



Email Archery

How to write emails your people actually want to open.
No funnels. No pressure. No pretending to be someone else.

JOEY RAGONA STRATEGIC BUSINESS ACADEMY

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How AI was used in this book. Every word in here is mine. I taught Email Archery live in 2017. That left 52,600 words of transcript. I had AI cut it down so you can read it in one sitting. It didn't write any of it. It took out the repeats, the tangents and the throat-clearing, and left what I said. Nothing was added. It's just shorter.



Joey Ragona

Founder, Strategic Business Academy

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FREE — PLEASE PASS IT ON

BEFORE YOU START

You already have a list. This is what to do with it.

It might be ten people. It might be ten thousand. The size doesn't matter as much as you think.

I've run a list of under two thousand people since I started online in 2012. It has served me well in building six figures over and over. There are people with hundreds of thousands of names who make less.

This book isn't about building a list. It isn't about funnels or ads or landing pages. It's about the emails you send once people are there, and why most of them get ignored.

Even if you had a hundred thousand people on your email list, you don't treat them the same way. That's why I called it archery.

The one idea underneath all of it

You're selling the click.

Not the product. Not the service. Not the coaching. The click.

This is where most people go wrong. They try to close the whole sale inside the email. They stuff in every feature, every benefit, every reason to buy. Then they wonder why nobody moves.

The email has one job. Get the person to the next place. That's it.

The WORC formula

Four things have to happen, in order. Miss one and the rest stop mattering.

W

Write it

So it sounds like you and not like a marketer.

O

Open it

Land in the inbox. Earn the open.

R

Read it

Get read all the way to the bottom.

C

Click it

Ask for the click and get it.

And then there's a fifth part, the one the name of this book promised.

WORC makes one email work. **Aiming** decides who each one is for.

That's the last (bonus) part, and it's the reason any of this pays.

Who this isn't for

If you're here for a magic bullet for making sales, this won't work for you.

If you don't care about the people on your list, they'll feel it. You can't fake caring at scale. It leaks into every line you write.

And if you're selling something you haven't done, used and don't believe in, no email tip will save it. Fix the thing first.

W

PART ONE

Write it

Before anything else works, the writing has to sound like a person. Here's the mindset, then the mechanics.

1 . 1

Care about the person, not the sale

If you don't care about your customers, you're just trying to make money. People feel that. It comes through the screen.

I'm not a money-first person. Everyone on my list knows it. So when I do ask for money, nobody feels weird about it.

You're selling a change in someone's life. Not a widget. Keep that straight and the writing gets easier.

1 . 2

Be who you're, and say so early

A lot of people put on a face. They copy a marketer they admire and write in a voice that isn't theirs. Readers see straight through it.

Here is the opening of my own welcome email:

Before we go any further

I'm not a typical internet marketing guru.

I'm not an expert in social media ads that work at the push of a button. And I'm not a million dollar launch day guy either.

I failed almost every subject in high school. I can't do simple math in my head.

The one thing I do consider myself good at is this. Helping business owners get a clear message and clear steps so people actually buy.

Notice what this does. Anyone looking for a fast fix opts out on day one. That's the point.

Say what you stand for. Say what you stand against. My list knows I don't believe in the grind. I'm all about making things as simple as possible. They know I'm not about bling. Anyone who is doesn't stay long, and that's fine.

My first three emails are built to push people out. On purpose. I would rather lose someone in week one than get a spam complaint in month six.

There's yes Joey or no Joey. There's no middle ground. I'm not trying to be everything to everybody.

1 . 3

Know what you're actually selling

You're selling two things.

A change. Not the thing itself. You're selling the move from where someone is now to somewhere better, and the feeling waiting for them there.

A fire extinguisher. There's already a fire going in your reader's life. Your job is to walk into the conversation that's already happening in their head, not the one you wish they were having.

It's easy to sell a life preserver to somebody who's in the water, drowning. You don't have to do anything.

Here's where most of us go wrong. We know what the person *needs*. So we sell the need. But people buy the *want*.

Prevention is hard to sell. The fire happening right now is easy. Meet them at the fire, then take them where they need to go.

So your job is to describe their situation better than they can describe it themselves. When you do that, there's no convincing left to do. They already trust you.

THE DOCTOR TEST

You say you have a pain in your side. The doctor says, "Does it feel like a knife going in, and when you lie down does it shoot down to your knee?"

You say, "Yes. That's it."

Now you believe everything else that doctor tells you. Because he went further to describe the pain in your side. That's what good writing does.

The three jobs an email can do

Every email you send is doing one of three jobs. Know which one before you write a word.

Transactional

Receipts, order confirmations, password resets, unsubscribe confirmations. Mostly set up once and left alone.

Promotional

A sale, a new offer, a webinar, a trial, a launch. You're asking for something.

Relational

Welcomes, deliveries, stories, surveys, announcements. Building the relationship. This is where most of your writing lives.

1 . 5

The three ways an email gets sent

Live campaign

Written as you go, during a launch or promotion. You can adjust based on what happens.

Sequence

Your autoresponder. Triggered by an event, usually an opt in or a purchase. Could be three emails. Could be fifty.

Broadcast

The one almost everybody wastes. Most people only use broadcast to blast the whole list about a sale.

Broadcast is where the real work happens. I usually send 2-3 a week, and none of them go to the whole list at once. They're split by what people have told me they care about.

Is that more work? Yes. It's also the difference between talking at a room and talking to a person.

1.6

Soft teaching beats hard teaching

This is the mistake I see most. Someone writes an email that teaches the whole thing. Every step. Every detail.

Two things go wrong. The reader is buried, or the reader is finished. You handed them the whole meal. Why would they buy dinner?

Soft teaching is different. You give the shape of the thing. A few top level points. An example. A story. Enough to make them hungry.

HARD TEACHING

Here are the eleven steps to write a subject line, starting with audience research, then a headline swipe file, then...

SOFT TEACHING

The WORC formula has four parts. Write it. Open it. Read it. Click it. Most people only ever work on one of them.

The second one tells you what. It doesn't tell you how or why. That gap is the reason to click.

And use ten words, not a hundred. If you're a doctor or a PhD or a specialist of any kind, this matters more, not less.

Your readers aren't stupid. They're busy. Every big word costs them a second of processing while they're standing in a coffee line. Give them that second back.

1 . 7

Write like you talk

People tell me they aren't good writers. I'm not a copywriter either. I just write the way I speak.

The test is simple. How would you tell this to one good friend sitting across from you? Write that down. That's the email.

Because that's how it gets read. Nobody gathers a group to read your email together. One person, alone, on a phone. Write to that one person every time.

You don't have to be a good writer. You're naturally a storyteller. If you got into a car accident, you'd be able to tell that story.

Two checks before you send.

The "so what" check. At the end of a paragraph, pretend the reader asks "so what?" If you have no good answer, that paragraph needs rewriting.

The "is it about them" check. Read the whole thing back. If it's all about you, spin it. "This reminds me why I built this." "Here's what that means for you." If it stays about you, they stop caring.

1 . 8

Open loops

An open loop is a question your reader's brain wants closed. Start one, and they keep reading to close it.

The easiest way is to start in the middle of the story, at the loudest moment.

JOEY RAGONA

I was bleeding, but I didn't know from where

My pulse raced after picking myself up from the ground.

I heard the piercing sound of broken glass under my feet. I was bleeding, but I didn't know from where.

Here's what happened.

True story. I ran downstairs to grab a record for my first client and went headfirst through a plate glass window. Got stitched up, played the gig that night, didn't make the sale.

The other kind of loop holds something back for later, or for tomorrow.

JOEY RAGONA

This nearly cost me everything

This week I learned one important thing about ads that saved my butt from going broke.

But first, let me share how much we spent this week.

[...]

Oh, and I almost forgot about that one thing that saved my butt. It's this.

Think of the TV and Netflix shows that kept you up too late. They open a few loops every episode, close a couple, and leave the rest hanging. Your brain won't let go. That's why binge watching has become so powerful for streaming services.

Use open loops sparingly. I fell into this trap early on. "I'll tell you tomorrow" every single day. People got bored and stopped opening. Sprinkle them in. Don't build your whole list on them.

1 . 9

What to write every week

Start with the 3-5 questions people ask you most. Those are your pillars. Almost everything you write comes back to one of them.

Then come at those three from different angles.

- **Personal stories.** What happened to you this week. Look around the room. It's all material.
- **Client stories.** The strongest kind. Real proof, real situation, real result. No names unless you have permission.
- **Something in the news** your people already have an opinion about.
- **A common enemy.** The thing your people are already tired of. Name it. Stand somewhere.

I know it feels repetitive to you. But it's brand new to them. You're talking about the same five things in a hundred different ways, and that's the job.

And when you go blank, go back to the exact words your dream clients have used with you. Not your summary of what they said. Their words. Pull a line out and start there.

Four formulas worth keeping

You don't need these every time. You do need them at 9pm when nothing is coming.

AIDA

Attention. Interest. Desire. Action. The classic, and still the one I fall back on.

Robert Collier

Attention. Interest. Description. Persuasion. Proof. Close.

Victor Schwab

Attention. Show an advantage. Prove it. Persuade them the advantage is real. Ask for the action.

John Carlton

Here's what I have. Here's what it'll do for you. Here's what to do next. Simple, and it works.

Notice every one of them starts with attention. That isn't an accident.

The writing method, step by step

- 1 **Write in a text editor, not in your email tool.** It crashes. It doesn't save. And you keep a copy you can reuse later.
- 2 **Run it through [Hemingway](#).** It's free. It grades your writing and flags passive voice and long sentences. Aim for grade three. Don't take every suggestion. Sometimes the sentence has to be that way.

- 3 **Read it out loud.** This is the one so many people skip. Your partner will think you're talking to yourself. Do it anyway. You'll hear the words that don't belong.
- 4 **Paste it into your email tool** and format it there.
- 5 **Send yourself a test.** Every time.
- 6 **Open it on your phone** and read it out loud again. Nine times out of ten I change something.

SMALL TIP, BIG DIFFERENCE

Narrow the margins in your document so the text column is about as wide as a phone screen. Now you can see the line breaks as you type, and you fix the shape of the email while you're writing it instead of after.

1.12

Define the vague word

Go back to the doctor test for a second, because there's a deeper cut to it.

Your market talks in vague words. "I want to feel better." "I want my life back." "I want to get to the next level." They mean something real by it. They just can't say what.

Your job is to define their words better than they can.

On one of the live calls, a coach who works with people rebuilding after divorce told me her clients all ask the same question. "Is there life after divorce?" That's the vague word. Life. It can mean anything, so it moves nobody.

The fix is to answer with a real person. "I was talking with a client last week and he asked me the exact same thing. So I asked him what life would actually look like. And here's what he said."

Then you describe it. The specific mornings. The specific fear about dating again. The specific worry about repeating the pattern.

Your job is to explain their situation better than they can, because they can't describe it. As soon as you describe it better, there's no convincing needed.

People call this empathy.

It's more precise than that. Empathy is "I get you." What I'm talking about is describing the journey better than they can, and showing you have the road out.

And when you need to show the cost of standing still, use other people's stories, never the reader's. "I watched a client rush into the next thing and end up worse off."

Third person. The reader draws their own conclusion, and nobody got blamed.

1.13

Two story frames, taped above the monitor

When people ask how I write stories so fast, this is the honest answer. Two frames sit printed above my monitors, and every story email follows one of them.

THEM FIRST

Open on a character your reader recognizes as themselves. "Someone from a group I'm in messaged me in a panic the other day." The character has a problem, meets a guide, gets a plan. This is the StoryBrand frame. Your reader is the hero. You're the guide.

ME FIRST

Open on you, in the mud. "I used to struggle with this. I was doing everything wrong. Then I found the thing that changed it." The point isn't you. The point is "I'm like you, and here's why it's worth listening to me."

They're opposites on purpose. Them-first builds the reader up. Me-first brings you down to where they are. Alternate them and your stories never feel like the same thing twice.

1.14

Keep their words where you can reach them

In 1.9 I told you to go back to the exact words your dream clients use. Here's the system behind that.

I keep a running map of the language my market uses. Not my summary of it. The actual sentences, collected from calls, replies, and conversations, sorted by topic.

When I'm stuck on a blank page, I open the map, pull one line out, and the email writes itself from there.

People tell me all the time, "it's like you're in my head." I'm not in their head. I'm quoting them back to themselves.

That's the whole "secret," and it never runs out, because your market never stops handing you material.

Start yours this week. One spreadsheet, 3-5 columns, one for each of your pillars. Every time someone says the problem in their own words, it goes in. Today I use tools like Notion to store and resurface my data.



PART TWO

Open it

A great email nobody opens isn't a great email. Two things get you the open. Landing in the inbox, and the first ten words they see.

2 . 1

First, check you can even get there

Before subject lines, make sure your email is allowed in the building. Three checks, once, and then once a quarter.

- **Your sender reputation.** Type your domain into a [sender score tool](#) and see what it says.
- **Your postmaster tools.** The big mail providers offer one. Get your domain verified with [Google Postmaster Tools](#). It makes a real difference.
- **Blacklists.** Run your domain through a [blacklist checker](#). If you're on one, they tell you how to get off.

None of this is glamorous. You would be surprised how many people have a problem here and have no idea.

2 . 2

Rethink the From line

Most people set this once and forget it forever. It's the first thing your reader sees, before the subject line.

This is about the visible sender display name sent from the same email address. You could use:

Joey Ragona

My default. Clean and human. Works well.

Joey Ragona (personal)

Very strong, and easy to ruin. Use it too often and people work out it's an autoresponder. Then you've spent something you can't get back.

Joey Ragona from SBA

Personal, with a reminder of where they know me from.

Company name only

Almost never. Unless your brand is a household name, it gives the reader no reason to open.

ONE IMPORTANT DISTINCTION

Use one primary From email address consistently. Don't routinely rotate between different sender addresses. If you introduce another sending address or domain, test and authenticate it separately.

And put your photo on your sending address. Plenty of large companies send a blank grey circle with a letter in it. Don't be one of them.

Most inboxes pull that photo from Gravatar. It's a free service that links a photo to your email address, so when someone gets your email, they see your face before they even open it.

Go to gravatar.com, create an account with the exact email address you send from, and upload a clear headshot.

It only takes a few minutes, and it makes every email look like it came from a person, not a company.

2 . 3

Four kinds of subject lines

A subject line is a promise of a reward. The reader should know what they're getting before they open.

Curiosity

Did you try email tip number three yet?

Did you get the free report?

Are your friends holding you back?

Direct benefit

40% off our best selling course
Seven proven ways to grow your business
Three simple ways to shed belly fat over 40

Look at the last one. "Over 40" is doing all the work. It sorts your list for you, and people who are thirty eight still open it.

Proof and results

Malcolm Gladwell's advice to business owners: don't be one thing
The secret to Shark Tank's success
64% of people say they read email in the toilet

You can borrow authority. If a name your people respect said it, everything under it lands harder.

Urgency and scarcity

Sale ends Friday
Only 48 hours left
Gone at midnight

A WARNING ABOUT THE FOURTH ONE

Most marketers only ever use urgency. Sale ends tomorrow. Last chance. Final call. That's why people are tired of marketing email and think we're all the same.

The last time I used this type of subject line was pre 2020.

That said, urgency works. Use it when it's true. Don't build your list on it.

Two subject line tips

Call out the exact interest. If two hundred people on your list raised a hand for one topic, say it back to them.

"The email program you asked about." "Ready to use AI?" They know you're talking to them, because you are.

Use their name. Their name alone in the subject line is powerful. So powerful that I only use it a few times a year, when I really need attention.

The rest of the time I put the name inside the email instead.

2 . 5

The lead starter

This is the biggest thing in this section, and almost nobody uses it.

The lead starter is the first line of your email. Your reader sees it in the inbox, under the subject line, without opening anything.

It's a second subject line you're probably wasting.

I put more effort into the first line than into the subject line.

JOEY FROM SBA

Read this one

Unless you already have a list, this email isn't for you.

One line, doing two jobs. It hooks the people it's for, and it saves everyone else the time. Both are wins.

Starters worth keeping near your desk:

This is important...

Just recently...

Unless you...

Do you...

There can...

Would you...

Keep the first line to six or ten words. On a phone it may wrap or cut off, and a cut off line isn't a problem. It's another open loop.

2 . 6

Plain text wins

Look at the emails I send. Always simple text. No template, no header image, no columns.

The moment an email looks like a newsletter, it trips the reader's own spam filter. They think "marketing" and move on.

You want it to look like you opened your mail, typed it, and hit send.

One thing to be clear about.

Plain text doesn't mean the plain text setting your provider can't track.

Every email tool has a simple text template. It's HTML underneath, and it looks like typing. That's the one you want. It also happens to be the most mobile friendly thing you can send.

2 . 7

How often, and when

Weekly is the floor. If you aren't in front of people once a week, they forget you. This is a distracted world and nobody is waiting by their inbox for you.

I usually send three times a week. Monday, Wednesday, Friday.

The fear I hear from people is always the same. "I'll send too much and people will leave."

Some will.

Here's the thing. If someone leaves because you sent three useful emails in a week, they were never going to buy from you anyway.

You haven't lost a customer. You've found out sooner.

SEND TIMES THAT WORK FOR ME

10:00 to 10:15am

After the morning purge. They've deleted everything else and yours arrives into a clear screen.

12:00 to 12:30pm

Lunch. I watch opens happen within seconds.

2:00 to 2:30pm

The afternoon lull.

7:00 to 9:00pm

Evening, phone in hand.

The one time I avoid is first thing in the morning. That's when everyone else sends, and readers are swiping to clear the deck.

Your email drowns in the pile.

2 . 8

Goodwill emails and promotion emails

People ask how many of my weekly emails are selling. The honest answer is all of them and none of them.

I send goodwill emails. Mostly.

Stories, ideas, things I noticed.

But there's almost always a link at the bottom to something worth doing next.

Almost every email I send has a way to buy in it, and almost nobody feels sold to.

A real promotion is a different animal.

When I run one, it takes over. Four or five days, one message, nothing else going to that segment.

For those days I'm a marketer and everyone knows it. Because I'm not one the rest of the time, they let me have it.

2 . 9

The nine word email

This one I learned from Dean Jackson, and it's the fastest way to wake up a quiet list.

The whole email is one question.

JOEY RAGONA

Deb

Are you still interested in email marketing?

Name in the subject line. One question in the body. Nothing else. No signature block, no links, no pitch.

It doesn't have to be exactly nine words. It has to be short enough that answering feels like nothing.

Then the part that matters: when someone replies, you reply. A real reply, from you, that day.

That's the whole point. You aren't sending a campaign. You're starting a conversation.

I use this at the front of my welcome sequence too.

Four hours after someone joins, before I've told them anything about me, they get one question. "Do you market or sell anything online?" People answer. I answer back.

And they find out there's an actual person here.

BY THE WAY

I spoke with Dean Jackson on the nine word email. Watch the two videos here: [how to write a nine word email that gets read](#), and [how to write cold emails using Dean Jackson's nine word email secrets, part 2](#).

Words that trip the filters

Some words are powerful to readers and poison to spam filters. "Million."
"Rich." "Free money."

The words people most want to read are the words the bots are trained to catch.

So I misspell them. On purpose.

A word like million gets an altered spelling. A curse word, when I use one, gets a symbol in the middle of it. It reads exactly the way I meant it.

It does two jobs at once.

It slips past the bots that would have sent the email to spam. And a misspelled word snags the eye. The reader stops on it, which is exactly where I wanted them to stop.

Don't overdo it. One altered word in an email is a wink. Five is a ransom note.

R PART THREE

Read it

They opened it. Now they decide in about a second whether to read it or leave. That decision is made on shape, not words.

3 . 1

Why you mail as often as you do

There are only two reasons anyone is on your list.

Some are collecting free things. They'll never buy. Nothing you do changes that.

The rest genuinely want help. Your job is to prove you can give it. You can't prove that once a quarter.

And here's the math behind consistency. Of the people who will ever buy, about half buy almost right away. Half of who's left buys inside three months. The rest take as long as eighteen months. Not always from you. From whoever is in front of them when they're ready.

That's the whole case for mailing every week.

You're not nagging. You're making sure that when month eleven arrives, the person in front of them is you.

The goal is simple. If you disappeared, they would notice. That only happens with consistency.

3 . 2

The six parts of an email

Subject line

Gets the open.

Lead starter

The first line. Visible before opening.

Body copy

The story and the point.

Subheads

Almost nobody uses these in email. They're the reason skimmers stop.

Bullets

A bullet list is a sales list.

The PS

The last thing they read, and the thing they remember.

3 . 3

Make it read like a regular email

You're writing a marketing email. But it shouldn't look like one.

- **Cut the corporate language.** No "Dear" and no "Best regards." You don't say "best regards" when you leave a room. You say see you later.
- **Use contractions.** Don't, you're, it's. That's how people talk. Save "do not" for when you mean it.
- **Delete the word "that."** Nine times out of ten it's doing nothing.
- **Cut most adverbs.** "This is a really great program" is weaker than "This is a great program." The second one is more certain.
- **Use short words.** Big, not prodigious. Hungry, not famished. Angry, not vexed. Aim for one syllable most of the time.
- **Use numerals.** 100,000 catches the eye. One hundred thousand doesn't.
- **Go easy on images.** They hurt delivery and they announce that you're a marketer. One picture, tied to what the email is about, and only when it

earns the click. A screen grab of a video is the best use. A screen grab of a real testimonial is the other.

3 . 4

Short sentences, and why they work

Long paragraphs frighten people off. They open your email, see a wall of text, and think "later." There's no later.

Short sentences do something to the reader. Every line finished is a small hit of progress. They keep going because going is easy.

I write emails between 300 and 700 words and people read them. Seven hundred words is a blog post. They read it because it doesn't feel like one.

And mix your lengths. A long story email lands harder when the one before it was six lines. If every email is long, long stops meaning anything.

Forget everything your English teacher said about writing. The more you can make your English teacher roll over in their grave, the better it is.

3 . 5

Kill the commas. Use the period.

This one changed my writing more than anything else on this page.

I used to write in one long ramble. Commas everywhere. Clause after clause, joined with "and," never stopping. Go back and look at your own emails and you'll probably find the same thing.

Here is the fix. Where you would put a comma or an "and," put a period instead.

BEFORE

Use the period a lot so everything flows with a rhythm.

AFTER

Use the period. A lot. Everything flows with a rhythm.

I wouldn't really write it that way. I'm overdoing it to make the point. But you can hear the difference.

We ramble when we talk because we're afraid of dead air. On the page you don't need to fill it. Let the reader breathe between thoughts.

Note: as of this writing, AI slop threatens this short, punchy style of writing. I still believe it has its place when you are the one writing the email.

3.6

Cliffhangers and dots

A cliffhanger is an unfinished thought that pulls the eye to the next line.

Three dots at the end do most of the work.

Try ending a line on "but" or "yet." Then stop.

And things got worse...

Then came the part I didn't expect...

But boy, am I glad I did...

That I now regret...

Same rule as always. Sprinkle these in. If every line ends in dots, the reader gets annoyed and stops.

3 . 7

Formatting that makes long emails feel short

- Plain text on a white background. No branding, no logo, no template.
- Left justified. Check this. Some tools centre by default.
- Body text at 14 to 18 points. People are reading on a phone.
- A standard screen font. Helvetica or Arial. Georgia if you want a serif.
- Subheads every few paragraphs, in a different size or weight from the body.
- White space around anything you want noticed. Especially bullet lists.
- Bold, italics, capitals to highlight. All of them work. None of them work if you use all of them.
- One column. Let the phone wrap it.
- Subject lines of four to seven words, because that's what shows on a phone.

3 . 8

One email, taken apart

Here is a real example email of mine with the working parts labelled.

JOEY FROM SBA

The one job I ignored

Reality hit a few years ago.

Like a lot of business owners, I didn't want to face the truth. But if I didn't, it would be very hard to sustain my business.

Here's the thing. I'm not alone.

Let me tell you the one mistake business owners make that leads them to failure.

That mistake is spending money on unproven ideas. I spent time and money on:

- + Designing logos
- + Fancy business cards
- + Getting the right computer setup

The list goes on. **80% of my time** went on getting everything right.

Or that's what I thought.

All important stuff. But not at this stage of a business.

Still, I thought I was smarter than the average bear. I wouldn't listen. Instead I worked myself into the ground building things nobody asked for.

But that didn't happen by accident.

It happened because I did the exact opposite of what I should've been doing with 80% of my time. Which brings me to the one truth I didn't want to hear.

Looking back now, I see how foolish I was. I ignored the single most important job any business owner has.

Tomorrow I'll share it with you.

"Reality hit"

Straight into the middle. Hit what? The loop is open on line one.

"I'm not alone"

Pulls the reader in beside me. I'm not telling them they made the mistake. I'm telling them I did.

The subheads

Each one stands on its own. Someone who scrolls past the whole top half still lands on a complete sentence that makes sense and pulls them back up.

The bullets

White space above and below. They stop the eye.

"But that didn't happen"

A segue. You can't stop reading on a line like that.

"Tomorrow I'll share it"

The loop from line one, still open. Tomorrow's open rate goes up.

3 . 9

Bullets, and formulas for writing them

A bullet list is a sales list. You can make a lot of sales with nothing else.

But only if it stands apart from the text around it.

Step away from the preset bullet. Use a plus sign, a dash, an arrow. Italicise one list and not the next. Give each list its own white space.

Not everything should line up. If two lists sit close together, make them look different on purpose. It should look like you typed it, not like you filled in a template.

Here are a few formulas to write them from:

How to [result]

How to [result] without [the annoying part]

Where to find [thing]

The little known [secret / reason / rule]

The [number] deadly [things] that [bad outcome]

Give me [X] and I'll give you [Y]

The quickest and easiest way to [result]

What never to do when [situation]

How to eliminate [problem] with [simple method]

The truth about [topic]

The single most important [thing]

How to talk about yourself without being the hero

Look back at that example email. Every time I talk about me, I'm talking about a mistake. What I got wrong. What it cost me.

That's the tip. Your readers want to know you've been in the same mud they're standing in.

But don't stay down there. If you only knock yourself down, they start wondering why they should listen to you. So climb back out. "Here's what I did about it." "Here's what changed."

Down into the mud, then back out with the answer. That's the shape.

Segues, the invisible push

Cliffhangers pull the eye down the page. Segues push it. They're different tools and you want both.

A segue is a short line that closes one thought and forces the next one open. Look back at the email in 3.8 and you'll find them doing the work.

Here's the thing.
But that didn't happen.
Which brings me to...
Or that's what I thought.
Now here's where it gets interesting.

"But that didn't happen" is the strongest of these. You can't stop reading on that line. Your brain demands to know what happened.

Start noticing them in every email that keeps you reading, mine included.

Then steal them. A segue every few paragraphs and the reader arrives at the bottom without ever deciding to keep going.

C PART FOUR

Click it

Everything so far leads here. This is where most people get shy, get vague, and lose the click they already earned.

4 . 1

One clear thing to do

Open your inbox right now and you'll find ten emails offering you six different things at once. Read this. Watch that. Book the other. Buy the thing.

A confused reader does nothing.

Go back to the question from part one. What is the goal of this email? Segment them? Get them to a video? Get a reply? Pick one and let everything point at it.

4 . 2

Two kinds of call to action

Almost every email I send has a way to buy in it. Almost none of them feel like selling. That's because there are two very different tools here.

The offer CTA

This is the standard promotional email.

Three links spread through the copy, sometimes four with the PS.

Even though I rarely write this type of email, I included it here because just about everyone uses it. Just know what it is. The reader can see it's a sales email, and that's fine when you're actually selling.

Three links is normal. Four is the ceiling. More than that and it turns into spam.

The soft sell CTA

One link, dropped in like an afterthought. This is the one that lets you sell every day without ever running a sales email.

Two phrases do almost all of the work. "**By the way**" and "**Speaking of.**"

JOEY RAGONA

The thing my accountant said

[... the story ...]

By the way. If you missed the offer I sent last week, I have something just as good. [Here's where you get it.](#)

It reads like you remembered something on your way out the door. That's exactly why it works.

Why people buy

Four reasons. Your call to action should touch at least one.

- **Personal gain.** They get something they want.
- **Logic and research.** They have looked into it and it adds up.
- **Other people.** Someone they trust recommended it, or everyone like them is already in.
- **Missing out.** The chance is going away.

What every offer has to answer

Writing offers is a whole subject of its own. But these six questions are in your reader's head whether you answer them or not.

- How do I know it'll work?
- How do I know I'm getting my money's worth?
- What else do I get?
- What do I have to do?
- What does it cost?
- How do I order it?

They look obvious written down. Look at ten offers and count how many answer all six. Price is the one people hide most, and hiding it never helps. Tell them on the page. Someone who leaves over the price was never buying.

Ask directly

Don't dance around it. When you want the sale, ask for the sale. People want to be told what to do next.

Click here to [get it]

See how it works here

Here's where you learn more

Get [thing] here

Find out why here

Here's where you [do the thing]

4.6

Change your verbs

Small change, real difference. Move your verbs out of the past and into what's happening right now.

PAST

The method **has taken** many people to the next level and **added** more money to their bank account.

PRESENT

The method **is taking** many people to the next level and **adding** more money to their bank account.

Read them again. The first one is finished. The boat has gone. The second one is happening now and there's still room. Same words, different tense, different feeling.

Not "my clients made more money." My clients *are making* more money.

Show the advantage

A call to action isn't just "click here." There has to be a reason on the same line. Ask yourself what this actually does for them.

Will they get something?

Save, gain, accomplish.

Will they lose something?

Avoid, reduce, eliminate. risk, worry, loss, doubt, mistakes.

Put the advantage first, then the command. "The method is taking people to the next level. Here's where you get it."

Drop the "if"

This is the smallest change in this book and the one that has helped my clients most.

The word "if" in a call to action tells the reader you aren't sure. It says they don't really have to. You're asking for permission to be asked.

WITH IF

If you would like a free quote, call us.

WITHOUT

Call for a free quote today.

WITH IF

Email me if you would like to set up a time to talk.

WITHOUT

Reply to this email to set up a time to talk.

IF

If you enroll today, you'll get these bonuses.

WHEN

When you enroll today, you'll get these bonuses.

Nothing here is pushy. It's just direct. And "when" quietly assumes the thing is going to happen, which is a very different email to receive.

One exception. In a headline, "if" is fine. "If you're doing this, stop." That isn't a call to action. It's a filter.

ONE REWRITE, LIVE

On a live call, a coach asked me to fix her invite. She had: *"If you want to book a coaching call, click here."*

First pass, drop the if: *"To book a coaching call with me, click here."*
Already better. Nothing pushy about it.

Second pass, add the reason: *"Here's where you book a call with me, when you want to improve your business."*

And here's the honest part. On my first try I said "if you want to" out loud, right after teaching this whole thing.

We all default to "if" because we don't want to be that pushy person. It isn't pushy. It's confidence in what you can do for people.

If somebody reads that as arrogance, they were never someone you could help.

4 . 9

The PS

Most people leave the PS empty. It's the second most read part of any email.

Readers remember the first thing they saw and the last thing they saw.

Plenty of them scroll straight to the bottom without reading the middle.

The PS is how you still reach those people.

Two rules.

Change the words. Nobody says "PS" out loud. I use "By the way." "Just one more thing." "One last thought." I still use PS sometimes, because people expect it, and the odd time is exactly when it stands out.

Summarise, then ask. Two or three sentences that restate the offer, then the direct command.

JOEY RAGONA

Something I've used for years

[... the email ...]

Just one more thing. They haven't raised their prices since 2015. But they keep adding more to make running an online business easier. So today is your last chance to get 2015 prices. [Click here to start your free trial.](#)

Sentence one

Summarises the whole email in nine words.

Sentence two

Answers the obvious objection. They aren't cheap because they're stale. They're still building.

Sentence three

Real urgency. Quiet. No bold, no flashing, no countdown.

Last line

A direct command. Not "if you'd like to." Click here.

4 . 1 0

The Super PS

This is the one I would keep if I had to throw the rest away. I learned it from Dean Jackson.

It's a separate block at the very bottom of every email, listing the ways someone can work with you. It sits outside the email. It has nothing to do with what you just wrote about.

Yes, it breaks the one call to action rule. That rule applies to the body of the email. The Super PS is its own thing.

Whatever the email was about

[... the email, and its one call to action ...]

By the way, whenever you're ready, here are three ways I can help you grow your business so you get more out of life.

- + [Grab the free business training resources.](#)
- + [Book a complimentary session with me.](#)
- + Work privately with me one on one. Just reply with "one on one."

The third one has no link on purpose. A reply starts a real conversation, and that's worth more than a form.

It does three jobs at once.

- **It catches the people you just lost.** Someone who doesn't care about today's topic reaches the bottom, sees this, and finds something they do care about.
- **It sorts your list for you.** Every click tags someone with an interest. Now you know what to send them next without ever asking.
- **It tells people what you actually do.** If every email you send is about one topic, that's the only thing anyone thinks you do.

4 . 1 1

Two things that will cost you

Bait subject lines.

You get good at writing openers and the temptation shows up fast. Write something wild, get the open, and the email has nothing to do with it.

You can do that exactly once per person.

After that they're gone, and they were right to go.

Whatever is in the subject line has to connect to what's inside.

If you want to be strange, be strange and then tie it back. "I mentioned a purple turtle because I needed your attention today." That works. Once.

Selling something you wouldn't buy. People come to me asking how to sell better. Sometimes we go a few questions deep and it turns out the thing itself isn't good. They haven't used it. They don't believe in it.

No subject line fixes that. If you wouldn't hand it to a friend, don't send an email about it.

4 . 1 2

How many links, really

People argue about this like it's religion. It isn't. The number of links is decided by the purpose of the email, the question you answered before you wrote a word.

A goodwill email gets one link, at the bottom, after the transition. That's 90% of what I send. A promotional email gets the three link treatment.

And the three link system is not the same link pasted three times. That looks like spam because it is.

It's three different phrases, woven into the copy, all pointing at the same place.

"I made this video for you. Go check it out."

"...and on this video I walk through the whole thing."

"Here's that video again when you're ready."

Same destination, three doors in. Each one catches a reader at a different point in the email, and none of them looks like a repeat.

A PART FIVE

Aim it

The part the book name promised. WORC gets one email read and clicked. This is how you decide who each arrow is for.

5 . 1

Why this is called archery

You've heard that email is dying. Look at who's saying it. People with hundreds of thousands of names, watching their open rates fall.

What's already dead in my opinion is blasting. The same email to the whole list, every time, forever. Readers are done with it, and the inbox providers are too.

I never blasted, and not because I was smart. I never had a huge list. So I talked to people individually, by what they'd shown me they cared about.

It turned out that was the strategy the whole time.

Here's the operating system, and it runs on one move you already know from the Super PS. **Every click is a raised hand.**

- 1 **Send a general email to everyone.** A story, an idea, a link at the bottom. Its real job isn't the sale. Its job is to see whose hand goes up.
- 2 **Tag every click.** Someone clicks the email marketing link, they're tagged for email marketing. They don't fill in a survey. They just click, and the system remembers.
- 3 **Send the specific stuff only to the tags.** When I promote something about copywriting, the people tagged for copywriting hear about it. Nobody else does.
- 4 **The rest of the list still hears from you that day.** A different email. Something general. Nobody goes quiet, and nobody gets pitched a thing they never asked about.

Even with a hundred thousand people on your list, you don't treat them the same way. Most of the time I send to my entire list to segment them. To get them to raise a hand.

That's the bow. Everything in the first four parts was fletching the arrow. This is aiming it.

5 . 2

Three buckets, no more

Your list isn't one person. But it isn't a thousand people either. It's about three.

Ryan Levesque calls them buckets, and his rule is the one I use. Three at most. Beginner, intermediate, advanced. Or three stages of the journey your people are on. More than three and the work buries you.

Here's what makes this workable. **You don't write three emails. You write one, and swap the opening.**

The divorce coach from 1.12 has three natural buckets. Just divorced. Starting to date again. Rebuilding for good. Same email body, a story, a point, one link. Three different first lines.

"If you just signed the papers and can't imagine what comes next..."

"If you're back on the dating apps and second-guessing everything..."

"If the new life is finally taking shape and you're scared to trust it..."

One email. Three intros. Sometimes a swapped closing line too. Each bucket reads it and thinks, this was written for me. Because it was.

5.3

Aiming small made me more money

The fear is always the same. "If I aim at one group, I lose everyone else."

My first company sold records to DJs. Not all records. Specialty remixes of popular tracks, for club DJs who wanted to sound different from every other DJ in town.

But that's not all, I charged three times the price of a normal record. Because of the exclusivity (another story for another time).

I chose a tiny slice of a tiny market. And I made more money than I would have selling everything to everyone, because that slice knew I was the only one talking to them.

What about the people outside the slice?

Think of a realtor who sells lakefront homes exclusively. Somebody walks in wanting a condo. Does the realtor say "I don't do condos"? No. They sell the condo.

Aiming at one bucket doesn't turn the others away. People outside your aim still hear you, still buy, still hire you.

You're not closing a door. You're choosing where the light points.

5 . 4

The extra half hour

Every time I teach this, someone says it. "That's too much work."

Here's the work, honestly. On a sending day, it's an extra half hour. Swapping an intro. Splitting a send. Writing a second short email for the rest of the list.

If you send twice a week, that's one hour a week. And it's not extra. It's the job.

Tuesday morning you write the email, you aim it, it goes out at 2pm.

That's part of running the business, the same as invoicing.

The people who say email doesn't work anymore are the people who wouldn't spend the half hour.

It's the difference between talking at a room and talking to a person, and your readers can tell from the first line which one they're getting.

START HERE

What to do this week

You don't need all of this at once. Seven things, in order, and your emails are already different from almost everyone else's.

- ☐ Run your domain through a blacklist checker and a sender score tool.
- ☐ Change your From line to your name, or your name and where they know you from.
- ☐ Write one email. Then read it out loud and cut every "that" and every "really."
- ☐ Replace your commas and your "ands" with periods. Read it out loud again.
- ☐ Write a first line good enough to be a second subject line.
- ☐ Take the word "if" out of your call to action.
- ☐ Build your Super PS block once and put it at the bottom of everything from now on.

Then send it. Then send another one on Thursday.

The people on your list aren't waiting by the inbox for you.

They're busy and distracted and getting on with their lives. Show up anyway, 2-3 times a week, or at the very least once a week, with something worth their minute.

That's the whole method.

And because this book should practise what it preaches, here's mine.

JOEY RAGONA

The Super PS, doing its job

By the way, whenever you're ready, here are three ways I can help you grow your business so you get more out of life.

- + [Grab the free business training resources.](#)
- + [Book a complimentary brainstorm session with me.](#)
- + Work privately with me one on one. [Send me an email](#) with "one on one" in the subject line.

You just read a whole book. [Email me](#) to let me know which part(s) helped - I read every email.

ALSO, CHECK THESE OUT

Some things I've built over the years that sit right beside this book:

- + The Perfect Email Design Template
- + The Schwab Sales Copy Framework
- + The Ultimate Copywriting Cheat Sheet
- + The Winning Offer Template (Doberman Dan)

I've bundled them together. Tell me where to send them and they're yours.

[SEND ME THE BUNDLE →](#)

You'll also get my emails, the same kind this book is about. A couple a week, worth your minute, and you can leave any time.



WHERE THIS CAME FROM

Almost none of this is mine alone. It's years of studying people who do this well, using their ideas, and making them my own. Attribution matters, so here's the list in no particular order.

Dean Jackson. Gary Halbert. Andre Chaperon. Gene Schwartz. Frank Kern. Eben Pagan. Ray Edwards. Clayton Makepeace. Dan Kennedy. John Carlton. Rich Schefren. Don Miller. Ben Settle. Robert Collier. Victor Schwab. Ryan Levesque. And the team at Digital Marketer.

The nine word email and the Super PS are Dean Jackson's. The infotainment idea belongs to Ben Settle. The rest is a mix, put together over a long time and tested on my own list.

Joey Ragona · Strategic Business Academy