

The Ultimate Recruitment Guide

Force24™
Marketing Automation

RDLC
Business People in the People Business



Co-Author: James Del-Gatto

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Force24™
Marketing Automation

1 Introduction



Adam Oldfield
Managing Director of Force24

As I always start most of my guides, I'd like to remind you all of one of the most important quotes I've heard in a long time. It was said by James Skellington, Force24 head of Travel business development, during the Swiss Innovation Day interview "People make Technology GREAT"!

As the managing director of a marketing automation platform, I'm the target of many recruiters' efforts. This gives me a beautiful lens in which to appraise their approaches, and understand their techniques and learning methods. This - coupled with our industry experience working with recruitment clients - gives us inside view of the objectives of the business.

I would also like to introduce my co-author on this project, James Del Gatto.

James Del-Gatto is a Recruitment Marketing Consultant with over 20 years' experience. Each one of these precious 20 years has been within the recruitment sector, and the majority within international agencies.

Founder and Managing Director of Black Slate, the recruitment brand and digital marketing agency, James' role has been to nudge, cajole and inspire recruitment professionals and MDs into new ways of thinking and marketing their brands in a digital world.



James Del-Gatto
Founder / Director - Black Slate

2 Objectives

It's simple - to inspire you to improve your email marketing, and to give you the tips and advice so you can build campaigns that engage your audience, build your brand reputation and achieve bottom line results.

It's sometimes difficult to see the wood for the trees, so to speak. Being able to craft well-structured well-written emails can be difficult if not following a specific framework.

The objective of this guide is to give you a framework in which to follow. Some important do's and important don'ts. This guide will not show you not what to write but instead how to write.

Unfortunately, there's no one size fits all approach works for every business. It's important that you apply your personality, your business values and unique insight into the industry that you work in. Hopefully this guide is just the start to building strong digital relationships with your prospects.

What's the problem?

Before you begin any digital marketing you need to be clear on two things:

- What your brand stands for in your niche sector, who your clients are and why they should buy from you!
- What educational content your audiences want and which you can credibly talk about?

The world is extremely busy online and with so much pointless content being pushed by recruiters, that it means clients and candidates are hard to engage. You have to learn the secrets to brilliant content so you can generate critical cut through. Or, you run the risk of campaigns falling on deaf ears...

Objectives (Continued)

Sometimes the written word loses all personality and can become lifeless. Many recruiters are enigmatic and energetic individuals - where their natural ability tends to lie with the spoken word and the art of persuasion.

Quite often, recruiters struggle in the production of content, when they report they could happily speak all day about a particular subject and have strong views on the industry.

A strange phenomenon disconnects oral ability from written availability; there's not much we can do about this other than accept it and work to address that weakness.

That's why we want to help you with a framework to help you pen your specialist content that your audience will value.

You'll notice in the guide we have not relied on external content such as PDF downloads, landing pages or other campaign collateral, we have made the emails almost stand alone.

This is not because we don't believe they are important factors of any marketing campaign, or that this stand-alone email approach is the way marketing should be done - instead, this approach has been taken to enable us to sympathise with the average recruiter marketing from his or her desk.

> Many recruiters are enigmatic and energetic individuals, where their natural ability tends to lie with the spoken word and the art of persuasion.



"Getting emails into the inbox - as you know - is getting tricky, every single recruiter has a responsibility to ensure their messages are landing in their recipient's inboxes. But how do they do that?"

3 Email Deliverability

Every email sent - even personal ones - is each being scored for engagement by very clever technology, owned and managed by some of the biggest tech brands in the world, such as Google and Microsoft. To help you understand what's happening technically when you send an email, we have outlined some of the steps below.

Getting emails seen in people's inboxes is a tricky concept, every single recruiter has a responsibility to ensure their messages are landing correctly and timely. But how do they do that?

These days, spam filters are less interested in the content of the email - don't be fooled the content of the email still must be perfect - and instead are interested in how your recipients are engaging with your emails.

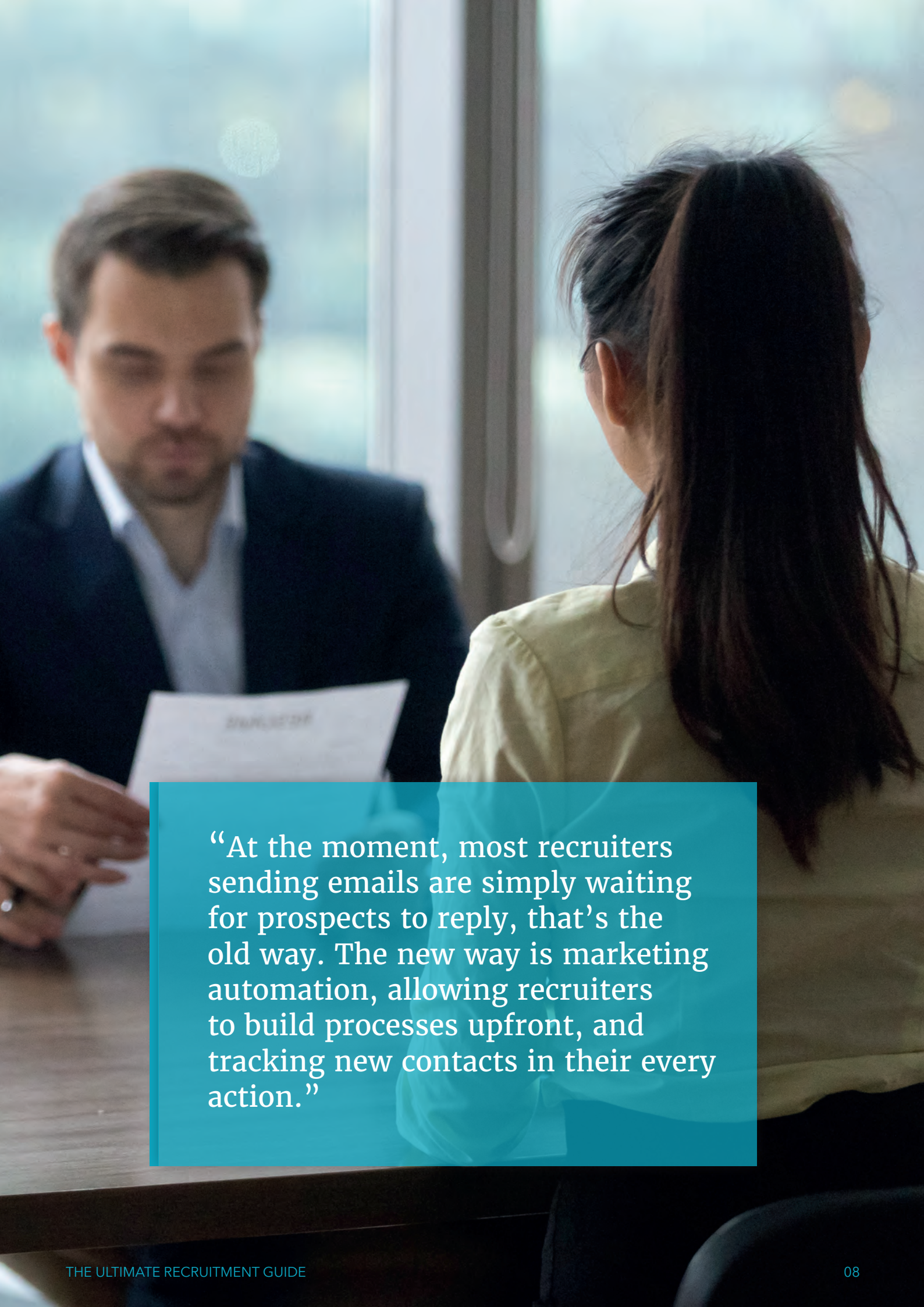
So, what do we mean by this? Well, if you're sending emails to 100 people and of that 100 people only two of them actually open your email, you will have a 2% open rate. This is not good, and mail servers like Microsoft, Google, Yahoo and BT will remember it too. Therefore, the next time you send an email, they'll recall that not many people liked it and will therefore be more aggressive in its spam marking.
Now let's assume, instead of sending to the hundred people we sent to only 10 and still only two of them opened, the difference now if you have a 20% open rate. This is good and the mail servers will reward you for this.

Remember, email is a free service that these mail servers often provide to their customers. And recruiters sending emails into such servers is actually deemed - in their eyes - a bit of a nuisance... So, as you can see by removing the 90 people that didn't open emails previously, the mail servers have said 'thank you, great targeting'.

Let's not forget great content though. Engaging words providing value towards a worthwhile subject matter is still of paramount importance. Technology alone cannot get your message into the inbox.

The problem is which 90 do I eradicate? Well, all of the information, this is where marketing automation comes into play. Marketing automation can help you understand the engagement of everybody you're sending emails to, when they open them, when they click them, what pages they then subsequently went on to look at on the website and even what lead score they achieved.

If you would like to know more about Marketing Automation, please take a look on our website **www.force24.co.uk** and download our quick pitch guide.



"At the moment, most recruiters sending emails are simply waiting for prospects to reply, that's the old way. The new way is marketing automation, allowing recruiters to build processes upfront, and tracking new contacts in their every action."

Email Deliverability (Continued)

Let's think like a computer for a moment and consider how your emails will look from a receiving mail servers point of view. By this we mean imagine sitting in a mail room at Microsoft, overworked and underpaid - and all of a sudden you receive 20,000 letters to distribute from a company sending a commercial offer that your recipients didn't ask for. We can imagine what expletives would be running through your head! That's what it's like for the receiving mail server.

To compound this problem, don't forget the majority of the email service provision market is owned by three or four main players. So each time you send the commercial email there's a chance it will be received by the same underpaid mail room worker - methophorically speaking - these are actually super computers running highly advanced AI – but you get the point) of these major players such as Microsoft, Google, Yahoo and BT. Understanding this should give you the ability to see how they differentiate large volume commercial emails from the small volume individual personal emails.

So let's get started.



4 Subject lines

The user's decision to open an email is based 50% on the brand, and 50% on the subject line.

One of the most important mechanics of an email is the subject line. In an instance of a plain text email, the subject line mechanic makes up 50% of the open rate argument. So, with this in mind, it's important to understand what makes a recipient engage.





Let's first understand the objective of the subject line. A subject line was developed as being an essential part of email. It doesn't exist in any other form of digital or physical communication. This is simply because email is the only form of communication where the message in its full form is forced upon a recipient without your prior consent.

Its original design was to be a brief synopsis of what the email contained, however, not all recruiters see the subject line in this way.

The moral of the story is to understand what a subject line was in order to build one designed to get the best response. Now, that being said, there are some formulas you can follow that have been proven to improve open rates.

The three most important things to get right in your subject line:

1. Focus on the audience, link to their persona (profile of their clients).
2. Short and sweet - make it 50 characters, capitalise each word.
3. Personalise and segment - matching the message with name and/or company name to the segment applies throughout.

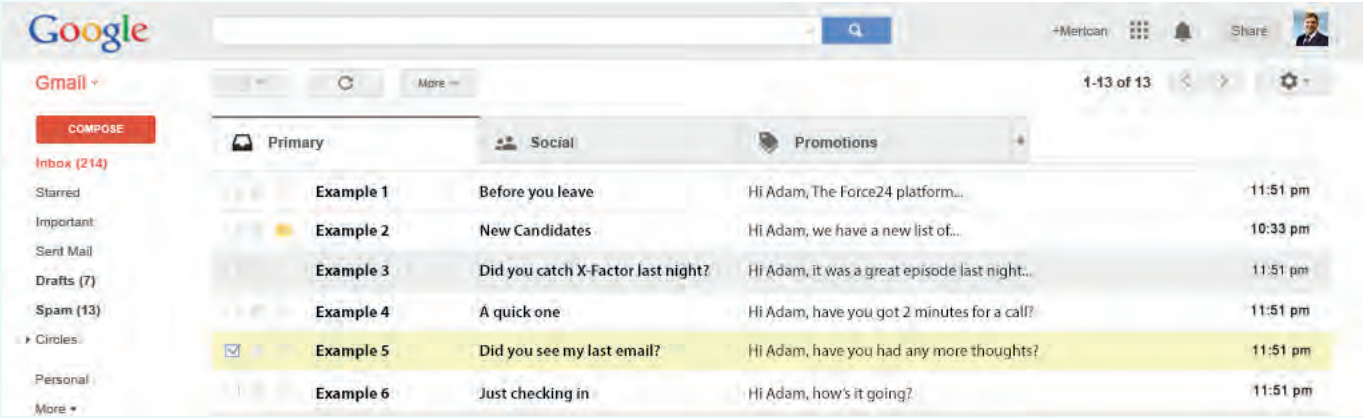
Subject lines (Continued)

NOTE:
Not all subject lines need to make sense. We don't mean you can be factually incorrect, but we do mean we don't need to use complete sentences. For example, we can use abbreviations and colloquialisms to get our point across. Remember, there's no such thing a 'business English' anymore - we're all just consumers at heart and respond to the same messages as one another. Be professional but don't be scared of being yourself.

Quite often we ask marketeers to review their subject line as if they were asking their mates a question. What subject line would I use if I wanted my mate to read this? Would it look like the subject line I've just created for the commercial email? Or would it look a little less formal and more friendly? The aim is to find the perfect blend between the two - something you can send your friend - but know it's safe enough to send out en-masse.

Be warned about the use of emojis! They can be an extremely powerful when drawing attention to your email. But watch out! Too many can cheapen the email and devalue the content. Take a look at your inbox and understand how brands communicating with you have used emojis, can you see a point where emojis become too much?

Before we look at the strategies that we do recommend, let's have a look at a couple of examples that we've received that have gone against our direct advice, let's see what you think?



Subject lines (Continued)

Straight to the point

The straight to the point strategy enables you to condense your message and deliver it in just a few words. This is a really powerful strategy when you have some strong content that will resonate with your audience. See some examples below:



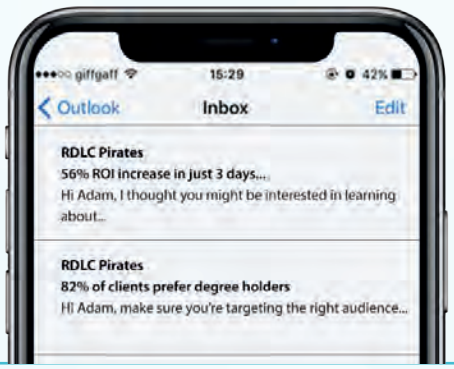
The verb formula

The verb formula simply states you should prefix your subject line with the verb that describes what the user can expect to do upon opening your email. To expand upon that I've given some examples below:



The proof

The proof formula allows me to introduce a statistic or metric the recipient should stand up and take note of. An example of this would be the following:



The killer question

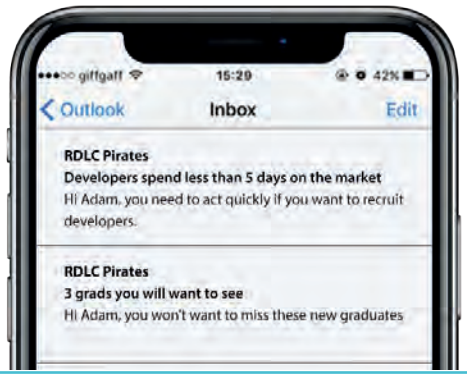
This formula is designed to provoke debate. We invoke a reaction by asking a question people know the answer to or will always have an opinion on. This is tricky as our aim is not to polarise the audience, so our questions need to be a little softer. Examples of this below:



Subject lines (Continued)

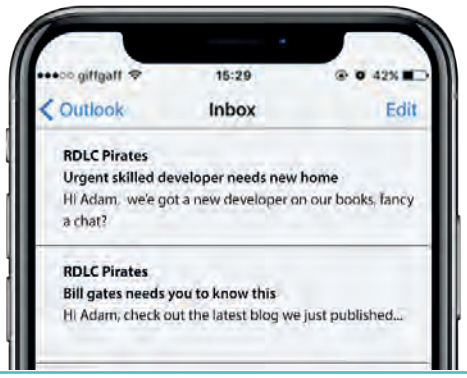
Urgency

The urgency formula will attempt to drive urgency in either your services, your availability, your clients or your candidates. Urgency is most often the most powerful subject line formula of all. Some examples of an emergency style subject line can be seen below:



Surprise

This surprise formula is designed to deliver some information that will either surprise or shock the recipient. But like all marketing, you must use this responsibly. Some examples of the surprise formula:



Heavy Personalisation

This formula relies on a strong dataset behind-the-scenes. There's nothing worse than personalisation gone wrong, where data is missing from important personalisation fields. So, before using this approach, you must make sure your data is strong enough to support this strategy. Some examples of the heavy personalisation formula below:

a. [firstname], [companyname] was mentioned to me today
b. [companyname] has been the topic of a number of chats
c. [firstname], some strong advice for [companyname]

[FirstName], learn how to attract top AI developers to [CompanyName]

Obviously, the most important fact is that your subject line must match with the content - the examples above are beautifully simple when you're not trying to marry a strategy to what you've written. So, please don't just copy and paste our examples, instead, understand the formula breakdown, its components and how you can apply new words to them.

5 Email Components

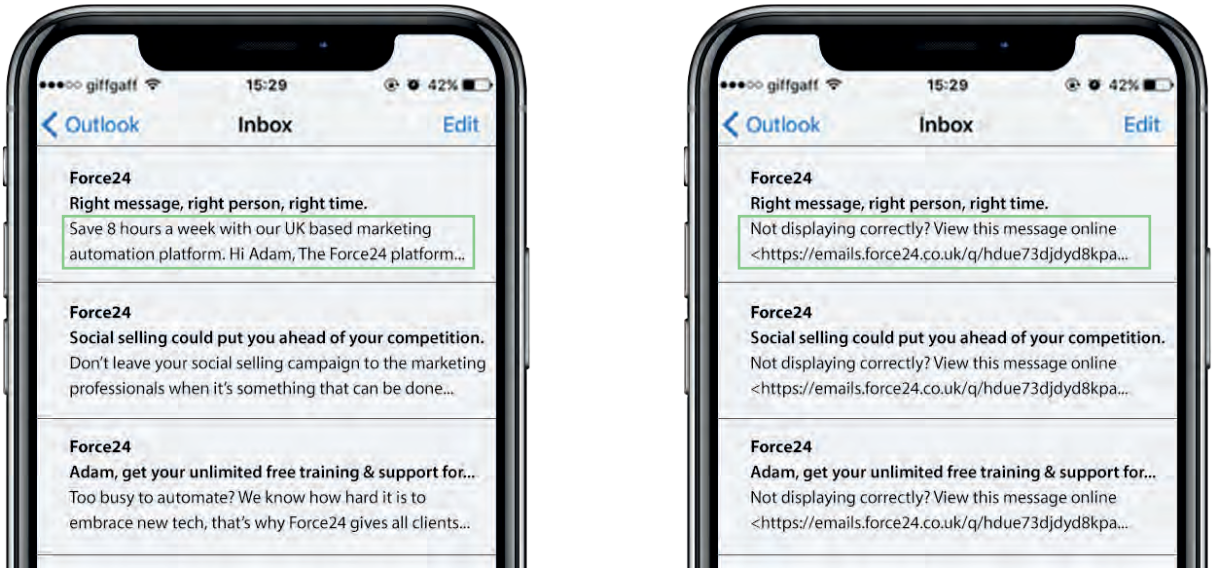
Now let's have a look at the components of the email. It's very easy to think of it as a single component, but it's far more complicated than that. By looking at the anatomy of an email at its component level, we can start to build emails in a more scientific and formulaic way. The good news is, we can then start to change, and adapt our approach so we can monitor how it improves the conversation with our recipients.

Let's have a look at the components of an email. The first component is the introduction, the Introduction which then passes into the desire and action section and finally that passes into sign-off.

Preheader

What is a preheader?

It's the text that is displayed below the subject line - in the preview pane which can be seen mostly on mobile devices. See the highlighted illustration below:



The preheader is designed to be the first 85-100 characters of an email. However, the problem is that quite often commercial emails load tracking pixels and images at the top of an email. In the example above, you can see without a preheader you see some useless information.

Most platforms provide the ability to insert a preheader. Our advice is to take the introduction paragraph of your email and insert this into the preheader.

Again, this is an exceptionally powerful aspect of the email open rate argument, but remember to keep building great content from within your email so it can be displayed here. For example, your introduction is not strong enough to be displayed here, you must revisit your introduction.



"In an instance of a plain text email, the subject line mechanic makes up 50% of the open rate argument."

5.1 Email Introductions

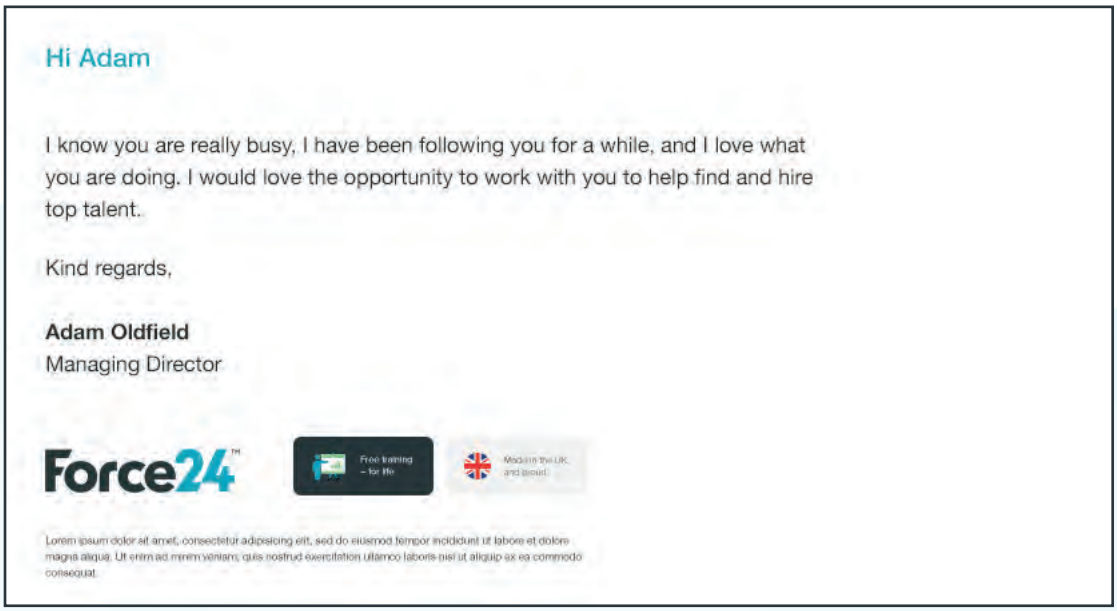
One of the most important sections of an email, the introduction, helps the user form an opinion as to whether to continue reading on or not. It won't necessarily improve open rates - as the user has already opened the email - however it should drive more traffic to an action phase, i.e. a conversion.

The introduction is typically one or two sentences in length and should not expand beyond this. Since the purpose of the introduction is to quickly reaffirm the user as to the content of the email the introduction must be sharpened and extremely concise. The use of plain English is essential, do not attempt to confuse the user in this paragraph.

Where possible, evidence through statistics and numbers have proven to be exceptionally powerful in the introduction paragraph.

This message should build from the subject line, and we'd also recommend adding an example at this stage.

In this section of the guide we're simply going to highlight some bad introductions as later on in this guide you'll see a series of emails demonstrating effective messaging.



Email Introductions (Continued)

Please, please don't profess your love for clients on the first date, at least wait a little bit before you talk about how much you would love to work with them! Or any other self-deprecating sentiment, we are the ones with the solution, and we must deliver a message which is strong and full of pride and must not be patronising to the recipient. Our advice in the introduction paragraph - in fact in the entire email - is to avoid comments such as "we/I would love to", "I know you're really busy, but", "grab a coffee". Asking me to grab coffee with you implies the only value I will receive from the meeting is a 30-minute break and potentially free coffee.

So, let's have a look at some of the examples that have stood out to us as being particularly bad. The purpose of showing you the worst before the best is to help you understand where you sit on the scale.

The following examples, set within a similar category, they are off points they contain no useful information:

- Forget Celebrity X-Factor tonight
- Just popping you an email to introduce
- How are you this morning?
- As we're entering the last quarter for 2019

Or sometimes even worse, introduction paragraphs that contain waffle! This example below demonstrates how you can quickly disengage contacts by not being able to immediately convey your point:

- Did you know, only 7% of students taking Computer Science A-Levels are female, and just half those women go into a job in the same field?

In the example above, it's difficult to see how you can convert the introduction sentiment into a commercial opportunity.

Whereas in the examples below, you'll see a totally wasted opportunity in introduction paragraph where the sender has filled the critical opening introduction with pointless information:

- Hope you're well, I tried to get hold of you on a couple of occasions last week, unfortunately it was to no avail.
- As we are now firmly in the final quarter of the year, I wanted to reach out and ask how business is?
- Afternoon Adam, I wasn't sure when you finished for the day, some people finish at 5pm others a little earlier/later.

Email Introductions (Continued)

At this stage if they've read this far you should state clearly what do you want the reader to do next, make it a clear action, see call-to-action examples below:

Discover the best Talent now >
Learn how to attract best talent>

Strong brand
Within the sign off it's important you provide all the necessary contact information for yourselfand the business, but also to include a very strong brand tagline. Many people scan straight to the bottom of the email to see the name of the company and what they do. This insight helps them understand whether they should continue reading the content or not, so it's a key component to the sign.

In the examples that we give later on in this guide, we use a made-up company name "Force24 rec solution" and we created a simple tagline that includes my location and a nod to the fact that we recruit software developers.

Force24 rec solution – Leading Leeds in developing the world



5.2 Desire & Action

This section will contain the detail of your email. Our advice is that the detail of your email must be worth reading. Simply listing the qualities of a particular candidates on an email is very, very specific content and will only appeal to a small number of your recipients that are currently hiring - and for that skill. Therefore, we recommend based on success we've measured that it's more important to base your content around broader industry or organisational topics, so, in theory, you can engage every one of your prospects irrespective of their current position.

> "Many recruiters are enigmatic and energetic individuals, where their natural ability tends to lie with the spoken word and the art of persuasion."

Below in this guide, we'll demonstrate the general sentiment your desire & action sections should convey (introduction, gain, fear, social proof and urgency), whilst maintaining a focus on the actual contents of the message you wish to deliver. A real balancing act!

In terms of content length for your desire & action sections you should ensure each paragraph as a maximum of four lines on a normal desktop monitor. And ideally you should have no more than four paragraphs. The trend is for shorter copy, but if you can write well and convincingly to get a point across, go for it!

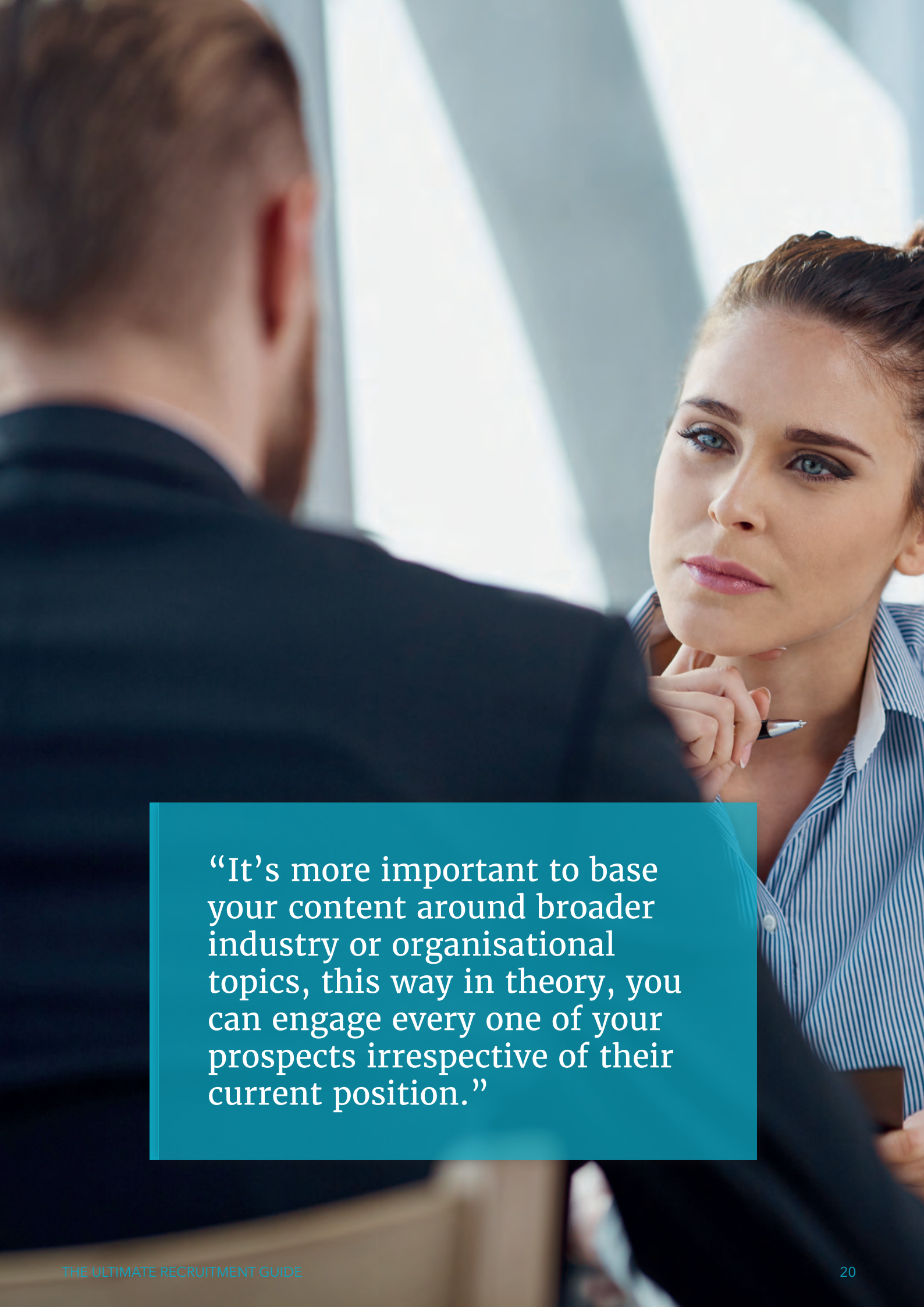
Where possible, always display data that should be tabular in bullet points to allow you to develop the clear path for the eye to deliver critical sales messages.

Additionally, the use of capitalisation, bold and italic fonts may be used to highlight key areas of the passage. The key thing to remember here, for the use of this formatting, is that the highlighted text should convey the message of the email by themselves. For example, if you copied only the highlighted sections and pasted them into an email, they should make themselves make sense (not necessarily grammatically but the sentiment of the email should exist).

You must use this highlighting wisely, each item you highlight you diminish the value of the previous items highlighted. There is only so much attention you can gain

We can use all the techniques available to ensure the content is clear, concise and is easily consumed!

You may use the squint test on plain text emails as well - simply open the email on your screen, sit back in your chair, squint, and attempt to read your email. If your message can be consumed in that state, you've delivered a well-designed, well-structured email. If not, it's back to the drawing board.



"It's more important to base your content around broader industry or organisational topics, this way in theory, you can engage every one of your prospects irrespective of their current position."

5.3 The Email Sequence

Now let's look at putting everything we've learned together into a sequence. We now understand the anatomy of a good email campaign, we just need to understand how best to execute it. In a perfect world, the ideal email would be sent just once, and people would fall in love with your brand and start doing business with you immediately. The reality is we open approximately one in six commercial emails sent to us. So we must come to peace with the fact we must say things must be said up to six times before the addressable base will have received and understood the message. So, we should come to peace with the fact we must say things up to six times before the recipients understood the message.

With this in mind, we need to develop a formula that allows us to discuss on email the same topic many times - from different angles. Since this is a recruitment specific guide - we've tailored this example to two consultants placing software developers into tech businesses.

The thinking behind this strategy comes from our wide experience in business-to-business lead generation where we developed a guide that enables you to understand what we call the "human argument".

This considers the stages that you would go through, in order to convince - lets say - a friend to do something. At first, we must introduce what it is that we wish to do - the introduction stage. Secondly, we must speak about the benefits, and what can they expect to gain? Following on from the gain we must now introduce fear, the fear of missing out. What would happen if they did not act on your advice? The fourth stage is social proof. Social proof introduces what others have experienced I also taking your advice. The final stage is urgency, urgency helps was in still requirement for user to act now.

This is a condensed version of the human arguments specifically tailored to what we believe recruiters rely on, on a daily basis in their verbal communications.

As previously mentioned, the examples we've produced have specifically been written to generate written replies rather than direct users to high-value content online.

You should inject your specific industry points into your emails, but please ensure the sentiment of each paragraph remains the same.

Email 1: Introduction - The Email Sequence

To help, we have broken down each of the example emails by showing you which paragraphs are introduction, which are desire and action, and which are sign off

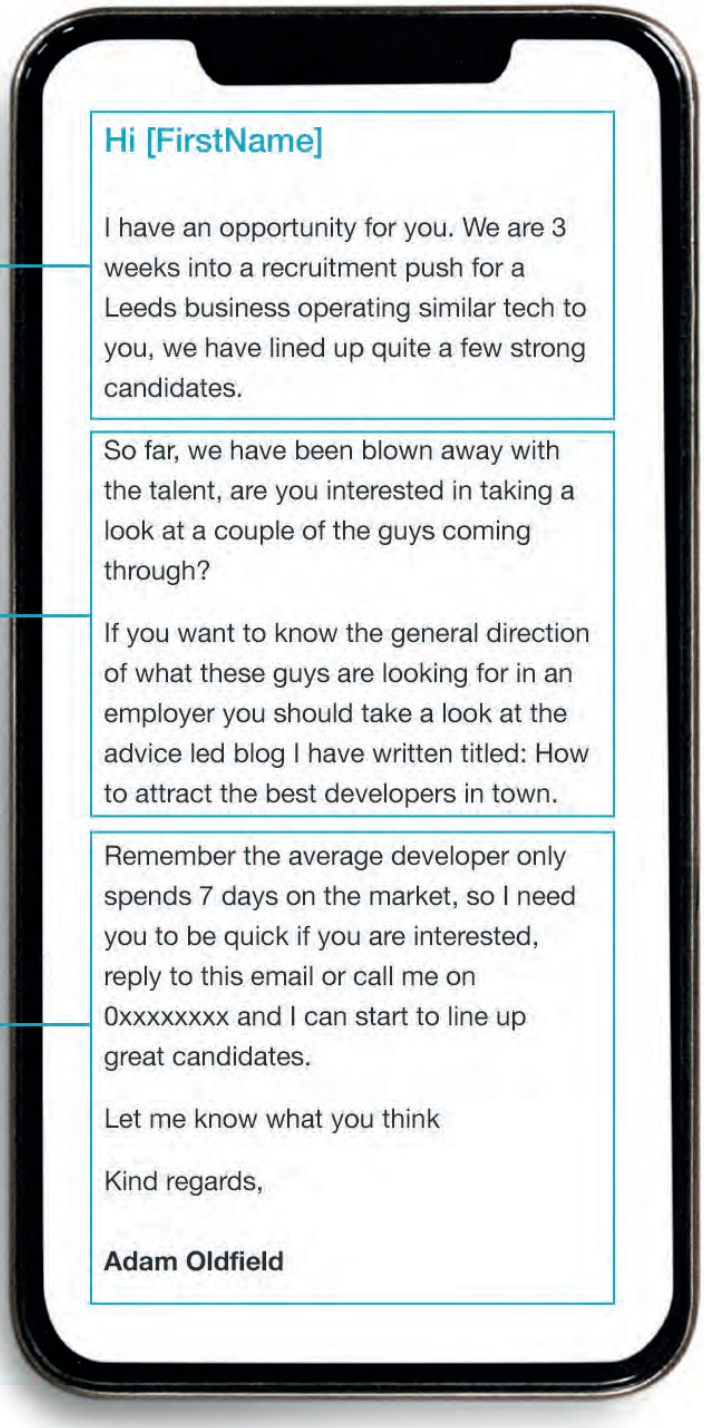


Email 2: Gain - The Email Sequence

Introduction

Desire and action

sign off

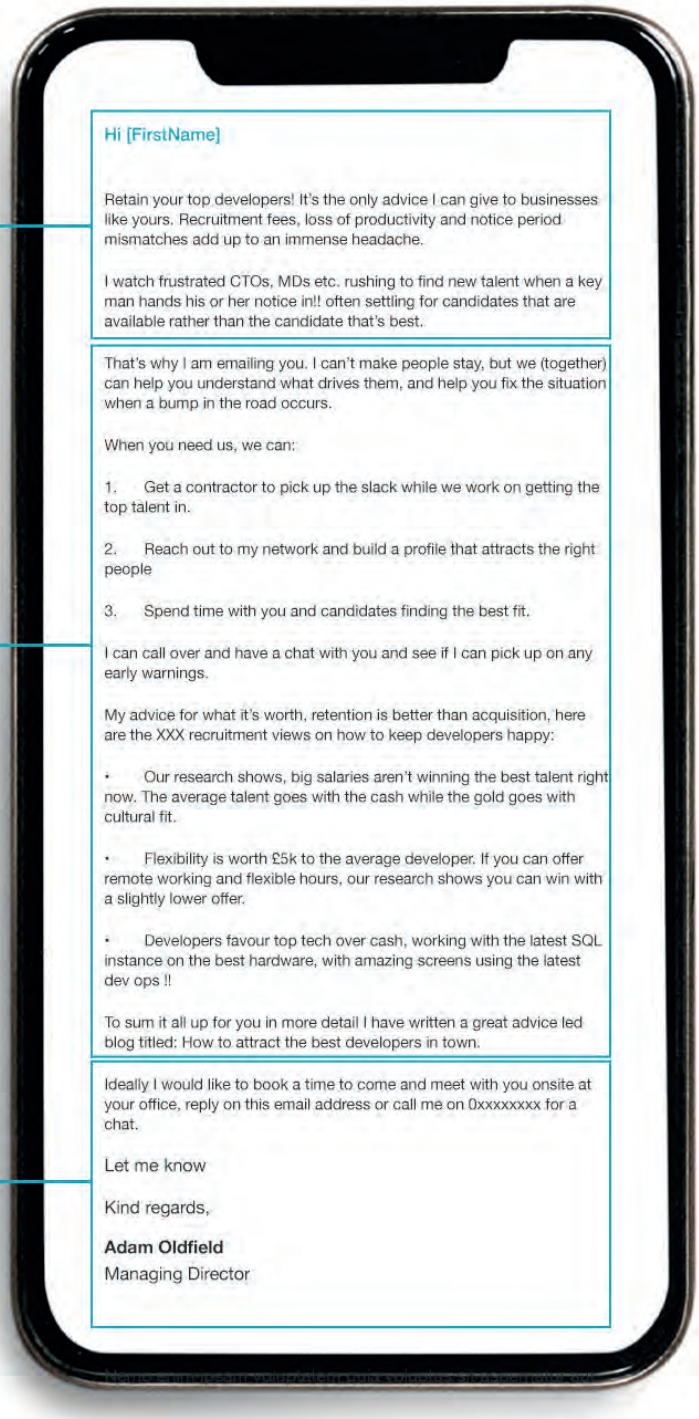


Email 3: Fear - The Email Sequence

Introduction

Desire and action

sign off

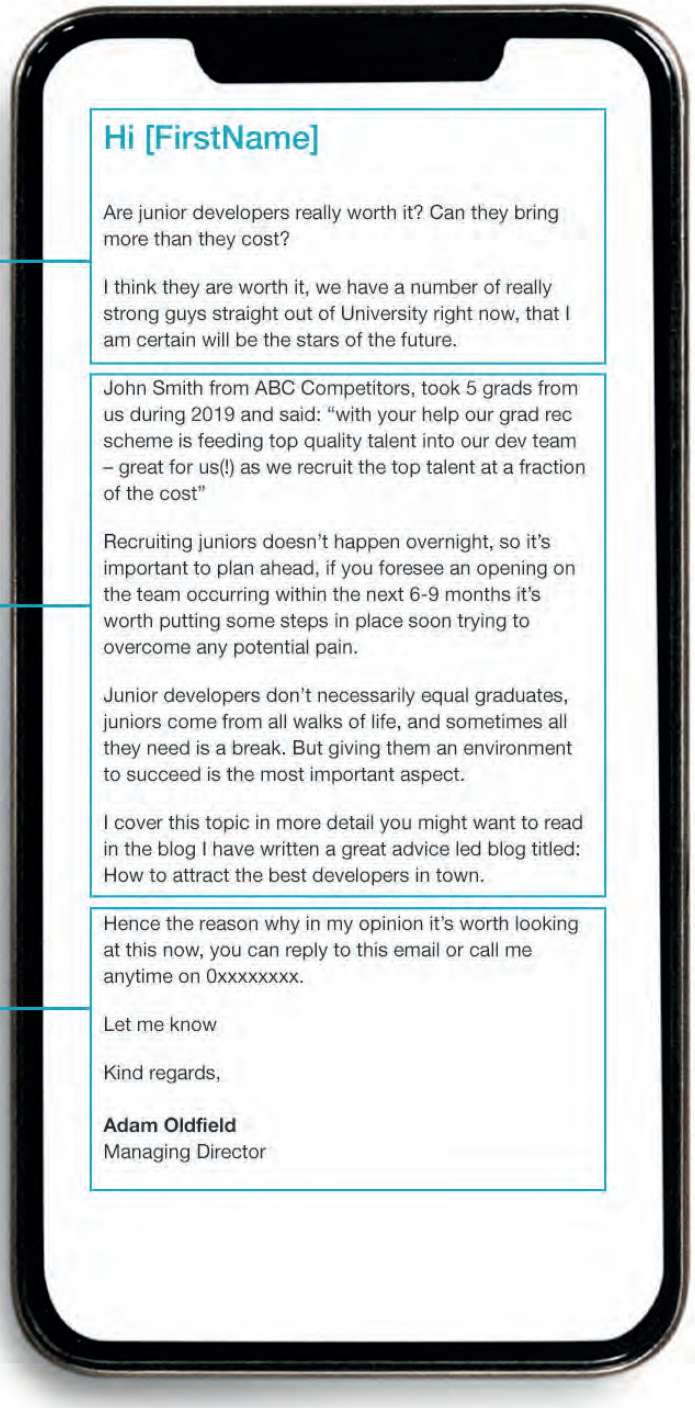


Email 4: Social Proof - The Email Sequence

Introduction

Desire and action

sign off

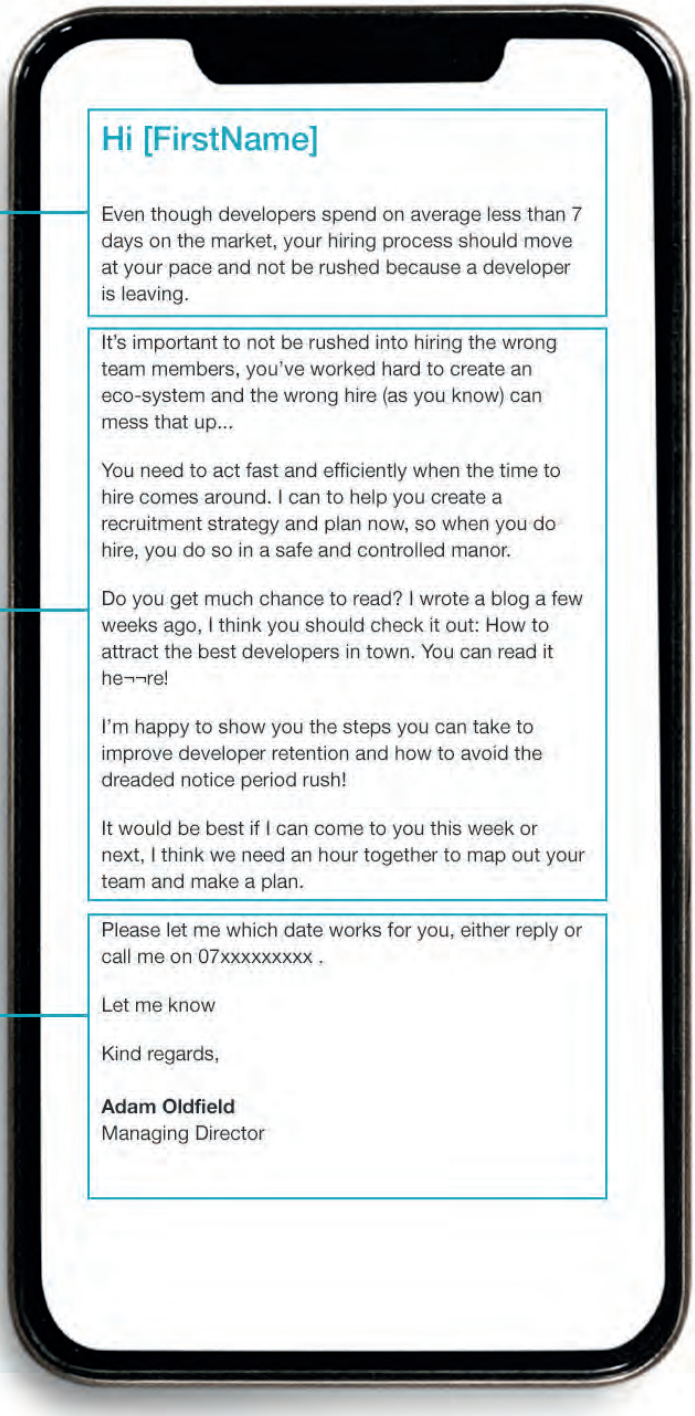


Email 5: Urgency - The Email Sequence

Introduction

Desire and action

sign off



6 Executive Summary

To summarise, email marketing has become a little bit more complicated then it has been in previous years. Inboxes are now protected but some of the most Advanced AI known to man.

I don't see this is bad thing, the AI is not here to stop your conversations, or your ability to reach new customers, it is simply there to ensure the messages you do send are of high-quality and targeted to its recipient. You must understand your role in the email deliverability argument.

Quite often we see people building email campaigns and trying to cram too much information into a single email, instead you should use multiple emails allowing you to be more concise in each email you send the recipient.

You should also consider the content in which you're sending to the recipient and understand if it is something they will engage with, all too often we see campaigns being sent from brands that are flat and lifeless, you should always make sure your content is useful and vibrant.

When writing your emails it makes a great deal more sense to build your emails based on a structured template. Our simple guide shows you the templates we have seen to work best, don't forget if you work from a template it means rather than starting from a blank canvas each time you can quickly craft effective well structured emails in moments.

Your emails consist of several components, each of these components have their part to play in generating responses and a return on your investment. Check out the next page for some examples.



Executive Summary (Continued)

The subject line and pre-header - these exist to help you convince the recipient your email is worthy of opening. These components are responsible for improving email open rates.

The introduction – this paragraph should contain the necessary hook required to convince the recipient the email content is worthy of their time.

The desire and action – this is the subject matter itself and the root for the recipients to find out more. Each email should build the desire and describe its clear call to action, this particular components of an email is responsible the generating email clicks and replies.

The signed off and strong brand – is it a short and concise final paragraph that gives your recipients a final settlement and a way to connect with you. The strong brand or signature is quite often where people look to you to understand what you actually do, so making it clear and concise is essential.

Remember this guide is here to help and is only part of the answer. Time and effort is required for to build your own style and iteratively improve it to get the best for your business.

Good luck and happy emailing!



Get in touch

If you want to talk about your marketing call us **0845 272 5990** or email **info@force24.co.uk**

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Marketing Automation

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