

How to send the perfect plain text email

Nurture Sequence

NEW
Extended
Nurture Sequence

Force24™
Marketing Automation

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Recommended Communication Strategy

This journey has been proven over time to educate contacts to the point of high engagement, by approaching the same subject from many different angles. We know as consumers we open 1 in 5 commercial emails, so a small amount of repetition can be forgiven.

The nurture sequence is not designed to sell to your contacts (that's the job of the sales team). The job is actually to educate and monitor engagement. When the engagement reaches a certain level we would deem it appropriate to pass these contacts to the sales team as an MQL (Marketing Qualified Lead)

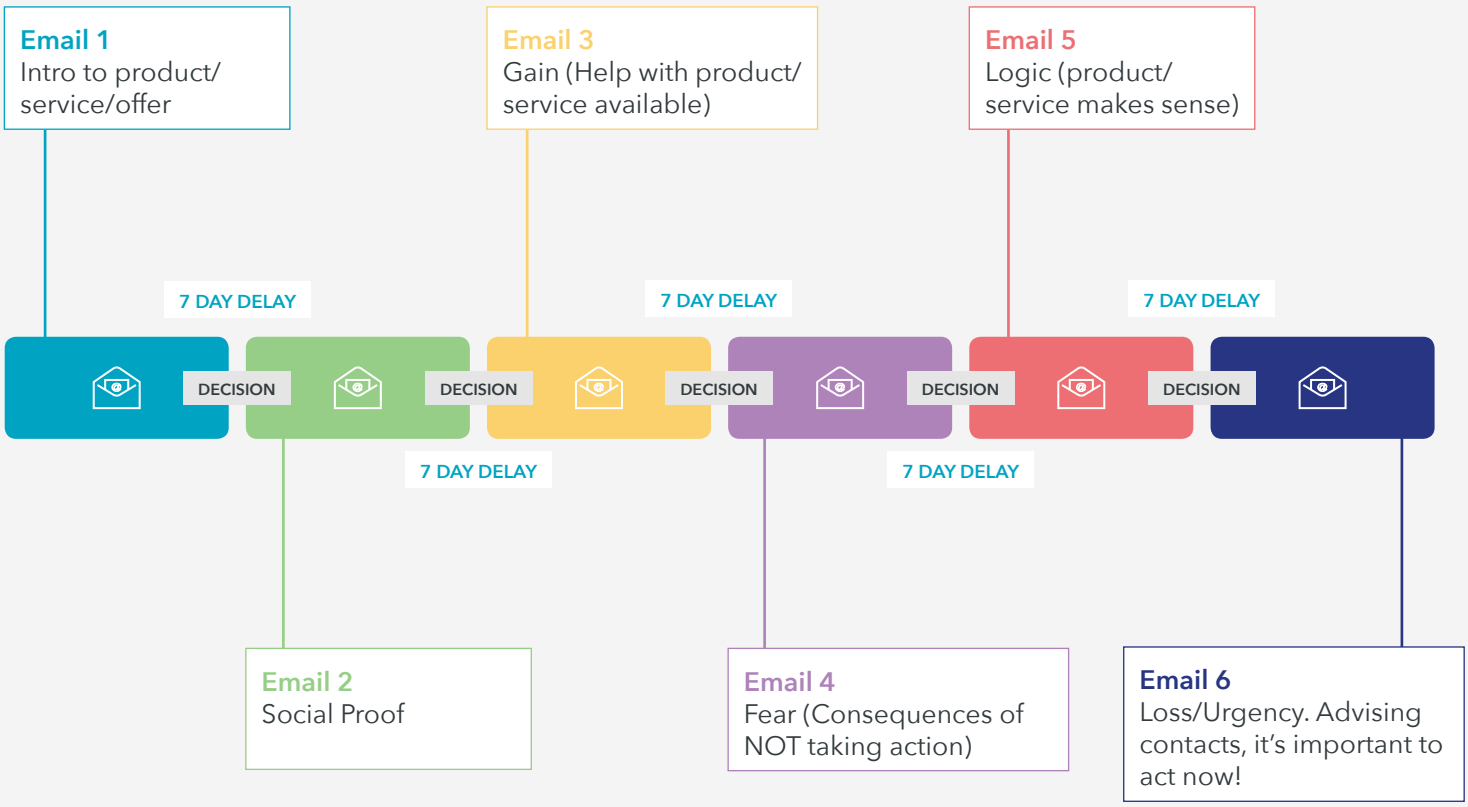
It's important to note and MQL is not yet a SQL (Sales Qualified Lead). But it is likely to become a SQL. The sales team should contact all MQL's on the basis that they have a need or a reason to engage to a high level and using their honed sales skill create a SQL.

The sequence below is proven to open doors and educate contacts faster than any other approach we have seen.

Although you must make every email your own, the contraction and composition is critical.

The Time Line

This plain text email nurture program is designed to engage contacts over a period of 5–6 weeks and should be run through a Marketing Automation platform.





SUBJECT LINE TIPS

Make sure you address the point of the email and direct the user to an action. This is done by addressing the future tense and utilizing a verb.

Rationalise, continually re-evaluate your subject line to condense it as much as possible, ideally remain within 5 words.

Be personal, if your data supports it and the subject calls for it insert [firstname] here.

Email 1.
Intro to product/ service/offer

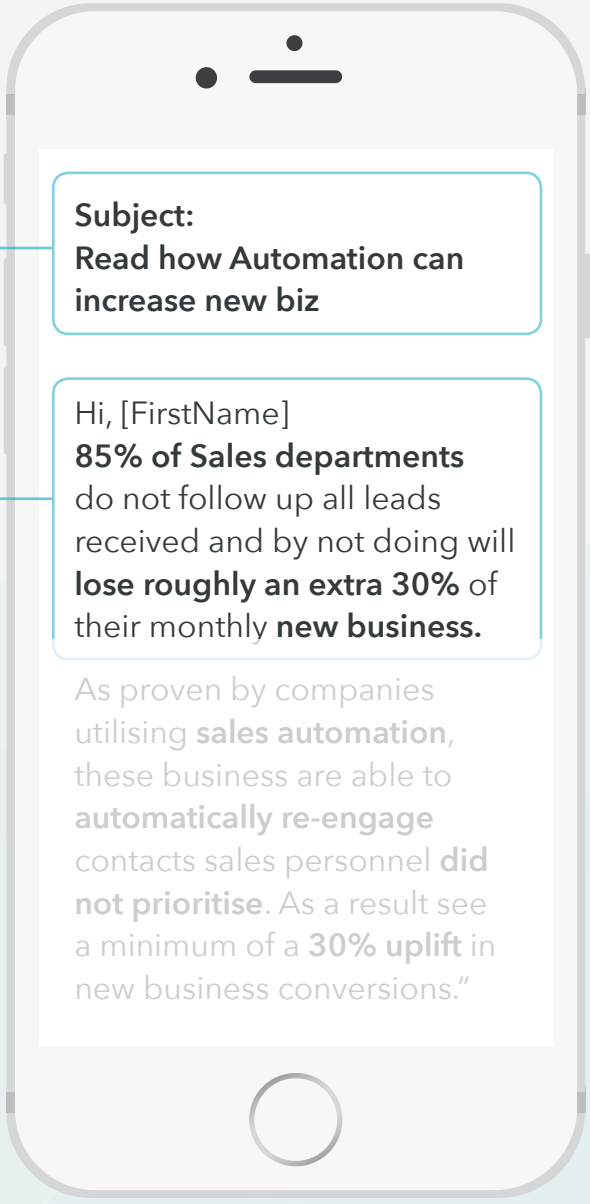
TEMPLATE 1

The welcome email is a key email and its aim is to introduce rather than sell or push direct contact. You must not expect a reply from the reader. A very gentle message, designed to add value to the readers' day.

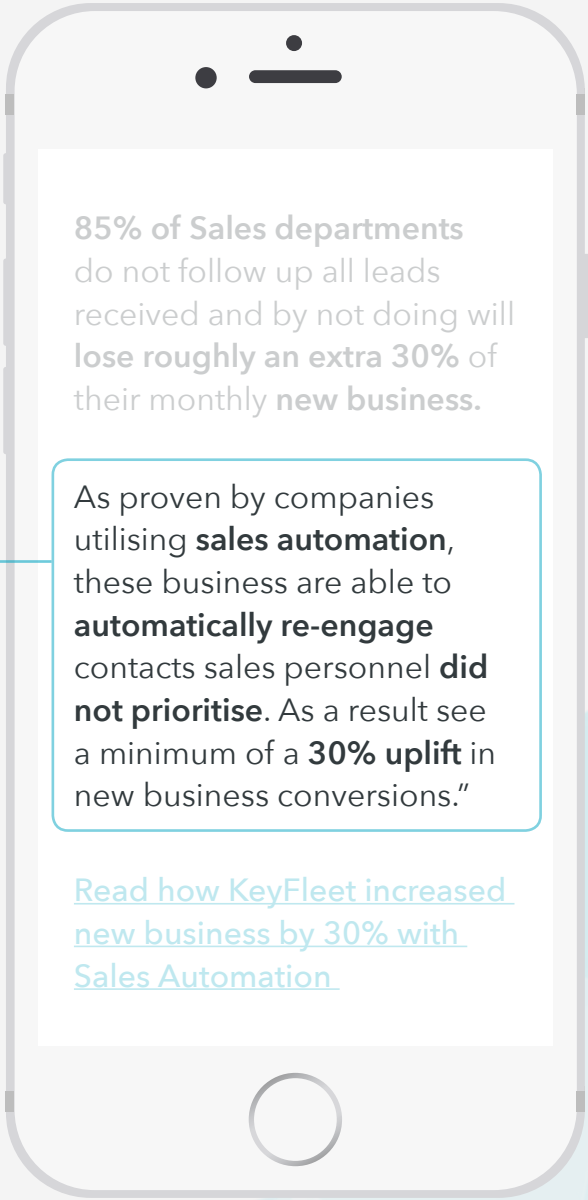
Subject – I would like to offer a soft verb to give the user a light weight entry into my sequence

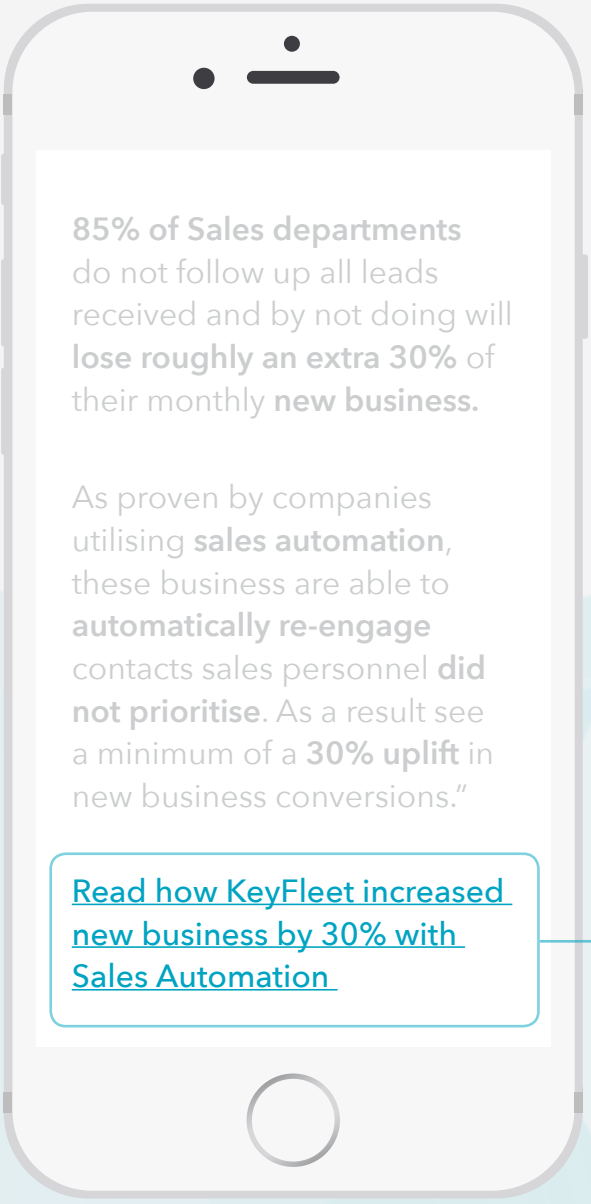
Intro Paragraph – Strong intro with attractive headline, this should refer to either a strong weakness or strong pain point. This paragraph should set the scene for the rest of the email. The use of bold will draw the reader's attention to the words of interest (note: reading only the bold words should tell a story)

Always use Hi or Hello [firstname] it's a strange thing but it draws more readers in.



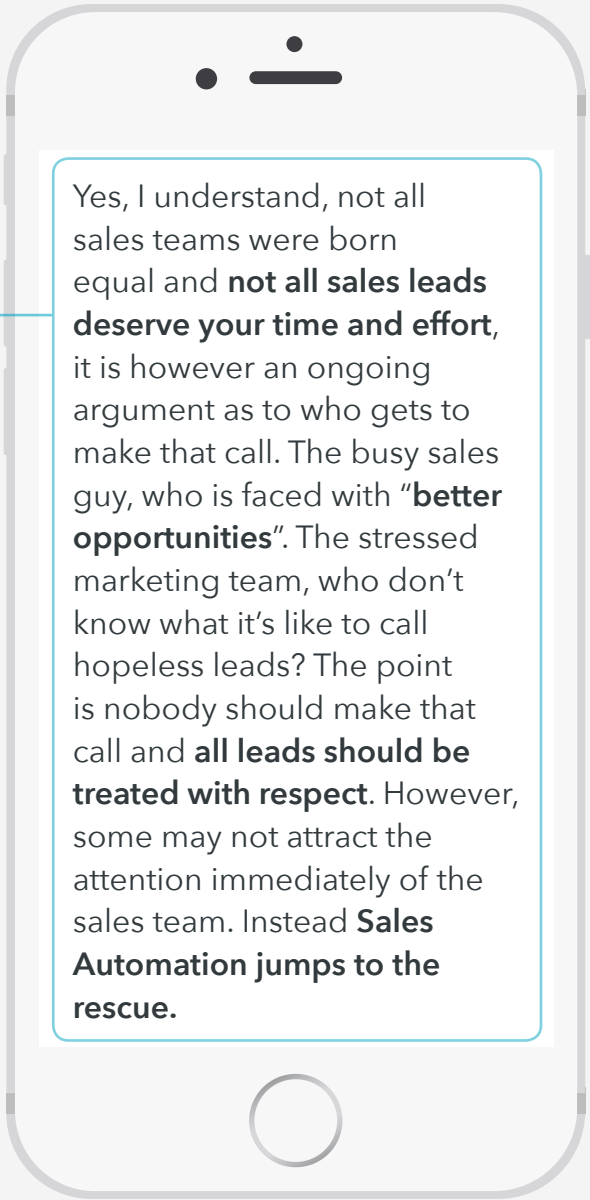
Reaffirming sub paragraph confirming interest – This next paragraph should be no more than 2 lines of copy and should begin to allude to the answer.

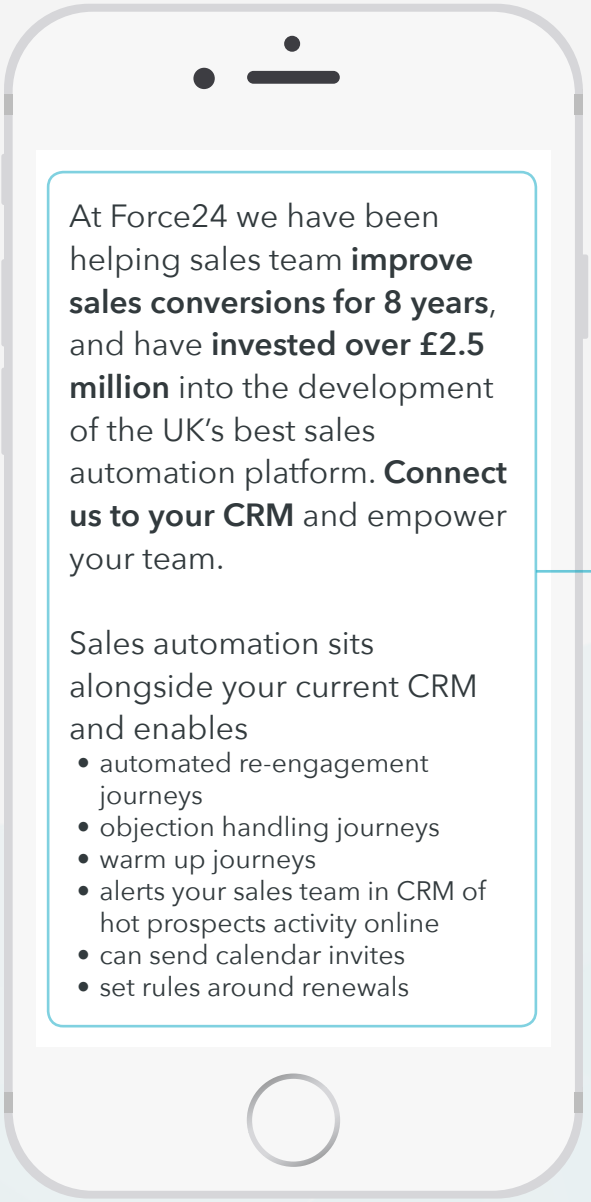




CTA – The text based CTA – This is a link to a piece of value content designed to reaffirm your opening statements. It's important to link the whole sentence rather than Click Here.

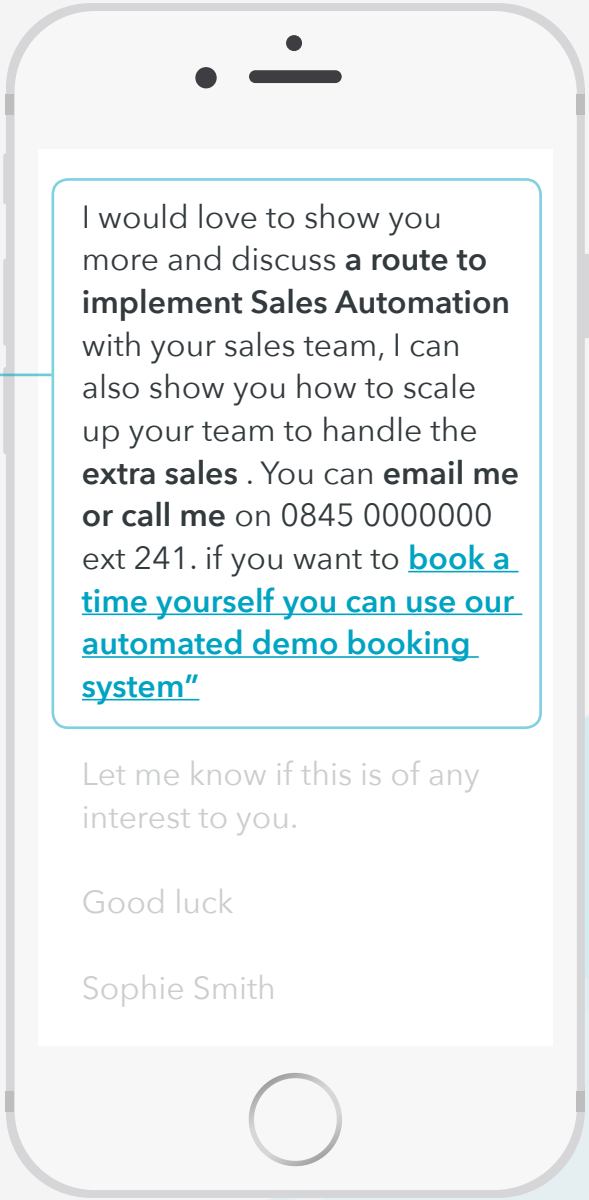
Create an anchor point for later conversations – The following paragraph should be the longest so far even verbose. The length of the paragraph generates a rebound for the less attentive reader back to the CTA, assuring the reader the click is the easiest thing. For those with a more persistent manor reading on will strengthen the argument by setting the desire (the bold words should tell a story).

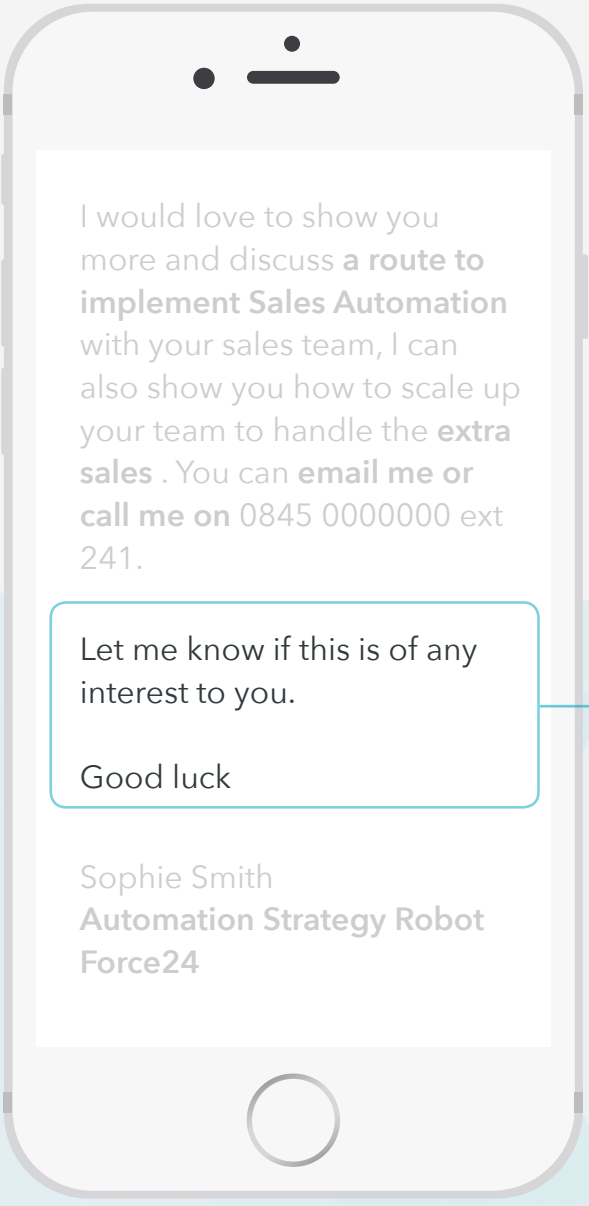




Introduction to the solution provider – A slightly snappier paragraph designed to firstly introduce your qualifications in this area.

Action Stations – A simple sign off with a strong and simple call to action, do not be afraid to project the reader forward and allow the to envisage your product/service/ offer in their business. If you can advertise a number with an ext this also helps.

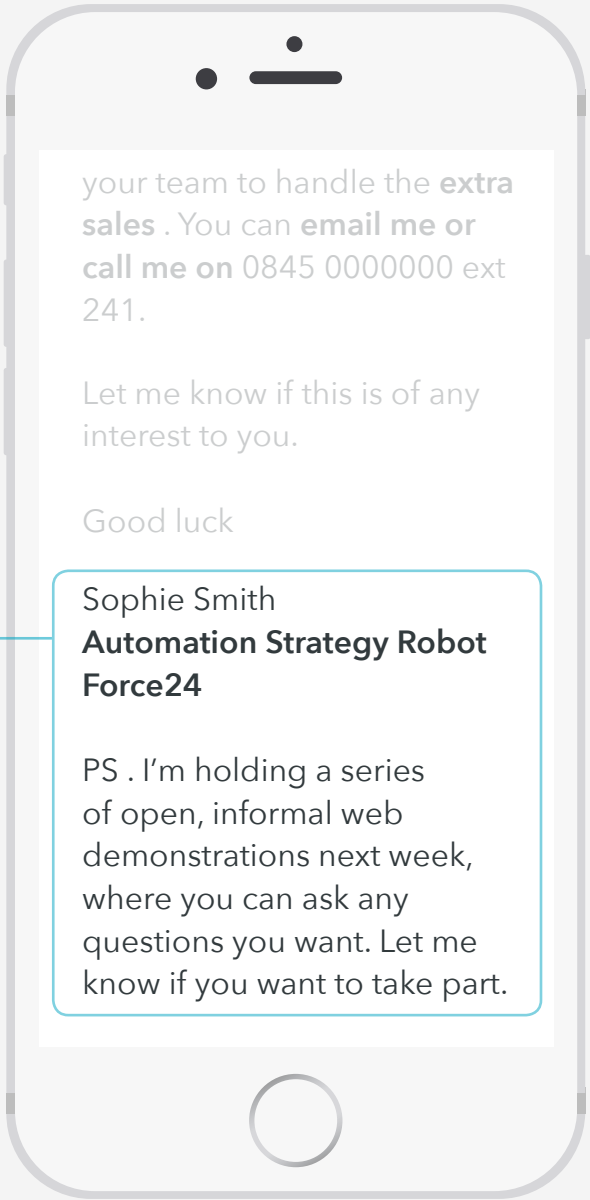


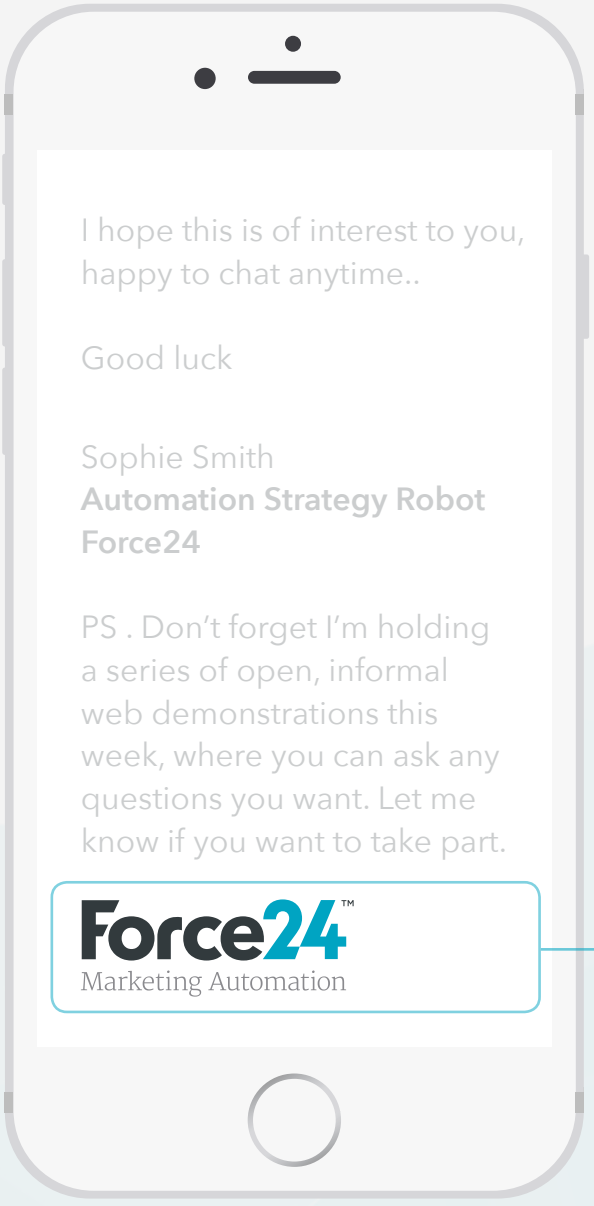


Sign off – Say goodbye and wish them well.

Signature and PS – If you don't want to use an actual name, you can create a friendly name, usually female names perform best. Also create a friendly and helpful job title to give the reader reassurance of a professional helpful response.

The use of the PS will draw the user back to the CTA's in the paragraph above.





Logo Signature – Use a logo in your signature to allow the user to quickly identify your organisation. This visual allows the user to quickly identify your brand.

DECISION

Did the user complete any of your online forms and engage with your sales team. Did the user reach a lead score equal to that of your hot lead outbound trigger?

If no, proceed to the next email



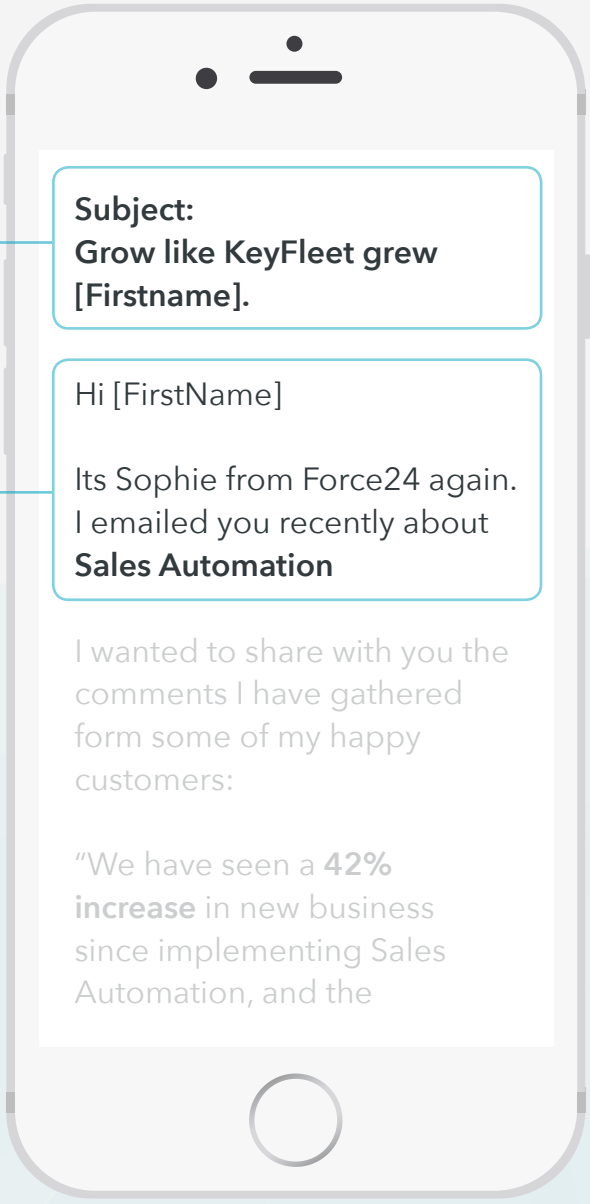
Email 2. Social Proof

TEMPLATE 2

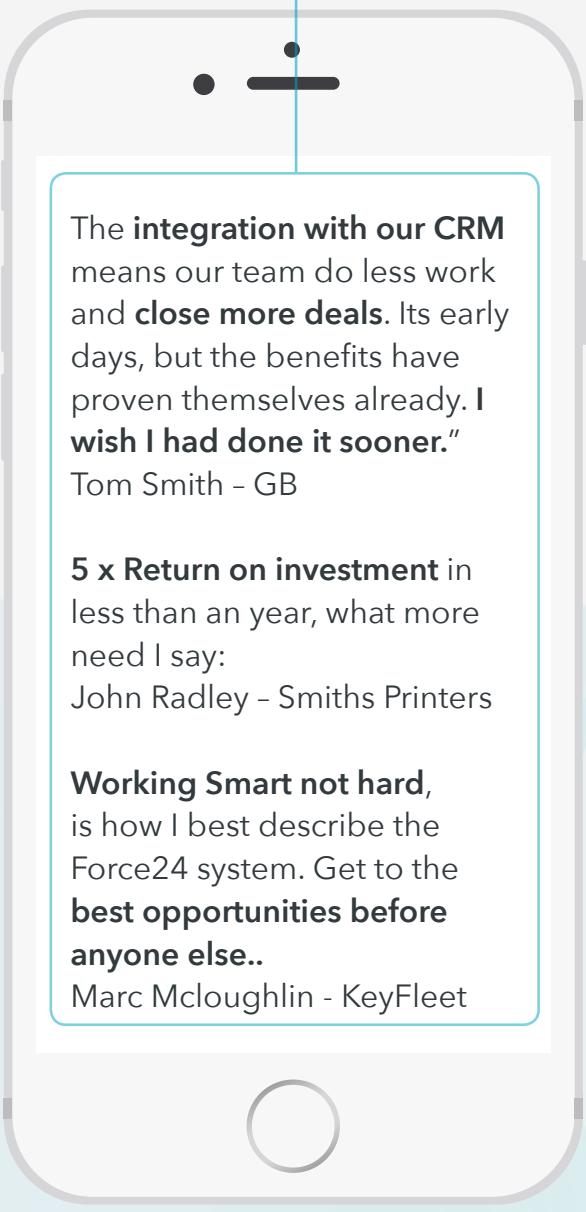
Following on from the gentle informative nature of the first email, this email should remain in the same vein, with a slightly stronger focus on action than before. We intend to introduce to the user the fact that others were where they are and have improved their position with your product, service or offer.

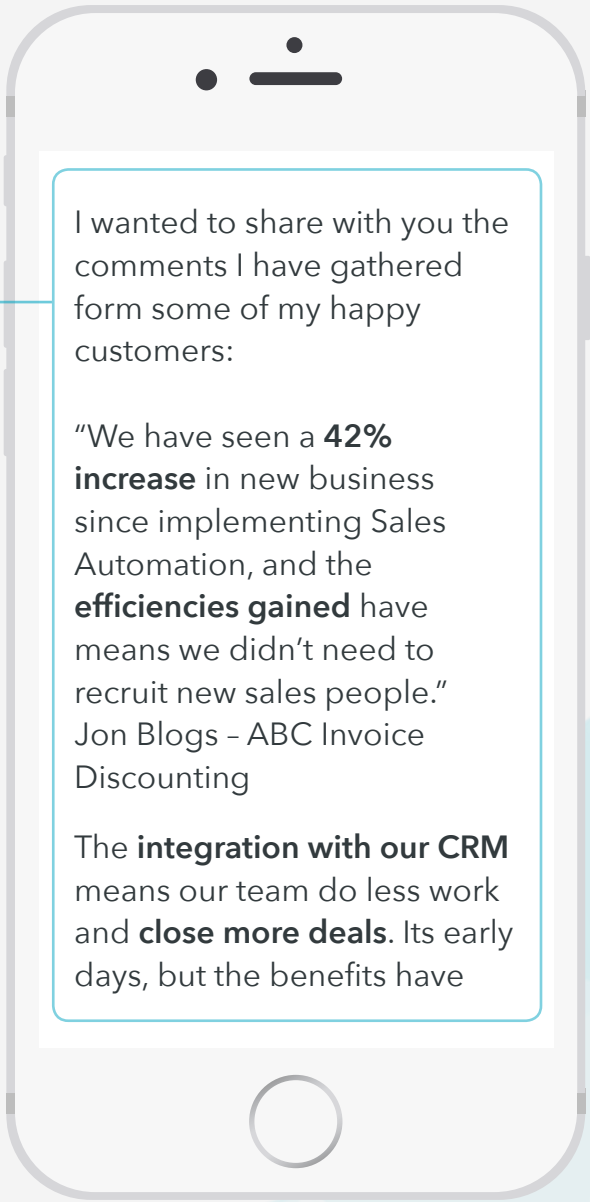
Subject – Now we can go on first name terms in the subject line, and introduce the proof. Remember future tense verbs where possible are amongst the strongest.

Re-introduce yourself – this time by name and refer to the term you used in your previous email.

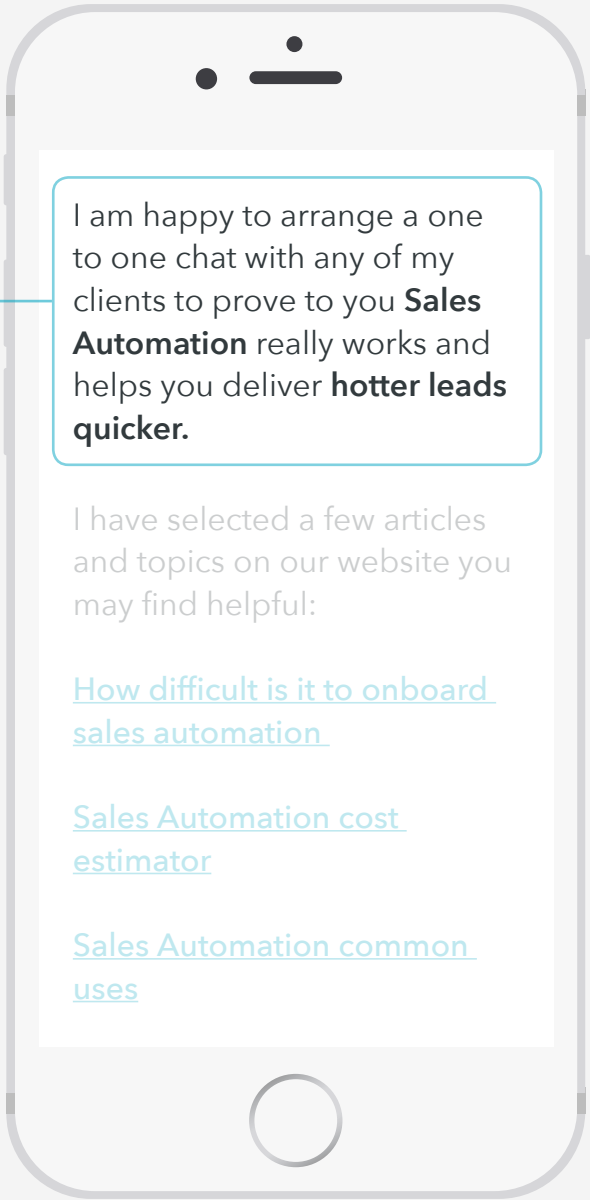


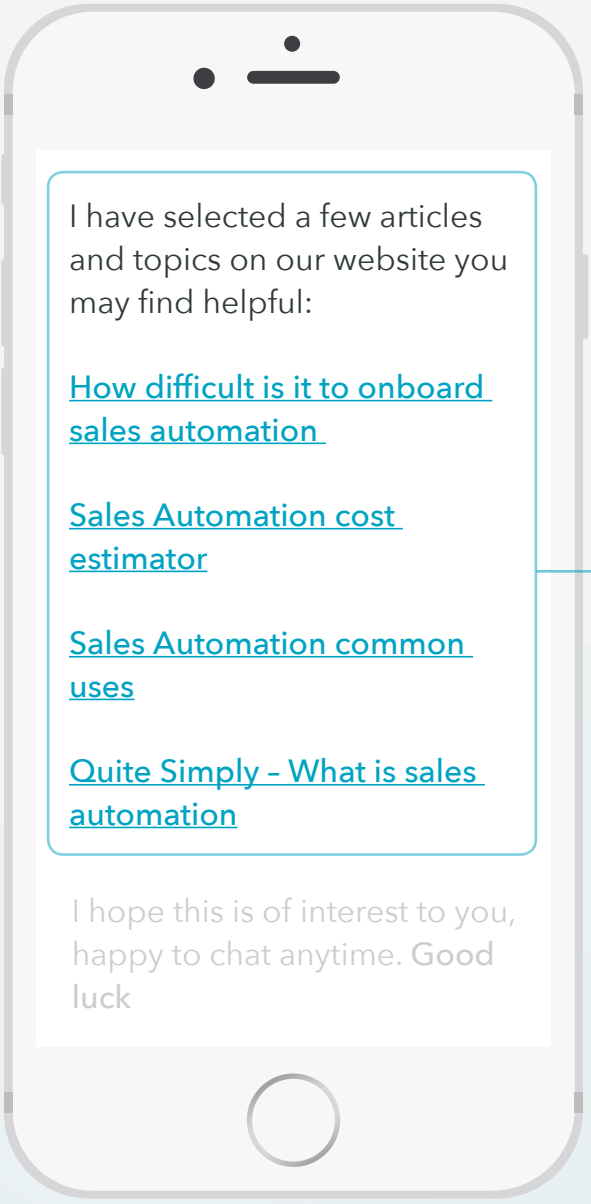
Deliver the Social Proof – Don't be afraid to use too much detail. Always reference the source.





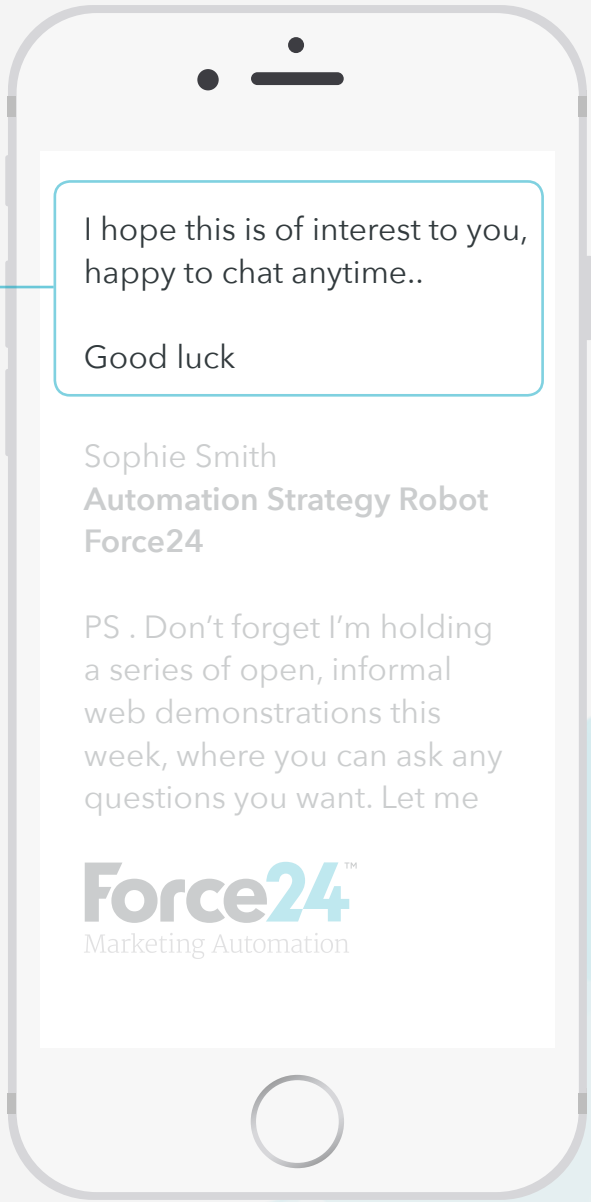
Reaffirming sub paragraph – To follow the social proof, deliver a short and concise summary as to why the reader should make the next step.

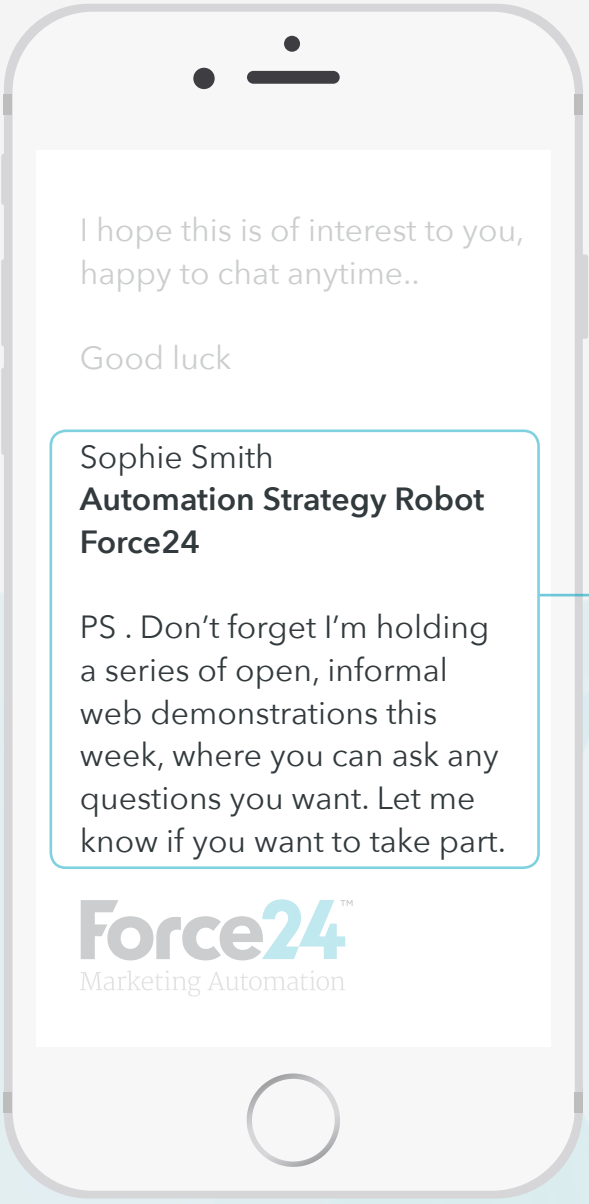




Action Stations – Push the user to act. The aim here is to drive the user to a click at this stage to take a look around the website. From where the user clicks here we can glean information as to their current position in the buying funnel. Keep this paragraph short and sweet so ensure the email maintains its momentum.

Sign off – Say goodbye and wish them





Signature and PS – Maintain the same user and Signature and push a similar point in the PS.

DECISION

Did the user complete any of your online forms and engage with your sales team. Did the user reach a lead score equal to that of your hot lead outbound trigger?

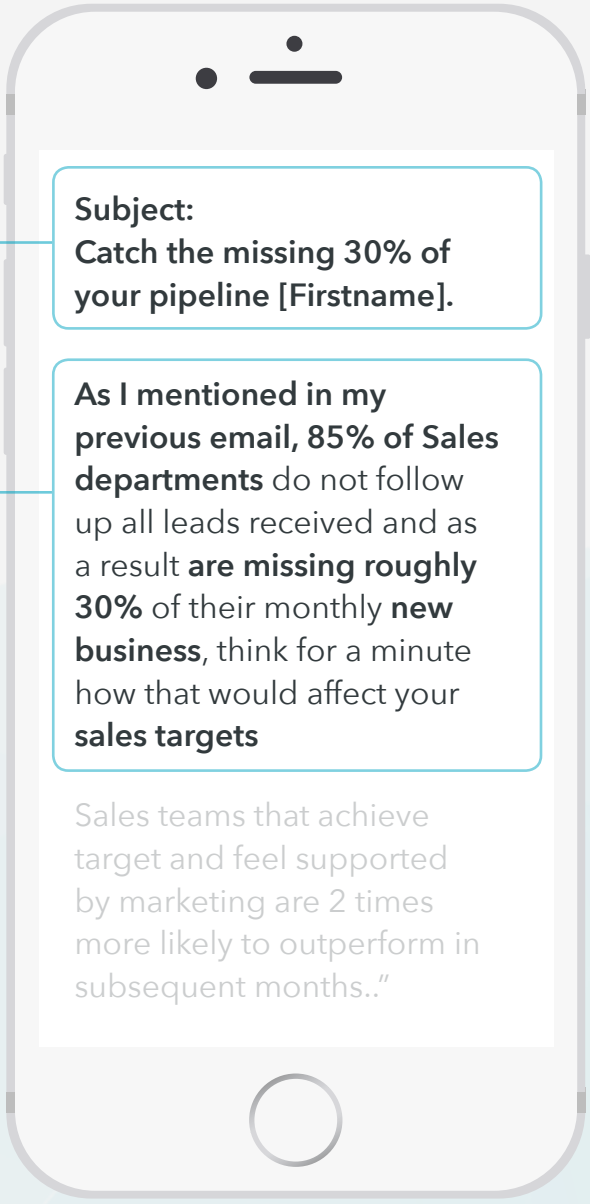
If no, proceed to the next email

Email 3.
Gain
(Help with product/service available)

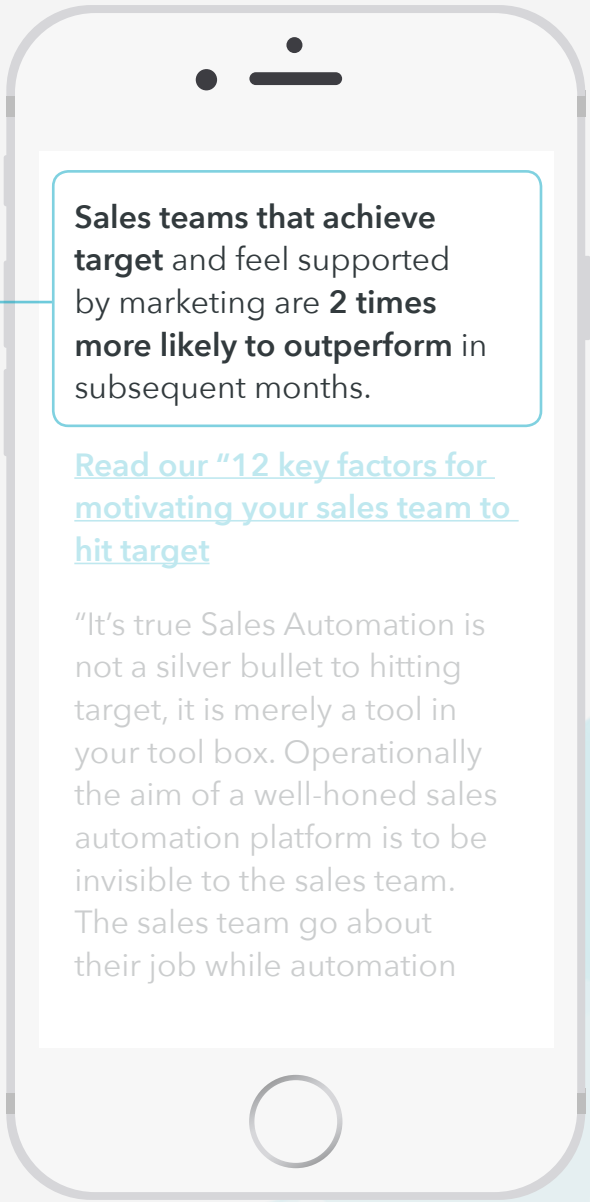
The purpose of this email is to focus on the gains they can expect by using you product, server or offer. Let's remain upbeat and project the user forward. Beginning to grow the pressure on the CTA's with a strong downloadable piece of content.

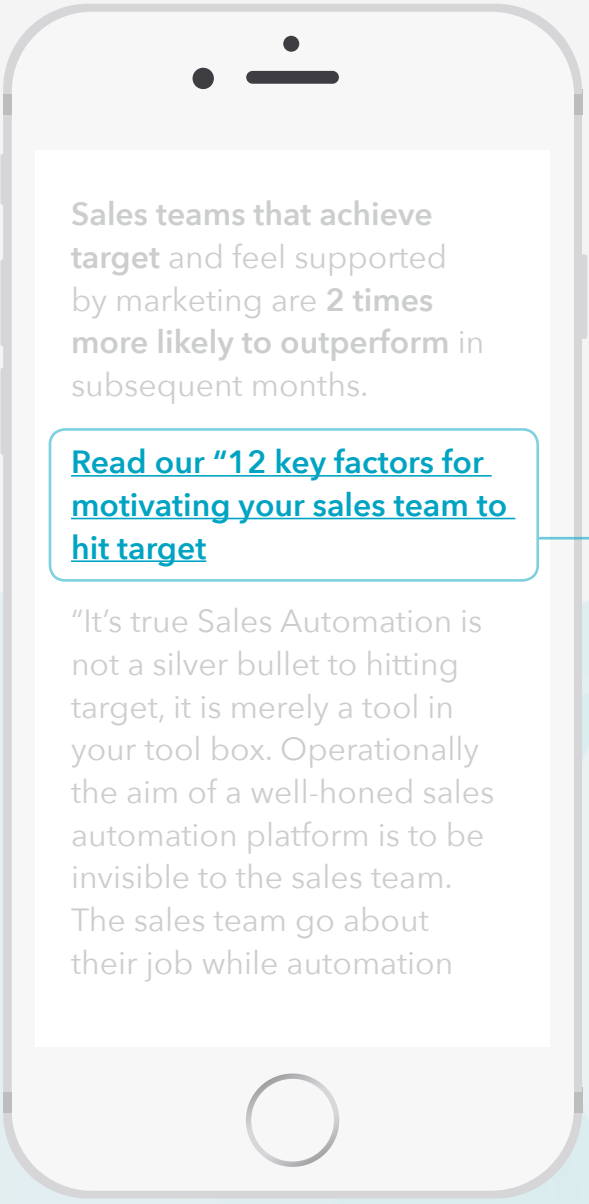
Subject – Focusing on the gain with a specific reference to the content in the email.

Intro Paragraph – Working on the assumption the majority of users at this stage have not actually consumed any of your content it's important to reiterate the essence of the product and reintroduce your principal term (Sales Automation in my example), but sticking to the theme of the email – Gain.



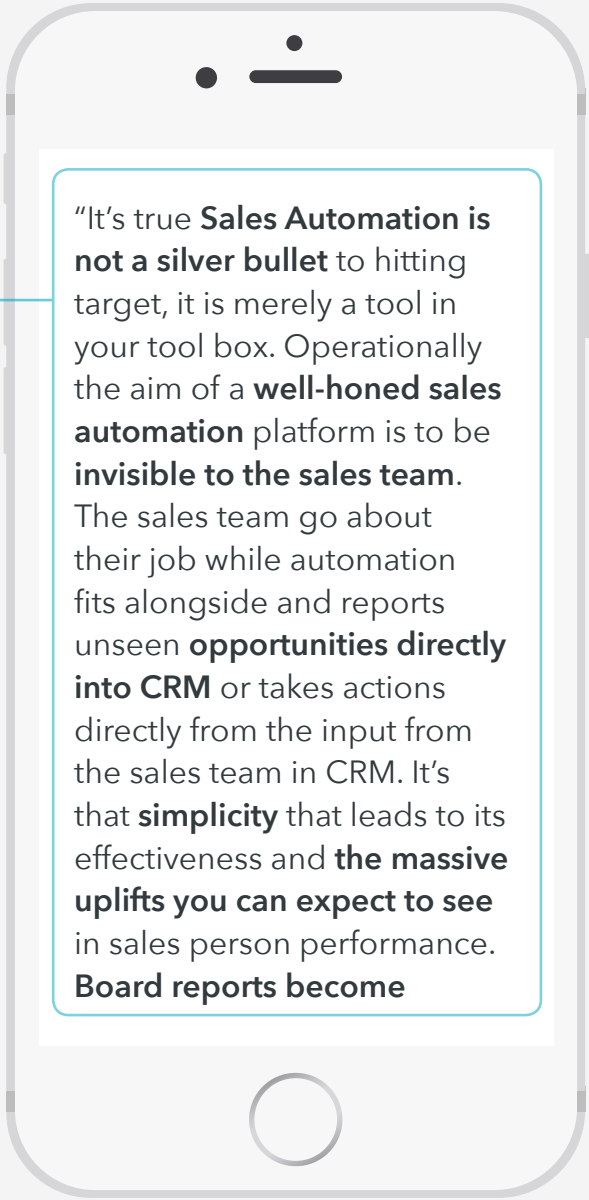
Reaffirming sub paragraph confirming interest – This next paragraph should be no more than 2 lines again and ensure you highlight the gain of your product.

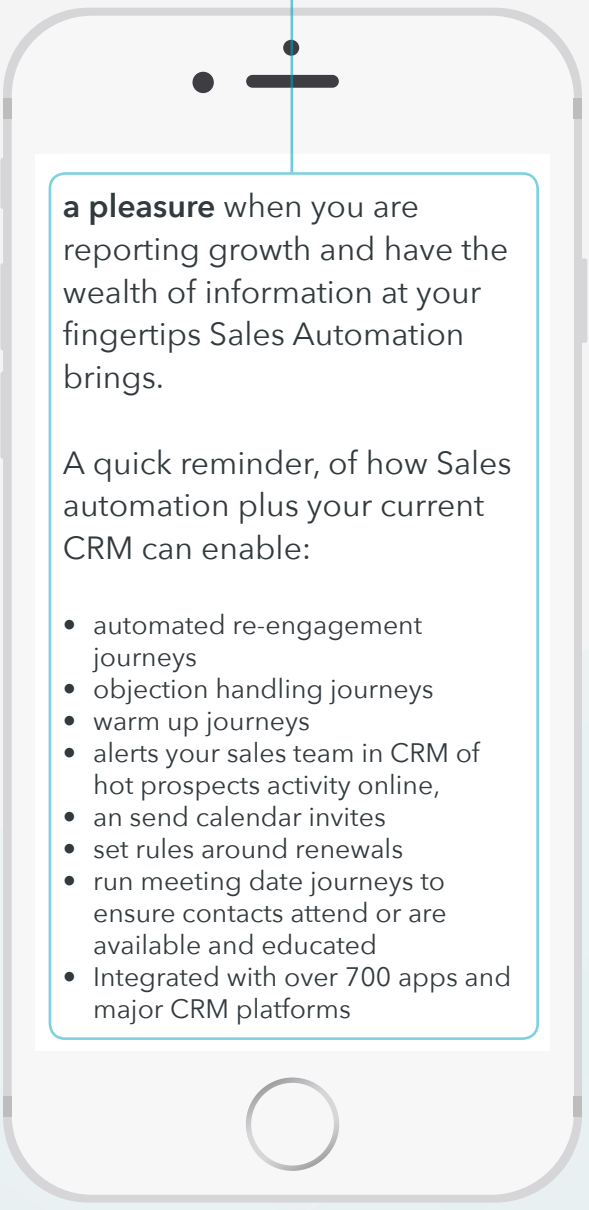




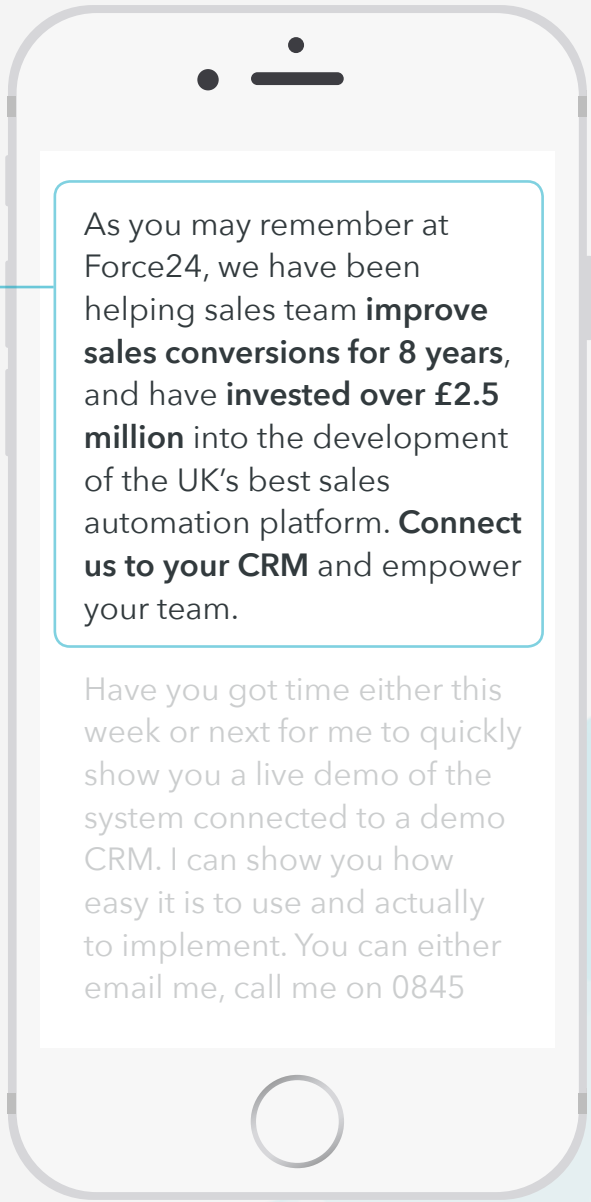
CTA – The text based CTA – As before link to collateral to support your argument. If you are directing the user to a piece of legislation or content not hosted on your website, you should always create an intro page on your own website and link to the external article from that page. This reaffirms it is your brand that is bringing the message to the user. In this instance, we would recommend you create your own content to direct the user to.

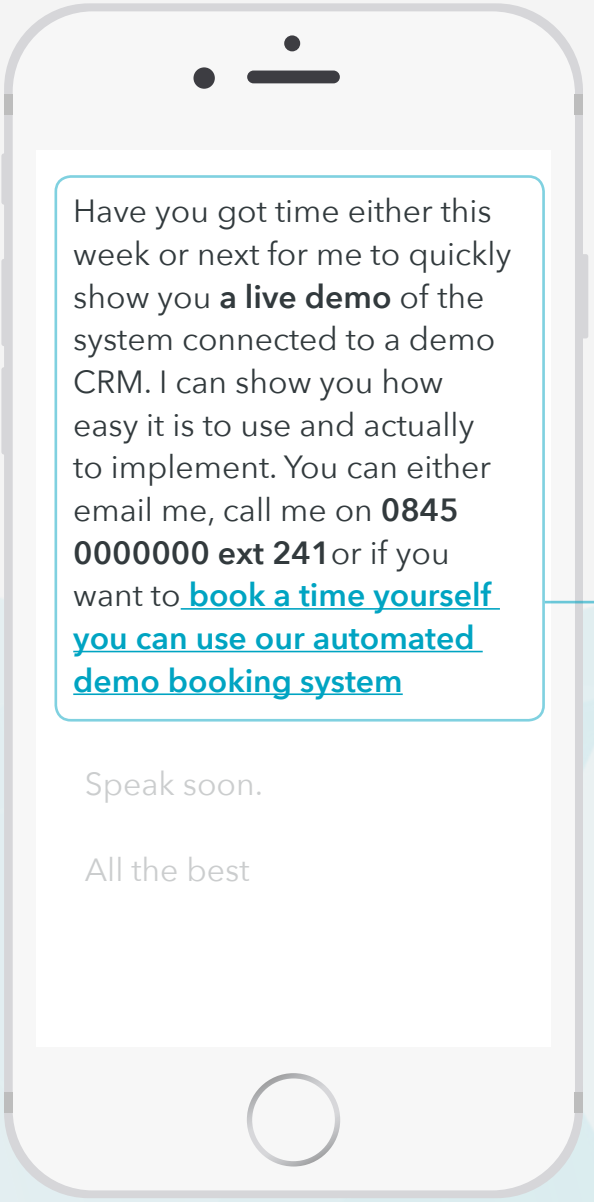
Create an anchor point for later conversations – As before in the conversation we can pad this paragraph with detail to attempt to bounce the user back to the CTA. Try to remain focused to the GAIN aspect of the email.





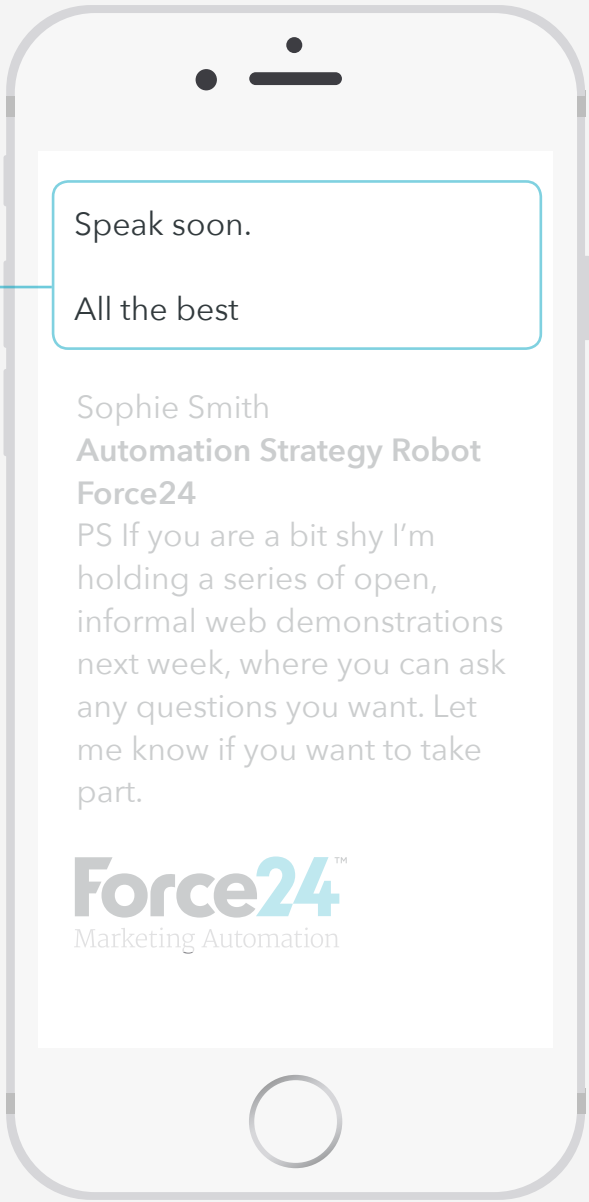
Introduction to the solution provider – Here we can quickly qualify the company.

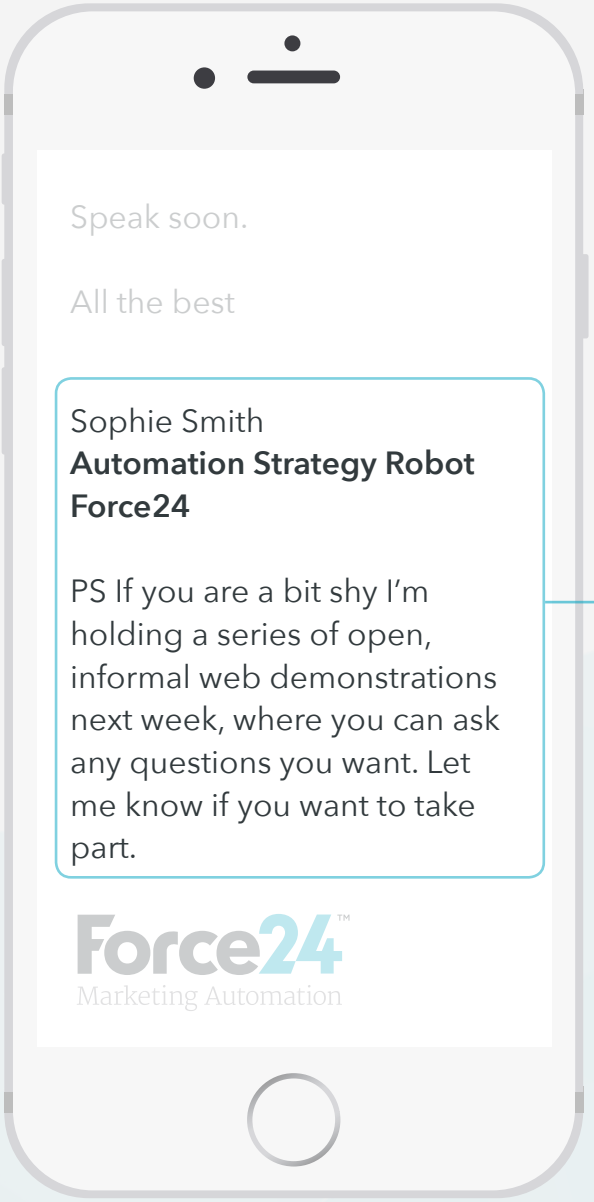




Action Stations – A simple sign off with a strong and simple call to action. In the example.

Sign off – Say goodbye and wish them well.



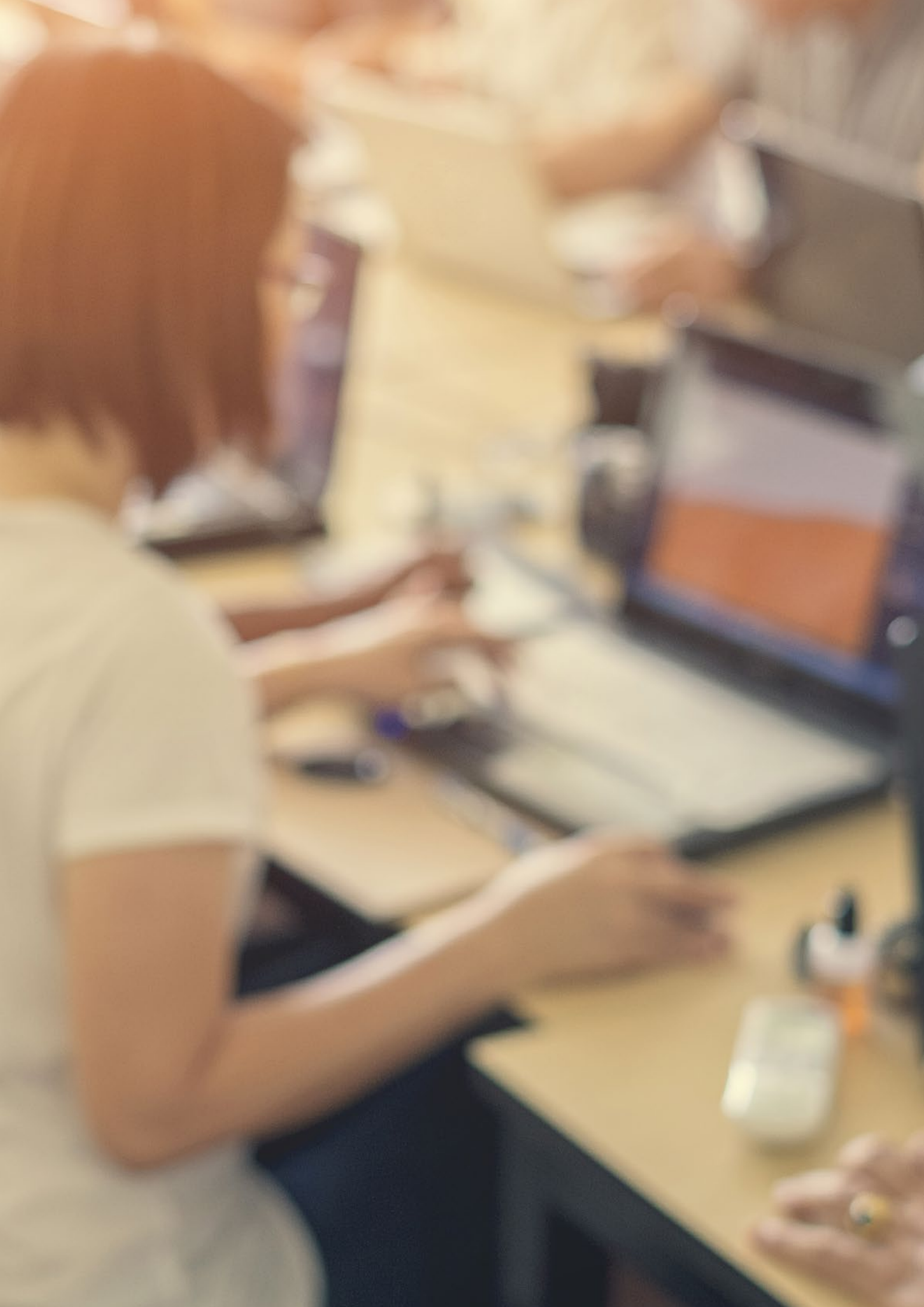


Signature and PS – The use of the PS will draw the user back to the CTA's in the paragraph above.

DECISION

Did the user complete any of your online forms and engage with your sales team. Did the user reach a lead score equal to that of your hot lead outbound trigger?

If no, proceed to the next email



Email 4.
Fear
(Consequences of NOT taking action)

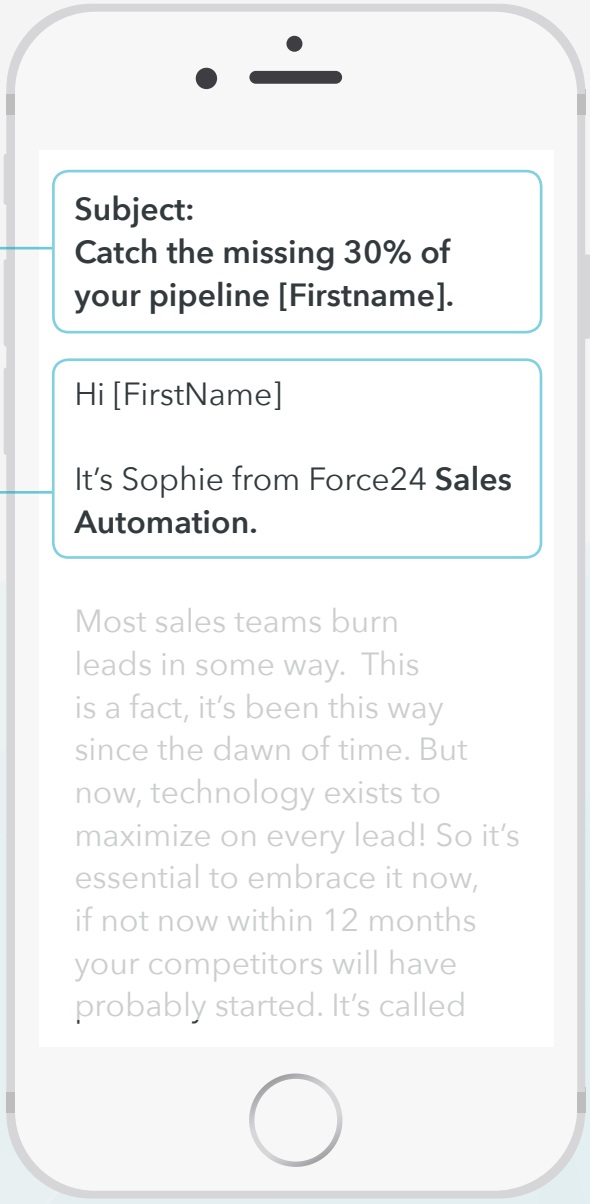
TEMPLATE 3

Intro – Problem –Scratch – Solution – Action

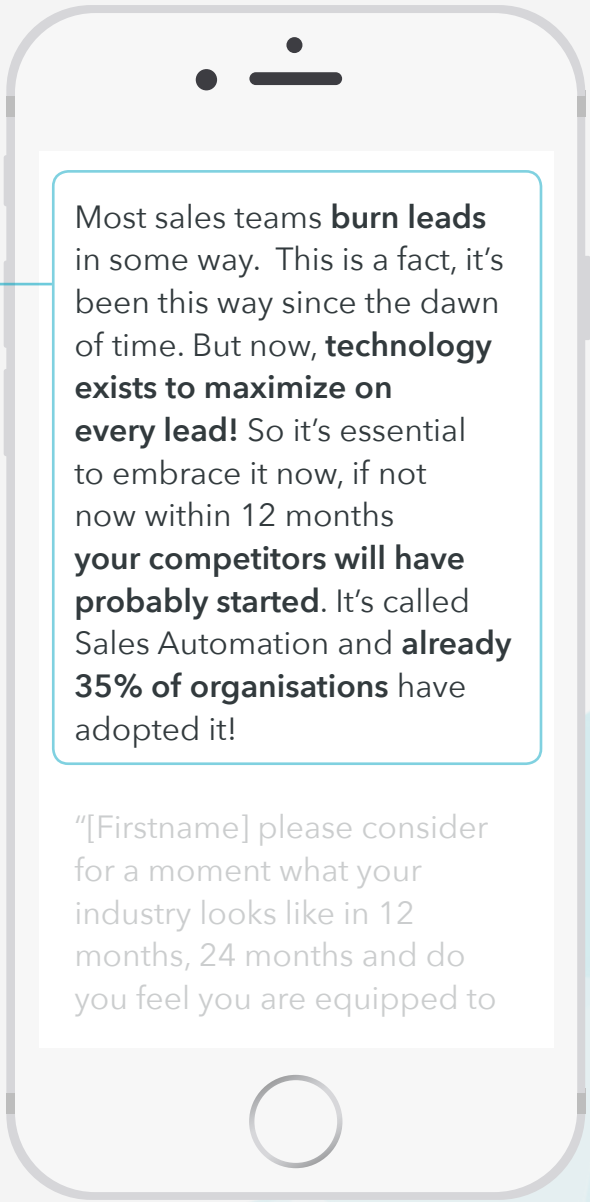
The aim of this template is to highlight to the user the issues of not addressing the problems your product or service resolves. We need to ensure we do not appear negative and remain a support to the reader. The email must remain punchy and focused on the fear.

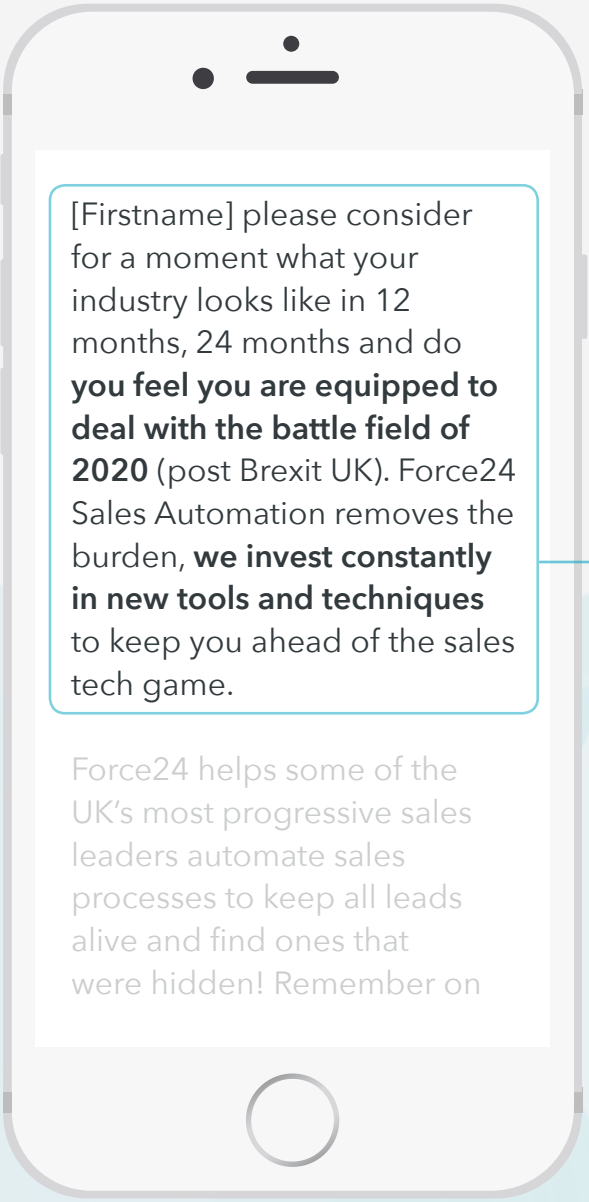
Subject – Focusing on the gain with a specific reference to the content in the email.

Re-introduce yourself – let's be direct and straight to the point. Let's remind the user of who you are and move on.



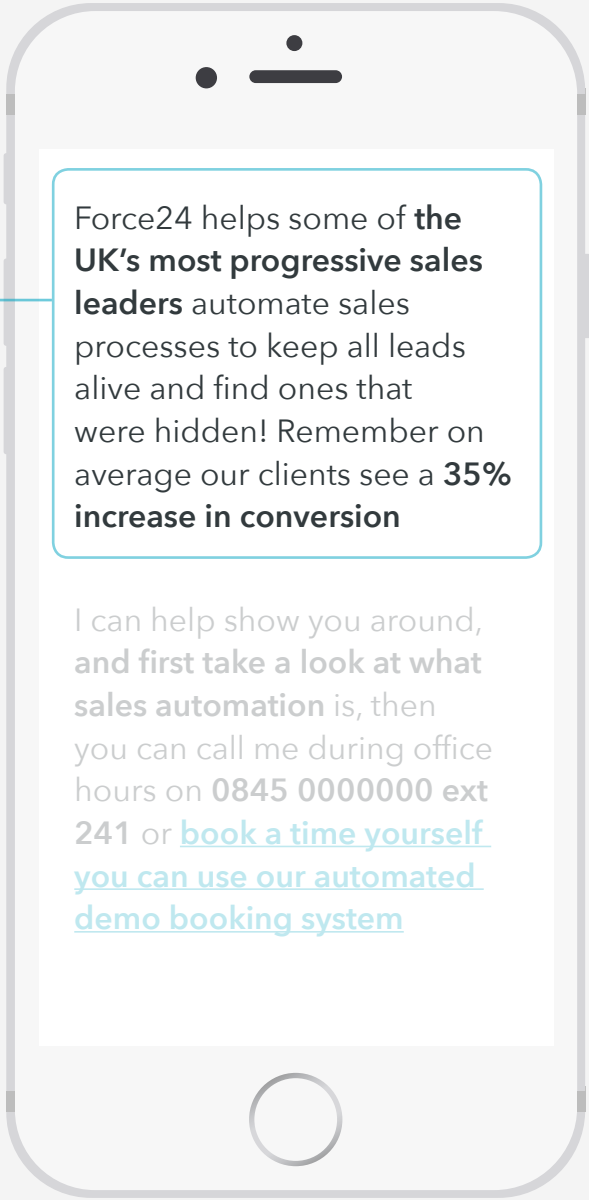
Deliver the Problem Along Side the fear – Keep within a single paragraph here and if possible only 3 lines.

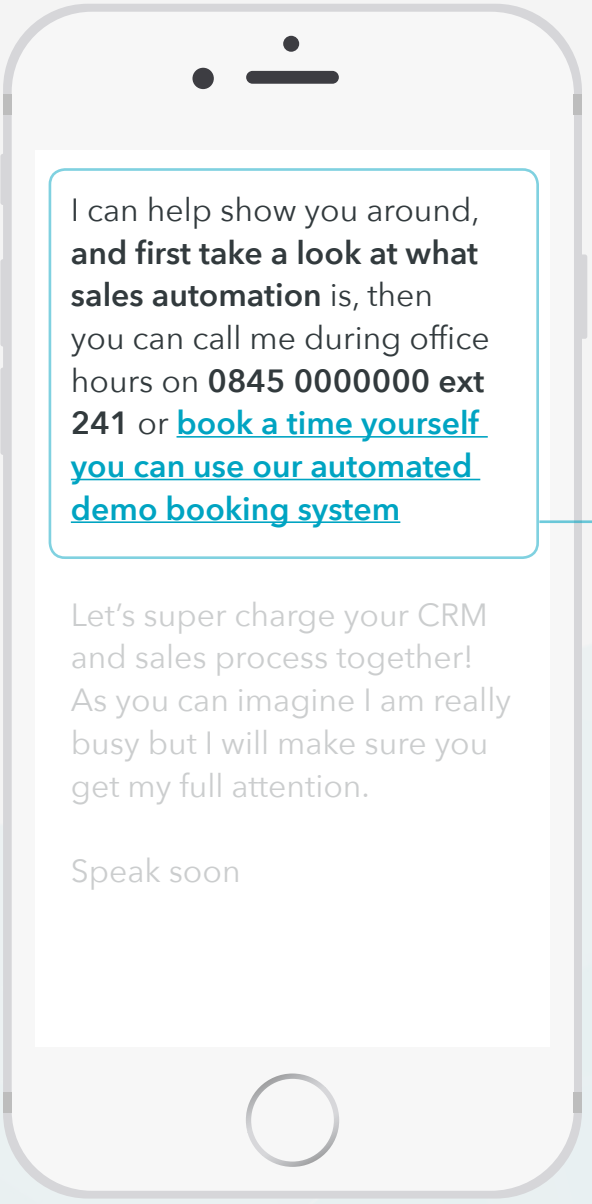




The Scratch – Now is the time to ask the user do they feel they have this covered.

Solution – The solution will include the reason why you are qualified to help, feel free to use social proof here to help affirm your position.

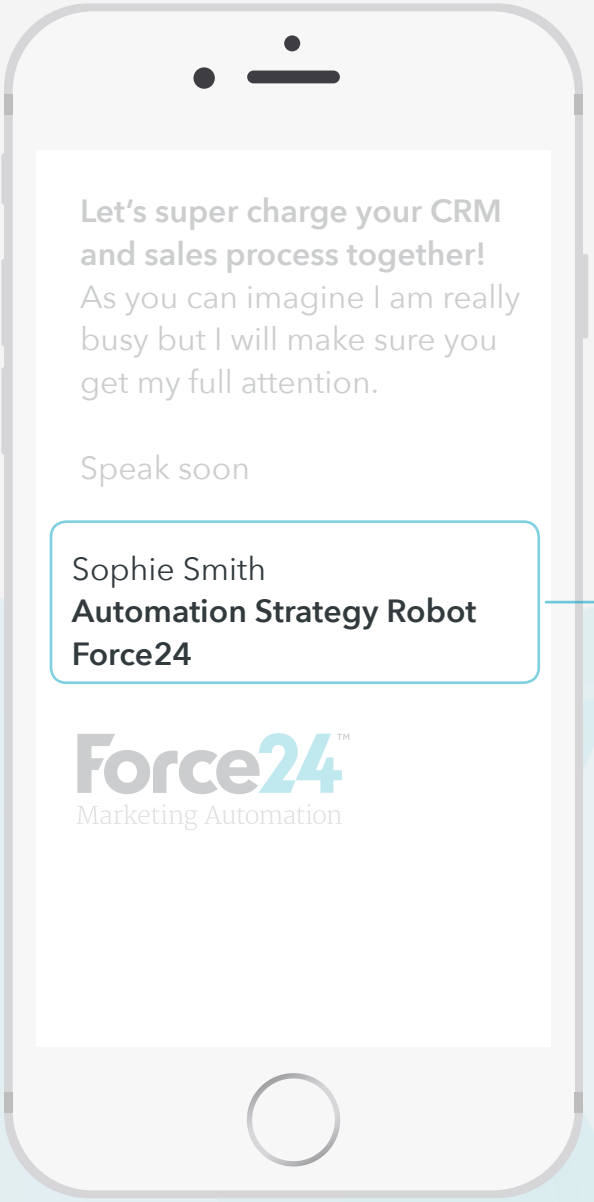




Action Stations – Push the user to act. On this instance I will give two very simple CTAs designed to support one another. This again should remain short. Please remember the context of the email being fear.

Sign off – Let's attempt to demonstrate our value and become a little less available.





Signature – Maintain the same user and Signature.

DECISION

Did the user complete any of your online forms and engage with your sales team. Did the user reach a lead score equal to that of your hot lead outbound trigger?

If no, proceed to the next email

Email 5. Logic
(product/service makes sense)

TEMPLATE 4

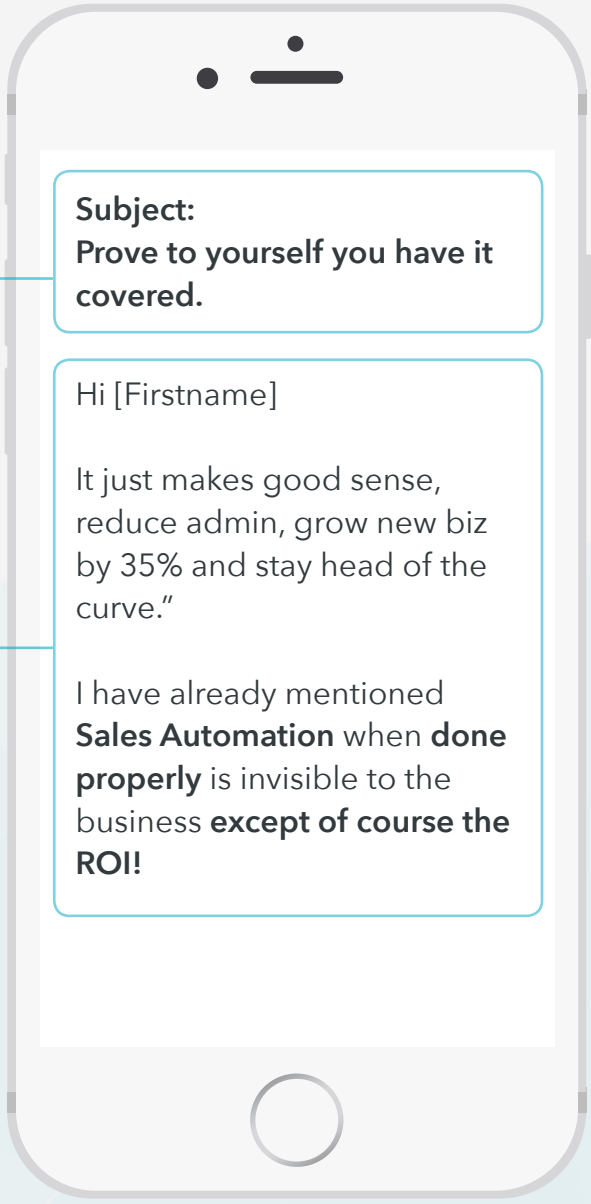
Intro – Attention – Action – Solution – Proof – Action/Sign off

The logic template is designed to present all the components in one place to deliver the perfect pitch. It is to be assumed at this point all possible active contacts will have observed at least one of your emails. But for whatever reason the recipient has not yet reached out, this final email will attempt to break this down and push the user to act. You must remain concise and straight to the point.

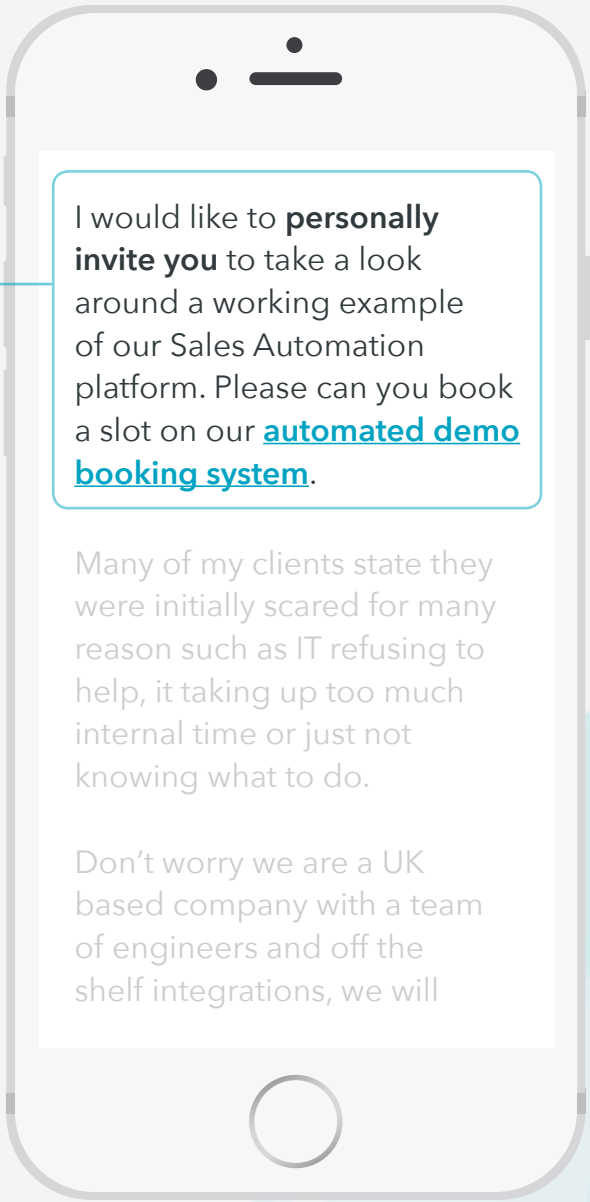
Subject – Focusing on the logic and try to drive engagement.

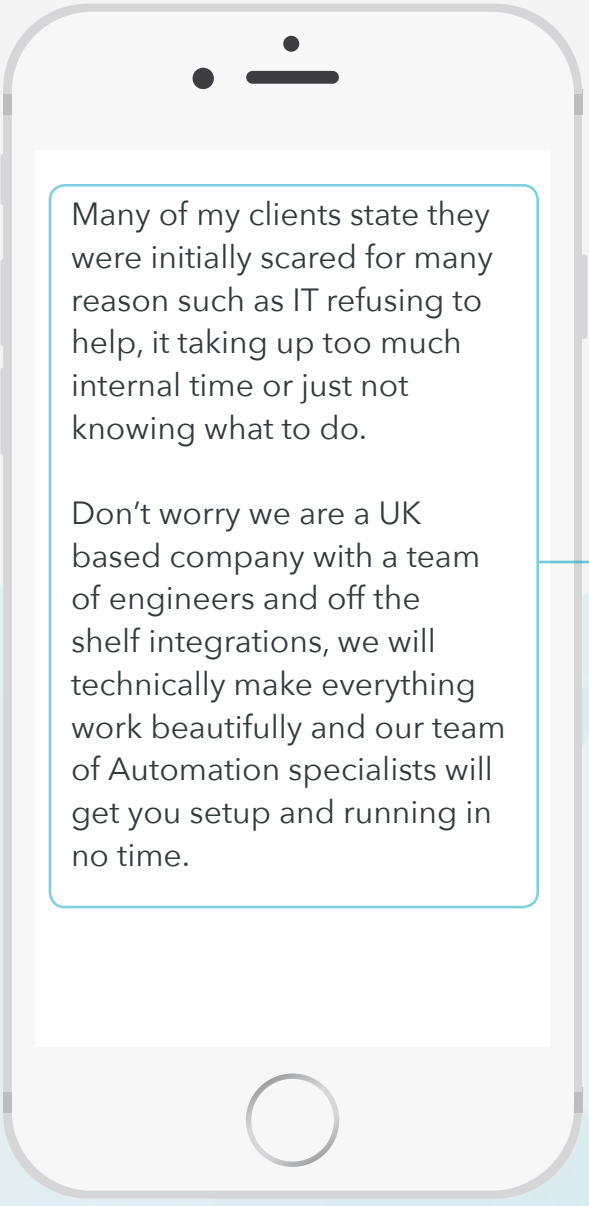
Introduction paragraph – Let's assume the reader has seen at least one of our emails and we can skip the intro. Let's get straight to the point! **When using this template earlier on in the sequence it would be important to ensure you use one of the introductions used in one of the previous templates.**

Attention Paragraph – You must keep this short and concise and distil the benefit back to the reader.



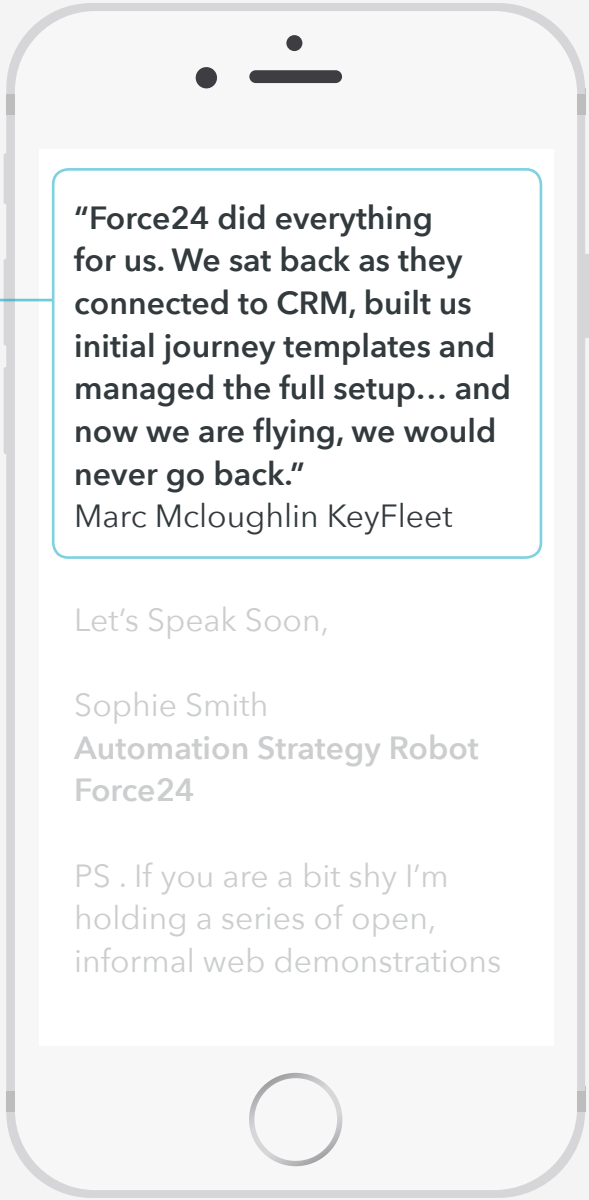
Action paragraph – Try to distil to a simple click type call to action. If the user clicks and doesn't complete we can attempt to re-target later. The CTA I would recommend at this stage is designed to push the user to the top of the sales funnel, after all clicking that CTA would mean (even if you don't complete the form) you

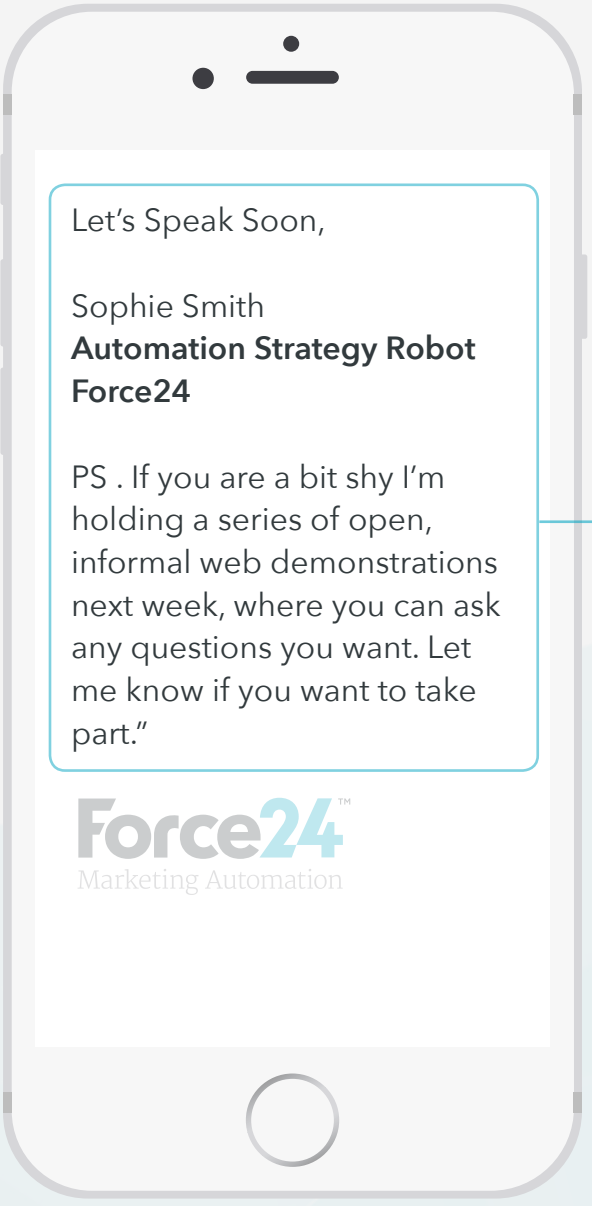




Solution – Let's reiterate a solution to the reader. I have split this into two paragraphs on this occasion to give me the ability to strengthen my solution. If you do this, it important to make sure you remain concise and strip any non-essential content.

Proof – Let's pull the proof back in and reiterate using a customers words how easy this is.





Action/Sign Off – In this template I have combined the action and the sign off into a single entity here to give the user the feeling its now down to them to act and you are expecting a response from them.



Email 6. Loss/Urgency

(Advising contacts, it's important to act now!)

TEMPLATE 6

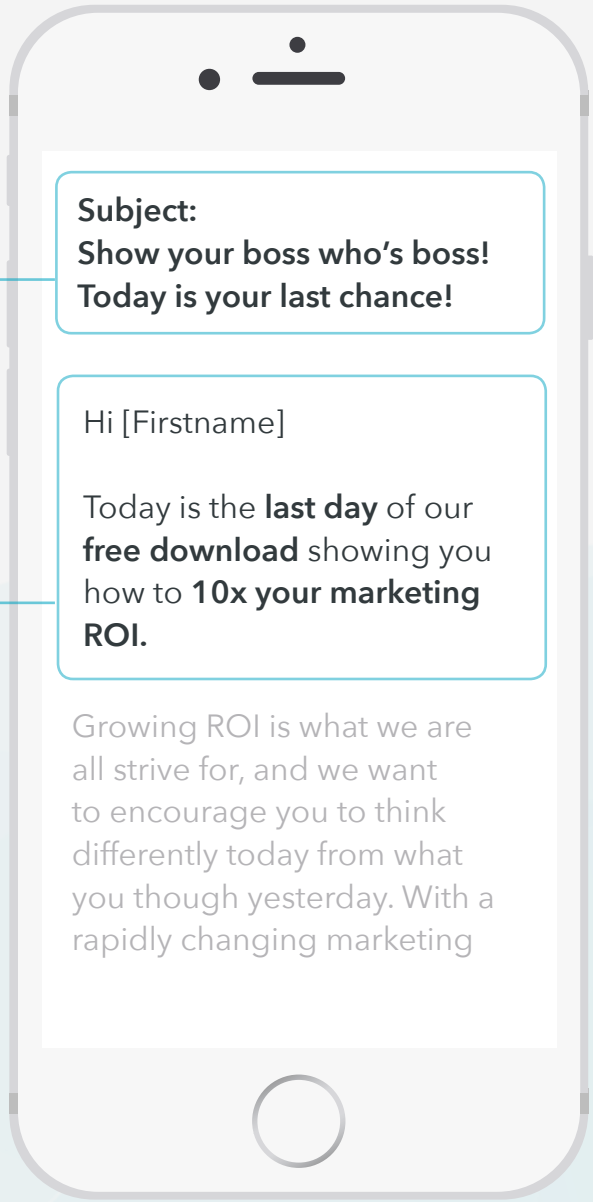
Intro – Problem – Scratch – Solution – Action

Having built a coherent argument as to your proposition in previous emails, it's now important to let the contact know there is a good reason to act now. We all think "I'll do that later" to many different offers, but then seldom actually complete. Instilling urgency can help increase ROI and act as the closing mechanism that sweeps up on all the great work from the previous emails.

Subject – Remember we need to start with a verb (and where possible a future tense) and instil the urgency in a short coherent way.

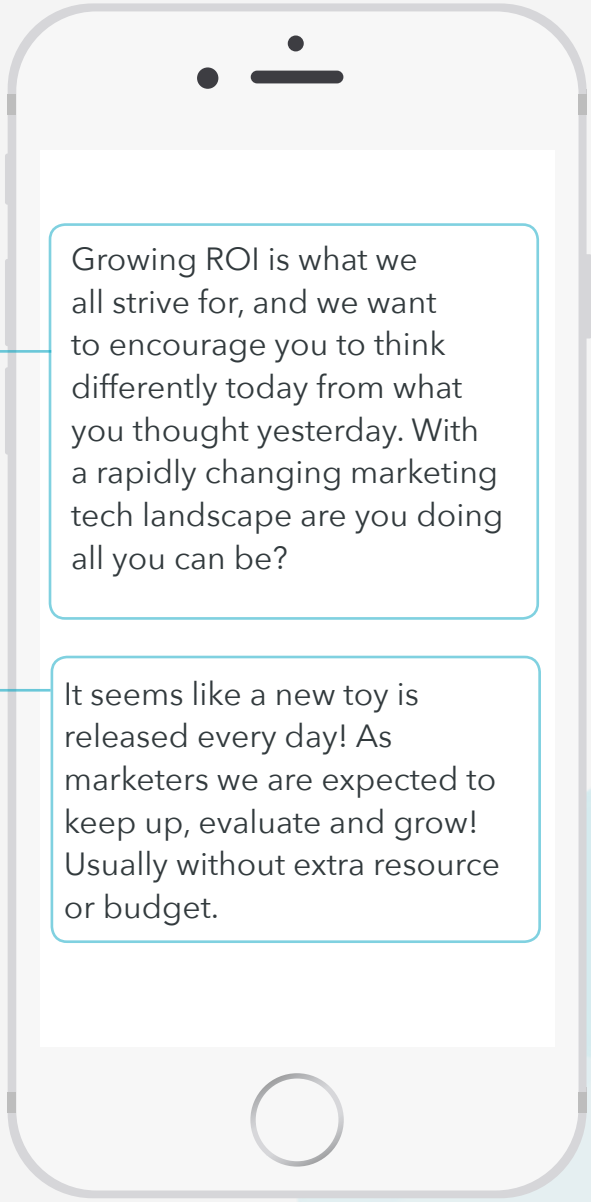
Introduction paragraph – Since we are instilling a sense of urgency and a potential of loss we must be direct and straight to the point.

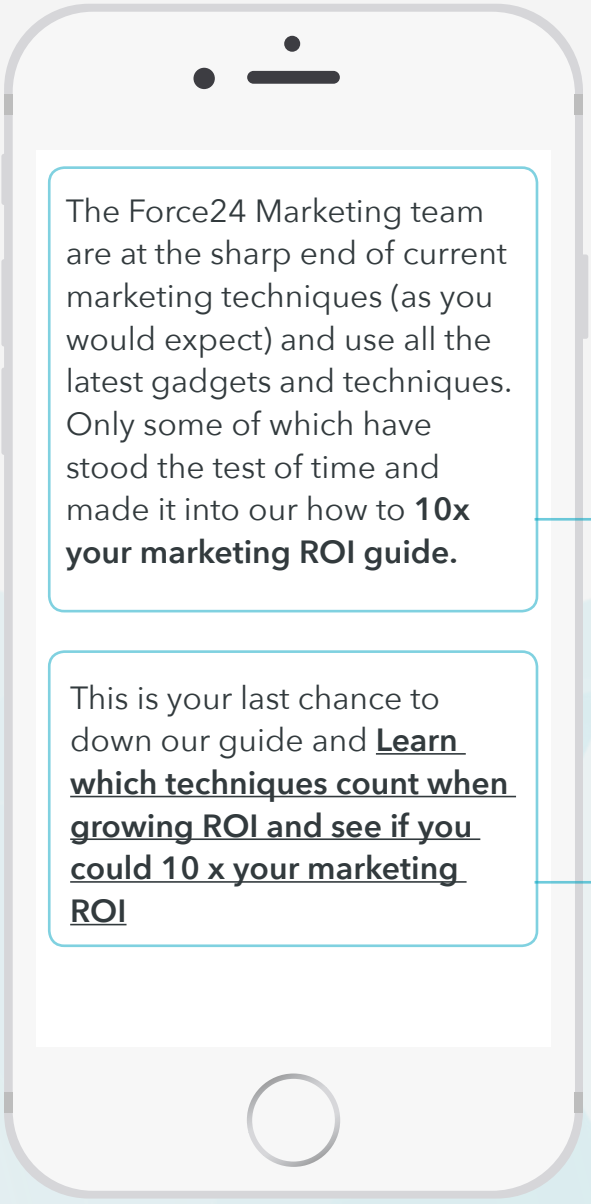
We must talk about the loss rather than the product or service and explain why today is the last day (for example), this allows the contacts to focus on the single emotion of loss rather than logically thinking if they want the product or service (let's let the landing page do the job of selling).



Deliver the problem alongside the loss. Again, keeping the message simple and straight to the point. Remember to read it many times and remove all unnecessary words.

The scratch – deliver the scratch to ensure the contacts can relate to their specific position. Do they have this covered and can they live without consuming your content.





The Solution – Let's deliver our solution to the problem, remember we can use social proof and other evidence to back up our authority at this stage.

Action – Let's now invite our contacts to act, let's keep it simple and concise. Let's remember the concept of loss and remember to reaffirm that here.

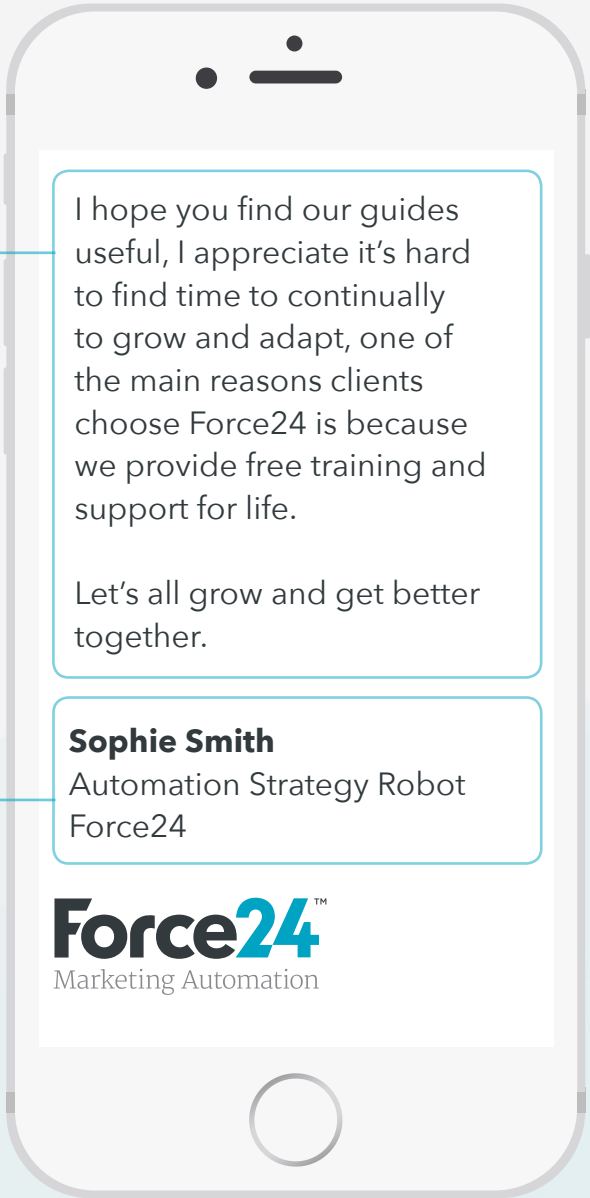
Email 6. Loss/Urgency

(Advising contacts, it's important to act now!)

Continued...

Sign off – Don't forget to build value and demonstrate your wiliness to help. Our aim here is to bounce the reader back to the CTA above. This is done by allowing a slightly longer paragraph which may force the user to scan back up to the CTA.

Signature – Let's keep consistent as usual with this.







GENERAL HINTS

Create a term that your readers can research, in the examples below I have used Sales Automation (rather than Marketing Automation)

Squint test, when appraising any artwork, sit back and squint and see if you can get the essence of the message. If you can – you are on target. If you can't – ***rethink***

Avoid words like "Click Here" and "Read more" in your personal plain text emails, these are fine in branded emails but stay personal.

Within the nurture sequence below, its important to also intersperse branded HTML comms within the stages. The user should be as educated as possible to the terms

It takes on average 6 emails to expose your maximum contactable base. So don't be afraid of repeating yourself, the likelihood of a reader reading all 6 emails is extremely low.

Ensure your data has contact first name!!!

I have suggested the use of two templates, Template 1 and Template 2. This allows you to write many emails while still maintaining a keen eye on improvement and refinement.

Ensure you have control over microsite and landing page development so your journey is not disconnected when the user arrives at your website.

Do not use jargon or acronyms, you may think everyone knows what a CTR is but for those that don't you can quickly alienate.

Don't try to cram too much into each email, remember we need to keep focused on the email topic.

GENERAL HINTS CONTINUED

Use Automation to ensure you can re-target the user, my primary calls to action are often "clicks" rather than calls or email, this is because if I can see a small amount of intent I will use automation to re-engage around the subject of the intent.

Auto Segment your data as the nurture sequence progresses. I would do this based on the types of links clicked. For example, in my example nurture sequence I use links to case studies, "top tips" downloads and online demo booking. I can categorise contacts clicking case studies or top tips downloads as **passive engagers**, whereas users clicking CTA's such as online demo booking I can classify as **active engagers**. It's the active engagers I will push directly to my sales team, where passive engagers we will continue to nurture (perhaps around their topic of engagement).

P.S TIPS

Using a P.S on an email is a great way to draw the reader back to the content.

Readers often scan read content and we are naturally drawn to the P.S, as it stands out at the bottom of the email separated from the main content by the signature.

The P.S function should be a last min attention grabbing line. Such a "Don't forget, today is your last day to….."

About Force24

Force24 is a world-class, UK-built, cloud-based marketing automation solution used by enterprise clients and niche SMEs alike. Trusted by leading brands such as WorldPay, Aviva & npower, the intuitive platform empowers marketers to generate faster, more efficient & meaningful conversations with customers & prospects. The result? Increased conversions, revenue & campaign ROI.

In fact, thanks to 8 million data triggers & the expertise of Force24's in-house marketing pros, the platform helps generate £50m revenue for clients each month!

What's more, the Force24 team isn't just made up of tech gurus and marketing pros. We even have our own in-house GDPR expert to ease every concern and ensure clients are fully regulation-ready!

Get in touch

For further information please visit **www.force24.co.uk** or call **0845 272 5990**. Alternatively, to drop us a line or sign up for our upcoming webinars, email **info@force24.co.uk**

Force24™
Marketing Automation

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