform for sharing videos, presentations, infographics, documents, and webinars from your website, blog, or social media outlets.

<http://www.slideshare.net/>; free

Vimeo

A high-end video hosting platform that supports ad-free high-def video.

<http://vimeo.com>; \$0 to \$65/year

Vidyard

Host videos, make them available for every platform, and track analytics in order to maximize conversions from views to clients. Unique calls to action are part of the package, with pop-up forms at the end of your video, so it includes a self-contained response.

<http://www.vidyard.com>; \$0 to \$59 per month

Live Spark

AniMates are live, computer-generated characters that can interact with an audience in real time or can be recorded as your spokesperson in your videos.

<http://live-spark.com>; \$1,000 and up per project

VideoHive

Stock footage, motion graphics, project files, and more; royalty-free video files from \$2 and up; part of the Envato Marketplace, which includes royalty-free photos, code, graphics, audio, music, and other assets for video, print, and web that lend truly professional results to your videos and other projects.

<http://videohive.net>, <http://market.envato.com>; \$4 and up

Category #14: Information and Insight

Estimated cost per contact: \$0

If sending a book or article makes sense, why not engage in an ongoing campaign to provide information and insight as a way to break through? That's the thinking that sets this Contact Campaign category apart, because it involves a different kind of commitment to your VIP prospects.

Sales Heretic blog author Don Cooper says the real opportunity here is to create an ongoing resource campaign. His strategy is to provide resources that potential clients can pass along to their clients. The information not only has to be usable and free of cost, it also has to provide value or insight to your VIP list members. "Send them articles, podcasts, e-books, infographics, and PDFs," he explains. "Keeping it up means that critical relationship is building over time." Cooper believes you must earn a VIP prospect's attention, and providing information, value, and insight is a

powerful way to break through, as long as you commit to making a consistent effort over time.

Author Linda Richardson points out that the Internet has changed the sales equation drastically, because buyers have already done most of their research before buying. So business expertise and insights are what prospects value now, not just product expertise. She says, “How is an insight like a refrigerator? When you open the door, the light goes on.” Richardson sees insights as a critical part of what she calls “The New Selling.”

But how do you come up with insights a CEO will want to hear? Richardson’s approach is to ask questions whenever you get the chance, then focus squarely on the VIP’s needs. “Offering an insight and not pitching,” she says, “is what is going to perk them up, if it’s on-target with their needs.” Author Anthony Iannarino agrees. “CEOs are constantly watching what other people are doing, what are they looking at, and what books should they be reading,” he explains. “If you can offer help with the strategic challenges they’re facing, that’s what they want.” He emphasizes that you’ve got to have business acumen and do your research before you talk to them, which extends neatly to the strategy of providing a steady stream of information and insight. As Iannarino puts it, “CEOs want to see around corners, and the more you demonstrate you can help with that, the better.”

Author Barb Giamanco amplifies the point further, saying, “The more you can give first and demonstrate you’re not just someone who’s trying to sell something, the more opportunities you’ll receive.” Giamanco also reminds us of the familiar mantra, that people buy from people they know, like, and trust. “Nobody wants to buy from the guy who thrusts his card in your hand looking to sell,” she explains. “You want to be someone who people ask for their card.”

“Nobody wants to buy from the guy who thrusts his card in your hand looking to sell.

—author BARB GIAMANCO”

There really are no shortcuts to becoming a trusted source of information and insights. It comes from making a commitment to searching

out and digesting articles, social media feeds, and the like, from always watching for intelligence the VIP prospects on your list might appreciate.

A word of caution, though: If you're going to use this strategy, it becomes imperative to explore sources the CEOs on your list don't already monitor. Pulling stories from *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal* may not surprise them much or provide much value. But events, webinars, and podcasts can be excellent sources of intelligence they might not commonly find. These can include direct contact with guest speakers after the event, which can generate a constant stream of information and insights your VIP prospects won't have and will find quite useful.

And here's an idea if you want to truly take it to an even greater level: Compile your reports into a custom magazine, completely personalized to each CEO. Blurb (see the end of Category 12) makes that possible at an incredibly low price point of just \$4.99. You can also use Blurb to deliver a custom-made book for each CEO for as little as \$12 each.

Category #15: Events

Estimated cost per contact: \$0 to \$1,000

As Contact Campaigns, events can be incredibly powerful contact devices. You can approach them either as an attendee or host.

The easiest method is to make use of someone else's event. I recently attended the Dreamforce show in San Francisco, easily the biggest marketing trade show I have ever seen. There were more than a hundred thousand marketers and sales professionals in attendance; the show occupied every building in the Moscone Center campus, and every hotel in the downtown area was sold out. Attendance was free and everybody I ever needed to connect with was already there, in that one location.

I was there for a few reasons. I already had clients in San Francisco to see. As one of the guest authors for the Salesforce blog, I had a private reception to attend. But really, I was there on the advice of keynote speaker and social selling evangelist Jill Rowley.

She says big shows like these are the perfect opportunity to execute what she calls a “Social Surround Strategy,” in which she targets a handful of key people and connects with them on several social media platforms simultaneously. She then reaches out, making note of some of their key common contacts, and mentions she’d like to meet sometime after her speech at the show. Rowley says as Contact Marketers, if we’re not attending the big shows in our own industries, we’re missing our biggest opportunities to connect with our Top 100 and Strategic 100 list members.

Author Dave Stein says it’s often useful to single out speakers for contact and plant yourself on the aisle toward the front to approach them after the presentation. “Don’t bother them beforehand,” he says, “and don’t be the first person to shake their hand. Better to be the third or fourth, when they have time to talk.” Sales Gravy’s Jeb Blount posits, “Why not ask them to dinner? You’d be surprised at how many speakers have no dinner plans after their talks.”

Ruhlin Group founder John Ruhlin takes it to the extreme. When he learned that one of his target VIPs was due to give a speech and that he was a Brooks Brothers fan, Ruhlin outfitted the man’s hotel room with merchandise from the store. That evening, he called Ruhlin and said, “You have my full attention.” *The Guerrilla Connector* author Richard Weiler talks about traveling to events relentlessly to make valuable connections happen. They don’t have to be big ones to have a great effect. “I once flew to Philadelphia to attend one of my target VIP’s local Meetup group,” he recalls, “and he was immediately impressed.” That single action landed Weiler a coveted spot on a national speaker’s tour.

Author Jill Konrath says it’s imperative to attend conferences, noting that one conference recently accounted for a quarter of her annual income. She says even if you don’t have a big budget, you can make a big splash. When HubSpot first launched, they wanted to be involved in Dreamforce, but couldn’t afford to be on the exhibit floor. So they did the next-best thing and rented a room to create their own event. “It worked,” she says. “Look at them now.”

Emotional Intelligence for Sales Success and *Sales Leadership* blog author Colleen Stanley says hosting your own event is a brilliant way to connect with VIPs on your contact list. Although Stanley has hosted a

variety of events over the years, her favorite approach is to host monthly executive briefings. She says even if just a few show up, she closes business. “It’s not the quantity,” she says, “it’s the quality.”

Slammed! For the First Time Sales Manager author and *Your Sales Management Guru* blogger Ken Thoreson takes a similar approach within the IT world, but his focus is to move away from the technical side and have conversations with VPs of marketing and sales. “At the CIO level, they’re highly analytical, they have a tremendous amount of pressure, and their average tenure is just eighteen months,” he explains, “so it’s critical in that environment to connect with multiple points of contact.”

Thoreson’s favorite approach is to host expert summits of fewer than a dozen people with respected thought leaders. He often recruits CIOs to be those thought leaders, yielding a double advantage—invitations to exclusive expert summit events, and a chance to be a thought leader to their peers at other companies, producing more opportunities to connect. “In these events, it’s important to be a member, not a vendor,” he says. “Building trust is a huge factor.”

Rapid Learning Institute CEO and blogger Steve Meyer advises staging your event early in the morning so that it won’t interfere with their day, and making sure they know other C-level executives will be in attendance. “CEOs are usually hungry for an opportunity to connect with other CEOs and swap stories,” he explains. “After all, they truly understand the value of networking.” And as the host, Meyer gets to network more than anyone else in the room.

“CEOs are usually hungry for an opportunity to connect with other CEOs and swap stories.

—blogger STEVE MEYER”

Events in any form can be tremendously effective Contact Campaign tools. They are a great way to immerse yourself in contact opportunities at the larger scale, and on the smaller scale, they offer Contact Marketers focused opportunities to connect with their VIP prospects personally and quickly.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- ✓ Interviews are one of the quickest methods for breaking through to VIP prospects.
- ✓ Interviews must be coupled with real exposure, but there are many ways to make that happen, even if you're just starting out.
- ✓ Each time you interview an executive, they bring their audience to your broadcast or podcast, causing your own audience to grow with every installment.
- ✓ Some interviews can be done simply to get advice or to reach out to a VIP who has written an article, blog post, or book.
- ✓ Most chief executives have a duty to publicize their companies' stories, and their assistants and public relations operatives are only too happy to help make the connection happen.
- ✓ Producing a podcast can be as easy and inexpensive as recording a free conference call and loading it onto a \$10-a-month podcast hosting service.
- ✓ Live podcasts at trade shows are a way of connecting with all or most of the VIPs in attendance.
- ✓ If you want a show-quality podcast, there are reasonably priced services available to put on a truly professional show, complete with commercials for you and your guest.
- ✓ Books and articles are also powerful devices for Contact Campaigns.
- ✓ If you are an author yourself, your book can become your best possible business card.
- ✓ You can also send books by others, but in all cases, include a note explaining why the book is relevant to your request for contact.

- ✓ If you are not an author, becoming one is exceptionally easy and accessible through various self-publishing platforms.
- ✓ A self-published book can look every bit as professional as any other you'd find on a bookshelf and can be produced in any quantity, from a single copy to thousands at a time, on demand.
- ✓ Having your book published professionally adds a tremendous measure of credibility to your name and can result in much greater impact in the marketplace.
- ✓ Your contact target's book can also serve as a Contact device, by reviewing, tweeting, or posting positive comments, or taking selfies while holding the book.
- ✓ Video provides perhaps some of the richest Contact Marketing opportunities of all.
- ✓ Videos can be delivered on physical devices, online, or as attachments to email, all to great effect.
- ✓ Many tools are available to personalize each video to its recipient.
- ✓ Video is a great way to humanize yourself to your VIP prospects.
- ✓ Sending a constant stream of information and insight produces trust and a deepening relationship over time, as long as it contains no pitching.
- ✓ Your sources for information should not include those the CEO already reads; look beyond *The Wall Street Journal* and *The New York Times* for items they haven't already seen.
- ✓ Don't just send information; include your comments to demonstrate your acumen and grasp of the CEO's current issues and concerns.
- ✓ Events can serve as powerful Contact Marketing devices.

- ✓ Use events hosted by others to make easy connections.
- ✓ Host your own events to produce deep connections with the participants.



"We are going to have to let one of you go."

CHAPTER 11

Over the Top

I saved the most entertaining categories for this final grouping. These are the rock stars in terms of entertainment value, but they are also too extreme to be considered the core of Contact Marketing. Still, they are great examples of audacity, creativity, and the kind of thinking that makes Contact Marketing so highly effective.

Category #16: Print and Billboard Media

Estimated cost per contact: \$500 to \$10,000

Some years ago, marketer Rick Bennett was approached by a client who wanted his startup to be the first on the market to offer a new web voice-portal platform. But to get to the next level, he needed to connect with one of the big players in the telecommunications sector. In other words, he needed to partner with someone like John Chambers, president and CEO of Cisco Systems; Bernie Ebbers, president and CEO of MCI WorldCom; or Ed Zander, president and COO of Sun Microsystems, for an infusion of cash and access to the enormous client bases each represented.

But how would they break through? Bennett's solution was to produce a contact letter addressed to all three target executives as a full-page ad and run it in *The Wall Street Journal*. Surely, he thought, John, Bernie, and Ed must be readers of *The Journal*, but even he hadn't expected what came next.

Yes, all three had seen the ad. But what surprised Bennett was how it had enlisted the help of nearly all of the target executives' colleagues and acquaintances, who were among the paper's 2.1 million readers that day—and how it sparked a feeding frenzy among their competitors. When the ad

hit, John's, Bernie's, and Ed's phones lit up all day with calls from people they knew, asking if they'd seen it.

In the end, Oracle CEO Larry Ellison had also seen the ad, and swooped in to preempt the trio by making his own deal with Bennett's client, a transaction worth tens of millions of dollars. With that kind of money at stake, and considering who the target CEOs were, the strategy was entirely justified and the campaign an enormous success.

Bennett has had similar triumphs producing ads on foam core boards and delivering them by courier, rather than running them in the paper. He has used the tactic to precipitate other company acquisitions from big players, including a \$500 million acquisition of one client's startup by Amazon. "The ad encapsulates the entire value proposition of the company," says Bennett, "so it is a very effective tool for getting the right people interested and motivated to move quickly."

Bennett says the same effect can be produced with carefully selected billboards. "For \$7,000 a month, you can buy the billboard directly across the street from General Motors headquarters," he explains, "so if you want to reach anybody in the auto industry, that's the way to do it."

"For \$7,000 a month, you can buy the billboard directly across the street from General Motors headquarters . . . so if you want to reach anybody in the auto industry, that's the way to do it."

—RICK BENNETT, marketer

We've all seen open letters in newspapers, calculated to generate a ground-swell of response; Bennett has simply flipped the equation around, using it to elicit a response from a single, high-value contact target. His message is that traditional media doesn't have to be used in traditional ways. Bennett's work is a brilliant example of the kind of thinking that makes Contact Marketing such a bold, dynamic, and valuable tool for sellers, marketers, and business owners.

Category #17: Prepaid Disposable Phones

Estimated cost per contact: Under \$30

This is a pretty simple premise. Buy a disposable phone, have it delivered to your target executive, and call the phone just as it's being delivered. Still, there are a few nuances you need to know.

Art Sobczak, author of the book and blog *Smart Calling*, recalls the story of a Contact Campaign involving a disposable phone purchased at Walmart. "They stuck it into a FedEx pack with a note saying, 'I'll call you at 10 A.M.," he says. "The secret was creating intrigue as to who's calling and why."

Just as important is knowing when the phone actually does arrive. Author Dave Kurlan recalls the story of a sales rep who sent a disposable phone to a CEO, parked outside his building, then dialed as it was being delivered. "It was actually ringing when the CEO got it," he says, "and so it naturally created intrigue."

Magazine publisher John McDermott admits he likes to use FedEx boxes that he delivers himself, with the disposable phone inside. "The boxes are free," he explains, "and I know precisely when they are delivered if I do it myself."

The key seems to be tightly controlling the timing of your call according to when the phone arrives. But others have reversed the equation, by preprogramming their own number into the phone, then delivering it with instructions to hit the speed dial to connect with the mysterious person who sent the phone.

If you'd like to see this in action, check out the movie *Hitch* starring Will Smith and Eva Mendes. At one point, Hitch launches his campaign to win his love interest's heart by having a messenger deliver a box. Inside is a switched-on walkie-talkie, and when she picks it up and says, "Hello," Hitch is on the other end, waiting to pick up the conversation. It's a delightful scene in a movie full of Contact Marketing examples in action.

Category #18: Personal Interests

Estimated cost per contact: \$0 to \$100

Matt Heinz, CEO of Heinz Marketing, recalls a surprising story of how he had been contacted in a particularly clever way. The campaign came from a company in Texas that formulated a launch strategy around engagement with thought leaders, leading them to speak and blog about myDocket, a fledgling startup with an email-tracking app.

“What amazed me was how thoroughly they had done their homework,” explains Heinz. “It’s one of the best examples of Contact Marketing I’ve ever seen.” The Contact Campaign piece that reached Heinz was an egg carton filled with plastic eggs and a note from myDocket CEO Jason Wesbecher saying, “Don’t count your chickens before they hatch.” Heinz was impressed because it compelled him to post about it in his blog, and he finds himself constantly mentioning the campaign. “The only way they could have known about my wife’s and my passion for raising chickens is if they did their homework,” he says, “and they did a great job of it.”

Wesbecher says he sent personal Contact Campaign pieces to roughly two dozen sales luminaries, just to let them know about myDocket’s offering. What was unique is that every one of the contact pieces was, well, unique. Each was based on personal interests they were able to find from each targeted thought leader’s social media profiles. “We sent a pink Superman cape to Jill Rowley,” he recalls, “and she has worn it onstage several times during speeches and given us plenty of very positive mentions, which is exactly what we’d hoped would happen.”

Wesbecher says authenticity is key in this approach, along with a lot of research and playful creativity. “The idea is to create goodwill, not be boring, and make a friend,” he says. Of the two dozen thought leaders on his contact list, he received calls from roughly 70 percent. The total cost of the campaign was less than a thousand dollars, but he says the exposure and positive mentions from key opinion leaders in his market has been priceless.

Skaled CEO Jake Dunlap recalls one of his favorite campaigns that involved researching the alma maters for each of ten targeted executives. “We found where they went to school and bought their sweatshirts,” he explains, “and then we packaged each with a letter peppered with random facts about their schools and a request to meet.” He reports that the Contact

Campaign produced a high meeting rate with a healthy margin of sales conversions.

Author Dave Stein recalls the time he discovered that the CFO of one of his target companies was also a fellow pilot who kept his plane at the airport on nearby Nantucket island. He also discovered when the fellow most often flew in, then flew there himself. Eventually they met and struck up a conversation there on the tarmac, which led to introductions and a contract. Although this was not a Contact Campaign per se, he uses it to illustrate his point. “You must always be prepared with foreknowledge,” he says, “in sales and certainly in Contact Marketing.” That is particularly true when targeting personal interests in your campaign.

Sometimes taking the personal approach can help move a stalled contact situation along. Author Linda Richardson recalls the difficulty one of her clients was having reaching a target executive at JPMorgan Chase. “The guy was always such a jerk,” she recalls, “so my client did some digging and discovered he was a fan of the Watkins Glen car races. She bought a beautiful model Porsche and sent it to him.” That, coupled with a personal note, enabled her to break through. Touching upon the target executive’s personal interests changed his demeanor and eventually led to business.

Blogger Lori Richardson says, “It can be as easy as simply finding out which teams they follow, what their passions are, and then doing something creative, something that separates you from the rest.” *CRM at the Speed of Light* author and CRM Hall of Fame member Paul Greenberg agrees: “We are all self-interested human beings,” he says, “which is a good thing, not a bad thing.” He says the best way to engage someone is to understand what they’re interested in.

But what if press clippings, social media, and readily available information about a person’s school or favorite team aren’t enough? Author Orvel Ray Wilson suggests going deep undercover to get to the kind of information that motivates a given target executive. He tells the story of a sales rep who had been calling on an electronics manufacturer for months, getting nowhere. He was told, “We’re happy with our vendor,” and was hitting brick walls at every turn.

But the rep discovered that, on every sunny afternoon, there was always a cluster of the company’s workers eating at the outdoor picnic tables just

outside their building. So one day, he showed up with a stack of pizzas, asked if anyone wanted some, and struck up conversations. He asked about the defect rate of certain components and delivery times from their suppliers. Within thirty minutes, he had everything he needed to make his case. From there, he put it all in a letter and got the account. “Sometimes it helps to have friends in low places,” Wilson says slyly.

Whether you decide to tailor your Contact Campaign pieces to each target executive’s set of personal interests, or to take a more standardized approach, every contact effort should incorporate a deep understanding of who they are and what their interests and considerations are. It’s a critical element of every Contact Marketing strategy and, as we’ve just seen, it can be a Contact Campaign all on its own.

Category #19: Investor Relations

Estimated cost per contact: How much do you want to invest?

It’s up to you how much you’d want to invest in a given company, but as author Dave Stein points out, “Stockholders get special access to the C-suite and board members.” He says buying even a little bit of stock entitles you to attend annual stockholders meetings, and all of the C-level executives will be there.

“Dave Stein notes that buying even a little bit of company stock entitles you to attend annual stockholders meetings, and all of the C-level executives will be there.”

Stein advises, “Get there early; position yourself in the right place. Get fully up to speed on what they’re experiencing and where they’re planning to take the company.” As the meeting comes to a close, that’s when Stein moves in with his own introduction and request for a meeting.

What’s interesting about this approach is its simplicity. You invest a little and you become someone relevant and important to your target executive. If you don’t like the results, you can always get your money back, plus or minus whatever change in value occurs in the stock.

Category #20: Over the Top

Estimated cost per contact: Impossible to determine

If one of the trademarks of a successful Contact Campaign is fearless adventurism, can it be taken too far? And does it make a good campaign? Many of the techniques and stories our experts have shared in the preceding sections could be termed over the top. I believe they worked because the level of audacity and creativity behind them tends to overcome the VIP's natural resistance to connecting with new people. They are always on guard, as are their assistants, but also watching for new and unexpected opportunities, insights, and market advantages.

So if you show a great amount of boldness in the way you reach out, it's natural to assume at least some of the targeted executives would see it as a positive demonstration of how you work and think, and how you approach problem solving. In that case, audacity, with clever and well-targeted thought behind the contact approach, is inherently valuable to the target VIPs.

There is a somewhat famous story about how Deutsch, Inc. CEO and CNBC host Donny Deutsch wanted to pitch a particular advertising account. His target was the head of the local Tri-State Pontiac Dealers Association and his approach was definitely over the top. For his Contact Campaign, Deutsch arranged to have a procession of car parts delivered to the target executive's home every thirty minutes. Each part came with a note, turning the pieces into visual metaphors. With the rear fender came a note saying, "We'll cover your rear end." A headlight showed up with the message, "We'll light the way." It continued until the fellow relented and awarded Deutsch the account. That Contact Campaign alone doubled the agency's billings.³

Years later, Art Sobczak recalled hearing the story from Deutsch during an installment of his show on CNBC. "He was ready to send twenty-four packages in all," he says. "He wouldn't give up until he got the account. It would have gone on for twelve hours straight." What I find over the top about Deutsch's campaign was the relentlessness of the timing and, if true,

the fact that it was all delivered to the target executive's home. But you can't argue with the results.

There's another reference to what the film *Forrest Gump* called "a certain fruit company" in this next story. Author Orvel Ray Wilson relates the tale of a software company representative who was anxious to sell an accounting package to the company. "The accounting team loved it," Wilson recalls, "but when they referred the poor fellow to Purchasing, he was told it wasn't in the budget." So the rep decided it was time to take it to the top.

The only trouble was, the CEO was also an international celebrity and *nearly* impossible to reach. The rep tried sending faxes, telegrams, and more, but nothing worked. Then he decided it was time to get outrageous. The next day, a delivery man showed up at the front desk with a wooden box containing a live carrier pigeon, to be delivered to the CEO. Accompanying the caged pigeon was a note saying, "I've tried everything else to reach you, now I've resorted to this." The note went on to request that the CEO write the name of his favorite restaurant with a date and time on a tiny note, then place it in the capsule on the pigeon's leg and release it.

To the rep's surprise, the pigeon returned with the requested information, and the CEO showed up for the lunch. Not only that, he brought a signed letter of intent and the rep got the \$250,000 sale. The cost of acquiring the contract? Lunch plus chicken feed, literally. ROI was through the roof. But still, I think it's highly questionable to involve live animals in a Contact Campaign. What if the box had never been opened or tossed in the trash? What if the pigeon had died on the way there? That would have resulted in the delivery of a dead pigeon and possibly a warrant for the rep's arrest for animal cruelty. Still, he did get the business.

It might seem that I'm saying over-the-top Contact Campaigns are not okay, that they're not valid. That isn't the case. Actually, most of the campaigns described in this book could be described as over the top, but as you have just read, these hover just at the edge of going too far. When they don't run afoul of that line, they can be quite effective.

Ruhlin Group founder John Ruhlin shows us one example in his shirt campaign. I covered it in [Chapter 8](#), where I described various Contact Campaign tactics based on giving gifts. It's just that Ruhlin's approach to

giving gifts seems so over the top that I should mention it again here. The way he builds a grand element of theater in the method of giving the gift is ingenious. The fact that an actual clothier comes by to take measurements and show fabric samples to provide a custom shirt, before any attempt at contact is made, shows amazing boldness. And it works.

Axcelerate Worldwide CEO Rob Smith has a similarly outrageous approach to his Contact Campaigns. He was once tasked with helping a client's reps break through to ten technology CEOs, but he decided to flip the equation and make the focus of the campaign their assistants. The reps called each assistant and asked them to decide whether or not the package should be sent. They were asked further, if I send it, will you make sure the CEO gets it? Each assistant listened intently and gave their nod to proceed.

Smith then sent what he calls a "Smart Box," a custom, aluminum Zero Halliburton briefcase with a laptop computer inside, preloaded with a three-minute video. The package also included a cell phone. The cases arrived with a scratch-off card that, when scratched, revealed the combination to the locking mechanism of the case.

Each Smart Box cost \$5,000, but the ten-piece campaign generated a 58 percent close rate and \$24 million in sales within forty days. Ruhlin's and Smith's Contact Campaigns were over the top in terms of the individual attention and effort that went into each instance of the campaign, but certainly do not cross the line of going too far.

As I researched the material for this book, and particularly the tactics and stories you've just read, I came across a number of instances in which the tactics had drifted into the realm of being sales stunts rather than Contact Campaigns. When is it a sales stunt rather than a Contact Campaign?

I would say when the action taken is simply for show, or to cause a grand interruption. And as I've already stated, a sales stunt is something that can easily reflect poorly on your brand. It might elicit feelings of awkwardness or perhaps anger for having been manipulated. I can't deny

that, more than occasionally, they also work. I just don't see them as being part of Contact Marketing.

Little Red Book of Selling author Jeffrey Gitomer is a master at doing these well and making them work. In one case, he sent his fifteen-year-old daughter into a meeting with ad agency Young & Rubicam to pitch a T-shirt campaign. It worked; he got the business. But I won't be advising that you send your kids to do your bidding. At least not within the realm of Contact Marketing. I won't be recommending that you trespass and block a VIP's parking space as part of your Contact Campaign, either, because I think these stunts ultimately deliver the wrong message.

In the end, all of this effort is directed at one goal: to build your network of VIP contacts. The more you have, the more introductions you'll receive, making your job easier. As one CEO puts it, "You earn your network over the course of your career." Still, having the tools described in the preceding chapters gives you the freedom to reach out and connect with virtually anyone at any time, with or without that golden introduction from a trusted source.

"All of this effort is directed at one goal: to build your network of VIP contacts. The more you have, the more introductions you'll receive, making your job easier."

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- ✓ Over-the-top techniques are great for entertainment value and demonstrate the high level of boldness that often makes Contact Campaigns so successful and dynamic.
- ✓ Still, the over-the-top methods described in this chapter are not necessarily considered the core of what Contact Marketing is.
- ✓ Print media can be used to great effect in a Contact Campaign, but be prepared to spend a lot per contact.
- ✓ Contact letters run as full-page ads not only reach the intended target executive, but also can elicit reinforcing behavior from all

of the VIP's contacts.

- ✓ Prepaid phones are a relatively inexpensive way to ensure a phone connection with a VIP prospect and can stir a lot of intrigue if delivered anonymously.
- ✓ Personal interests can be researched easily via social media and should always be part of the dossier you compile on any Top 100 list member before connecting.
- ✓ Personal interests can serve as Contact Campaigns all on their own.
- ✓ Becoming an investor in a target company can get your foot in the door with CEOs, and may end up making money if the stock goes up during the campaign.
- ✓ Over-the-top Contact Campaigns do work, but run the risk of backfiring more easily than other types.
- ✓ Sales stunts are definitely not part of Contact Campaigns; they're generally manipulative and reflect poorly on your brand.

SECTION III

YOUR CONTACT CAMPAIGN IN ACTION

CHAPTER 12

How a Contact Campaign Works

Growing up in Massachusetts, I spent a lot of weekends with my family on our thirty-foot sloop, which was moored on the confluence of the West and East Branches of the Westport River, just to the north of the Rhode Island border. It was a beautiful place, one of those impossibly picturesque seaside New England villages surrounded by grassy sand dunes, where Horseneck Beach pointed the way across Buzzards Bay to the Elizabeth Islands and then on to Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket. As beautiful as this place was, it could also be treacherous, and we learned to respect the ever-changing sea conditions.

One day, we made the hour-long drive to Westport, and just as we crossed the bridge over the river, we encountered a thick fog. My father pressed on, as he always did. As we parked at the yacht club and began off-loading our gear, members of the club stopped by to consult with my father. *Are you going out in this? Shouldn't we wait it out? Why don't you hang out here with us, at the club?* He firmly waved it all off. We were headed out as quickly as possible.

As we progressed up the channel, the fog seemed to get thicker, but still my father pressed on. But as we cleared the mouth of the inlet, something truly amazing happened, something I will remember my whole life.

As soon as we passed the ends of the jetties marking the entrance to the harbor, the fog disappeared. Well, not exactly. It remained pressed over the marina and Westport River like a lid on a jar, but the rest of Buzzards Bay was completely clear. We had the whole place to ourselves, and it was a beautiful, sunny day as we cruised the islands.

Returning late that afternoon, as we reentered the harbor, the fog was still present, though thinning. As we made our way back through the channel, we could see many of our fellow club members with their boats beached on the sand, where they had laid out towels and blankets to "wait it

out.” They had spent their entire day hunkered down in the fog, never venturing beyond their self-imposed limits to see what lay beyond.

Contact Marketing is much the same. You’ll be told some of the people you’re trying to break through to are impossible to reach. You’ll be told some of your goals are impossible to achieve. But you don’t have to listen to any of that limiting, albeit well-intentioned, misdirection. If someone tells you something is impossible, remember my sailing story and forge ahead. Find out for yourself and never “wait it out” under the fog of someone else’s limitations. Your opportunities for growth and prosperity are endless and immediate. You just have to get started.

We’ve looked at an assortment of Contact Campaigns different people have tried, and I hope their creativity has inspired you. In this section, we will look at how to actually build your campaign once you have your Contact Marketing strategy in mind. I will walk you through some general tips and the steps to follow for a successful campaign. This chapter in particular sets up your initial approach and even includes some standard scripts you can follow or adapt as needed to articulate what you need to say.

Never Take “No” for an Answer

I don’t mean “Never take ‘no’ for an answer” literally. If you reach out to an important contact and they reject your approach, I’m not suggesting you become a stalker. But you should take a thoughtful look at why they have resisted your contact request and determine if they should still be pursued, perhaps in a different way.

Reaching out to VIPs, particularly C-level executives and company owners, will be difficult and challenging. Some of what you’ll encounter is their standard response to anyone trying to break through. They don’t know you. You’re asking for their time. They’re already busy, already overcommitted. If they don’t understand what you have to offer, it may take them a bit of time to come around.

Never taking “no” for an answer can take many forms. It could look like simple persistence. Or maybe a changed approach, sending articles of interest rather than relentlessly calling, if one approach or the other hasn’t

worked. Never taking “no” for an answer isn’t about actually never taking “no” for an answer. It’s about stepping into a new attitude, one that will allow you to press on when your inner voice tells you to stop because you’re entering unfamiliar territory. Challenging yourself to break through, to stick with it, is every bit as important to your success as your actual campaign.

Famed real estate speaker Brian Buffini once decided he wanted Neil Armstrong, the first man to walk on the moon, to speak at an upcoming conference. So he sent a handwritten invitation. Nothing happened, so he sent another. When that failed to prompt a reply, he sent another. This process repeated until he finally received a note from Neil asking, “Are you going to continue to send me these notes?” Buffini wrote “Yup” across the top and returned Armstrong’s note. And with that, Neil Armstrong, the first man on the moon and one of the world’s most reclusive icons, agreed to deliver that keynote speech after all. It was such a coup that NASA later requested video footage of Armstrong’s speech because it had so little of him in its archives.

If a given contact target’s response really is a hard “no,” don’t let it discourage you. If they can’t see the value in what you have to offer, go to their competitors. And once some of them become your clients, circle around and get in touch again, this time telling them they’re missing out and falling behind. Contact is a fluid entity, constantly changing as conditions and events change. You will find that your determination is one of the most important elements of your Contact Campaign, so keep it fresh and alive. Believe in your mission and don’t turn back. There are sunny skies and a beautiful blue ocean of possibilities waiting just beyond the fog and breakwater.

Steps, Flow Charts, and Scripts

You’ve already read about the various categories of Contact Campaigns in the previous section, so you know they don’t all take the same path. Still, there are many common elements of a Contact Campaign, which we’ll examine now.

When you're reaching out to a C-level executive, it is very likely you'll need to navigate a few obstacles to get there. If a company is set up traditionally, you'll start with the receptionist, who risks losing their job if they put the wrong people through to the CEO's office. They're often tough, but not always. After all, they need to direct the right calls through as well.

I find two approaches particularly useful. If I'm calling for the CEO, I'll ask the receptionist if the executive has an assistant I can speak with, and probably because I call with a confident tone and sound like I belong, I'm usually put through. It works whether I'm calling the famous CEO of a *Fortune* 500 company or if I'm trying to reach the owner of a smaller company.

The other approach is to use what I described in [Chapter 9](#) in the "Phone" section. Start by telling the receptionist you're not sure who you should connect with and ask if you can explain what you're trying to do. They'll usually listen intently, as long as you don't take too long to explain yourself, and they'll refer you to someone. Once connected, repeat the same thing: "I'm trying to reach the person in charge of such and such. I was referred to you, but I'm not sure you're the right person. May I explain what I'm trying to do?"

This approach puts people in "help" mode and they almost always listen intently. Eventually, you will reach the right person, but stick to the script: "I've been referred to you, not sure if you're the right person, may I explain what I'm calling about?" By the time you're finished, you will have reached the right person, explained why you're calling, and the whole thing has taken place in a nonresistant mode.

In the context of a Contact Campaign, I am usually calling to follow up on a contact effort, so the next hurdle is to work with the target's executive assistant. Don't assume they're trying to act as a gatekeeper; work from the position that you have something worthwhile to bring to the executive's attention, and you're simply working with the assistant to help them help their executive.

This has to be done quickly, so you don't waste any of the assistant's time. My standard approach is to explain in just a few words why I'm calling, then ask if I can send an email to explain the reason for the call.

This email component is critical, because it gives the assistant something they can easily pass along to explain why you called.

This is what a typical Contact Campaign looks like in flow chart form, with some simple scripts for dealing with receptionists and executive assistants on initial calls.

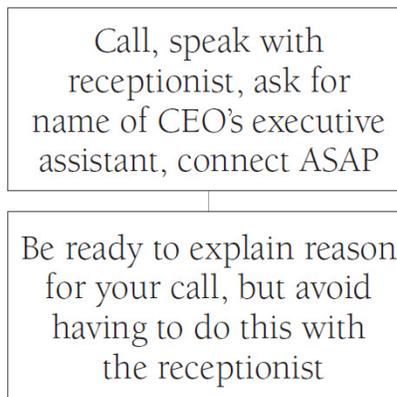
Contact Campaign Flow Chart

The Nature of Contact Campaigns

Contact Campaigns involve highly individualized approaches to each target contact, and, people being people, you're likely to encounter a broad range of responses. In turn, you'll need to be ready to offer a set of responses as you move the contact along. But there are some commonalities, and the steps diagrammed below are likely to be a part of any Contact Campaign.

Receptionist

Goal: Get past this initial gatekeeper to CEO's executive assistant as soon as possible, with minimal explanation of your reason for calling



Not Recommended

Using phone directory to reach CEO directly—it's premature, although that could come in handy later in the process, if you're having trouble breaking through

Executive Assistant

Goal: Get the executive assistant (also known as the EA) plugged in to your mission to reach the CEO, get their confirmed contact details, and make them your ally

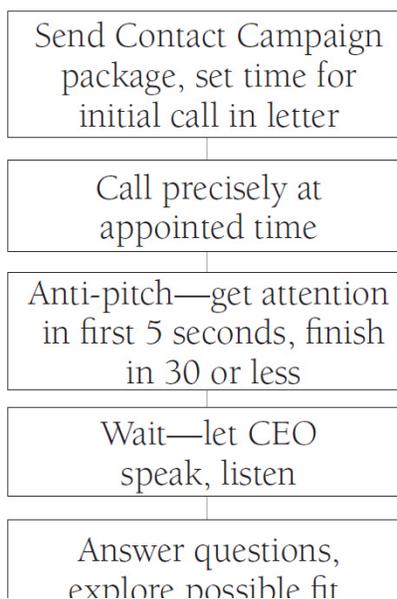


Not Recommended

Being evasive in your answers, disrespecting the EA's authority, treating them like adversaries rather than the allies you need them to be

CEO

Goal: Get opportunity to speak on the phone or at least have your message presented, progress to a direct meeting or top-down referral to get the sale or strategic partnership you're seeking



Not Recommended

Whatever you do, don't waste a second of the CEO's time; know their company and anticipate their needs, and be ready to serve them with a well-conceived solution

explore possibilities,
determine next steps

Contact Campaign Scripts/Gatekeepers

Your goal: Get through to the EA as quickly as possible, make them an ally, and recruit their help to get the Contact Campaign in the CEO's hands.

Receptionist

Goal: Get through to the executive assistant, give as little info as possible:

Hello, does ((Mr./Ms. target name)) have an executive assistant I can speak with?

“Yes, hold on” ➔

Proceed to Executive Assistant section

Or, “Who’s calling/What do you want?” ➔

I’m ((Title)) of ((Company)) and I’m calling to alert ((Mr./Ms. target name))’s assistant that I will be sending a package. May I be connected?

“Okay, hold on” ➔

Proceed to Executive Assistant section

Or, “Can I say what this is in reference to?” ➔

Again, I’m ((Title)) of ((Company)) and I’m sending a package to ((Mr./Ms. target name)). I want to speak to his/her executive assistant to let them know it’s coming and what it is. May I be connected now?

“Okay, hold on” ➔

Proceed to Executive Assistant section

Or, “I’m sorry, I can’t put you through/I’ll have to take a message” ➔

End the call, call back the next day, perhaps during receptionist’s lunch break.

((Note: At this stage, avoid giving your name in case you don’t get through and need to try this again at a later time. Also, keep in mind the receptionist only has the power to say “No” to your access, but lacks any authority to say “Yes” to your mission.))

Executive Assistant

Goal: Get her/his contact info, recruit his/her help setting up the contact, trigger sending Contact Campaign

Hello, are you ((Mr./Ms. target name))’s executive assistant?

((Be sure to write down his/her name while introducing yourself))

My name is _____. I’m ((Title)) of ((Company)) and I wanted to alert you that I will be sending ((Mr./Ms. target name)) a package. You can never be too careful these days, so I just didn’t want it showing up unannounced and I wanted to make sure you knew what it was. Actually, it’s a _____ for his/her office, and it’s something I think he/she will really enjoy and find useful. In fact, I could also send you an email to confirm all of this, so you’ll have the details. Would that be okay?

“Yes, that’s fine” ➔

Get correct spelling of assistant’s name, email address, confirm delivery address, finish call

Or, “Wait, tell me more about what you want” ➔

Again, my name is _____, I’m ((Title)) of ((Company)) and I will be sending _____ to ((Mr./Ms. target name)). I’m doing this to introduce myself and from there, he/she can meet with me or refer me to someone else in the organization.

“Okay, that’s fine” ➔

Get correct spelling of assistant’s name, email address, confirm delivery address, finish call

Or, “He/she doesn’t accept gifts/Let me connect you with someone else” ➔

Well, that’s fine, but what I do concerns his/her overall strategy for the company. I’m happy to speak to anyone he/she recommends, but I always start with a conversation with the ((CEO/President/Owner)), simply because it involves the direction of the company.

“Okay, that’s fine, go ahead and send it” ➔

Get correct spelling of assistant’s name, email address, confirm delivery address, finish call

“I think you should contact _____ instead. I’ll connect you now” ➔

((see Options 1 and 2 below))

OPTION 1

Okay, but can you please give me some assurance I’ll be talking to the right person? I’ll be discussing corporate strategy as it relates to _____. It will involve _____, _____, and ultimately, shareholder value and the net effect on your stock price or company valuation. Are you sure I shouldn’t speak with ((Mr./Ms. target name)) instead?

OPTION 2

In that case, I’ll withdraw. I am sure it will make sense to refer me to someone else in your organization at some point, but if I can’t first address those strategic issues—issues that may mean millions of dollars worth of value and could change the direction of the company—with ((Mr./Ms. target name)), then I’ll pass.

After the Call:

1. Enter assistant's name and contact information in tracking spreadsheet.
2. Note in Action Required section that contact piece should be triggered.
3. Make entries in Notes/Comments section to keep your team in sync as to progress of contact.

In most cases, you'll find the EA is eager to help—it's their job to keep unwanted callers out, but also to bring new opportunities to the CEO's attention.

What You'll Need to Create

As you've read in [Section II](#), there are very simple types of Contact Campaigns that don't require the steps and materials others do. Some of the phone or email techniques obviously skip a few steps, as well as expense. In my experience, these work a lot of the time, and I include them in my strategy. But if I really need to break through and I want to make the best possible impression, it's time to use some of the more involved and powerful methods. These require several key elements.

The first of those is your contact letter. It must be succinct and powerful, and get to the point immediately. It should leave the reader with a clear understanding of who you are, why you want to get in touch, and how it will benefit them on a strategic level. It can't simply be based on the assumption that saving some money is enough; it has to be something significant that helps move their organization in the right direction.

Your contact letter is also for your benefit. It is a necessary exercise to get to the essence of your value statement, which is how you will open the initial conversation when you connect with your contact target.

You may want to include a second effort, something you send to a VIP prospect who hasn't yet responded. This could be a handwritten letter or an email. I often use greeting cards featuring various cartoons depicting their business success, often with fantastic results.

Cartoons are wonderful in this mission. A cartoon delivers its message in a delightfully disarming way, and it seems to allow you to say just about anything.

Whatever form it takes, your follow-up element should incorporate some way to compel the VIP to respond. It could be humor or it could touch upon a possible pain point. It should clearly explain how you can contribute without talking about your product or service, perhaps with a focus on how you're already helping the contact target's competitors. And it should always press for contact.

As mentioned earlier, you should also consider including a hold-back device in your campaign, which we will examine in more detail in [Chapter 14](#). Hold-back devices are used to create leverage to make the requested meeting or phone conversation more likely to happen.

What You Can Expect

By definition, reaching out to VIPs is high-stakes business. As you begin, you're likely to find the experience intimidating, but stick with it. Like the sailing story at the beginning of this chapter, you're starting in the same fog everyone else is, the fog that prevents them from reaching out to people they perceive as being too important to possibly engage with them.

As you push your way through the process, it will become easier and easier. And then it will start to be *fun*. You'll become very comfortable dealing with the people you encounter on the phone, including the target contact's executive assistant. You'll see them as enablers rather than obstacles to your success.

The techniques I have shared with you in the previous section are designed to produce maximum impact. When I send my Contact Campaign and I hear about how excited the target was when it was received, *I get excited*. When they tell you your contact piece was one of the cleverest campaigns they've ever seen, you will experience the exhilaration my family and I felt when we cleared the fog and discovered the beautiful day awaiting us on the water. You'll be thrilled to see your ability to reach virtually anyone take form, as it reshapes your life's prospects.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- ✓ The objective of Contact Marketing, of connecting with highly important and mostly unreachable people, is far from impossible.
- ✓ The saying “Never take ‘no’ for an answer” strongly applies to Contact Marketing.
- ✓ Reaching out to VIPs is daunting, but don’t allow yourself to become intimidated; they’re people just like the rest of us.
- ✓ If a CEO does tell you “no” is their final answer, go to their competitors.
- ✓ It’s helpful to use a script when first approaching VIPs through your Contact Campaign.
- ✓ Scripts are an effective way of ensuring your message remains uniform across your sales team.
- ✓ Once you’ve chosen a Contact Campaign method, you’ll need to create a contact letter and follow-up efforts, possibly including cards to thank executive assistants and prompt stalled contact efforts.
- ✓ Many of the most effective Contact Campaigns include a “hold-back device,” designed to push the target contact to respond in the requested manner.
- ✓ Reaching out to CEOs will at first seem scary and difficult, but you will soon see it can actually be highly effective and a lot of fun.



“This one must be for you. It’s addressed, ‘Dear Fiend . . .’”

CHAPTER 13

Developing Your Contact Letter, Scripts, and Anti-Pitch

I have mentioned earlier in this book that I've often thought of Contact Campaigns as direct mail on steroids. My own campaigns, which use personalized cartoons, literally are adaptations of the countless record-breaking campaigns I've created for many of the world's biggest direct marketers.

Direct marketing campaigns seem to have fallen out of favor lately, as digital, search, social, and mobile marketing have taken over, but the lessons from this form of marketing are still quite valid. In fact, mailed campaigns have begun to take on a contrarian mantle. It's now novel, even exciting, to receive something tangible and well conceived.

At the height of my creative work for magazine publishers, I was paid as much as \$25,000 to write a subscription campaign letter. It was a lot of money, but these letters were expected to work magic. They were always tested against the client's current "control"—their most effective campaign piece to date—to see if I could develop something new to beat it. Publishers are some of the most prolific testers in the world and their controls are nearly impossible to beat. If you tie a control, you just tied the record for their all-time most effective campaign.

It was a fiercely competitive environment in which to create. If you produced a piece that failed to set the new record, you were out. But if your creative pieces were setting new records, you were paid well. That's how it worked. So when I give advice on what your letter should say, I'm telling it from a perspective honed through hard-fought lessons learned over a twenty-year span, as someone who has produced countless record-breaking, control-busting campaigns.

Am I trying to impress you? Yes. I want to impress upon you the value of a well-written, powerful letter. When you write yours, or when you're giving direction to a copywriter to write it, do it as though your letter is worth that same \$25,000 creative fee, regardless of the price actually paid. The stakes here are just as high.

What Your Letter Should Include and Say

The best letters—the ones that generate record results—always start with a point of agreement woven together with a hook that creates a desire to engage in the message. I've always had a big advantage in this, because my letters almost always start with a cartoon, just like the chapters in this book.

That may seem silly at first, but there is sound marketing reasoning behind it. Readership surveys have shown cartoons are almost always the best read and remembered part of publications, so they get more attention than just about anything you can put in print or on-screen. If you think about it, the nature of humor is simply truth told with a twist. That's why, when we laugh at something, we often find ourselves saying, "That's so true!"

The cartoon acts as a device to grab the reader's attention, plant an immediate point of agreement, and produce deep engagement with my message. With or without a cartoon, that is what your letter must do to capture your target's interest. From there, your letter must lay out a quick, compelling, thoughtful, and informed statement of the issue you want to address.

Then comes your value statement. Keep it short and tightly focused on how it solves the target contact's problem. Don't get carried away with extraneous detail about your product or service. This is the same statement you will use eventually as you start your conversation with the prospect, and it should be confined to as few words as possible, without sacrificing the impact your solution can provide.

As I've stated elsewhere in this book, I strongly suggest you include a hold-back device, something of value related to your reason for getting in touch. This will be expressed in your first of two closing paragraphs, in

which you explain what you see as the opportunity to be discussed, along with your promise to bring the hold-back device when you meet.

The closing paragraph should be a single sentence addressing the upcoming call or meeting. In *Selling to VITO*, Anthony Parinello advises setting a certain time and date for your call, noting that the target can have their assistant arrange a different time or they can call you directly at any time.

It's not a bad approach, but I find its execution problematic. If you're sending something physical, what if it doesn't arrive before the call date? And, although it is admirable in its drive to get the meeting to happen, I have found that setting the call date unilaterally comes across as presumptuous and is rarely honored.

Instead, I recommend asking the target to take the call. "Please take my call shortly," or "Please expect my call shortly," seems to work quite well and doesn't ensnare your campaign in logistical problems.

But we're still not done. What will appear in your signature block? If you're employed, you'll list your printed name, title, email address, and phone number. But are there other elements you can include, which form the basis of the VIP statement covered in [Chapter 4](#)? Do you hold other titles that may be relevant to the contact target? Is there a distinction you can include that will cause the recipient to feel excitement about your call?

Your signature file should be crafted carefully. Mine looks like this (shown here with underlines to indicate embedded links when used in email):

Stu Heinecke

[How to Get a Meeting with Anyone](#) by Stu Heinecke

"The #1 sales book ever written on prospecting." —SalesDaily

[How to Grow Your Business Like a Weed](#) by Stu Heinecke

"*How to Grow Your Business Like a Weed* is the new *Blue Ocean Strategy*." —Joe Soto

"One of the most important new business books in the last ten years." —Steve Gordon

Author | Growth consultant | *WSJ* cartoonist

Take a look at what I have here. The signature block is organized around the titles and links to my two books. The testimonials lend an instant

measure of credibility, especially the reference to *How to Get a Meeting with Anyone* being the #1 sales book ever written about prospecting. My authority is reinforced with the notation of my being a contributor to *The Wall Street Journal*.

My own VIP statement is always evolving, but I can tell you this one already works quite well. Some of that has to do with *The Wall Street Journal* cartoonist and author statements, which cause a great deal of fascination and anticipation to get on the phone with me. It's up to you to produce a similar effect from your own VIP statement.

Direct marketers have long known that, in a typical letter, readers focus first on their own name and second on the postscript. They use that fact to their advantage by restating the offer in the "P.S." with a reminder of the expiration date. You should use it to restate the compelling reason why the meeting or phone call should take place. Do it in nine words or less.

When you write your letter, give special attention to the tone. The best letters always use conversational language to create an emotional connection with the reader. Leave out jargon and acronyms; don't produce something that reads as forced or overly formal. Let them know you have something of value to offer, something that will only be ignored at great cost, and that you appreciate their openness to taking the meeting.

"The best letters always use conversational language to create an emotional connection with the reader."

Defining Your Process

Defining your process starts with a series of choices. Who is on your list? Are they primarily C-level executives? What is the issue you hope to solve for them? How difficult are they to reach? Do they have executive assistants? Which Contact Campaign method or methods are you planning to use?

Starting at the point where you've identified and researched your list members, you will need to assemble a flow chart. Include every step, so that others within your organization can duplicate your process with

minimal instruction, or so they can step in and assist you at any point along the way.

As you saw in [Chapter 12](#), my process starts with a call to the contact target's assistant. I have a script in mind, although I engage in free-flowing conversation. During this initial contact, I'll want to make sure I have confirmed the spelling of the executive's and their assistant's names, along with their email addresses. This serves two purposes. First, the assistant's address comes with permission to send emails, starting with a message I can copy and paste, to provide an explanation of my request for a meeting that can easily be forwarded.

Second, once I have the assistant's email, I can see how addresses are formed for all employees of the company. `Firstname_Lastname@company`, `FLastname@company`, `firstname.lastname@company`, and even `First@company` are all commonly used email conjugations. Make a note of what that suggests the executive's email address may be.

Next, you'll include steps linked to producing, delivering, and tracking the Contact Campaign piece—be sure to make a note to send an email to the executive assistant when tracking information is available. Keeping the assistant in the loop tends to ensure their commitment to help you make contact with their executive.

Then comes the call to the CEO. Since you may not be starting with a set call date and time, be prepared to call a few times, perhaps over the span of a couple of weeks. Keep in mind, VIPs are busy people, are often out of the office, and their schedules are packed. It will take a bit of maneuvering to find mutual fits in your calendars.

Inevitably, you will find there will be some targets who don't respond. It is possible to connect with your targets at least 50 percent or more of the time, but be prepared to test different approaches before that happens. Meanwhile, you'll need to add a few follow-up steps to your process. These could take the form of greeting cards, letters, emails, or phone calls.

If a hold-back device is part of your campaign, it may need to show up twice in your process; once if the desired meeting takes place, and again if the target hasn't responded throughout the process. You may find that sending the held-back item produces the desired result after all, or you may decide to send another communication, asking what you should do with it.

Should it be donated to a charity? If so, does the target have one in mind it should benefit? The goal, of course, is always to start engaging with the contact.

As you refine your process, keep your flow chart up to date. It will help keep you clearly on track, while ensuring your process is easily duplicated and multiplied by others in your organization.

Developing Your Scripts

Since this is part of documenting your process, you'll need at least three scripts, starting first at gaining entry with the receptionist. You can start with the scripts included in the previous chapter, but you really should develop your own to fit your particular campaign.

Scripts can be written out word for word, or arranged in outline form. I prefer the latter, because you have your talking points laid out on the page, but you're free to converse naturally. Use whichever feels best for you.

As you progress from receptionist to executive assistant, your script should include a quick explanation of who you are (your VIP statement tailored to the needs of the targeted executive) and why you're calling, as covered in [Chapter 12](#). I think it makes sense to focus on the item you're sending to the executive, but be prepared to explain why you're sending it and what your ultimate goal is. This can be tricky. A truly determined assistant may cut you off, saying it won't be necessary to send the contact piece. I usually send it anyway, because we have no idea if the assistant has a firm grasp of the facts yet, and I don't want to argue it at that point. I would rather have the contact piece reach the target executive and let them decide for themselves whether there is reason to meet or not.

And finally, there is the million-dollar call itself to the VIP prospect. *A million-dollar phone call?* Absolutely, and we'll touch on this more in [Chapter 16](#). You have to approach each contact with the attitude that each of these calls could be worth that much to you. So you'll want to be ready with a very special, very brief script. Remember to lead with a value statement that leaves the target asking, "How would you do that?" Or a question that has them saying, "Yes, yes, yes!" in their heads. Do it in less than a dozen

words. That's it. Have your "VIP statement" statement ready when they ask, "Who are you?" (covered in [Chapter 4](#)).

Developing Your "Anti-Pitch"

Developing opening lines is one thing; developing a pitch is another. And what I'm going to suggest to you is instead an "anti-pitch." Let me give you an example.

If I were to reach out to, say, Gail Goodman, CEO of Constant Contact, about my CartoonLink service, I would start with, *"I can double your members' email open rates. Is that of interest?"* But I would already have told her that in my contact piece, so I'd proceed with my anti-pitch.

I'd introduce myself: *"I'm Stu Heinecke, president of CartoonLink. I'm also one of The Wall Street Journal cartoonists and a hall of fame-nominated direct marketer. I have a device that has been doubling open rates for my clients, and I have a feeling that might be strategic for you to offer to your members. But I don't really know if that fits with your plans. Can you discuss that with me for a minute?"*

If she says yes, I would continue. *"From what I've been able to learn, you have 700,000 users of your email marketing platform. Constant Contact positions itself as an 'engagement marketing tool,' and you, yourself, have authored a book on engagement marketing. I'm thinking that, if you were able to offer my cartoon devices easily and affordably to your member base, it would increase their results, thereby increasing their engagement with your services. Does that make sense?"*

If she responds affirmatively, I'd ask her how she might see it fitting with their service. I'd ask what she might see as next steps and who I should connect with. I'd offer to send a copy of my book so she can understand the thinking behind the CartoonLink service. And I'd ask for her permission to correspond directly via email. And then I would end the call. As this new relationship begins, I want her to know that I respect her time. It's one of the most important things I can communicate to her.

I call this approach the Anti-Pitch because I'm not jumping down my prospect's throat, jamming in as many words as I can about my product

before she cuts me off. I'm having a relaxed, exploratory conversation with her, and I'm giving her several opportunities to cut it off. But with each burst of information, I'm also telling her why I think there may be value for her. And I'm checking in constantly, to make sure she agrees with my thinking. If she doesn't, that's okay. She has given me some of her highly valuable time and I am grateful for the opportunity. It's either a fit or it isn't.

The one thing I am not doing is pitching. I'm collaborating and inviting her participation and scrutiny. I'm not trying to coerce her. I'm simply bringing something I think she may find interesting and strategically important to her attention. I haven't even mentioned my brand or any particular program yet.

Along the way, I have used my Contact Campaign to clear a path. I have a relationship with her assistant, I have demonstrated the effect I want to bring to their email marketing platform, and I have been very open about giving her an out. When you do that, the contact becomes intrigued. They start to trust you because you have already shown a great deal of consideration. You're not pushing your way past a gatekeeper and onto the phone with the VIP. They wouldn't allow it, and even if you did get through, it wouldn't work.

You will need to craft your Anti-Pitch in the same way. Start with a brief statement that has them intrigued and asking, "How would you do that?" Then have an exploratory conversation, by saying, "I have this solution that I think will work for your company/project/etc., but I'm not sure if it is a fit after all. May I explain?"

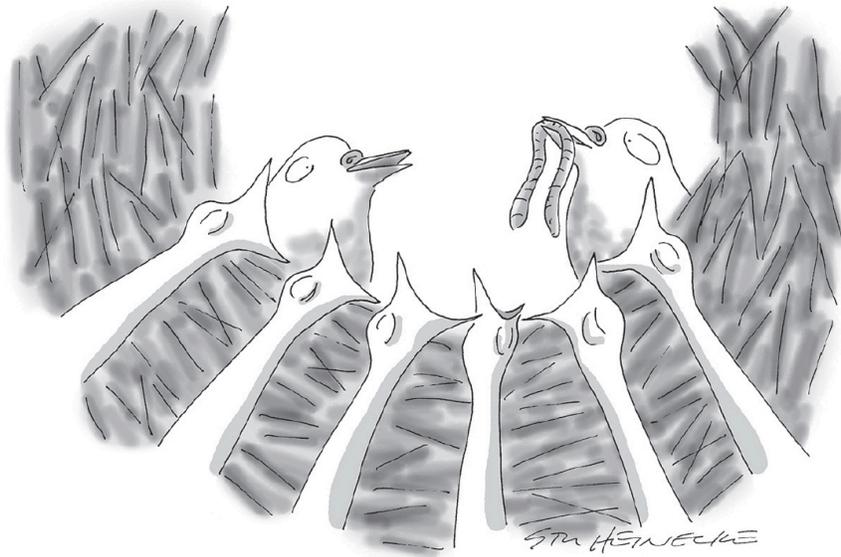
The Anti-Pitch works in a way similar to the series-of-requests technique described in [Chapter 12](#). As you explain your thinking, ask the contact if they agree and what they might see as next steps.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- ✓ My own Contact Campaigns came from creating top-line campaigns for some of the biggest direct marketers in the world.

- ✓ The best contact letters start with a point of agreement woven together with a hook that creates a desire to engage with your message.
- ✓ I often use cartoons to engage readers quickly, as they are one of the most powerful engagement devices available.
- ✓ Humor is actually truth revealed with a twist; it gets readers saying, “That’s so true!”
- ✓ Your Contact Campaign concept will drive the writing of the letter. Stick closely with the theme and focus on the value you will deliver to the contact target.
- ✓ Your letter must lay out a quick, compelling, thoughtful, and informed statement of the problem you want to help the CEO solve or address.
- ✓ The close of your letter should request that the recipient expect and take your call shortly.
- ✓ It’s best not to dictate a specific date and time for your first call, as it can easily be ignored and leave your contact effort stalled.
- ✓ Your signature block should reflect your newly crafted VIP statement.
- ✓ Leave out jargon and acronyms from your letter copy. Write it from one human being to another, offering to bring something of value or significance to their attention.
- ✓ Don’t turn your letter into a pitch. Focus solely on the value you want to bring to the CEO and why you’re the best qualified source.
- ✓ Start with a script that you can modify on the go. Pass it along to others in your organization to standardize how they communicate with VIP prospects.

- ✓ Develop an “Anti-Pitch,” a collaborative conversation to explore a possible fit for the CEO’s company.



“If you keep feeding them like this, they’ll never leave . . .”

CHAPTER 14

Your Secret Weapon: The Hold-Back Device

Throughout this book, I have said Contact Marketing is a fusion of sales and marketing that exists to support specific, direct, strategic sales contacts. Because Contact Marketing functions in this sales support role, it is easy to forget that it is also a true form of marketing, subject to the same disciplines applied to other forms of marketing.

When I was involved in mega-campaigns for publishers, there was a running discussion of “premiums,” the free gifts offered to produce a higher incidence of paid orders. Premiums often work well in that role, but they add expense to the campaign. When the measure of success hangs in the balance of a few pennies per piece either way, you can appreciate how sensitive these marketers were to adding the weight of any unnecessary expense to a campaign.

What worried the publishers even more was the requirement that, once they started offering premiums, they couldn't go back. They were stuck with the need to continually add that expense to their budgets. Even worse, it seemed once they used premiums in their offers, they had to continually raise the perceived value of the gifts, which then raised expenses further. It was a losing battle the publishers were anxious to avoid.

They also worried that their subscribers were becoming motivated more by the gift than the publications themselves. Their advertisers were catching on, too, demanding to know what percentage of the magazines' subscriptions were sold with premiums, and discounting the rates they were willing to pay to reach those readers.

As any good marketer knows, the solution is to test—to probe the possibilities and find out for certain what works, what doesn't, and why.

Hold-back devices are similar, in that they are items of value, offered in exchange for a desired response. In this case, we want our VIP quarry to agree to speak or meet with us. But there are important differences to consider in your campaign strategy.

The Contact Marketing mission focuses on a small group of target executives who have extremely high potential value to you or your company. So this isn't a situation in which a few pennies are going to throw the campaign into the loss column. What we really have is the opposite set of factors. We're working toward response rates of at least 20 to 50 percent and extremely high ROI numbers. If a \$500 gift can tip the balance in your favor and you stand to gain a hundred-thousand-dollar sale, the expense will be insignificant in comparison to the gain.

Contact Marketers should not worry about the expense of a hold-back device, and in some cases, there is no added expense. The techniques in the "Half of a Gift" category in [Chapter 8](#) rely upon splitting the campaign device in two; the remote-control model delivered with the promise of the controller when the meeting takes place, as an example. But in most cases, the hold-back device will be something of added value, rather than subtracted.

Why It's Needed and What It Does

I once used a BigBoard to reach Bruce Seidman, then president of the famed sales training firm Sandler Training. He loved it and soon after, we entered into a test to explore how it might work for their prospecting efforts. The results were a 100 percent response and 8,000 percent ROI from the meetings it generated with *Fortune* 1000 CEOs.

Some of that success resulted from the brilliant hold-back device Seidman suggested. The company uses copies of founder David Sandler's book, *You Can't Teach a Kid to Ride a Bike at a Seminar*, as introductory gifts to land new accounts. For the test, we devised a personalized cover that made the book look like it was about the target contact's own sales success story, complete with a byline by the CEO. *It became a book by the CEO about the transformation of their own company.* An image of the book

was shown as part of the message on the BigBoard, along with a teaser, promising it would be presented to the CEO during the proposed meeting.

Since all five targeted CEOs ended up meeting with the Sandler franchisee, I have to assume the hold-back device had something to do with it. Certainly the cartoon piece did, too, as I expect they're still on display in each of the CEOs' offices all these years later.

Still, it is obvious the hold-back device performed well in its role. Many of us harbor the desire one day to write our own books, and the hold-back device gave recipients a chance to live out that fantasy. It became a "must have" item, which is exactly what a hold-back device should be—something of personal importance or value to the target executive, something they can get only if they follow through with the requested meeting or phone conversation.

"Many of us harbor the desire one day to write our own books, and the hold-back device gave recipients a chance to live out that fantasy. It became a "must have" item, which is exactly what a hold-back device should be—something of personal importance or value to the target executive, something they can get only if they follow through with the requested meeting or phone conversation."

Developing Your Hook

Throughout your Contact Marketing strategy, you should be thinking about opening valuable relationships based on delivering unique and substantial value to your VIP prospects. That should be happening throughout your marketing, but it operates in overdrive here.

Put yourself in the prospect's place for a moment. You're busy. Maybe you're getting ready to travel or make a presentation to your board of directors. The phone rings constantly and, without your assistant's help, your email inbox would swell with thousands of messages from people you don't know, all of whom want a piece of your time and a chunk of your business. It's relentless and quickly becomes annoying background noise to which you are committed to filtering aggressively.

Your challenge, once again, is not just rising in importance to the target executive yourself, but aligning your mission to what is important to your prospect. We can assume they are all focused on achieving and exceeding their goals, on peering into the future to find new competitive advantages, and squeezing more efficiency from their operations.

That's a good place to start and, in some cases, may be enough to put your campaign on target. A good example of that in my own cartoon-based campaigns is using a cartoon that commemorates the recipient's success in business. I often use a cartoon that shows several executives milling about in an art gallery, with two in the foreground admiring a painting of a positive trend on a sales graph, with the caption, "*That would look really good in ((Joe Sample's)) office.*" Obviously, Joe Sample is a placeholder for the name of the recipient. That cartoon often causes my contact pieces to remain on display in CEOs' offices for years, which means my message and contact information also remain on display.

That's great, but what if it still isn't enough to get the target executive to commit time to your call or meeting?

Your hold-back device should be an extension of the initial theme and message, but should offer something of irresistible value. In the preceding example, I often include the promise of an autographed copy of *Big Fat Beautiful Head*, a book of my cartoons. The thought process behind it is, if the recipient liked the cartoon on the contact piece, they'll love getting an entire book of them, signed by *The Wall Street Journal* cartoonist himself as a reward for taking the meeting.

But your hold-back device shouldn't simply copy mine. To deliver value uniquely tied to you, your company, and your offering, you need to come up with something all your own. To offer true value, your campaign should focus on the recipient's needs, circumstances, and goals—but it should be suggestive of your value as a new confidant.

That requires an honest inventory of your company's unique assets. What is it you do that could be of value to the target VIP? If your company provides consulting services, is there a way you can produce an eye-popping report on the target executive's company? Most executives are hungry for honest intelligence that helps them see their company in relation

to their competitors and the market ahead. And they would gladly welcome such a report.

If not a report, how about doing a bit of probing to identify the things the executive is talking about, and collecting a set of articles on the subject? Is there a book you feel best expresses the direction you'd like to take the target executive's company within your own offerings? Both of these make fine hold-back devices.

The publishers I mentioned earlier can offer a cautionary tale about the kinds of things you might consider as your carrot. They often found that, the more valuable their premiums were, and the more independent they were from the magazines they were offering, the less the resulting sales would have to do with subscribers actually wanting the magazine. The audience was subscribing to get the *Sports Illustrated* football phone more than they were to get the actual magazine.

The lesson here is that the hold-back device in your campaign should not become a bribe, because that won't work with VIPs. They can afford the football phone if they really want one. Your challenge is to provide something they can't get elsewhere that helps them achieve their goals. More than anything else, it is to provide a compelling reason why the target executive needs to strike up a relationship with you and your company.

"The hold-back device in your campaign should not become a bribe . . . Your challenge is to provide something they can't get elsewhere that helps them achieve their goals."

How It Supercharges Your Chances for Success

In any new business relationship, it's imperative that you always have more to offer. If you are the pursuer, you need to keep the process moving. In the early steps of your contact efforts with your VIP prospects, that need is magnified because they'd still rather ignore you at that point.

Hold-back devices can be thought of as that critical Step 2 of your contact process. If you've gotten an executive's attention with your initial contact effort, having a powerful second step ready to go enhances your success rate.

By the time you have delivered your hold-back device, you will have had three critical and positive points of contact: the initial campaign touch, the meeting or phone conversation, and the reward for having participated. You're already 90 percent there.

Of course, you still need to have a cogent case for your proposed sale or strategic alliance. But by the time you have delivered your hold-back device, you will have broken through the "I don't have time to talk with this person" wall. The target contact will have heard your Anti-Pitch and gotten to know you and your company, and you're now in a position to get some clarity on where the two of you go from there.

That's hugely significant progress toward changing the scale of your business. Moreover, if your Contact Campaign has done its job, the target contact not only knows you, they're starting to *like* you. They like the way you approach challenges, the way you think. And it's all tied initially to the quality of thinking behind your Contact Campaign. It just makes sense that a campaign that carries you through three critical steps of contact is going to be more effective than a campaign that only offers a single up-front touch.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- ✓ Hold-back devices are a crucial third step in your Contact Campaign.
- ✓ They operate like marketing premiums, providing a critical push to get your VIP prospects to follow through on your request to meet or talk.
- ✓ Hold-back devices are something of unique value to the target executive that are relevant to their own lives and goals.
- ✓ Hold-back devices may be branded, but the less you focus on your brand and the more you focus on the target executive's current issues, the more valued the devices will be.



"I'm a little early for my appointment. Actually, it's not until tomorrow."

CHAPTER 15

The Critical Role of Executive Assistants

Executive assistants, administrative assistants, admins, secretaries, assistants, gatekeepers. Whatever you call them, if you're going to reach out to anyone of great importance, it's likely you're going to have to deal with them first.

Does the thought of an encounter with an EA cause your gut to tense? A study once determined that people were more afraid of public speaking than they were of dying. They must have left executive assistants off the survey, because for some reason, speaking with them seems to be one of the biggest fears of most salespeople.

When you raise the subject of executive assistants to most sales reps, the conversation often veers to frustration and how to circumvent them. But admins know when you're attempting an end run and they're more than ready for it. They're also tired of that whole approach, because it's so wasteful—*for them and for you*.

Given that executive assistants are such an integral part of the process of gaining contact with the people most important to you, isn't it time to take a fresh look at who these people are and how they can *help*, rather than prevent you from reaching your goals? Allow me to reintroduce you to the venerable executive assistant. It may just change your life.

So Much More Than Gatekeepers

Put yourself in their shoes for a moment. Let's say you're an executive assistant to a CEO. Unlike most of the people in the company, you report to the top. More than that, your results are on direct display to the CEO. If you

screw up, the chief executive officer is directly affected, not to mention disaffected.

To say these people live in a pressure cooker is an understatement. They report to the same person the VPs do. It's a tough job, and only the most qualified people rise to these positions.

This may shock you, but I contend these are some of the sharpest people in their organizations. Rather than thinking of them as gatekeepers or glorified secretaries, you should think of executive assistants as stealth vice presidents. Their work receives as much visibility and scrutiny as any VP in the organization. And their decisions and actions either support or undermine their executive's effectiveness. *Executive assistants are themselves VIPs.* It shouldn't be surprising that, if you've been trying to circumvent, trick, or in some other way minimize the assistants you've been encountering, you won't be breaking through to the C-suite very often.

From now on, when you hear the title "Executive Assistant," think instead, "Vice President of Access." It will help you do your job and connect properly with these crucial members of your target contact's team. Think of them as top-level, critical advisors and influencers, and accommodate them accordingly in your Contact Campaign strategy.

Like any vice president, executive assistants are intimately aware of and involved with their executive's goals and strategies. They have a lot of duties, but perhaps their most important is encountering the many people who reach out to the CEO, and weeding through the stuff that has no relevance or should be handled by another member of their team.

If you speak to a CEO or company president in a casual moment, they're likely to emphasize how much they are in the "people business" and how critical it is to build a solid team they can depend upon. With that in mind, is it any wonder the best executive assistants are fierce defenders of their executive's time and resources? Can you see why, with the hundreds of calls and other modes of communication constantly fired in their direction, EAs must develop a high level of efficiency in their process of determining how each request for contact must be handled and who gets through?

You would do well to consider the executive assistants you encounter the most important person in the organization you're trying to reach. They

are senior people in a critically sensitive role; in many ways, they are the people who actually get things done in their organizations. Yet for all of their importance, it's surprising to hear many of them say they're just doing their jobs and have no real authority. I respectfully disagree. They are the most important people you will ever encounter in your cultivation of critical contacts during your time in business.

Think of Them as Talent Scouts

Few people seem to realize that, as much as their role is to weed people out, executive assistants are equally tasked with letting the right people in. For that reason, you should think of them not as gatekeepers, but as talent scouts. Think about their unique role in the organization. Hundreds of people are trying to reach their executive, but most will waste their time with off-target pitches and personal agendas that have nothing to do with the goals at hand. But assistants are always watchful for the people, issues, ideas, perspectives, and opportunities that do fit their executive's goals, especially for the things the CEO would otherwise miss.

Think about that for a moment. The executive assistant, the person you may have been trying to circumvent all this time, is actually tasked with finding the rich opportunities that will otherwise go unnoticed. These people are not your enemies; they are your critical allies in the fulfillment of your goals. These are the people who can say to their CEO, "I think you should listen to what he has to say. He's a good guy." They are the people who can help you break through.

"Executive assistants are the most important people you will ever encounter in your cultivation of critical contacts."

The relationship that often exists between CEOs and their assistants is unique within the business world. When it's right, top executives respect and trust their assistants' judgment so deeply they often rely upon the EAs to make hundreds of decisions a day on their behalf. Do you see the pattern

here? When you call in, the executive assistant is already making decisions on the CEO's behalf. *You're already in contact.*

So your job is not to circumvent, minimize, or trick the assistant. It is to help them find the markers in your call of something or someone worthy of their executive's consideration. This is critical: *You must go in with the belief that what you're bringing to the CEO is something of great value, deserving immediate attention.* And you must be ready to express that quickly, because you're talking to a very busy, very important person.

Making the Executive Assistant Your Ally

Again, rethink your image of who the assistant is and what they're there to do. Yes, they will push the wrong people aside. But they're doing that so that they can invest time in the right people, perhaps *you*. They're ready to receive your bid for contact and engagement with the CEO. *You're on.*

The first thing you must do is to introduce the concept of *you*. And you do that with a single-sentence, power introduction that includes the VIP statement you formulated from your VIP makeover in [Chapter 4](#). The goal is to spark their interest quickly, while establishing equal status with their executive.

Again, my VIP statement is: "Hi, my name is Stu Heinecke. I'm one of *The Wall Street Journal* cartoonists, a hall of fame-nominated marketer, and an author." Have I piqued the assistant's attention? Well, sort of, but not quite yet. What I have done is establish that I am someone with an intriguing background who is worth hearing, however briefly.

Next step is to quickly establish the value in my reason for connecting: "I have something I'd like to run by Ms. Smith that I think she will find both fascinating and useful in her present goal of expanding reach into the small business market." In this hypothetical statement of purpose, I am still being vague, but I'm showing that I value both the executive's and EA's time by already understanding one of their chief strategic goals. More importantly, I'm closer to establishing that I'm one of the people who should get through.

With just two statements, I've already established that I am someone of important and intriguing stature, who has taken the time to understand their business and current goals—and that I have something of value to the CEO to discuss. But I'm still not through.

I need to help the executive assistant further, by offering to put my reason for getting in touch in writing. So I ask, "May I send you an email to explain this further?" Most assistants will welcome this, because it gives them a chance to understand and even reread your introduction and reason for requesting a meeting.

More than that, you've made the assistant's job easier, because you have given them a ready explanation that can easily be forwarded—but with every step, you're also showing them how you work. You have the ability to focus on the needs of others and quickly get to the point. And you've shown great respect for the assistant's time. Can you see how, with just three quick statements, you've become a prospect for the talent scout on the other end of the line?

You've made things easier for the assistant, but you're also gaining important footholds. You're establishing an open door to the assistant, an important new relationship with a key person in the organization you want to engage. You now have their email address, so you're able to get through at any time, ask questions, and get their help navigating the waters ahead.

I've said it elsewhere in the book, but it bears repeating: By writing out your introduction and reasons for getting in touch, you also get to *control your message*. You don't have to worry about someone's incomplete and inaccurate paraphrasing, and you don't have to worry about the omission of key elements of your rationale for the proposed meeting.

Now you're well on your way. You've gotten the attention of the talent scout. Are you done yet? No!

Your Contact Campaign strategy should always include touch points with the executive assistants. They are VIPs, too, and are critical to your success. So you should be doing something to firmly cement that critical relationship. In my case, I always send a thank-you card, with my usual twist of a cartoon, personalized with the assistant's name. The cards always include a handwritten note inside, with my cartoonist's signature. That often seals the deal.

I realize not everybody is a *Wall Street Journal* cartoonist, so don't worry about sending one of your own cartoons—but even a simple handwritten note in a “Thank You” card can be quite meaningful and set the stage for much more to come.

My Own, Real-World Example

This has all been rather hypothetical, so let's take a run through one of my own Contact Campaigns. As you know from [Chapter 7](#), I use BigBoards: giant foam core postcards featuring one of my personalized cartoons on one side and a message on the other from me to my contact target explaining why we should meet.

My Contact Campaign starts with a thorough understanding of who I want to connect with, what they'll gain from it, and why it is likely to meet their needs. That's my Top 100 list from [Chapter 5](#), and my research on each of them is covered in [Chapter 6](#). This is critical to making my campaign as effective as possible.

Part of my research for my Top 100 list is identifying who the executive assistants are. But I usually discover that when I first make the call. You know my VIP statement by now, but I'll repeat it here: “Hi, my name is Stu Heinecke. I'm one of *The Wall Street Journal* cartoonists, a hall of fame–nominated marketer, and author.”

I quickly jump to my value statement, which you also know by now: “I'm sending a print of one of my cartoons about your boss, and while I want it to be a surprise to her, I don't want it to be a surprise to you. Of course, I'm sending it because I have something I want to discuss with Katherine [note the use of the CEO's first name] as well.”

Next, it's time to create our connection. “May I send you an email to explain and include the tracking info for the cartoon print?” The answer is always, “Yes.” Moreover, they're usually very excited to receive this print of a cartoon from a *Wall Street Journal* cartoonist about their boss. Remember, the executive assistant is always on watch for something extraordinary, something their boss might otherwise miss or something of

great value to the executive or company. And I'm about to make the assistant look very good indeed.

Of course, sealing the deal is the card I send afterward, thanking the assistant for their help. I now have a champion, a critical contact who will serve as the quarterback for my Contact Campaign from inside the CEO's office. The effect continues when the BigBoard arrives, because the target executives are usually thrilled to receive it.

From the executive assistant's standpoint, we have done our jobs together. I have delivered unique value, and they have discovered it and brought it in to their executive. In the end, that's really what the assistants are there to do. It's not just about expelling the people who don't belong, even though, to many, that may be the most visible part of what the assistants are doing. The most important part of their jobs is to discover *you* and the unique value you have to offer.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- ✓ Executive assistants should not be thought of as gatekeepers, but as talent scouts.
- ✓ Most people think of assistants as those to circumvent, but doing so ultimately results in a defeat for you.
- ✓ In many ways, executive assistants are the most important connections you can make in an organization.
- ✓ EAs should be viewed as being on the same level as any other direct reports to the target executive.
- ✓ EAs are constantly on the lookout for the people, opportunities, ideas, and perspectives their boss will find useful and important in achieving their own goals.
- ✓ On the whole, CEOs deeply respect and trust the judgment of their assistants.

- ✓ Executive assistants have a lot more authority than anyone gives them credit for, including the EAs themselves.
- ✓ EAs should always be part of your Contact Campaign strategy. It cannot succeed without them.
- ✓ Your initial conversation with the target's executive assistant is critical; you must establish your equal business stature and value within the first two sentences you speak.
- ✓ Always offer to send a quick explanation of your reason for calling via email. It cements your access to the EA, makes it easy for them to pass it along to others, and allows you to tightly control your message.
- ✓ You should think of every EA as a potential ally and treat them as such.



“Richard Branson sent you a get-lost letter? God, I wish someone would do that for me . . .”

CHAPTER 16

Making Contact

So far, we've examined the nature of CEOs and their executive assistants. We've expanded the definition of "CEO" to include anyone who is the "Center of Enterprise Opportunity," the key person in an organization you have targeted as a member of your Top 100 or Strategic 100 list. We've reviewed twenty categories of Contact Campaigns, all of which are powerful tools to help you break through to your best prospects for sales or strategic partnerships. You've had a VIP makeover and you are completely plugged into the goal of Contact Marketing, which is to produce a rapid expansion of scale in your business or career.

We have also examined the nature of Contact Marketing itself. A delightfully odd fusion of selling and marketing, Contact Marketing has been quietly producing results marketers have long considered impossible, including response rates as high as 100 percent and ROI in the hundreds of thousands of percent.

In the past, Contact Campaigns have been something marketers have produced from their own ingenuity and in nearly complete isolation from how others have approached the challenge of breaking through to their VIP prospects. This has been such an obscure practice that it hasn't even had a name until now. Of course, we're talking about Contact Marketing. You now have an unprecedented advantage, because you know what it is and how others have used it, and you have an abundant compilation of tactics to draw from for your own campaign.

Now it's time to pull it all together and start making the contacts that will change your life.

The Four Stages of Contact

Response rates, ROI, and expense-to-revenue figures tell you how your Contact Campaign performed once it is completed. But I find ranking each Contact during the campaign and tracking changes in those levels is critical to achieving optimal results. That is what the following “Four Stages of Contact” are for: to help you apply a standardized appraisal to each contact situation and take necessary actions to maximize the success of your campaign.

Stage 1: Indifferent

At the beginning level, your target contact is either unaware of you or your company, or may have a minimal awareness, but he or she is indifferent toward you or your brand. You’re strangers. Or worse, the contact holds an inaccurate and unflattering picture of you or your company. External measures can help; your social media footprint, writings, and publicity can combine to change perceptions and make it more likely to make a meaningful connection with your target contact. The primary function of Contact Marketing is to help you push through this level of contact to the next stage.

Stage 2: Intrigued

At the second stage, something has piqued your target contact’s interest to know more about you and what your company has to offer. This is typically when a contact will request more information or ask you to speak to others in their organization. It’s a critical phase in your campaign, as it means you have genuinely moved the contact forward, perhaps toward the desired end result. But intrigue alone is not enough to make a sale or seal a partnership agreement. For that to happen, you must present a value proposition that the contact sees as a potential fit with his or her plans, and you must help them gain required consensus to move forward with a deal.

Stage 3: Committed

If you've reached the next level, you have pierced any initial resistance the contact has had toward meeting and dealing with you and your company, and you have provided a compelling case for moving forward immediately with a deal. The contact and their team have embraced your solution and placed their trust in you, your company, and your brand. This is also the stage at which most sales or partnerships take place.

Stage 4: Sponsor

When you've made it to the final stage, your contact has become a supporter, a fan. He or she believes wholeheartedly in you and your company and wants to share this satisfaction with friends and colleagues, who might also benefit from your services. Your name pops up in conversations, and the contact frequently cultivates referrals within and outside his organization.

The obvious next question is where do your contacts need to be on this scale in order to make a deal happen? The answer is not quite so obvious. Some deals can percolate quickly, rising during the first conversation from an initial contact to a commitment to do the deal, while others require more steps and time. Others may start at Stage 3 and then, surprisingly, stall.

Four Stages of Contact				
Stage	① Indifferent	② Intrigued	③ Committed	④ Sponsor

Situation	Contact is unaware or indifferent, or may have misperceptions of you or your brand	Contact is interested, open to receiving more information or proposal	You have presented a compelling case and contact is committed to moving forward immediately	Contact is a client or partner and is a big fan of you and your brand
Required Action	Use methods to create awareness, change perceptions, use Contact Marketing to break through	Present value proposition that intensifies contact's interest and solves a specific and relevant need	Make sure all stakeholders have been addressed and included, guard against any sources of delay	Use Contact Marketing touches to cultivate engagement and knowledge of your activities and offerings
Outcome	Open new contact, generate conversation or meeting	Contact wants to move forward, has tools to create consensus	Transaction or partnership goes forward without resistance or delay	Your VIP clients become your biggest sources of business and growth

You can see in this chart that to initiate an imminent deal, most contacts must reach Stage 3, in which the contact is committed to you and your solution. Getting them to that level requires work and extra contact touches, which is why rankings should be part of your campaign tracking system. Every contact on the list showing a Stage 1 rank should be addressed with additional measures to push them along to the next level or, lacking any meaningful response, they should be removed from the list and replaced with a new prospect. Contacts at Stage 2 are hot prospects, but they require

quick action to move them to the next level, to commit to your deal. These should receive a lot of your attention to discern what is needed to move the conversation along, who else needs to be involved, and which obstacles are yet to be cleared.

Contacts standing at Stage 3 should represent impending deals. If not, your critical mission is to discover what's standing in the way. This is often when deals can inexplicably stall as unknown factors come into play. Don't make the mistake of assuming that just because a contact has reached Stage 3, the deal is complete. You may find you will need to exert additional leverage here to see the deal through. "Oh, we just had another program come up as a higher priority" means your deal has just become stuck, just as dead as if it had been denied in the first place. Your job is to ensure it continues all the way through to launch and beyond.

Even in Stage 4, deals can go sideways. But this is also the magical level, where your contacts and opportunities should begin to multiply through referrals. If you find your deal stalling in this stage, something is fundamentally wrong and must be fixed quickly.

I experienced this recently with an important client in the insurance industry. In our initial test, the Contact Campaign produced a 96 percent response rate and 30,000 percent ROI, and my contact became a strong supporter. Still, the campaign stalled because the client hadn't secured budgetary commitments from the necessary stakeholders. A quick adjustment brought it all back into alignment, but it shows how even at the highest stage of contact and commitment, without constant vigilance and occasional adjustments, deals can simply dissolve.

If contacts are at Stage 4, does that mean they no longer should be part of your Contact Marketing program? Absolutely not. These are the people who have become critical to your success, because they're spreading the word about you and your services. So Contact Marketing then takes on a critical engagement mission: to keep these people in the fold, always discovering new things to talk about when they're talking about you.

Amazon founder Jeff Bezos is known to say, "Your personal brand is what people say about you when you're not there." Contact Marketing efforts can directly affect what people, particularly your Stage 4 contacts,

say about you. So doesn't it make sense to keep them constantly engaged with your message? Of course it does.

"Your personal brand is what people say about you when you're not there.

—JEFF BEZOS, Amazon founder"

Returning all the way back to Stage 1, let's take a look at the mechanics of the calls you'll be making as you get your Contact Campaign rolling.

Initial Contact

This is it—it's showtime. You're on. You've done your homework, and you already know a great deal about the target contact and how your opportunity fits with her objectives. You've already primed the conversation with your contact piece, which has piqued the CEO's curiosity and given a concise rationale for the meeting you're about to have. Be confident, be prepared, and be ready to see the scale of your enterprise change. At the same time, be respectful of the contact's time; get to the point quickly, and speak in terms of how you can help them achieve their goals. You're on your way.

Complications/What to Expect/Becoming a Phone Ninja

Some people walk into these situations with great ease, while others find it chokingly difficult. For those in the latter category, we need to talk about your phone skills and look at how you can be thrown off track.

When you make your initial call, you're already a target. You're asking to speak to the CEO or their executive assistant, which puts whoever you've just reached on the defensive. They know that if they put the wrong calls through, it could mean the end of their employment. Since they have had daily practice, eight hours a day, they're very good at deflecting your call. Your job is to stay on track.

The most common complication with your initial call to reach the CEO's executive assistant will be diverting you to someone you don't want to speak to. Unless you're offering something of strategic interest to human resources, a referral to that department is almost always a sign that the speaker on the other end of the line doesn't understand what you want to accomplish. *Never* accept a referral to HR; if they suggest that course of action, patiently re-explain what you want.

Remember, the executive assistant's job is to shed irrelevant calls quickly and protect the CEO's time—but also to find the hidden nuggets of opportunity their executive might otherwise miss. Your job is to make it through their potential obstacles. To do that, you must become a phone ninja. You need to be confident, have a balanced stance, and be ready to block and counterstrike with logic and relevance to the CEO's objectives.

Handling the Receptionist

If you encounter a live receptionist on your call, be courteous but focused. Avoid small talk; just state your request and be ready to tussle a bit. If they ask the nature of your call, volunteer the least amount of information necessary to get through. Don't try to convince them of the value of your call. Your objective is to reach the target's executive assistant. Get there as quickly as possible with the least amount of conversation possible.

Automated reception systems generally make your task of connecting with the CEO's assistant more difficult. Ideally, you'll be able to speak with a human receptionist, ask if the CEO has an executive assistant you can speak with, and be connected. But with a machine, you're usually left with a laundry list of departments and possible tasks to choose from to complete your call. Still, there are a few tactics you can use to break through.

When possible, push for the ideal—to reach an operator to get their expert referral to the target executive's assistant. Many companies employ both an automated system and a bank of operators. So the task becomes finding your way to that live receptionist. You can sometimes simply press “0” to reach an operator, or say the word “operator” into the phone. Other systems are set up so that you must listen to all of the options first, then

press the appropriate key to reach the operator. On a few recent calls, I've had to press "4" or "9" to reach the operator; others state at the end of their options list that you can simply remain on the line or press "0" to reach the receptionist. Automated systems require patience and focus to find your way through.

The next level of difficulty comes from systems that provide a list of options with reaching an operator conspicuously absent. These often include a final option of leaving a message in the company's general mailbox. Don't leave one. It's the equivalent of tossing your message, and contact mission, into a deep, dark hole. If you find an option to reach a sales or customer service representative, these are often your next best choice. When you connect, I find it's best to apologize for connecting with them, but explain that there is no receptionist and you're trying to find the executive assistant to whomever you're trying to reach.

The final option is to dial into the target executive's direct line through the automated company directory. If you take this route, you have a choice to make. Some sales trainers would advise you to go directly into your pitch if you happen to reach the CEO, but I prefer to show restraint, and respect for their time and privacy. Thus, my approach is to explain that I'm trying to reach their executive assistant, so that I can make a proper introduction and explain my reason for reaching out. Surprisingly, this response often gets the CEO to ask directly what you're trying to accomplish, so be prepared to have that conversation straightaway. If you end up leaving a voice mail, be courteous and explain that you're actually trying to reach their assistant. That will often result in a returned call from the EA.

The worst of the automated systems are those designed simply to repel outside calls. If you've ever tried to reach someone at Google or LinkedIn, you're familiar with this dismissive approach to even having phones. With these, you're essentially instructed to dial the person's extension or get lost. In that case, look for ways to connect via social media instead to get their direct dial number.

The Initial Call to the Executive Assistant

If you're on with the target executive's executive assistant, you're almost there. You're now in audition mode, so be sharp, focused, and ready to create what may become one of the most important connections you've ever made.

Not all executive assistants are alike. Some are relaxed and friendly, others are brusque and always in a hurry. Be alert to their style of interaction and be sure to match their speed, just as you do when you accelerate to smoothly enter highway traffic. If they're friendly, you can relax a bit in your communication pace. If not, move things along quickly. In either case, they will appreciate your perceptive approach to the call.

But always keep focusing on the target. The executive assistant needs to know two things from you right away: who are you and what value do you offer. So get to the point quickly, say "I'm so and so," launch into your VIP statement, then the reason for your call.

Executive assistants always want callers to be sincere and transparent. Be respectful, be sharp, be ready to respond to whatever the EA puts out. Help them do their job and they'll help you achieve your mission.

How to Make a Million-Dollar Phone Call

You need to be ready to have a million-dollar call at any time, so be prepared by developing a level of comfort with the idea of spending a few minutes with someone on the phone that can turn into a million dollars' worth of business.

You should also know precisely what it takes for any of your calls to amount to a million dollars' worth of business, and be ready to ask for it. If you don't know how to ask, or if you simply never get around to asking, how will you ever make significant breakthroughs?

Still, it's a daunting task. How can you ask anyone for a million dollars unless you're a professional sports hero, best-selling author, or an A-list movie star? It turns out, it's really not all that difficult. You just have to know *how* to ask.

More precisely, you have to have worked out ahead of time how that would piece together within your business model. If you work on the basis

of a monthly retainer plus production of whatever you're offering, how much would you need to charge for the retainer, and how many units would you have to produce monthly to turn all of that into a million dollars' worth of business?

If you sell custom windows and you're approaching builders to use your product in their projects, how many homes, on average, would you need to turn that into a million dollars' worth of business? Then it becomes a simple matter of approaching the right builders who routinely build enough homes each year to easily hand you a contract worth a million dollars.

You might not find yourself selling that much each time you approach an important new prospect, but that's not the point. I want you to start thinking big, really big, because that is the true nature of Contact Marketing. To create explosive growth in the scale of your career or business, you need to know what to ask for.

"To create explosive growth in the scale of your career or business, you need to know what to ask for."

After all, you're using Contact Marketing to reach out to your highest-potential prospects, so you must approach the campaign ready to make much bigger sales and reap much bigger results than you're used to. Integrating the idea of making million-dollar phone calls routinely into your daily thinking should become a critical part of reaching your goals.

Of course, there's much more to your call with the CEO than knowing how to ask for a million dollars' worth of business. But you must start by believing you can achieve much bigger results than you ever have before.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- ✓ There are four stages of contact: Indifferent, Intrigued, Committed, and Sponsor.
- ✓ Ranking each contact according to the four stages helps you measure the ongoing progress of your Contact Campaign.

- ✓ Each level of contact requires constant vigilance and immediate action to push them to the next level, initiate deals, and keep them on track.
- ✓ Stage 4 contacts may warrant the most attention in your Contact Campaign, because they can multiply your contacts and opportunities through referrals and constant evangelism.
- ✓ To make it all work, you must become a phone ninja, ready to take on any and all complications with intelligence, logic, and finesse.
- ✓ Your call starts with the receptionist—human or machine—and you must learn to quickly pass through this level of screening.
- ✓ Volunteer only the minimum amount of information necessary to get the receptionist's help and move on quickly to the next phase of your call.
- ✓ When faced with an automated reception system, sometimes the quickest way through is to dial "0."
- ✓ Always be ready to ask for a million dollars' worth of business—and know precisely how that can be achieved within your business model.
- ✓ Making million-dollar phone calls must become a routine part of your Contact Marketing mission to create explosive sales growth.



“Listen, you’re the expert, so let me tell you how this is going to work . . .”

CHAPTER 17

Your Call to the CEO

In the previous chapters, we delved into the initial stages of making contact, including your initial encounters with the CEO's reception layer and that all-important audition with their talent scouts, the executive assistants. We also introduced the mindset of making every call to a target CEO a million-dollar call.

It's a great start, but you'll need more than the intention of producing a million-dollar call when you speak with the CEO for the first time. In fact, if it is to be a million-dollar call, that will only come after a carefully laid-out plan of specific value and fit is explored, and only after your target is in agreement that there is sufficient value to proceed. Even then, the target's decision to press on can easily mean a yearlong cycle of testing and evaluation before you see the outcome you seek.

So let's take a closer look at what your first call or meeting should include and how you'll make your case.

What's Your Objective?

Before you fire, you've got to aim. So what is the objective of your outreach? Of course it's about extending the scale of your business or career, but how will your call extend the scale of your target executive's business? How is it relevant to their goals and how will it help the CEO achieve those goals more effectively or more quickly? The point of these questions is to remind you that you've got to show up with your homework done, and a clear idea of what you want to happen and how it will happen.

In [Chapter 3](#), I explained how a CEO is looking several years ahead, to plot the best possible course for their enterprises. They're hungry for

information, but only if it's relevant to their particular circumstances—and only if it's a quick read, because of the demands on their time.

Everything you say on your call must fit into their framework. The best place to start is to clearly define your agenda. If you're seeking a meeting, what is its purpose and how will it benefit the CEO? (This is the key reason why they should take the meeting, so be ready with a strong case for it to occur.) Who should be present in the meeting? (The more people required, the less chance of it happening.) What is your honest estimate of how long it should take? (If you say it will take 10 minutes, stick to 10 minutes or less.) What do you want as the outcome? (Don't expect too much; a good plan of action is to propose a test and get the CEO's referral to the right people in their organization to make it happen.)

Maybe your call isn't about selling to the target executive's company, but striking up a strategic partnership. In that case, how will it work and how will it benefit the CEO's company? Answering the "What's in it for me?" question is crucial to any partnership. What level of investment is required for the CEO to take advantage of your offer? Every action the CEO takes must be framed in terms of ROI; be ready to help them see the value immediately. What is the CEO likely to see as a result of the partnership? (Show them how your proposed partnership might help them retain or gain customers, serve their clients better, improve their efficiency, etc.)

"Answering the "What's in it for me?" question is crucial to any partnership."

One of the easiest ways to make the most of your contact with a CEO is to set the objective of gaining their referral to the right person in their organization. Essentially, you're asking for their help, but in order to get it, you first need to explain the reason for your request. As stated earlier, a sales call puts people on the defensive; a request for help tends to lower their guard, making them far more open to considering the reason for your call.

Requests for referrals from CEOs can produce several key benefits. If the CEO has sat quietly, carefully considering your reason for the referral, you're gaining an opportunity to have them essentially put their stamp of

approval on it. If they refer you to someone on their team, they're essentially saying, "This sounds interesting, I want you to check it out." In that case, the CEO is helping tremendously by introducing you to the "CEO" of the opportunity or problem you want to solve. If you succeed in getting your proposed sale or partnership to move forward, the CEO will remember thinking it was a good idea, lessening the chances of a veto just before you get their business. Most company operatives will have a tough time resisting the tug of a referral from their CEO. Your call becomes far more important when it carries the CEO's imprint.

Getting to the Point and Finding the Fit

Since one of your objectives for the call is to get the CEO to agree to your proposed agenda, I have found that it is far more effective to start with the suggestion to explore a possible fit, rather than asserting there is a fit. It's the essence of the Anti-Pitch in [Chapter 13](#). Telling a CEO you already know there is a terrific fit with their goals is presumptuous and will only succeed in raising their guard.

Start instead with a well-crafted, quick explanation of what you're proposing, along with how it has worked for other clients. Continue with the statement that you're not sure if there is a fit, but you feel it's worth exploring. The target executive is far more likely to give it a thoughtful hearing. You may indeed find there isn't much reason for continuing, or you may both discover there are even better reasons than you'd imagined for you to team up. The more you make your call to the CEO informative and collaborative, the better your chances of a successful outcome.

Equally important, you must be quick to get to the point of your call. So what will that look like? You know the drill by now. You'll start by introducing yourself and making your single-sentence, twelve-words-or-fewer VIP statement. You'll move on to the reason for your call, which is why you think it fits specifically with one of the CEO's stated goals. Express it also in a dozen or fewer words, in a way that will leave the CEO wondering, "How will you do that?" Then you'll suggest a quick exploration and a course of action, which might be a test or a referral. Or

the conversation may take an entirely unexpected direction, at the behest of the CEO.

Waste No Time

Always keep in mind that the CEO is on a different time scale than most. Show respect by calling when you say you will and keeping your side of the conversation brief but focused. Make it easy for the CEO to have the conversation and see the unique value you're trying to bring. Show them you understand their world by respecting the value of their time.

Actually, you won't be in charge of how long the call will take. The CEO will move it along briskly. A successful call will be surprisingly short; a failed call will be even shorter. Welcome to the CEO's world.

I want you to be prepared for the brief time scale you'll be working with at the CEO level. Your role in this will be to move your agenda along quickly. The CEO will let you know if they want to spend more time, so be ready to play by their rules.

Defining Next Steps

While the brevity of the phone call might be a surprise, never allow it to end without defining your next steps together. That won't make sense if the target executive tells you they aren't interested, but even there, you are free to ask if there is someone else in their organization with whom you can discuss the matter. At least then you might exit the call with a referral.

Assuming the tone of the call is positive, be ready to list the resulting action items and get a clear understanding of when you will either speak next with the CEO or hear from someone on their team. Get names, email addresses, and direct phone numbers. Make sure you exit with real next steps that will move the process along. You're on the phone with the CEO, and if you've had a positive outcome, make sure you get what you came for—a pathway to a breakthrough to expand your sales numbers or the scale of your business.

Like this chapter, your conversation with the target CEO will be brief but focused on the key points that will move things along, for you and for them. Never allow yourself to end these potentially life-changing conversations without a path leading everyone involved forward.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- ✓ Any call to a CEO should be preceded by a few hours' research to understand their world, issues, and goals.
- ✓ When speaking with a CEO, you must have a clear objective for your call.
- ✓ If you're seeking a meeting, why is it beneficial to the CEO, who should attend, and what will they gain?
- ✓ If you are proposing a strategic partnership, what's in it for them? What's involved?
- ✓ Requesting a referral is one of the most effective ways to get the CEO to listen to your reason for calling.
- ✓ Top-down referrals produce several advantages, which can be your shortcut to new deals.
- ✓ When speaking with the CEO, make sure you get to the point quickly. How is it relevant to their situation, and how will it provide unique value to their enterprise?
- ✓ Never tell the CEO you already know there is a fit between their needs and your solution; always ask to explore whether there is a fit or not.
- ✓ People will be more engaged in calls that are informative and collaborative, rather than pitch-oriented, which can greatly improve your chances for a successful outcome.

- ✓ When speaking with a CEO, appreciate the value of the time they're spending with you by not wasting it.
- ✓ You're not in charge of the brevity of your call; the CEO is.
- ✓ A successful call with a CEO will be surprisingly short; an unsuccessful one will be even shorter.
- ✓ Never exit a meeting with a CEO without a specific set of next steps to carry your initiative forward.



“Good God, eight hundred pounds?”

CHAPTER 18

Now the Work Begins

By now, you have identified your Top 100 list, strategized and created your Contact Campaign, completed your VIP makeover, persuaded each executive assistant to put you through—and you’ve had your first conversations with your target CEOs, remembering that “CEO” is an acronym for whoever is the “Center of Enterprise Opportunity” for your outreach.

And *now* your work has just begun? Uh, well, yes.

You haven’t created any breakthrough mega-sales or strategic partnerships yet, which is the reason you’ve made the investment in your Contact Campaign. This is not the time to sit back and relax, feeling like you’ve accomplished your mission. Not yet.

If you’re running in a race and you’ve gone three out of the four laps, having passed all of your competitors along the way, have you won yet? Of course not. That can only occur once you’ve crossed the finish line. In your Contact Campaign, once you’ve made contact, you’re almost there, but you haven’t yet crossed that finish line. So let’s get you there now.

Follow Through on Your System

You’ve probably noticed by now that, if you want to succeed at anything, consistency of effort is what gets you there. Experts have been telling us it often takes a minimum of six or more touch points before we ever break through to make a sale. At this point, you have only made your first, second, or third touch (including your hold-back device).

So it’s time to get to work. As I have stated throughout this book, I always include the executive assistant in the campaign. When they have been helpful on the phone, particularly after the first contact, send them a

card with a handwritten note of thanks inside. Once the initial meeting has taken place, thank them again for their help. The point is to start fostering a relationship and cementing your access to the CEO.

Even more critical is the nurturing of your new contact with the CEOs themselves. If you have exited the call with any sort of action items, anything you have committed to producing for them as a result of the call, make sure you follow through quickly and thoroughly. Make it your goal to exceed the CEO's expectations wherever you can. And be sure to thank them for taking the time to meet or speak with you.

If the result of the first call is the CEO's referral to someone else in the organization, in a sense, the process starts all over again. You're stepping in with a top-down referral, which is an enormous advantage, but it still requires effort to connect with this new person, including their executive assistant.

Nothing happens if the CEO doesn't follow through with the promised referral. So make sure it happens. You are your own advocate. Don't assume things are getting done. Make sure they're proceeding according to plan. It's all up to you to make it happen, so make it happen.

Your Critical Response

Please remember these words: *A deal delayed is a deal denied.* Keep that in mind as you push through your Contact Campaign process.

I am certainly guilty of having felt, once a very important new client or partner has said we'd do business together, that my job was complete, that it was time to celebrate. But a not-so-funny thing can easily happen at this stage. The deal can stall.

"Make it your goal to exceed the CEO's expectations wherever you can."

There's often no apparent reason for it and there's usually no immediate cause for alarm. So-and-so will be out the rest of the month, or they're committed to the project, but can't do anything until the start of the new

fiscal year. Maybe there is another, higher-priority project underway or a trade show in the next quarter that has your quarry's attention.

Whatever it is, these are potential deal killers. Even though it may not seem like it at the time, what's happening is your deal is being delayed. And once that starts, it may continue to be delayed indefinitely. The client or new partner may not mean to deny you this new deal, but if they never get around to it, it's as dead as if they'd simply said "no" in the first place.

So keeping your deals on track, doing whatever it takes to punch through delays and excuses, is your absolutely critical response to any new deal you set as a result of your Contact Campaign.

But how?

Often a delay is a disguised assessment by the other side that you don't have sufficient leverage in the deal. Your challenge, then, is to create new leverage quickly and apply it forcefully. If the new client has put other projects above yours on their list of priorities, it's time to examine the situation and find new leverage points.

One approach would be to see what their competitors might offer to have that same deal with you. Sometimes it's enough simply to ask, "If you're putting this on the back burner, would you mind if I approach XXX, your competitor?" It's important to treat your deal as highly strategic and valuable; if the new contact doesn't see it that way, perhaps the prospect of losing it if they don't act will help them see it differently.

A softer approach would be to continue to feed valuable, unbiased information to the CEO on a regular basis in support of the deal. Make sure they are constantly and fully aware of the opportunity at stake—and what they could lose if they continue to put the deal on hold.

In any case, you must always be on guard for delays and never validate them with inaction. It's up to you to make the deals that are most critical to your success not only happen, but happen as quickly as possible.

Addressing New Stakeholders

One potential source of delay could be obstacles created by unknown-to-you stakeholders. They may be raising concerns simply because they

haven't been included in the discussion. So another part of your critical response should be to find out who all the stakeholders are and include them in your campaign as soon as possible.

The process of determining who they are is really pretty simple. It's a matter of picking up the phone and speaking to your new inside ally, the CEO's executive assistant. He or she will know who the additional stakeholders are and will have access to ask the CEO if there is any doubt.

Once you know who the stakeholders are, it's time for a new round of outreach, although these won't be nearly as challenging as the initial contact was. Often a simple phone call to their assistants, explaining that you're working with the CEO on a new initiative and you want to get their executive's input, is enough. Essentially, you're saying to all of the people who can delay or kill your deal, "I'm recognizing your importance and including you in the process."

Beyond that simple offer of recognition, you might come away with valuable insights that will actually make your deal stronger. Addressing additional stakeholders is simply a smarter way to do business; it ensures your deals go through with support from influencers who would otherwise remain hidden and potentially hazardous.

My favorite approach is to position these calls as interviews. Explain to each stakeholder you're doing this as a fact-finding step in your process, and that the results of the interviews will be rolled into a feasibility report to be presented to the CEO. This gives each subordinate a chance to have their contributions highlighted to the CEO, and with the recognition of their expressions of support or concern, they become invested in the same outcome you seek, which is to get the deal done.

Addressing stakeholders not only smooths the way; it makes your deal more important, because you now have everyone who matters on your side.

Completing the Job

The point of this chapter is to keep you focused on completing the job, on ensuring your deals become breakthroughs in your career or business. That's how you change the scale of your business.

Don't stop running your race in the third of four laps. Follow through on all promised action items. Make it your goal to exceed the CEO's expectations at every turn. Never allow your deals to be delayed. Include all necessary stakeholders and make sure they never get the chance to derail your deal.

It's your turn to break through to greater and greater levels of success. Make it happen!

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- ✓ You've come a long way with your Contact Campaign, but your first contact is just the beginning of the process that will lead to the breakthroughs you seek.
- ✓ Breakthroughs only come when you have finished the job, when your deal is completed and active.
- ✓ Once you have broken through, the consistency of your follow-up is critical.
- ✓ If a first contact with a CEO results in a referral, be sure to make the new connection quickly.
- ✓ If your deal is going to happen, it's up to you to make sure it goes all the way.
- ✓ Always remember, a deal delayed is a deal denied.
- ✓ Treat delays as a serious threat and act to overcome them quickly with additional leverage.
- ✓ Continue to "after-sell" your deal with constant information to the CEO in support of the opportunity.
- ✓ If delays continue, bring the opportunity to their competitors to reenergize the deal.

- ✓ One sure source of delay is unacknowledged stakeholders, so be sure to include them in your process.
- ✓ One way to bring all stakeholders into alignment is to arrange interviews with them to produce a feasibility report for the CEO.



“Oh my. It seems we left the letter ‘r’ out of the word ‘shirt’ in our, ‘Wear this shirt!’ campaign . . .”

CHAPTER 19

Defining Success

Contact Marketing may be a newly identified form of marketing, but it's also an entirely new way of approaching the critical mission of becoming connected with the people who can make big things happen in your life. Becoming well-connected not only enhances your business results, it also transforms you into a VIP yourself. CEOs pride themselves on the personal networks they have built over the span of their careers, because they know the more connected they are with the right people, the better able they are to do their jobs, hit their goals, and move their companies forward.

Still, the immediate goal of Contact Marketing is to help you break through to your Top 100 or Strategic 100 lists, in order to create vast breakthroughs in your career or business. Success in that goal will present itself in many forms. In some cases, you will never meet the target CEO, but still get the referrals you need to make a deal happen. Or perhaps it leads to an introduction outside the organization, but doesn't lead to new business with the target company. You might find yourself in direct contact with a CEO, with no resulting business.

Are each of these outcomes failures or successes?

As with most things in life, the answer is complicated. Each of these scenarios may well lead to business—in fact, the first one already has—but perhaps in forms you may not have expected. In all three, there is at least some level of connection with the target contact, and that alone gives you the opportunity to expand your network. But only the first example resulted in direct business, while the other two may take some time before they produce results. It could even take a few years.

So how should you define success in your Contact Marketing campaign? Let's take a closer look.

Are the Executive Assistants Becoming Long-Term Contacts?

Executive assistants are often the first point of contact, and as I have addressed throughout this book, they are also your first measure of success. Remember, they are not gatekeepers—they're talent scouts. So how have the auditions been going?

Assistants are people, too, so they're fallible just like the rest of us. Some simply have surly personalities, or perhaps they are unhappy with their position. Maybe some hate their bosses, so they're not willing to seek any special advantage on their behalf.

But on the whole, executive assistants are usually some of the most clear-sighted people in the organization. They often wield tremendous power, even without the fancy titles or mega-salaries netted by their executive bosses. In some cases, they are essentially stealth vice presidents in the way they touch all areas of the organization; of all of the people in the executive suite, they're often the ones who get the most done.

What they say and how they react to your requests for contact is an important indication of your success as a Contact Marketer. So how have you fared so far in your campaign? Are the executive assistants becoming friendly parties and important long-term contacts? Or have they remained distant, or worse, have they closed the door on your contact efforts?

By taking this early measure, you can determine a couple of important factors. If the assistants are consistently thwarting your pushes for contact, they're giving you valuable feedback: "Rethink your approach." Figure out what you're missing. Are you breaking some sort of important protocol? Have you failed to present your reason for connecting as something of strategic importance to their bosses? Maybe all you're doing is pitching, which is perhaps the worst offense of all.

"My guess is that, nine times out of ten, assistants have curbed your advance because you've sounded like a salesperson looking to make a pitch."

If you find yourself in this situation, there is a simple solution: Just ask for their advice. Explain that you felt you were bringing something of strategic importance to their boss's attention and hadn't expected the assistant's reaction. Can they offer some feedback? My guess is that, nine times out of ten, they have curbed your advance because you've sounded like a salesperson looking to make a pitch. Always keep in mind that they want to let the right people through, so listen carefully as they describe what makes someone right for access.

Alternatively, if the executive assistants are mostly responding favorably, you have achieved your first level of success in your Contact Campaign. It's really something to celebrate, because impressing these tough judges is not easy. And it means you're heading in the right direction.

Your Response Rate

This is where Contact Marketing gets very exciting, because it is capable of producing shockingly powerful metrics. As stated earlier in this book, it is not uncommon for Contact Campaigns to produce response rates approaching 100 percent. If you are a marketer, you know results like that are considered impossible—but now you know that's not necessarily true if you're using Contact Marketing.

Still, we need to temper expectations, because I don't want you thinking that anything less than 100 percent is an unacceptable outcome. I have described campaigns in [Section II](#) that have been exceptionally effective with response rates in the 30 percent to 70 percent range. In the IT realm, we're seeing that even a 10 percent to 20 percent response can be a decent outcome, as these target contacts tend to be particularly standoffish—it seems like, if they had it their way, they wouldn't have to connect with anyone. So in some cases, breaking through at all can be a victory.

There is also the question of what constitutes a response. If, as a result of your outreach, a CEO indicates there is no opportunity with their company, is that a response? What if their assistant gives you the same answer, without consulting their executive?

Since the goal of a Contact Campaign is to get in touch with the target executive, I would say any direct contact as a result of your campaign is a response. It may not be the response you wanted, but it was an opportunity to present your case and you did make contact. At least you'll know that, after hearing what you have to say, that particular organization may not be the opportunity you thought it was. The CEO might even offer a bit of feedback as to why it failed to gather interest, in which case you have gained valuable insight you can use to steer subsequent efforts.

If that same negative answer came from the assistant with no input from the target CEO, I would not count that as a response, because the campaign did not produce direct contact.

So let's define what a response to a Contact Campaign is:

- a) any form of direct communication or contact with the targeted party, or
- b) a direct referral from the targeted party to someone in their organization who has authority over the issue or opportunity you're presenting, or
- c) any referral or introduction to a contact outside the target executive's company who is of value to the achievement of your goals for the campaign.

Using that scale, is your Contact Campaign producing the level of response you want? Can it be improved? Keep in mind, response rates are an important measure of your success, but they are not the whole story. What if you only get through to 10 percent, but each time it's worth millions of dollars? Isn't that an enormously successful campaign? Of course it is.

Your Return on Investment

I've described Contact Campaigns that have produced tremendously high response rates, and others that have scored returns on investment of more than 600,000 percent. My own Contact Campaign all those years ago, to the

vice presidents and directors of circulation with the major magazine publishers, may have produced millions of percent ROI. After all, I spent \$100 to put a personalized cartoon print and letter in the hands of about two dozen VIP contacts, and launched a business netting millions of dollars' worth of income as a result.

Response rates don't directly correspond to enormous returns on investment by themselves. What is significant is the combination of the right kinds of response in sufficient numbers, with a high average dollar amount per deal.

That's pretty simple. In the earlier example, if you "only" get a 10 percent response to your Contact Campaign, but each response amounts to a million-dollar sale, your ROI will be extremely high. Conversely, if you are getting through to everyone you target, but the average dollar value per contact is low, your ROI may be minuscule.

Taking these measurements will be extremely useful to your future success. In that 10 percent example, a high ROI despite a relatively low response rate indicates you have an enormous upside yet to come. Just figure out how to get that response rate higher. Boosting it to 20 percent would mean millions more in sales. In the latter example, the ROI indicates there's something off in the level of people you're targeting or perhaps in your revenue model. Can you target companies with bigger budgets to spend on what you sell? What can you do to increase your average sale amounts? Are you missing a more lucrative area of opportunity related to what you sell?

Actually, I must clarify that a true measure of return on investment is more complicated than the simple ratio of dollars spent on the campaign against the dollars generated by the campaign. A true accounting measure of ROI includes all expenses, including salaries, overhead, fixtures, interest, taxes, and more. A more accurate depiction would be income versus expense.

On that scale, the accepted industry standard for a lead-generation campaign would be a factor of ten or twenty against direct expenses. That would amount to a 1,000 to 2,000 percent rate. In Contact Marketing, you should be shooting for at least ten times those rates. If you're not hitting

that mark, do some troubleshooting to figure out what adjustments may be necessary.

What Did You Accomplish?

Once again, the purpose of Contact Marketing is to get you in front of the people you have identified as most important to your goals. It doesn't stop there, though. Your reason for gaining access to those people is to produce exceptional growth in your business or career. And that shows up in the form of greater sales, greater influence, and a million-dollar Rolodex of contacts.

Did you connect with new contacts who can expand your network further through referrals? Have you opened new pathways to achieving other goals in your life? These things might not be obvious at first, but will come to light as you interact with the members of your network.

Take stock of your accomplishments. If you are using Contact Marketing, you should be finding yourself on a steep upward trajectory. If not, take a look at what your results are telling you, make the necessary adjustments, and prepare for the amazing breakthroughs that lie ahead.

What Were Your Breakthroughs?

I don't mean to say your only achievements should be greater connections in higher places, with nothing to show for them. I simply left the best for last. I expect you will become quite wealthy from the sales and partnerships you're about to produce. You may even embark on some wonderfully unexpected adventures in your life. You may start a new cause or business that puts you in regular contact with your heroes. With Contact Marketing, there are no limits to the success you can bring to your life.

The dictionary defines the word "breakthrough" as "any significant or sudden advance." And that will be the ultimate test of the success of your Contact Campaign: Has it produced a sudden or significant advance in your life or business?

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- ✓ In the narrowest sense, the purpose of a Contact Campaign is simply to get you in front of the VIPs on your Top 100 list.
- ✓ The broader purpose of a Contact Campaign is to help you achieve explosive growth in your career, business, and life.
- ✓ Measuring the success of your Contact Campaign involves some complexity and interpretation.
- ✓ Among the first results to evaluate is your success rate with executive assistants.
- ✓ Since EAs function as talent scouts for their bosses, their feedback is invaluable and should be sought out.
- ✓ If you are converting most of the assistants you connect with into long-term contacts, it's a good indication your approach is sound.
- ✓ Contact Campaigns typically produce response rates well beyond those experienced with other forms of direct response marketing.
- ✓ Although 100 percent response rates are possible, your campaign will likely produce a lot less yet still be highly successful and profitable.
- ✓ A Contact Campaign response is any direct connection, referral, or meaningful introduction to someone who can directly capitalize on the opportunity you're presenting.
- ✓ Response rates alone are not enough to evaluate the success of your Contact Campaign.
- ✓ ROI or income-versus-expense results provide direct feedback on the soundness of your campaign and revenue model.

- ✓ If your response rate is low, but your ROI is high, finding ways to improve response will pay enormous dividends.
- ✓ If your response rate is high, but your ROI is low, you're either shooting too low or asking too little for what you're selling.
- ✓ Part of what you should be accomplishing with your Contact Marketing is a far greater personal network of VIP contacts.
- ✓ The real breakthroughs should always be measured in terms of response rate, ROI, and the explosive growth of your business.



“Charles, so glad you could join us for a cup of coffee!”

CHAPTER 20

Virtual Meetings

I've always found that when we meet in person, there is a certain magic present. A bond forms instantly. We experience each other as people, not mere voices or sources of text. We laugh together. We learn together. We experience Flip Moments together.

Sometimes, we experience mishaps together, too, which only deepens the bond. I remember once visiting *Inc. Magazine's* headquarters, on a wharf in Boston. I was excited, because I'd admired the magazine and looked forward to claiming them as another blue-chip client.

To get there, I had to take a water taxi across Boston Harbor, which only added to the sense of adventure. I walked in with another fellow who had just arrived. We both checked in and soon enough, two people came down the stairs to the lobby to receive us. One greeted the other guy, the other greeted me, and we all headed upstairs for our meetings.

Once we reached my contact's desk, I started explaining why I wanted to meet and what I had to offer. I told her about my cartoons, and how, if sent in the mail, they would command attention. I told her about test results and other major magazines that were already clients. And then she asked, "What does this have to do with statistical analysis models?"

Um, well, nothing.

We quickly figured out the four of us had chosen the wrong pairings in the lobby, and regrouped with a good laugh. Once I was coupled with the right person, the meeting went splendidly and I did exit with that new blue-chip client.

The fact that we had a funny story about our first meeting gave us something special to remember and share with others. It became an instant bond, which is what we're always after in Contact Marketing. People who like us, and feel a bond with us, want to do business with us.

If in-person meetings are the gold standard for creating human-to-human connection, virtual meetings are not far behind.

We still get to see each other's faces and read each other's reactions. We still get to associate a face with the voice. We even get to visit our contacts in their intimate settings. When else would we ever get the chance to meet in person, at the prospect's home?

And sure, there are all the jokes about only having to dress our upper halves. As long as we don't stand up, we're fine. In fact, more than fine. **Zoom** and other platforms give us the ability to have meetings that otherwise might never have taken place.

It's common to connect with people on other continents. In fact, you could have five meetings with five people on five different continents in a single day. That is something that never could have happened before the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated—and popularized—virtual meetings.

I'm not sure Zoom is a method for getting meetings, but it certainly is a way to have meetings, to make them possible and convenient—even palatable. Virtual meetings have proven a vital new platform for creating the kinds of bonds that move business and feel more human. They are an important part of what we're doing as Contact Marketers.

The purpose of this chapter is pretty stark: Keep it simple!

There are many platforms for virtual meetings, and many tools and plugins offered to enhance the experience. Microsoft Teams, Webex, Google Meet, Soho, Skype, and more claim their platforms are superior to Zoom, but I like the latter's full suite of features, including the ability to share screens, use virtual and blurred backgrounds, show slides, sort participants into private rooms, deploy AI-powered note takers, and more.

Then there are the streaming platforms that always seem to make everything more difficult. They often don't recognize cameras and microphones. They often don't work with green screens. Worst of all, they require a long, slow upload of the recording to be pushed onto your device before you can close the session, long after the meeting has ended.

I don't always get to stipulate the use of Zoom, but I always make my preference known. Zoom is the default platform for virtual meetings. Everybody has it, it's simple, and it just works. Virtual backgrounds are

particularly good on Zoom, so you can place yourself anywhere, in front of any background you can imagine.

For those reasons, the rest of this chapter will focus on Zoom as our virtual platform. Let's consider how you can maximize the experience, for yourself and your guests.

Creating Your Best Impression: Video and Audio Hacks

If you're going to be on-screen, the first bit of kit you'll need is a camera. There might be one built into your monitor. Or you might have an upmarket webcam with AI stabilization, tracking, and color management features. If you're taking your Zoom meetings on the phone, you have a sophisticated camera already built in.

Whatever you use, pay attention to the quality of the image and sound. Video and audio go together, and if either source is soured by poor quality, everything you do in the meeting will be perceived as substandard. *You* will be perceived as substandard.

Fortunately, it's easy to produce a great effect. Invest in a good camera if you're meeting from your studio. Logitech, GUSGU, and Obsbot currently make fine units that include color adjustment dashboards, tracking, and AI picture enhancements, and produce excellent video quality at 1080p or 4K resolution.

Digital 35 mm SLR cameras can also be used to produce excellent-quality images, but they're complicated, and perhaps overkill unless you're producing a high-end video podcast, too.

All of these cameras allow adjustments to contrast, brightness, saturation, and sharpness. Take some time on a Zoom screen to play with those sliders to produce the best version of you. But before you do anything with those, be sure to understand how to set white balance. None of the other settings matter until you have the white balance set properly for your camera. If the white balance is off, the camera will produce very unnatural video with oddly hued skin tones. Find that setting in the camera manual and make sure you keep the white balance setting finely adjusted.

Similarly, if your current microphone is not producing clear, clean sound, the impression you create will be subpar. Fix that by at least adjusting the microphone settings in your camera if that's the source. Or splurge on a studio-quality microphone and run it through a desktop mixing board. Remove sources of buzzing, humming, or other unwanted noise. If you're purchasing an external mic, a shotgun-patterned unit is preferable for tuning out everything but your voice. By contrast, cardioid and omnidirectional microphones pick up everything everywhere, which will lend your audio a distracting quality.

Another critical part of getting the best possible signal is proper lighting. In a studio setting, there should be at least two light sources on your face. One should be dominant and offset to one side, with the second set to the other side, to fill in details and provide depth to your image.

Your background should be lit separately with larger studio floodlights, so its image can be fine-tuned to frame your face in the best light. Of course, background is a much bigger subject than just lighting.

You've probably noticed many Zoomers have cozy bookshelves as backdrops. Even though they're quite commonly used, they're still very useful for setting the scene. If you're an author, they're the perfect setting to display your books. Ditto if you have hobbies to share or pictures you're proud to show. New products, prototypes, items of fascination, and more can all find a spot on the shelves, making for a very useful session backdrop.

Another option is to use a green screen, so you can place yourself anywhere in the world in your video presentation. There are portable green screens, but the best solution is to have an entire green wall behind you. Green screens present their own issues, however. They must be well and evenly lit, and you will need to add a few lights to your personal array, so your shoulders and hair have a slight backlit effect. Those edges of your outline must be well lit to prevent the odd effect created by camera latency in virtual background images. Without that lighting, a dark line will form in the boundary between you and the green wall behind, and the whole thing will look fake. Proper lighting will make the composite image look ultra-realistic.

Once you solve those setting issues, you have a whole world of possibilities for backgrounds. You'll need source JPEG images in a 16:9 aspect ratio, the standard for portrait-orientation video and television images. To load the virtual background images on Zoom, open a meeting session, then open the Settings pop-up window, and navigate to Background & Effects. Within that pane, choose Virtual Backgrounds and click the + symbol to add new background images. You can accumulate a library of images, and Zoom supplies a few to get you started. To place yourself in front of any of the background images, simply click one of the thumbnails in the library.

So, what should you use for a background image? I have a few favorite sources. One is to license an image of an office or studio from iStockPhoto, Envato, or any other stock source. I choose images that have big picture windows, so I can use Photoshop to strip in any view I want. I've produced some very interesting studio backgrounds with large window walls looking out over the water, perhaps with a sailboat at anchor. But still water in a photograph tends to betray the realism necessary for a true virtual background, so my other favorite source is Midjourney (really, though, you can use any text-to-image AI platform). I've been able to produce realistic images of studio walls with various items sitting on shelves. Those tend to be book covers, cartoons, and contact devices, because, well, that's my actual background.

I find that when I keep the wall images dark, it tends to look most realistic, because the telltale latency areas between my image and the background are far less visible. I happen to have the entire wall behind me painted as a green screen, but I also have a row of tables against the wall, with various campaign pieces and cartoon prints. That combination of green screen and displayed samples produces a very useful effect. The table looks like it's part of the background, just like the virtual background image, but I'm able to turn around and pick up items, which tends to make everything more believable.

When you log in to Zoom, you're always presented with an option to open the settings before entering the session. I recommend using that opportunity to check your video and microphone settings to ensure the right camera and microphone are selected. That's where you can also enter the

Virtual Backgrounds settings described earlier and ensure the desired background or effects are selected.

A Few Favorite Tools and Shortcuts

New tools and features are constantly being integrated with the Zoom platform. It's easy to share resources from your desktop or camera roll, for instance, and AI has produced some interesting new functionality.

One of my favorites is the new class of AI-powered note-taker apps. I signed up for the **Fathom Notetaker** some time ago, but ended up dismissing it every time it showed up in my sessions. I didn't want to burden the conversation by imposing a recording device.

But I recently thought, "Maybe I should use it this one time for this meeting with a prospect." I'm glad I did. The prospect never mentioned the fact that notes were being taken, and at the end of the session, I received a brief summary of what we discussed. Normally I do that by hand, but not anymore.

Literally within minutes, I was able to get back to the person with a summary of what we discussed and a few one-sheets that covered everything we needed. Fathom quickly became an unfair advantage I will surely continue using in meetings.

Another favorite functionality of Zoom is really quite basic, but essential: the ability to share files on my screen or for my guests to share from theirs. In virtual meetings, it is much clearer to share images than to hold up the same item in front of the webcam. Using the latter method, items presented by hand appear poorly lit and distorted by the camera lens. Sharing images from my desktop allows total control over the quality of presentation.

Zoom's Share Screen command, activated by the small green button found in the navigation bar at the bottom of the screen, is one of the most useful features of the platform. It gives access to any file you have on your screen. So, for instance, if I want to share a video, I use the Share Screen command, then select the video image already open on my desktop and hit Play.

If you're using any files with an audio component, be sure to click the Share Sound option in the sidebar of the Share File pane. Otherwise, the audio won't play and your presentation won't seem polished. Use the same method to share images, web pages, or slides. Quickly toggle back to speaker mode by clicking the red Stop Share button at the very top of your screen.

Another favorite hack is to set up a simple domain as a shortcut for your Zoom page. Every Zoom account has its own, reserved meeting link that's always ready for use. If your name is Bob, reserve something like [ZoomwithBob.com](https://zoom.us/join/ZoomwithBob.com), then have it redirect to your actual Zoom meeting page.

That way, you can always invite anyone to your Zoom meeting by giving them that simple to remember web address.

Virtual Meeting Etiquette

There are certain things you wouldn't do in face-to-face meetings. For instance, you wouldn't bring your pet to a meeting, and you probably wouldn't have another conversation running with someone else when meeting in person. Nor would you show up wearing shorts and flip-flops. Doing these things would reflect badly on your personal brand and probably lose you the sale. The same is true of virtual meetings, although the offending actions may be different.

One of the most thoughtful things you can do is use your mute button. We tend to tune out background noise and interruptions in our own environments, but when they're piped over your mic, they can become wholly distracting to others. If you're hosting the meeting, everyone will appreciate your setting the ground rules:

- Please mute your mic until you're called upon to speak.
- Please check your camera and microphone settings to ensure your video and audio signals are coming through properly.
- Don't speak over others.

- Don't have conversations offline during our conversation, especially with your mic on.
- Leave your camera running so the rest of us know you're engaged in our conversation.

One of the worst offenses I've seen lately is when people send their AI note taker to the meeting instead of attending. No, thank you. If you've only sent your note taker, you're not contributing at all to the conversation. You're subtracting. Plus we're already taking notes and will share them with you afterward. Imagine hosting a meeting and only note takers appeared. It's the opposite of participation and should be squelched. After that experience, I decided to remove any note-taking apps that are present without their owners.

Meeting hosts have some etiquette to follow as well. It's up to you to direct and enhance the attendees' experience, so if there are any open mics and distracting noises, find and mute them. Control the speakers so that no one monopolizes the time. Make sure everyone gets a chance to speak and be heard. And when the meeting is over, take a few minutes to bundle up the meeting summary and share it with all in attendance, and perhaps even those who didn't show.

Can't We Just Get on the Phone?

It's easy to forget that the original version of virtual meetings was just a phone call. Remember those days? We simply dialed the person's number, and if they were available, we'd have a conversation.

There was no requirement to turn on the lighting, mount the camera, remove the lens cover, adjust camera settings and white balance, turn on the mic, select which mic and camera were to be used, check sound levels, check backgrounds, then click a few times to activate the platform—and then have the conversation. Never mind that you might also need to take a shower and comb your hair first.

Virtual meetings are one of the great miracles of our time. We can connect with anyone, anywhere, and create our most positive impression.

We can construct our own realities, feature any aspects of our lives, careers, and businesses, and hone our images to perfection.

“Virtual meetings are one of the great miracles of our time. We can connect with anyone, anywhere, and create our most positive impression.”

Still, we should remember virtual meetings are not always necessary, and sometimes just get in the way of quick communication. In those cases, let’s remember we can always just pick up the phone and talk.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- ✓ Meeting in person is the gold standard for creating human-to-human connections.
- ✓ Still, virtual meetings can achieve similar bonding results.
- ✓ Virtual meetings enable connections that never could happen in person; meeting five people on five continents is easy virtually, impossible in person.
- ✓ There are many virtual meeting platforms, but Zoom is the baseline—it’s simple to use and it just works without fuss or unnecessary complications.
- ✓ Invest in the best camera and microphone you can afford. Like a fine suit, it will pay off in terms of impressions made.
- ✓ If you’re working from home, consider setting up a professional studio, with either a custom setting or green screen in the background.
- ✓ Lighting can dramatically change the production value of your Zoom persona and presentations.
- ✓ Consider reserving an easy-to-remember domain as a shortcut to your Zoom meetings.

- ✓ Etiquette and house rules are important for hosting a productive meeting and providing a positive experience.
- ✓ Don't forget, not every conversation has to be a Zoom meeting.



“Any plans for the Apocalypse?”

CHAPTER 21

Some of My Favorite AI Tools

This updated edition exists because of AI. Of course, other factors are changing the way we get meetings. But the disruption and enhancement AI will bring to every corner of our lives is greater than anything we've ever experienced. It is the next step in human evolution.

I started this update with thoughts on how AI will reshape B2B selling. We can already see how it will divide us into two classes—those who fear and avoid AI, and those who eagerly lean in. That is the key to thriving in this new Age of AI. Lean in, learn, experiment—and put it to use. That is the purpose of this chapter, to help you start leaning in. Here, I'll share some of my favorite AI tools for getting more meetings and selling more deals.

We don't have to go far to find AI tools already integrated into our selling. If you use any of the big CRM or sales automation platforms, they're already infused with AI enhancements, running in the background. Salesforce, HubSpot, and others are already speeding up deals with AI-powered insights and data points that identify likely buyers. Data platforms like ZoomInfo, Seamless, and Apollo are also heavily infused with AI enhancements, allowing sellers to find the right buyers at the right time. In B2B sales, AI is everywhere already.

"In B2B sales, AI is everywhere already."

Because AI is evolving so incredibly fast, it's impossible to write a chapter like this without it quickly becoming outdated. So, let's use this as a starting point for a "living chapter." I will continue to share my favorite AI tools and sources via email. To join in, simply visit my author site at <https://stuheinecke.com/ai-in-sales>, then sign up for my list.

What follows are my favorite AI tools: some for becoming better sellers, of course, but also for becoming more creative, audacious, and resourceful Contact Marketers. Use these tools, and you will be transformed as you start your own journey of discovery and wonder.

Become an Illustrator with Text-to-Image AI

Are you an artist? A photographer? A writer or filmmaker? Or perhaps a singer/songwriter? If your answer was “No” to any of these categories, it’s time to change your thinking. Let’s start by recasting you as an illustrator and photographer, no equipment or art supplies required.

Of course, I’m talking about text-to-image AI platforms, including DALL-E from OpenAI, Leonardo, and Canva, but my favorite of these is **Midjourney**. All of these platforms allow you to use written prompts to produce wondrous images, so the trick is to understand how to write a great prompt.

To start, you’ll need to set up an account. Most platforms offer free accounts to start, but be prepared—you’re going to want to start paying to produce more content faster.

Now it’s time to get creative.

Midjourney prompts start with the command, “/imagine:” What follows is a concise description of the scene you want to create, followed by parameters for artistic style, point of view, and aspect ratio. Here’s what that looks like:

```
/imagine:an expansive desert scene of a broad valley covered in wildflowers and majestic mountains in the distance, low angle, wide shot, minimalist style, cartoonish, reduced palette, purple, orange and gray, --ar 16:9
```

That will produce a stunning set of images in a minimalist style with dramatic uses of purple, orange, and gray, sized at 16:9 aspect ratio (standard for video). There is no substitute for practice here, as writing effective prompts becomes an art form itself. Try substituting something

like, cinematic, Canon EOS, ultra-realism for minimalist style, cartoonish in my example. Try fluorescent colors against a black background to produce a black-light poster effect.

For further variety, try using any of the following to specify the style of image: punk, vaporware, op art, diagrammatic, fractal, diffusion, grisaille, or Aboriginal dot painting. For photographic styles, try 35mm, photorealistic, shallow-focus, Canon EOS, 4K ultra realistic, Sony A7R IV, Boujie lifestyle, sharp focus, sprite-effect, antique tintype, or Ansel Adams.

According to Midjourney's terms of service, any image we create, we own and can sell or use without restriction—but Midjourney also reserves an irrevocable license to use any image produced on the platform.

Now, how can we put this to use for getting meetings? You can produce any image you want, including deeply personalized pieces. Try importing headshot images and practicing prompts that include the person in the output. If a prospect is a tennis buff, try importing their picture and creating an image of them playing tennis or posing on the court with Serena Williams or John McEnroe, and turn it into a card. Or put it in an email. Or animate it and send as a video in an email.

To learn more, I suggest following Matt Wolfe (@mreflow) or Making AI Magic (@makingphoto) on YouTube. They provide constant updates of all sorts of platforms, along with text-to-image tips in their channels. For other tips, watch the following videos:

- Getting started on Midjourney: <https://tinyurl.com/2zycwmm5>
- Setting up a private server to keep your images to yourself and not fight for server visibility: <https://tinyurl.com/mruabat5>
- Leveling up your Midjourney prompts: <https://tinyurl.com/5dcjy9y9>

Become a Voiceover Actor with Text-to-Speech

Text-to-speech platforms do exactly what the name sounds like. They convert text to speech, which can be output as an audio file, or used in real time to hear a passage spoken out loud. But as you might expect, these tools are a bit more complicated than just that.

The many text-to-speech platforms on the market include Speechify, NaturalReader, PlayHT, Lovo, Murf, and more. My favorite is **ElevenLabs**, but the others have interesting uses, too. My favorite feature of ElevenLabs is the option to create an AI voice model based on your own voice, for free. I use it constantly.

To create one in your voice, simply record yourself talking for two minutes, then upload the recording and enter a description of how you want the voice to sound. I told ElevenLabs I wanted a voice that was energetic, mischievous, and much younger than my apparent age. What it gave me was something that is surely my voice, but often sounds like it's being delivered by the actor Jeff Goldblum. It's perfect.

I use ElevenLabs for most of the narration I need in my voice. I use the audio output for videos and animation of a character based on me but decidedly an AI clone. It's actually simpler than reading the script myself, because the ElevenLabs dashboard includes sliders to control the stability and dynamism of delivery—and even exaggerate the speaking style. *It actually delivers lines in my voice better than I can.*

All of these platforms include a deep assortment of voices you can choose from (check to make sure whatever you use is royalty free). NaturalReader has voices I recognize from many YouTube videos, but they also focus on training materials. And it makes sense. People prefer to learn in different ways. Text-to-speech has been helping companies save a lot of money on production expenses, simply by having training and onboarding materials converted to audio and video files.

For those of us seeking unique ways to get meetings, try text-to-speech messaging as attachments to LinkedIn DMs or emails. Some of the platforms also include celebrity voices, which would make outreach messaging a lot of fun. I played with one recently in Barack Obama's voice, and there are many others. To learn more about text-to-speech platforms and uses, follow Website Learners ([@Website-Learners](#)) on YouTube and

view their videos. Here's a video by Dr. Alex Young featuring his picks for the top ten AI voice generators: <https://tinyurl.com/4pcw3wfm>.

Website Learners also has a video about free text-to-speech platforms: <https://tinyurl.com/26t2f623>.

Become a Movie Director with Text-to-Video

This sector covers everything from animating a character speaking a text-to-voice audio file, to stunning, fully cinematic video clips that will surely become part of filmmaking soon. Like most of what AI touches, text-to-video will put the ability to make Hollywood-quality video into everyone's hands. And again, there's no special equipment to buy or rent, no locations to visit, no actors to hire.

Some may say that's not good for the film industry, but that isn't true. Big-time producers will continue making their films and series as they always have, with giant budgets and huge overhead. For the rest of us, it simply gives us the tools to tell our own stories, and nearly the same level of production value. It's extraordinary.

Text-to-video platforms include Sora, EMO AI, RunwayML, Kaiber, HeyGen, and Hour One. Some of these are pre-release as of this writing. Still, if you view this video previewing footage from Sora (<https://tinyurl.com/5ed73564>) or this one of EMO AI (<https://tinyurl.com/5ha2vrjb>), you'll see the astounding production quality coming our way.

Like other types of AI creative platforms, text-to-video is generated from written prompts. But it can also generate clips from still images, audio files, and other video, in any style you desire. HeyGen and Hour One can even translate the video into forty languages, with the actors properly mouthing the words.

My favorite text-to-video platform is **D-ID.com**. I've been using it extensively to animate the "A/I/Stu" character I will describe further in the following section about AI agents. So far, it has been a reliable tool for blending text with AI avatars that don't quite look realistic, but fit perfectly if you're portraying an AI-generated character. You can upload audio files,

like those generated in ElevenLabs, or simply enter any text-based script, and choose from a menu of premade avatar actors to speak your words. It's a good service, but what I've seen of the competing platform, EMO AI, absolutely blows it away. Then again, everything is subject to change in the world of AI.

Text-to-video should be very useful for Contact Marketers, as it can help to produce slick outreach appeals. You could make a cinematic movie about the meeting you're about to have, or the challenge you'll help the prospect overcome. If you were Steven Spielberg, and you wanted to create some outrageous movie-trailer contact videos, you'd have an easy time breaking through. Thanks to AI, we're all about to have that same power, at very little expense.

This sector of AI will surely morph into something spectacular for us all. To follow the progress, try tuning into Marques Brownlee ([@mkbhd](#)) or Futurepedia ([@futurepedia_io](#)) on YouTube.

Clone Yourself as an AI Agent

I've been biting my tongue, so to speak, in the earlier sections, because a lot of what I've been exploring has to do with AI agents. Have you ever thought, "I wish I could clone myself so I could get more done"? Well, of course, AI is making that happen, too.

I've been wondering recently, "Am I now able to replicate myself as an AI?" We're not too far off. The idea was to produce a SaaS platform based on the AI version of the character who wrote *How to Get a Meeting with Anyone*. But this version would be much better than I am at getting meetings. Because I can't do what AI can.

Users would sign up for an account, then answer questions about their Ideal Customer Profile (ICP), desired trigger events and buyer intent signals, and brand strength, and the AI would build their Top 100 list and just go out and get the meetings. If that were possible, my AI alter ego could be helping a lot more people get life-changing meetings while I do something else, like work on the next book or another startup.

So, I've been experimenting with the character A/I/Stu, the AI/mythological person who wrote this book. A/I/Stu is the character that appears in videos I created, like the one that tells the story of how Kris Kristofferson met Johnny Cash (<https://tinyurl.com/242tev9n>), or the one revealing that Leonardo da Vinci was also one of us—he, too, was a Contact Marketer (<https://tinyurl.com/yc576wy3>).

To produce those videos, I had to create the A/I/Stu character. To do that, I used [Leonardo.ai](#), a text-to-image platform, uploaded my headshot, and told it to create a character that was a combination of me and Max Headroom, the crazed talking head character from the movie *Max Headroom: 20 Minutes into the Future*. I then imported that image to D-ID, and generated talking video with the audio files from ElevenLabs.

In these YouTube Shorts, all of the images of Leonardo da Vinci, Johnny Cash, and Kris Kristofferson were generated in Midjourney, and everything was assembled in Adobe Premiere Pro. But that's not how a true, lifelike AI agent should be built. The kind of AI agent I want would be a lifelike (though obviously AI powered) character that listens and reacts like a person would. A very entertaining person who is half me, half Max Headroom, who is sort of “manning the booth,” answering any question a user might have, based on all of my knowledge plus all of the data out there in the world.

To build something like that, we might use **Unreal Engine** to build a three-dimensional model of the character that can move and talk in real time. The guys at Bad Decision Studio did this based on a 3D scene of a model, to build what they called a “meta human” (<https://tinyurl.com/mw5te2pc>).

Of course, the agent needs to be based on a foundation of data, preferably private, so it can exist behind a paywall and not show up on ChatGPT. Then it will need the actual AI logic, as executed in CrewAI, [Sierra.ai](#), or AI Agent. Interestingly, *Whale Hunting* author Barbara Weaver Smith has built an AI agent on the Delphi platform that listens to questions and coaches the participant based on her books and other writings (<https://tinyurl.com/yxtda6sp>). The interface is nothing like the meta human in my videos, but this intermediate step will only get better.

- To learn more about AI agents, check out Sam Witteveen ([@samwitteveenai](#)) and Maya Akim ([@maya-akim](#)) on YouTube.
- Matthew Berman created a tutorial on the AI agent platform CrewAI (<https://tinyurl.com/3a27c3r2>).
- 100xEngineers has a great video explaining “How to Create Your Own AI Clone” (<https://tinyurl.com/2fp79jv6>).

Become Your Own Recording Artist with Text-to-Song

When I do interviews or connect with people on LinkedIn, I often hear, “I wish I had your talent for cartooning.” I have to confess, when I speak to people like Alex Perkins, I often find myself thinking, “I wish had your talent for singing.”

I wrote about Alex in my follow-on book about Contact Marketing, *Get the Meeting!* His specialty is composing songs about the prospects he wants to meet, then singing them on videos delivered on Vidyard. It’s an incredibly disarming way to grab a prospect’s attention, but hardly anyone does it because it requires a specific talent most of us don’t have.

Not anymore.

I invite you to check out Zachary Bynum’s video about **LyricStudio** (<https://tinyurl.com/56m9m5rh>). The platform uses AI and your prompts to write song lyrics about anything you want, in more than a dozen music styles. Then you take it to MelodyStudio, which matches several melodies to your song, or ACE Studio, where you convert it into some pretty nice-sounding music.

In one extraordinary video (<https://tinyurl.com/23a3ukph>), Dr. Mix demonstrates the magic of ACE Studio by singing out of tune, then converting the recording to a song expertly sung in Chaka Khan’s voice. The way ACE Studio is able to manipulate the off-key singing into something nearly perfect is astounding.

If you’re not inclined to do this yourself, Ryan Anderson ([@ryan-mark-anderson](#) on LinkedIn) might be able to help. We’d had conversations about

putting this technology to work for sales teams, so we started producing original, personalized songs, sung in each representative's voice for each of their prospects.

If you're questioning the value of singing videos, consider this. A song about your prospect will act as an engagement device. When you tie it to videos you make with Vidyard, BombBomb, or Loom, the moment the prospect clicks on the clip, you start getting metrics for minutes viewed and the number of people viewing. If you send ten videos and five are getting strong nibbles, that's your cue to set the hook and reel them in. To follow developments in text-to-song, check out Dr. Mix ([@Doctormix](#)) and Arcade ([@ArcadeFL](#)) on YouTube.

Releasing Your Inner Writer with Large Language Models

ChatGPT, Grok, Gemini, Bard, and Claude are some of the better-known names for large language models or LLMs, currently the most commonly used AI platforms. When we think of AI as a collaborator, assistant, or researcher, those perceptions stem most commonly from use of LLMs like ChatGPT.

LLMs are incredibly versatile AI tools. The ways in which others are using **ChatGPT** and other LLMs are astounding. Some use it to write code. Others use it to write posts and articles, and some have even popped out books. LLMs are being used to train AI agents, to summarize lengthy articles and videos into just a few paragraphs. As the basis of virtually every AI tool in existence, LLMs are the Swiss Army knives of AI, and they will be the quickest to change and evolve.

Well, so, we know it will write or research just about anything in mere seconds. Is there a downside? Is there anything it can't do? Well, yes, potentially.

A frequent criticism is that LLMs can only draw from what has already been written or said, and that's a problem. Whose work is it poaching when it provides answers to prompts? And, if it's only based on past thoughts, it

can't produce new thought until one occurs to us and we enter it into the public record. I've noticed it's also terrible at writing anything funny.

Perhaps the biggest problem is, who's doing the fact checking? Google recently added a built-in fact checker to its Gemini LLM. But wait a second. Aren't they the same people who allowed users to produce those racially biased images of historic figures? That doesn't sound promising or reliable. So, however you use LLMs, make sure you do your own fact checking. Don't rely on anything until you've checked it yourself.

That caveat also applies to any research you might do on your prospects using ChatGPT or other AI tools. When I requested information about myself, it returned some pretty accurate pieces and some that were sorely out of date. But these still can be useful to Contact Marketers for producing dossiers on our top prospects, if other sources are unavailable. We'll cover better ones in the following sections.

Also consider getting ChatGPT's help to write notes, posts, and emails, or to summarize articles from uncommon sources to provide insights to your prospects. And use it to research trends and issues your prospects might be facing. It really is an amazing tool and a powerful productivity extender. Just be sure to check its work.

To learn more about how LLMs are being used, be sure to ask friends and colleagues what they're doing. At least a few will be on the leading edge of this category of AI. Check out NetworkChuck (@NetworkChuck) and Hayls World (@HaylsWorld) on YouTube. Here are a few videos you should check out as well:

- “How I Made AI Assistants Do My Work for Me,” by Maya Akim (<https://tinyurl.com/2aseeden>)
- “Run Your Own AI (but Private)” by NetworkChuck (<https://tinyurl.com/4w5a2u7y>)
- “10 ChatGPT Life Hacks” by Hayls World (<https://tinyurl.com/u95jxukw>)

Becoming a Super Seller with Lead/Account Data

Time to switch gears from creativity-focused to sales-focused AI platforms. Because B2B sales is an enormous, lucrative market, there are many entries. AI entrepreneurs are anxious to get their share, so they've been coming up with some spectacular offerings.

Most of these have focused on surfacing deeper intel and insights from big data to produce greater personalization and close more deals, at scale. As mentioned at the start of this chapter, AI is showing up as embedded new technology within existing platforms, like Salesforce, HubSpot, Marketo, and Salesloft. It also has been infused in lead/account data sources like ZoomInfo, Seamless, Apollo, and LinkedIn. I interviewed ZoomInfo founder Henry Schuck and Seamless founder Brandon Bornancin for this update, and I obviously have deep experience with LinkedIn (we all do), and I've found what they're doing for the sales community incredibly impressive.

ZoomInfo (<https://zoominfo.com>) grew out of DiscoverOrg, which was one of the early efforts to not only track down target prospects, but also the people who surround them, to influence or drive their buying decisions. That has evolved on an industrial scale into the present ZoomInfo platform, with over one hundred million companies profiled, including all their employees, with verified direct contact details.

Seamless (<https://seamless.ai>) grew out of Brandon Bornancin's frustration as a Google sales rep at the long research process required for each pitch presentation. His big idea was to create a search engine for sales prospecting, using AI and predictive analytics to find contact and other background information on each prospect. More than 500,000 companies now use the platform to find, rank, and contact their best prospects. The service recently incorporated buyer intent data from Bombora, enabling prioritization of buyers precisely when they're ready to buy.

Apollo (<https://www.apollo.io/>) and **Clay** (<https://www.clay.com>) have been gaining ground quickly, thanks to their application of AI to crawl the web to produce both the enormous amounts of data and direct insights that are critical for sales success. Clay produces actual profile scrapes at scale to help sellers accurately address their best prospects, integrating more than seventy-five data enrichment tools and a built-in AI agent to assist with outreach.

LinkedIn (<https://linkedin.com>) clearly has been facilitating introductions and interactions that lead to sales. **LinkedIn Navigator** takes this further, by helping users identify their most likely prospects and then connect directly with them through the platform.

But all is not roses and daisies in the world's biggest business social media community. LinkedIn users have been able to track first-, second-, and third-degree connections with others since its inception. Suddenly we could see everyone we knew who could introduce us to target contacts, which induced a culture of making introductions. But that has shifted, as it has become easier to automate direct messages at scale. What started as utterly useless, generic requests for contact ("Hey, it looks like we know some people in common and I'd like to connect and find out what you do") has now become naked, unwanted, irrelevant pitches. Let's hope that's not what the future looks like as AI helps us produce "outreach at scale" from the other platforms mentioned here.

Buyer Intent Signals and Account-Based Marketing: Who's Ready to Buy Now?

All of the companies featured in this section are account-based marketing (ABM) platforms. And they do more than gather buyer intent signals. ABM offers a special set of tools for marketers and sellers alike, some of which are foundational elements of a modern, effective Contact Marketing campaign.

Buyer intent signals are a miracle of machine-based perception, because they're based on deciphering intent from the daily, worldwide torrent of search data. If someone is looking for the very solutions you offer, these new AI systems can pick up on it, then identify and prioritize these new prospects in order of sales potential. That's stunning.

"Buyer intent signals are a miracle of machine-based perception, because they're based on deciphering intent from the daily, worldwide torrent of search data."

This means you can sell to people you don't know, who are in the market right now for what you sell. Would that be a useful element of your sales strategy? It's almost like a sixth sense, which is why Amanda Kahlow, Dustin Chang, Viral Bajaria, Premal Shah, and Shane Moriah founded **6sense** (<https://6sense.com>) in 2013. They've already been doing this for more than ten years.

But ABM is about more than buyer intent signals. In fact, all of it is quite magical. ABM goes beyond targeting prospects to focus on the entire buyer ecosystem that surrounds them. The approach is holistic and smart. Instead of homing in on a single person, ABMs identify and target their entire team of influencers, supporters, decision makers and economic buyers in their outreach campaign.

Their method of outreach is also ingenious. Instead of basing the campaign on email, their solution is a digital-surround campaign, composed of display ads that show up wherever the prospect and their team go on the web or in social media. That is, as targeted team members visit sites or use social media, they're bombarded with branding ads from the seller before reaching out. Suddenly, your ads are everywhere, and the effect is that you look like a big, serious provider for the precise thing they happen to be looking for.

This is the precise technology I use when building campaigns for clients, based on a brutally honest appraisal of their brand. Brand strength is a major factor for the success of Contact Marketing campaigns, because if buyers don't know you, they're less likely to respond. So, if the client's brand needs a boost, ABM is how we do it.

Several platforms besides 6sense now offer ABM services, including **Terminus** (<http://terminus.com>) and **RollWorks** (<http://rollworks.com>). They tend to be expensive and are geared to enterprise marketers, but if you can afford them, they're well worth the spend to integrate AI into your sales outreach. Of course, I favor doing more than running ads alone, but these are part of a powerful foundation for scale-changing, sales-based growth initiatives.

Become an AI-Powered Super Seller with Outbound Platforms

Many outreach platforms integrate AI in some fashion, and several are devoted to creating deeper intel on likely prospects at enormous scale. That in turn enables intuitive outreach at scale, which is where a friction point may emerge with buyers. The more outreach becomes an automated process, at an ever-broadening magnitude, the more likely prospects are to become swamped with unwanted pitches. Still, there are gems amid this unprecedented new crop of AI-powered tools that are essential to any Contact Marketer.

Clay (<https://www.clay.com>) builds prospect lists, but it also produces profile scrapes at scale—a great improvement over the previous method of manually producing research on every prospect on our contact lists. Like many platforms mentioned in this section, Clay then relies on email as their outreach strategy, which I think is a mistake. Email is an overcrowded channel that makes it nearly impossible to stand out, and thus, to create the necessary human-to-human connections I’ve talked about throughout this book.

“Email is an overcrowded channel that makes it nearly impossible to stand out . . .”

Amplemarket (<http://amplemarket.com>) is another interesting platform that uses buyer intent signals but reverts to sending email. It happens to be AI-enhanced email, but it’s still bound by the laws of gravity and overstuffed inboxes everywhere. But as Contact Marketers, we can see the benefit of using buyer intent to target our most valuable—and likely—prospects.

Clevertviral (<http://clevertviral.co>) is another email-focused platform, but with an interesting twist. Their platform only emails prospects when a specified trigger event occurs, and it does it all automatically. As the name implies, it really is clever, and if coupled with more human-like touches, could be a powerful device for Contact Marketers.

Relatable (<https://home.relatable.pro>) and **Tavus** (<https://tavus.io>) are new AI platforms designed to deliver personalized video at scale. Tavus's positioning statement says it all: Record one video, and the platform will personalize the next million for your audience. It's an AI-powered technology that has utility far beyond email as the delivery medium. As Contact Marketers, we can appreciate the time savings from automated personalization, as long as it still helps produce human-to-human connections.

Aidentified (<https://www.aidentified.com>) promises to apply the power of AI to multiply the reach of your personal and professional networks by leveraging warm referrals. Although targeted to the financial services sector, Contact Marketers will recognize the value of centers of influence: the people who can create powerful introductions that lead to business. Referral sources should be part of our Contact Marketing strategy. Aidentified can make that process much faster, according to its website, by using AI to "monetize the network we never knew we had."

To target anyone in our contact campaigns, we first need to identify who our target market is, as defined by our ICP. **M1-project.com** (<http://M1-project.com>) offers a very helpful service in their AI-powered ICP Generator. Simply fill out a questionnaire and M1 will deliver a forty-page report on who your ideal customers are, where to find them, and how best to talk to them. It's a powerful use of AI, and it's free.

Use AI-Powered Gifting Platforms to Open New Doors

The gifting-platform market seems to be narrowing to two, Sendoso and Reachdesk. Both are busily integrating AI into their platforms. Sendoso recently acquired one of their biggest competitors, Alyce, which has been using AI to help Contact Marketers since 2015. The company's AI agent (Alyce), along with human researchers, help senders choose precisely the right gift for each target recipient.

Sendoso (<https://sendoso.com>) was founded a year later by Kris Rudeegraap, and has since achieved a global presence, with clients in North

America, Europe, and Asia. Their assortment includes e-gifts, physical gifting, and branded merchandise, and integrates with the top CRM platforms. With their acquisition of Alyce, they are undoubtedly the biggest gifting platform in the world.

Reachdesk (<http://reachdesk.com>) has a very special origin story. Founder Alex Olley started the company in 2018, after reading the original edition of this book. Alex is also the contributor of this updated edition's new Foreword. I'm thrilled to watch his progress, and doubly thrilled that this book helped him achieve such amazing success. Headquartered in London, with substantial backing by HubSpot and others, Reachdesk is now a juggernaut in the B2B outbound market, with a presence in Europe and North America.

AI will surely enhance the operations of both companies, which is a very good thing for Contact Marketers everywhere. Gifts are a solid way to produce the human-to-human connections that are imperative for selling in the Age of AI—especially if they're powered by the kinds of insights only AI can provide.

The combination of AI and human-to-human connections will accelerate our ability to get scale-changing, life-altering meetings. It will also be the deciding factor in who succeeds as a seller in the Age of AI.

"The combination of AI and human-to-human connections will accelerate our ability to get scale-changing, life-altering meetings."

This is an ever-changing story. The players in the AI space will continue to come and go, bringing us wonders never imagined. If you'd like to continue this process of discovery, be sure to visit <https://stuheinecke.com/ai-in-sales> to join my list and receive updates.



POINTS TO REMEMBER

- ✓ AI, combined with uniquely human experiences, will surely be the way to break through to top prospects in the Age of AI.
- ✓ AI will divide us into two classes of people: those who avoid AI and lose, and those who lean in and win.
- ✓ Text-to-image platforms will transform you into an illustrator and photographer, enabling you to produce impactful images you can use in your Contact Campaigns.
- ✓ Text-to-speech can be used to create a free AI voice model for producing perfect recordings in your voice as attachments to LinkedIn DMs and other outreach channels.
- ✓ Text-to-video enables us to produce amazing clips and projects, giving us extraordinary new cinematic tools for Contact Campaigns.
- ✓ Text-to-song gives us the ability to produce professional level songs that are personalized to each recipient, as a totally disarming, utterly human way to get meetings.
- ✓ Large Language Models like ChatGPT are the most commonly used AI tools, and are incredibly versatile in their uses, including writing, research, summarization, programming, and more.
- ✓ Many AI tools can help us directly with getting meetings and selling, by focusing on prospect intel, buyer intent signals, and trigger events. Buyer beware: Many AI-based outreach platforms revert to automated email as the contact method, making it nearly impossible to stand out to important prospects.
- ✓ My favorite AI tools will change over time, as will yours. Be sure to continue this chapter with me by visiting my author site (<https://stuheinecke.com>) and joining my list.



*“Okay, well, welcome, everyone, to our first annual shareholder’s webcast .
..”*

CHAPTER 22

Where Do We Go from Here?

Where do we go from here? It's actually three questions in one. Where do you go from here as a Contact Marketer? Where does Contact Marketing itself go from here? And where do you and I go from here?

To answer the first question, let's examine next steps that will allow you to expand your success, sales, and network. Since writing the original edition of this book, I've written two others that offer additional perspective on growth strategy and meeting tactics that will help you go even further than before. All of these will combine to inform how you can make Contact Marketing an essential element of your Go-To-Market strategy.

By completing the steps suggested in this book, you will have raised your own VIP profile, compiled a Top 100 list of VIP prospects, and instituted a Contact Campaign strategy. There are so many types of Contact Campaigns and such a wide variety of cost options, you surely will have found a combination of tactics to make contact with nearly anyone in your crosshairs.

While many salespeople dread the prospect of cold-calling the C-suite, you will break through with ease. Your targeted VIPs will thank you for reaching out and congratulate you on your brilliant creativity. They will point to you as an example of how they want their own sales and marketing teams to perform.

Being able to connect with virtually anyone is a joy. It will make your life and career a lot more fun and fascinating. So now that you've gotten started, let's look at what's next.

Cross-Sells, Partnerships, and Referrals

Making a big sale is a thrill and very good for your business. But it's just the start of what can be a chain reaction of new opportunities. The reason for that should be obvious: Every VIP you connect with has hundreds of other connections who may be prime prospects for large sales, partnerships, and more.

The first place to look is within each VIP's organization. Are there other departments, divisions, subsidiaries, or sister companies that can use your products or services? Cross-selling is one of the easiest routes to more sales, because the company is already a customer and you are one of their trusted vendors. It is also the least expensive method for generating more business because you're already known to the organization. You just have to plug into the full array of business opportunities there.

Strategic partnerships are another potent source of explosive growth. Some of your new VIP contacts will have vast sales channels they may want to open to your company, if you can demonstrate a strategic value for them. If you can find a way to have your offering become part of theirs, you've found a golden opportunity to grow your own sales.

What about all the opportunities your VIP contacts can open beyond their own organizations? Every C-level executive will have built enormously valuable networks over the span of their careers. They often have friendly relationships with their industry allies and even their competitors. Once you have delivered on your promise, and they get to know, like, and trust you, your VIP contacts can become powerful advocates and open many more possibilities for new sales, partnerships, investments, and more.

“Once you have delivered on your promise, and they get to know, like, and trust you, your VIP contacts can become powerful advocates and open many more possibilities . . .”

Many sales trainers say referrals are all you need to produce explosive sales growth. But as a Contact Marketer, you now have the same secret weapon I've had all these years. You can open new relationships at the very highest levels, and by starting at the top, you will quickly rise to that same stratospheric level.

The Next Top 100 List

Once you start enjoying new success through myriad cross-selling, partnership, and referral opportunities, should you stop there? Absolutely not. I once heard an interesting story about William Wrigley Jr., founder of the chewing gum empire. He was riding in a train with one of his junior executives, who was eager to impress him with his business savvy.

“Sir, I have a plan that will save the company millions of dollars,” the junior executive exclaimed.

“Oh, what’s that?” Wrigley asked.

The young executive explained that if Mr. Wrigley would simply cancel all of his advertising, he could reap an enormous windfall from the savings.

“Young man,” Wrigley replied, “how fast do you suppose this train is moving?”

He answered enthusiastically, “At least forty-five miles per hour!” Mind you, in the early twentieth century, that was mighty fast.

Wrigley then asked, “How fast do you suppose we would go if the engine was removed from the train?”

Obviously, it would lose momentum quickly, then grind to a halt, without the engine’s constant tug. Don’t let that happen with your Contact Marketing efforts.

Once you have established a winning strategy, you should make it your highest priority to stick with it, to keep your momentum building. Your horizons can always expand further. Thus, you should always consider your Top 100 list to be ever evolving. As you connect with VIP contacts on your list, new ones should take their place.

As your company grows, as your strategic priorities evolve, so should your strategy for choosing who will be on your Top 100 list. This is particularly true now that AI can help prioritize prospects based on things like real-time trigger events and buyer intent signals.

Once you finish the original Top 100 list, you should have another hundred VIP prospects ready to go. And if you’re in charge of overall sales or growth for your company, every team member should have their own AI-enhanced Top 100 list to prospect and convert to new business.

The Future of Contact Marketing

When I wrote the original book, I wondered, “Where does Contact Marketing go from here?” I turned to my sources for their thoughts, but really, nothing could have helped us predict what was coming.

In that original telling, we talked about keeping the integrity of creative thought and not falling into the doldrum of “best practices.” There were comments about not letting Contact Marketing descend into a collection of trickery, rather than the wonderfully rich creativity that already defined the genre.

I had no idea I’d be writing another book so soon after this one, or that the response to this one would be so strong. But I heard stories about amazing sales and entrepreneurial successes from people who’d read the book and acted on their inspiration.

I heard from Andrei Zinkevich, who added a quick \$300,000 to his sales volume after reading the book. I heard from Alex Olley, who wrote the Foreword to this edition and founded Reachdesk as a result of reading this book. And then I heard from readers who had even more Contact Marketing tactics to share, while others came forward to ask for more case studies with photographs of the campaigns.

That was the inspiration for my second book, *Get the Meeting!* I filled it with more stories, more contact tactics, and a look at possible future campaigns using virtual reality, augmented reality, and AI. But the most powerful elements were still the good old, utterly human stories.

There was the one about how Kris Kristofferson met Johnny Cash by landing a helicopter on his front lawn . There was the story of Orabrush, a year-old startup that set the record for the highest known return on investment from a Contact Marketing campaign, at 69,500,000 percent. And Paul Nielsen’s stretchy rubber “Pocket Campaign,” which set the record for response at more than 300 percent.

All of those events and discoveries were part of what was to come when I wrote the original edition of this book. Still, no one could have predicted the COVID-19 pandemic and its resulting effects on getting meetings. We had to learn quickly how to conduct virtual meetings and adapt to prospects working from home. And we’ve all experienced the increased volume of

spam calls, ubiquitous random LinkedIn pitches, and yes, the ever increasing, unrestrained use of time-wasting email sequences, which have all amplified the resistance to our outreach efforts.

And now we're facing utter disruption as AI sweeps through every aspect of our businesses, careers, professions, and lives. So here's what I see next for Contact Marketing. AI will create havoc for some, but the winners of this race will become AI superusers. In B2B sales, they'll use AI to operate with an unimaginable depth of insight into whom they should be targeting, and they'll achieve an uncanny depth of personalization in their outreach.

They will take the right actions at the right time, informed by deep, data-driven signals of intent, triggers, and foresight of what it takes in each case to produce the right reactions and outcomes. But that stuff's easy. In some sense, it's already here. I'm just saying in the future, we'll all use AI heavily and quickly forget how much it has changed the way we work.

But there is one major insight that comes up over and over: Human audacity and creativity will always be effective and in demand. As things become more automated and artificial, we will remain transfixed by things that surprise and delight us, that deliver uniquely human insight—things that can only be produced by talented humans.

What that means is the tactics in this book and in *Get the Meeting!* will remain the gold standard for outreach. If you want to connect with someone important, someone who is in constant demand, someone who hears from others who always want something from them, then give them an experience they'll never forget. Use the tactics I've shared in this book to inspire new ways to forge deep human-to-human connections.

"If you want to connect with someone important, someone who is in constant demand, someone who hears from others who always want something from them, then give them an experience they'll never forget."

That's the future of Contact Marketing. There will be unforeseen events, new disruptions, and more changes in how work gets done. But nothing will replace humor, audacity, creativity, insight, and relevant value as deciding

factors for getting meetings and starting relationships with the people who will change your scale.

Where Do You and I Go from Here?

I started the introduction to this book with the story of how I used Contact Marketing to break into the magazine business. I used a simple, personalized cartoon print with a letter, sent to two dozen directors of circulation at the big, Manhattan-based print media giants, including Time-Life, Condé Nast, *Forbes*, McGraw-Hill, Hearst Magazines, and *The Wall Street Journal*.

My telling of that story always includes the fact that the campaign produced a 100 percent contact rate, a 100 percent meeting rate, and a 100 percent conversion rate. But those metrics don't really tell the story.

So here's what does. As a result of a single Contact Campaign sent to two dozen carefully chosen recipients, and at a total cost of less than a hundred dollars, I went from an unknown to having all of the major magazine publishers as clients. I also went from an unknown to being one of the top direct mail creatives in the world.

Does that sound like explosive growth to you? It does to me. As I've told you, I believe we're all just ten major accounts away from living very different lives. Or perhaps reaching aggressive revenue goals for the year. Just ten major accounts away.

So, one way I get involved with readers is as their enterprise growth consultant. The goal is always to get clients in front of their first ten major new accounts quickly. Then we continue the campaign to reach their entire Top 100 list, in order to meet or exceed their revenue goals for the year.

Of course, growth is often more complicated than just increased sales. Growth requires a strategic depth that addresses competitive advantage, market fit, branding, Go-To-Market strategy, company culture, strategic alliances, and more, all of which must form a solid foundation if a jump in sales is to have a lasting effect. In fact, I wrote a book about growth strategy you might find useful. It's titled *How to Grow Your Business Like a Weed*, and it focuses on discovering the unified model used by every species of

weed to . . . well, you know, grow like a weed. Weeds are a fascinating study if business growth is your goal.

Weeds always deal with what is (not what they hoped would be). They never do anything without an unfair advantage. They never do anything alone (always at scale). They always focus on what makes them win (process). And they thrive best in disrupted ground. They are nature's perfect model for entrepreneurial growth and success.

So, if growth of your enterprise is an immediate goal, do pick up a copy. You should also include *Get the Meeting!* as part of your induction as a Contact Marketer. The present volume and *Get the Meeting!* are meant to function as a matched set. This book sets the foundation for Contact Marketing and provides many tactics you can use right away. The other greatly expands the collection of tactics and strategy. Both belong in your Contact Marketing library.

If you are a podcaster or event planner, I'm always ready to support you as a guest or speaker. And in any event, please feel free to connect with me on LinkedIn, and I invite you to join my email list and newsletter on AI for getting meetings. Simply visit my author site at <https://stuheinecke.com>.

I hope the answer to, "Where do you and I go from here?" will lead us both to incredible new heights. I welcome you to the ranks of Contact Marketers all over the world. And I wish you good hunting for the people who will change the scale of your life, as they have for mine.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- ✓ Your Contact Marketing mission is never done. There are always cross-sells, alliances, and referral sources—and more prospects to fuel your growth.
- ✓ Every VIP you connect with has hundreds of connections who are also prospects for your products and services. And you can always use Contact Marketing to add to your network of referral sources.

- ✓ Strategic partnerships are another potent source of explosive growth.
- ✓ Once you finish your outreach to your Top 100, it's time to start a new list, and then another.
- ✓ The future of Contact Marketing calls us to expertly integrate AI with uniquely human creativity and value.
- ✓ Getting meetings with important prospects will always be about producing human-to-human connections.
- ✓ *How to Get a Meeting with Anyone* and *Get the Meeting!* are a matched set. Both should be in your Contact Marketing library.
- ✓ The record for ROI for a Contact Marketing campaign is 69,500,000 percent, and the highest response recorded is in excess of 300 percent. No other form of marketing produces metrics like these.
- ✓ If the basics of a given business are solid, the rapid growth of sales created by Contact Marketing can be one of the quickest pathways to explosive expansion of the enterprise.
- ✓ We're all just ten major accounts away from living entirely different lives.

Acknowledgments

To borrow a line from the Grateful Dead, what a long, strange, wonderful trip this has been. The original edition of this book inspired more useful mischief, changed more lives, and sparked more explosive growth than I ever could have imagined.

Multimillion-dollar companies were formed. Fortunes were made. Careers and lives were changed. The American Marketing Association dubbed me the “Father of Contact Marketing.” The book was named one of the top sixty-four sales books of all time, and just recently was crowned the #1 sales book on prospecting, ever. Sales reps, entrepreneurs, and regular businesspeople around the world are using Contact Marketing to break through to their most important contacts, opening the door to untold new riches, growth, and opportunity.

Contact Marketing is a story that is much bigger than this book, and this book is much bigger than this author. Sure, I’ve had a fascinating introduction to this magical form of outreach. I’ve used my cartoons throughout my career to break response records and break through to virtually anyone.

That gift is the first thing I’d like to acknowledge. I wouldn’t have this high level of proficiency without the once-in-a-lifetime mentoring I received from several of the world’s top cartoonists at *Playboy* and *The New Yorker*. We had no idea, when I first approached them to become part of my agency, that I would be so profoundly transformed by their creative genius.

So thank you, Leo Cullum, Eldon Dedini, Gahan Wilson, Arnie Levin, Bob Mankoff, Lee Lorenz, Sam Gross, Mike Williams, Michael Ffolkes,

Donald Reilly, Trevor Holte, Roy Raymonde, Anne Gibbons, Ken Mahood, and R. O. Blechman, for welcoming me into your world all those years ago.

In the first edition of this book, I started by thanking Jay Conrad Levinson, the famed *Guerrilla Marketing* author, who wrote the Foreword and inspired all of us to be more clever, audacious marketers. In this updated edition, I get to thank someone new for their Foreword: Alex Olley, the founder of Reachdesk, who started his company after reading this book. I am proud to know you, and even prouder to have your words grace the beginning of this updated edition.

To write a book that encompasses the entirety of how people reach out and make important connections requires a broad canvas of smart people in the sales and entrepreneurial worlds. In this updated edition, I returned to some of my favorite sources and also consulted wholly new practitioners and experts.

For helping shape the new insights for this update, thank you, Andy Paul, Brandon Bornancin, Chris Strahan, Dale Dupree, Dan Waldschmidt, Dustin Poole, Gerhard Gschwandtner, Henry Schuck, Jason Zintak, Jim Keenan, Kris Rudeegraap, Lori Richardson, Mark Hunter, Nathan Lippi, Patrick William Joyce, Rick Bennett, Ryan O'Hara, Shari Levitin, Stuart Saunders, Tommy Schaff, and Vinnie Romano.

I also wish to thank all of the sources from the original book, who are too numerous to name here. They are the great force behind Contact Marketing . . . the free thinkers who have devised many of the tactics in this book, and certainly in the business world at large. They are an ageless, fearless band of souls who have been opening doors with live pigeons, swords, empty doughnut boxes, contact letters run as full-page ads in *The Wall Street Journal*, funky little Facebook ads, floppy rubber business cards, harpoons, signed baseballs, embroidered aprons, Google AdWords, single shoes, even a handmade lute fashioned from a horse's skull.

It is a community that counts among its members the most creative sales professionals, entrepreneurs, and thinkers in the world, extending all the way back to Leonardo da Vinci. Thank you all for your inspiring wit and willingness to take delightfully ridiculous risks to make extraordinary things happen in all of our lives.

New editions require new covers. And for this one, I was honored to get to sketch one of my new heroes of the sales world when we met up at TOTALITY, Dale Dupree's amazing new event for Contact Marketers and sales rebels. Enrika Greathouse patiently posed for a few snaps, and now she's the saleswoman pictured on the front cover, opening a new door to success. Thank you, Enrika, for our new friendship and your inspiration for the drawing.

And of course, books don't just magically happen without publishers and agents. Like trying to get a sale without a meeting, this book wouldn't exist without the expert guiding hands of my agent, Matt Wagner, and the BenBella publishing team: Glenn Yeffeth, Adrienne Lang, Sarah Avinger, Monica Lowry, Madeline Grigg, Alicia Kania, James Fraleigh, and finally, my faithful editor and new best friend, Victoria Carmody.

From the bottom of my heart, thank you all.

Notes

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- Brooks Brothers
- Brownlee, Marques
- Buffett, Warren
- Buffini, Brian
- Burger King
- business breakthroughs
- business opportunities, from VIP makeover
- business owners
 - engagement strategies of
 - Strategic 100 lists of
- business status, increasing your
- buyer intent signals
- Bynum, Zachary

C

camera, for virtual meetings

Canva

carrier pigeon

Carter, Sandy

The Cartoon Bank

CartoonLink

cartoons

- Contact Campaigns involving (*see* personalized cartoon Contact Campaigns)

 - in direct mail campaigns

 - injecting brand name into

 - in marketing and business

 - second efforts featuring

 - starting contact letters with

 - in thank-you cards

CartoonStock

Cash, Johnny

Cash, June Carter

celebrity voices

Centers of Enterprise Opportunity (CEOs)

- achieving equal business status with

- being a trusted source of insight for

- benefits of contact with

- conversing with

- directly dialing

- disposable phone method with

- doing your homework to understand

- email messages for

- events for

- executive assistants' influence on

- feedback from

- helping, to win

- initial call with

- insights for

- making contact with

- media-based campaigns for

- nurturing contact with

- phone calls to

- presenting value proposition to

- providing value to

- respecting time of

- sales careers of

- sending books to

- substantive calls with

- timing of calls to

- value of human-to-human connections for

- videos targeting

centers of influence

CEOs. *see* Centers of Enterprise Opportunity

Chambers, John
Chang, Dustin
Changing the Sales Conversation (Richardson)
charities
ChatGPT
Cisco Systems
Claude
Clay (platform)
C-level executives
 benefits of CEO contact for
 common elements of campaigns targeting
 engagement strategies for
 events for
 free methods of contacting
 interviewing
 involvement of, in Contact Campaigns
 never taking “no” for an answer from
 personal interests of
 referrals from
 sending books to
 at stockholders meetings
 Strategic 100 lists of
 on Top 100 list
 videos targeting
 VIP contacts of
Cleverviral
close rate, for videos
clothing, gifts of
CNBC
Coca-Cola
Coe, Joe
coffee cups, as gifts
cold calls
Cole, Tony
collaborations
 with artificial intelligence
 with executive assistants
Committed stage (Stage 3)
company website
Compendium (company)
competitive advantage
competitors, approaching target’s
Condé Nast
connection. *see* human-to-human connections
Constant Contact
consumer uptake
contact
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making (*see* making contact)

as a response

Contact (agency)

Contact (film)

Contact Campaign(s)

author's first

defining

defining responses to

direct mail campaigns vs.

elements of

of executives and business owners

Flip Moments in

measures of success for

in modern marketing

moving to direct sales from

preparing to launch

process used in (*see* Contact Campaign process)

tactics and methods in (*see* Contact Campaign tactics and methods)

traditional marketing vs.

viewing VIP makeover as

Contact Campaign Flow Chart

Contact Campaign process

addressing new stakeholders in

Anti-Pitch in

author's

completing the job in

contact letters in

critical response in

defining your

elements of

emotions experienced during

executive assistants in

following through in

hold-back devices in

keeping deals on track in

before making contact

making contact in

never taking "no" for an answer in

scripts for dealing with gatekeepers

second efforts in

self-imposed limits on

Contact Campaigns

multi-step

Contact Campaign tactics and methods

author's personalized cartoon method

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costs associated with

food-based

free and low-cost
gift-based
going too far with
imitating others
inspiration from others
media-related
over-the-top
sales stunts vs.
testing and sharpening
contact information, getting
contact letters
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emotions experienced by
explosive growth for
fear of executive assistants of
next steps for
transformation in response to AI for
VIP makeover for (*see* VIP makeover)
Contact Marketing
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agencies that consult on
applications of
building momentum for
components of
future of
goals/mission of
mass marketing vs.
and outbound sales
self-imposed limits in
for Sponsor-stage contacts
traditional marketing vs.
unexpected results of
contact pieces
BigBoard
creating
sending
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Copper, Don
Corcoran, Barbara
cost per contact
for Contact Campaigns in general
for direct mail campaigns
of gifts
of hold-back devices
for low-cost contact methods
for media-related contact methods

for over-the-top methods
with premiums
COVID-19 pandemic
CreateSpace
Creative Market
creativity
credibility
CrewAI
critical response
CRM at the Speed of Light (Greenberg)
cross-selling
Cruise, Tom
Cuban, Mark
Cullum, Leo
Curtis, Joan C.
Cutco knives

D

DALL-E
deals. *see also* stalled deals
 in Commitment stage
 keeping, on track
delight
Dell
Delphi
Demandbase
demand generation
Deutsch, Donny
Deutsch, Inc.
[D-ID.com](#)
digital ads
digital channels
digital reflection
digital SLR cameras
dimensional mailings
direct mail campaigns
 cartoons to personalize
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 response to cartoons in
Direct Marketing Association
direct response
direct sales
Dirty Little Secrets (Morgen)
DiscoverOrg
DJI Avata
DJI Mavic 3 Pro
Dr. Mix

Doerr, John
Do YOU Mean Business? (Haken)
Drawing Attention (Heinecke)
Dream Clients
Dreamforce show
drones
Dunkin' Donuts
Dunlap, Jake
Dupree, Dale

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email messages
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 in Contact Campaign process
 for executive assistants
 gift announcements in
 intentional sloppiness in
 outreach platforms relying on
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EMO AI
Emotional Intelligence for Sales Success (Stanley)
Engagement 100 list
Engagement Marketing (Goodman)
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enterprise growth
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 "Amy,"
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building alliances with
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in Contact Campaign process
controlling messages to
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Flip Moments for
getting attention of
information on new stakeholders from
initial contact with
and interview requests for CEOs
long-term contact with
mail-based contact with
making contact with
matching communication style of
over-the-top methods involving
referrals to
relationship with
scheduled interruptions by
scripts for
sellers' fear of
talent scout role of
thanking
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as VIPs
executive briefings
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Contact Marketing plan for
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Facebook
fact checking, of large language models
Fandango
Fast Company
Fathom Notetaker
feasibility reports
Federal Reserve
FedEx boxes
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Find New Customers
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- after phone calls
- cadence of contact when
- in Contact Campaign process
- in mail-based campaigns
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Ford
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- of Dale Dupree
- email messages
- mail-based
- phone calls
- of Jason Rende
- of Stuart Saunders
- social media posts
- at trigger events
- using Google Alerts in

FreeConferenceCall
The Fundamentals of Business-to-Business Sales and Marketing (Coe)
Futurepedia

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- executive assistants as
- fielding of interview requests by
- scripts for dealing with

Gemini
Gene, Billy
General Motors
Get the Meeting! (Heinecke)
Giamanco, Barb
gift(s)

- AI platforms for giving
- announcement emails for
- designed as re-gifts
- in engagement strategies
- giving half of a gift
- going too far with

involving art, humor, and film
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at Reachdesk
standing out with
that reflect target's personal interests
as visual metaphors
gift cards and certificates
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Gitomer, Jeffrey
Gleason, Bridget
Gmail
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 of campaigns by executives and owners
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 of traditional marketing processes
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Golden Raspberry Award
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good impression, in virtual meetings
Goodman, Gail
Google
Google Alerts
Google Meet
"Got Milk?" ad campaign
Grant, Adam
Greenberg, Paul
Green Eggs and Ham (Dr. Seuss)
green screen
greeting cards
Grok
The Guerrilla Connector (Weiler)
Guerrilla Marketing
Guerrilla Selling (Levinson, Wilson, and Gallagher)
guest blogging
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GUSGU

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Hacker, Bob
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Harvard Business Review
Harvard University
Hayls World
Hearst Magazines
Heart & Sell (Levitin)
Heiman, Alice
Heinz, Matt
Heinz Marketing
Hello, My Name is Awesome (Watkins)
HeyGen
Highland Capital
High-Profit Selling (Hunter)
Hitch (film)
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Honeywell
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How to Grow Your Business Like a Weed (Heinecke)
How to Sell Anything to Anyone Anytime (Kahle)
How Winners Sell (Stein)
HubSpot
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human resources department, referrals to
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Flip Moments for building
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with members of Strategic 100 list
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Inc. Magazine

Indifferent stage (Stage 1)

industry recognition awards

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Ingham, Gavin

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Inside Sales Experts blog

insight

becoming a trusted source of
in LinkedIn posts
from new stakeholders
providing contacts with
Insight Selling (Schultz and Doerr)
interviews
advice
for blogs
with new stakeholders
on podcasts
with prospects
to use in your book
with you as the guest
The Intrepid Group
Intrigued stage (Stage 2)
iPad
iStockPhoto

J

J. Barrows blog
Johnson, Jerry
JPMorgan Chase

K

Kahle, Dave
Kahlow, Amanda
Kaiber
Kalman, Tibor
Keenan, Jim
KeyBank
Kindle
Klein, Russ
Kodak
Konrath, Jill
Krause, Michael
Kristofferson, Kris
Kurlan, Dave

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large language models
[Lavender.ai](#)
lead generation
[Leonardo.ai](#)
leverage
Levinson, Jay Conrad

Levitin, Shari

Life After the Death of Selling (Searcy)

lifetime value of sale

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LinkedIn

AI tools in

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connection maps on

digital reflection on

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junk messages on

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unsolicited pitches on

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LinkedIn Navigator

Lippi, Nathan

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Little Red Book of Selling (Gitomer)

Live Spark

Live the Intrepid Life (Schnick)

[Lob.ai](#)

Logitech

long-term contact, with executive assistants

Loom

lost lamb approach

lottery tickets

Lovo

low-cost contact methods. *see* free and low-cost contact methods

Lulu

LyricStudio

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“Magic 8 Ball” email

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Making AI Magic

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with receptionist

Mantle, Mickey

Marketing Lessons from the Grateful Dead (Halligan & Scott)

Marketo

mass marketing

Matt on Marketing blog

Max Headroom (film)

Mayer, Alen

McCord, Paul

McDade, Dan

McDermott, John

McDonald's

McGraw-Hill

MCI WorldCom

M&Co Labs

measures of success

- business breakthroughs

- and goals of Contact Marketing

- long-term contact with executive assistant

- response rate

- return on investment

- taking stock of accomplishments

media-related contact methods

- at events

- interviewing prospects

- providing information or insight with

- sending your own books or articles

- sharing videos

Medium (platform)

meeting rate

meetings

- bonding during in-person

- million-dollar

- virtual (*see* virtual meetings)

MelodyStudio

Metacritic

Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, N.Y.)

Meyer, Steve

microphone, for virtual meetings

Microsoft Teams

Midjourney

million-dollar meetings

million-dollar phone calls

A Mind for Sales (Hunter)

Mr. Blackwell's Worst Dressed List

mobile devices

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Morgen, Sharon Drew

Moriah, Shane

Motivate People (Ingham)
movie DVDs, as gifts
Moviefone
Movies Unlimited
M1-project.com
multi-step Contact Campaigns
Murf
Museum of Modern Art (New York, N.Y.)
Music Scene Magazine
mute button, in virtual meetings
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National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)
National Association of Sales Professionals
National Guard
National Lampoon
NaturalReader
negative recognition awards
Netflix
NetworkChuck
The New Handshake (Curtis and Giamanco)
new media
New Rules of Marketing & PR (Scott)
NewsEdge
newsfeeds, researching CEO on
The New Yorker
The New York Times
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Nick, Michael
Nielsen, Paul
Nike
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Nook
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NoWait

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Objections! Objections! Objections! (Ingham)
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Office Depot

OfficeMax
Ogden, Jeff
O'Hara, Ryan
Olley, Alex
100x Engineers
one-to-one marketing
"10-One-4" watch
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operators, phone system
Orabrush
Oracle
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Outdoor Life
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outreach platforms
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Paul, Andy
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Perkins, Alex
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- of gifts
- of videos
- personalized cartoon Contact Campaigns
 - BigBoard contact pieces in
 - for CEOs
 - Contact Campaign process for
 - Contact Marketing principles in
 - contacts' response to
 - demonstrating goal alignment in
 - email messages in
 - executive assistants in
 - Flip Moments in
 - hold-back device in
 - mail-based methods in
 - measures of success for
 - method author used in
 - response and conversion rates for
 - thank-you cards in
- Petri, George
- Phillips, Bennett
- phone call(s). *see also* initial call
 - cadence in
 - for CEOs
 - in Contact Campaign process
 - email in tandem with
 - as free contact method
 - interviews via
 - making contact in
 - million-dollar
 - to prepaid disposable phones
 - spam
 - timing of
 - virtual meetings vs.
- PitchFire
- pitching
- PlayHT
- Plum, Scott
- Podbean
- podcast(s)
 - being a guest on
 - books based on content from
 - finding insight on
 - interviewing prospects on
 - starting a
- Porter, Kyle
- portraits, as gifts
- postage stamps, custom
- postscript, in contact letters

Predictable Revenue (Ross and Tyler)

premiums
prepaid disposable phones
print media
private servers, for images
Professional Sales Association
Prudential

R

rainmakers
Rapid Learning Institute
Razzies
Reachdesk
receptionists
 as allies
 asking for help from
 in Contact Campaign process
 making contact with
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recognition, stakeholder
recordings, of podcast interviews
Redbox
referrals
 aligning yourself with trusted sources of
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 from C-level executives
 to executive assistants
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 as responses
 in Sponsor stage
 from target contacts
 top-down
re-gifts
Relatable
remote-control toys, half-of-a-gift strategy with
Rende, Jason
reports, as hold-back devices
reputation
response devices
response rate
 for author's first Contact Campaign
 for Contact Campaigns in general
 in Contact Marketing
 in direct mail campaigns
 in direct response
 for email messages
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hold-back device and
as measure of success
and return on investment
for videos
for visual metaphors
for Dan Waldschmidt's campaign
response to Contact Campaign, defining
return on investment (ROI)
for Contact Campaigns
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in direct response
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for free methods
for Hacker Group campaign
hold-back devices and
for mail-based methods
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Richardson, Linda
Richardson, Lori
RingDNA
RocketReach
ROI. *see* return on investment
ROI4Sales blog
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RollWorks
Ross, Aaron
Rowley, Jill
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Rudeegraap, Kris
Ruhlin, John
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RunwayML

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Contact Campaigns in support of
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equal business status to make
touch points for
Sales 3.0
Sales Aerobics for Engineers blog
The Sales Fix blog
sales-focused AI platforms
Salesforce
Sales Gravy
A Sales Guy blog

Sales Heretic blog
The Sales Hunter blog
Sales Leadership blog
Sales Lead Management Association
SalesLoft
Sales Manager Survival Guide (Brock)
Sales & Marketing Management magazine
sales promotion
The Sales Rebellion
sales reps
 automated systems that connect to
 benefits of CEO contact for
 engagement strategies of
 Top 100 lists of
 value proposition of
 view of executive assistants by
Sales4Startups
sales stunts
Sales Talk for CEOs podcast
Sandler, David
Sandler Training
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art Museum Store
Saunders, Stuart
Schnick, Todd
Schuck, Henry
Schultz, Mike
Scientifics Direct
Score More Sales (Richardson)
Scott, David Meerman
scripts for conversations
 with executive assistants
 with receptionists
[Seamless.ai](#)
Searcy, Tom
second efforts
secretaries. *see* executive assistants
Seidman, Bruce
self-imposed limits
self-published books
sellers. *see* Contact Marketers; sales reps
Selling Is Better Than Sex (Mayer)
Selling to VITO (Parinello)
Sell Less, Win More (Paul)
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serial gifts
series-of-requests technique
Seuss, Dr.
Shah, Premal

Shanto, Tibor
shared gifts
Share Screen command, in Zoom
She Sells (Richardson)
SHiFT (Elias and Shanto)
Shift Selling blog
shoes, half-a-gift strategy with
[Sierra.ai](#)
signature block, of contact letter
single-point sales
6sense
Skaled
Skype
Slammed! (Thoreson)
SlideShare
slide show presentations
Smart Box
Smart Calling (Sobczak)
Smart Prospecting That Works Every Time! (Krause)
Smith, Barbara Weaver
Smith, Rob
Sobczak, Art
Social Centered Selling blog
social media. *see also specific platforms by name*
 boosting engagement with
 in Contact Campaigns vs. traditional marketing
 contacting target on
 identifying contact's personal interests from
 promoting recognition awards in
 researching VIP contact on
Social Surround Strategy
soft skills
Soho
songs, AI platforms for generating
Sora
speakers, at events
speech, AI platforms for generating
Speechify
Sponsor stage (Stage 4)
Sports Illustrated
stakeholders
 addressing new
 alignment with new
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 simultaneous contact with several
stalled deals
 after initial call
 Flip Moments to move forward in

greeting cards to unstick
hold-back devices to prevent
in Sponsor stage
using personal interests to move along

[Stamps.com](#)

Stanley, Colleen

Staples

Stein, Dave

Steinman, Dom

Stevens, Mick

stockholders meetings

StoryQuest

Strategic 100 list

author's

composing

evolution of

getting to know contacts on

qualifying people for

strategic partnerships

[StuHeinecke.com](#)

subject line, email

subscription campaign letter

Sun Microsystems

Super Engraver action set

surprise

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SymVoll blog

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talent scout role, of executive assistants

Tavus

technology use

Terminus

testimonials

text-to-image platforms

text-to-song platforms

text-to-speech platforms

text-to-video platforms

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Thoreson, Ken

thought leaders

Time Inc.

Tobin, Rick

tone, in contact letters

top-down referrals

Top 100 list

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AI tools to help build
consulting engagements to create
Dream Clients and partners on
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as focus of Contact Campaign
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identifying executive assistants of
profiles for people on
qualifying people for
social media to reach people on
Strategic and Engagement 100 lists vs.

Top Sales Dog blog

Touch of Modern

touch points for sales

Tower Hobbies

trade media

trade shows

traditional marketing, Contact vs.

transcripts, of podcast interviews

translation, of videos

Trash Can mailing

trial rate

trigger events

AI to track

calling in response to

Contact Campaign deployment based on

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outreach platforms using

Trigger Events (Mayer)

Tri-State Pontiac Dealers Association

Truax, Tara

truth, in humor

The Truth About Leads (McDade)

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Tyler, Marylou

U

The Ultimate Sales Machine (Holmes)

Uncommon Goods

Understanding the Sales Force blog

Unreal Engine

V

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- establishing, with executive assistants
- expressing, in Contact Campaign
- with half-of-a-gift strategy
- of hold-back device
- presenting, to CEOs
- video presentations of
- visual metaphors that demonstrate

value statement

VideoHive

videos

- AI text-to-video platforms
- drones that capture
- making contact by sharing
- from outreach platforms
- over-the-top methods involving
- personalized songs in
- in virtual meetings

Vidyard

ViewPoint blog

Vimeo

VIP contact(s). *see also* Top 100 list

- ABM platforms targeting
- acting as connector for
- asking, for help
- blog posts mentioning
- building network of
- building profiles of
- at charities
- of C-level executives
- delivering Anti-Pitch to
- discovering personal interests of
- executive assistants as
- Four Stages of Contact with
- goal alignment with
- knowing gift rules of
- multiple, at same organization
- social media to reach
- transforming yourself into (*see* VIP makeover)
- value of

VIP makeover

- business and opportunities from
- changing your status with
- equal business status as goal of

VIP statement

- of author
- function of
- in initial call
- in million-dollar phone call

of podcast hosts
presenting, to executive assistant
in scripts with gatekeepers
signature block and
VIP makeover to strengthen
virtual meetings
benefits of
and bonding during in-person meetings
etiquette in
making your best impression in
phone calls vs.
Zoom tools and shortcuts for
Viskovich, Julio
visual metaphors
voice mail, leaving

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Waldschmidt, Dan
The Wall Street Journal
advertiser portraits from
author's VIP statement mentioning
Rick Bennett's contact letter in
in CartoonStock repository
sending CEOs information from
as target of author's first Contact Campaign
Walmart
Watkins, Alexandra
webcams
Webex
WebInkNow blog
Website Learners
weekends, email messages sent on
Weiler, Richard
Wendy's
Wesbecher, Jason
Whale Hunting (Searcy and Smith)
white balance
Who the Hell Am I to Start a Business? (Truax)
Wilson, Orvel Ray
Witteveen, Sam
Wix
Wolfe, Matt
word choice, in phone calls
WordPress
Wrigley, William, Jr.

X

X (formerly Twitter)

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Y

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Yesware

You Can't Teach a Kid to Ride a Bike at a Seminar (Sandler)

Young, Alex

Young & Rubicam

Your Sales Management Guru blog

YouTube

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Zander, Ed

Zenrows

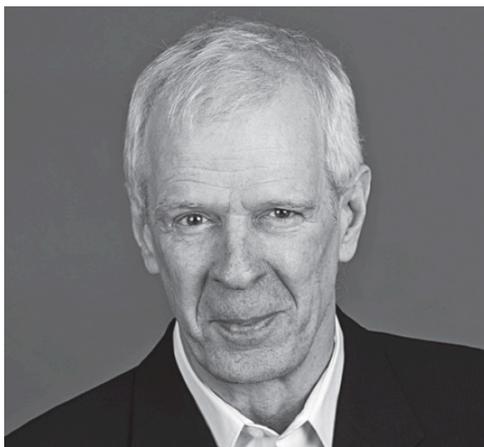
Zinkevich, Andrei

Zintak, Jason

Zoom

ZoomInfo

About the Author



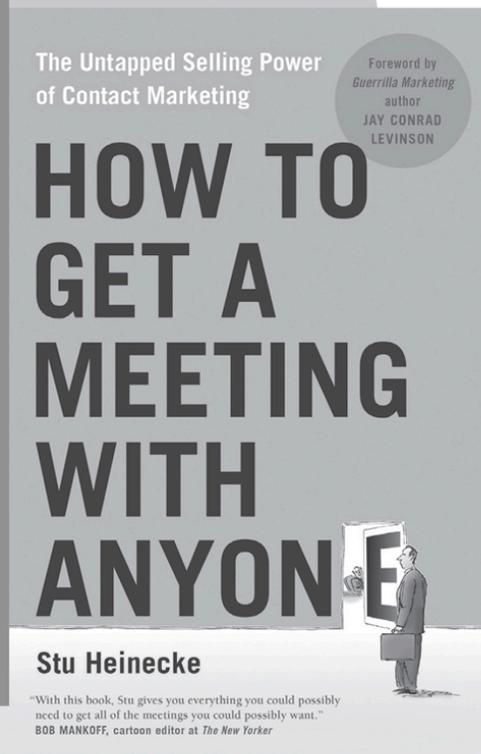
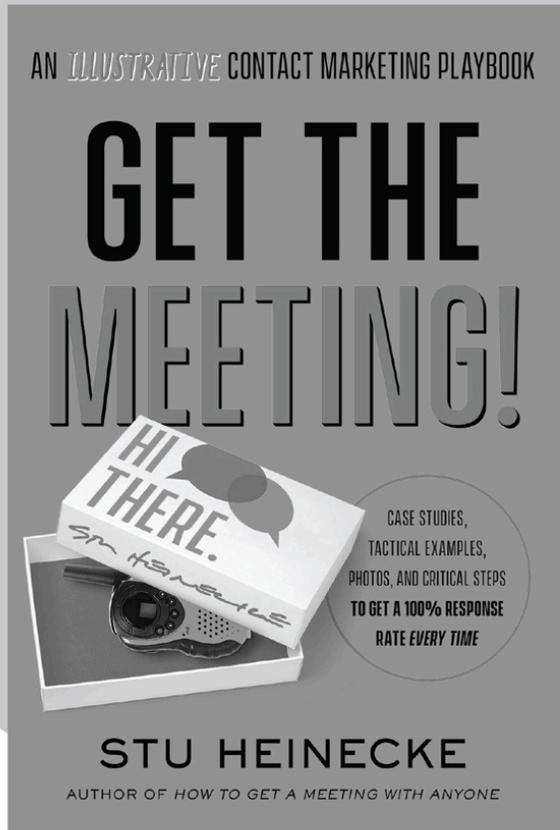
Stu Heinecke started his career by combining marketing with a one-in-a-million mentorship under top cartoonists from *Playboy* and *The New Yorker*, resulting in a new genre of direct mail and hundreds of record-breaking campaigns for some of the world's biggest direct marketers. Stu's first book, *How to Get a Meeting with Anyone*, has been named the #1 sales book on prospecting, and one of the top 64 sales books of all time.

His next book, *Get the Meeting!*, extended his coverage of Contact Marketing with a collection of illustrated case studies of record-breaking campaigns to reach high-level prospects. And his *How to Grow Your Business Like a Weed* laid out a complete model for explosive business growth, based on the strategies, attributes, and tools that weeds use to grow, expand, dominate, and defend their turf.

A twice-nominated hall of fame marketer, best-selling business author, and *Wall Street Journal* cartoonist, Stu was dubbed "the father of Contact Marketing" by the American Marketing Association. Through speaking,

agency, and consulting work, he helps sales teams break through to their top accounts and companies to achieve rapid growth.

More from Stu Heinecke



"Get the Meeting! is one of those rare books where ideas literally leap off the page, sparking your creativity to ignite campaigns as you star in the role of a very successful contact marketer."

—Willis Turner, president/CEO of sales and marketing at Executives International, Inc. (SMEI)

"How to Get a Meeting with Anyone just topped our list as The #1 Top Sales Book on Prospecting—ever!"

—Haris Halkic, Editor/Publisher, SalesDaily

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