THE FOLLOW-UP FORMULA

HOW TO GET EVERYTHING YOU WANT BY DOING WHAT NOBODY ELSE DOES

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CLOSE CO-FOUNDER & CEO

The Follow-Up Formula:
How to Get Everything You Want by Doing What Nobody Else Does

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THE FOLLOW-UP FORMULA: HOW TO GET EVERYTHING YOU WANT BY DOING WHAT NOBODY ELSE DOES

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DEDICATION

To my mother Anthoula, my wife Diana, and my little super hustlers Georgios and Leonidas.

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INTRODUCTION

If you're the kind of person who wants to make things happen, this book is for you. Whether it's making a sale, building a product, organizing an event, hiring amazing people, designing the most beautiful accounting app for freelancers, building a school in Uruguay–the follow-up will help you get it done faster.

Nothing that I share in here is particularly brilliant. Most of it is common sense, and you could probably think it up yourself if you took the time to think about it.

So why am I writing a book about it?

Because very few people actually DO what I advocate in this book. And the ones who do are either a) already very successful individuals, or b) very close to being immensely successful.

I don't know how you measure success for yourself, but I do know that there are things you want in life: you want to do something, you want to create something, you want to have something, you want to feel something.

If you take the advice in this book and apply it, you'll get it much faster. It's written with salespeople in mind first, but you can take these principles and apply them to every area of life. Now before we get started ...

Find a typo? Keep it :)

"If there aren't any typos in this book, we launched too late!" – Reid Hoffman, Co-Founder, LinkedIn

This isn't a professionally edited book. You will find typos, incorrect grammar, inconsistent styling, widows and orphans, and that we probably mixed up our indentations with block paragraphs.

Here's what you should do when you encounter them: Keep reading!

Our goal is not to publish the perfect book. Our goal is to provide you with actionable advice you can use right away, to start generating more business today.

Some people assume it's a lack of care. But the opposite is true: We're putting this imperfect book into your hands exactly because we care so much. Instead of focusing on creating the perfect book, we invest our time and energy into putting the most valuable information into your hands ASAP. There's a big lesson for success and sales in here: always operate with a sense of urgency.

Pretty much every day we get emails from people pointing out some typo in one of the 500+ blog posts we've published over the years. I'm not

gonna lie: It's a bit embarrassing. Especially if it's something like mixing up its and it's. But this is exactly the kind of discomfort you need to get comfortable with. Whether you're writing or reading–don't let perfectionism prevent you from giving or getting value.



Steli Efti, CEO of Close.io

THE POWER OF FOLLOWING UP

A little story about the power of the follow-up

"Stubbornly persist, and you will find that the limits of your stubbornness go well beyond the stubbornness of your limits." – Robert Brault

I want to share the story about how a Thai fruit lady out-hustled 16 hypnotists using the power of the follow-up.

Thirteen years ago, I'm in Thailand studying hypnosis with a group of 15 hypnotists. We wanted to go to a remote island called Koh Lipe, which required a four-hour boat ride. When we showed up at the shore, the master hypnotist went into a building to find the guy with the boat.

Picture 15 people standing around, waiting in the hot sun after lunch. Suddenly, a Thai lady peddling fruits on her bike spots us. She bikes over to us, positioning the bike and the fruit right in front of us. She jumps down and starts shouting, "Fruit, fruit", with a big smile, looking every single one of us in the eyes while heavily gesturing towards her delicious goods. We go, "Yes, it looks great but we're so full. We just ate lunch, no thank you." She simply repeats, "Fruit, fruit." Same energy. Same pitch.

The master hypnotist comes down and says, "This is the wrong building. I need to go to that building a few blocks down the road. Come with me." We all walk over and wait near the building.

The Thai fruit lady gets back on her bike, bikes over to us, positions the fruit right in front of us, gets down and repeats her pitch, "Fruit, fruit." We go, "Yes, we know, we see it. It's the same fruit as over there. We really appreciate it but no thank you." She doesn't care. With even more passion and animation, she waves her hands and points towards the merchandise, "Fruit, fruit." Eventually, the master hypnotist comes down and says, "I talked to the guy. The blue boat over there is the one. Let's stand around that boat and wait. He said he's going to be here in 10 minutes." We all go over to that boat.

You can guess what the Thai fruit lady does next. She gets back on her bike, bikes over to us, gets down and goes, "Fruit, fruit, fruit." Her passion and smile widen. Wow! We can't believe the persistence on display. And then it happens ... one guy goes, "All right, all right, what the hell, I'm going to have some fruit." Another one goes, "Well, it's a four-hour boat ride, let's get some fruit just in case we get hungry." Suddenly, everyone buys fruit from her. It was magical.

Two hours later, we're on our little shaky and salty boat ride, enjoying the fresh fruit. We all look at each other with big passionate smiles on our faces, going, "Mmmmm ... fruit, fruit, fruit!" We were hypnotists, masters of language and persuasion yet this simple and humble Thai fruit lady influenced all of us with her hustle.

She showed up yes, but even more importantly, she followed up and followed through in the face of rejection. She had more clarity than we did on what we needed and that's why she won. That's how you always win. You need to know what you want more than the other person. If it's good for them, you need to be patient and persistent until the timing is right for them to realize the truth: You don't want to be on a four-hour boat ride to a remote Thai island without some delicious fruit with you!

The Follow-Up Formula

"Your advice on the psychology of entrepreneurship is important BUT your follow up advice has changed my fucking life!" – Joelle Steiniger, Co-Founder, Rocketship.fm & SmallHQ

It's easy to focus on the initial contact. The first meeting. The email you've sent to someone important. You reach out to someone and then feel good about yourself. You've done your job, you've pitched and reached out. You've asked for a meeting/call/etc. Now, all you need to do is sit around and wait for them to respond.

And that's the problem–you have no follow-up hustle.

I get it. You don't want to be a jerk. We all want to avoid being annoying at the risk of getting rejected. Yet, the key is to keep it short and sweet yet remain persistent.

Most people will contact someone once, then wait around for that person to get back to them. That's the completely wrong approach.

My follow-up philosophy

I have a simple philosophy: I follow up as many times as necessary until I get a response. I don't care what the response is as long as I get one. If someone tells me they need another 14 days to get back to me, I will put that in my calendar and ping them again in 14 days.

If they tell me they are busy and they don't have time right now, I will respond and ask them when they feel like a good time would be for me ping them. The key here is to actually keep following up. If someone tells me they are not interested–I leave them alone.

But here is the kicker–if they don't respond at all, I will keep pinging them until they do. And trust me, they always do. 😉

Two of the most important rules of my follow-up philosophy are:

1. If you've never met the other person before, don't follow up more than six times.
2. Don't guilt the other person, even if they don't immediately respond.

I'll dive deeper into these rules in the next chapter but for now, know that following up does *not* mean spamming people.

How I followed up 48 times to land an important meeting

Once I followed up with an investor 48 times until I got a meeting.

Now, this investor was introduced to me through a mutual friend and had said, “Oh yeah, I want to meet with you guys”, but then disappeared in limbo.

I could’ve taken his silence for rejection but I kept emailing him, suggesting different times and dates to meet.

Forty-eight emails later, his reply was, “Oh my god! I’m so glad you followed up, Steli. I was traveling and there was a crisis. Be here tomorrow at 1:00 PM sharp in our office.”

He ended up investing.

And I'm not the only one that has seen results with my follow-up strategy. Here's just one example of how Brandon Gracey, a sales executive from New York, applied this strategy and the results he saw: “Steli’s philosophy on following up sent me back to a significant prospect that had gone very cold. A mix of forty-one emails and voicemails later, I got my response;

‘You win, let’s connect at the trade show.’ Long story short, they’re onboarding this month.”

Another story of someone who followed up relentlessly? James Altucher wanted to work for a billionaire investor. He got his foot in the door by cold emailing the guy for a whole year.

The follow-up is amazingly versatile. It can be used for a wide variety of situations, whether you want to raise money, close a big deal, or more.

You don’t need to be rich, insanely talented, or well-connected to follow-up. You only need time and persistence, two ingredients available to anyone, anywhere.

Learning how to follow up is like gaining a superpower because it’s where winning really happens. It’s when everyone else stops running, and you’re the only person still in the race. It doesn’t matter how slow you run–you are going to win because everybody else stopped running.

To get started, here’s a crash course on following up.

HOW TO FOLLOW UP LIKE A CHAMPION

The follow-up cheat sheet: Everything you need to know about the follow-up in a few pages

"The race is not always to the swift, but to those who keep on running." – Author unknown

Following up isn't complicated. Here's everything you, as a busy reader, need to know to get started immediately.

How often should you follow up?

If you reach out completely cold and never had any interaction with the other person, follow up a maximum of six times. You really don't have the type of relationship that gives you permission to do much more than that.

If you already had some kind of interaction and that interaction was *not* a clear, definite NO, then follow up as long as it takes to get a response. Never stop till you get a response.

What's the right follow-up frequency?

When following up, you should start off by following up with high frequency, then decrease the frequency over time. Here's a general schedule for timing your follow-ups:

- Day 1: 1st follow-up
- Day 3: 2nd follow-up
- Day 7: 3rd follow-up
- Day 14: 4th follow-up
- Day 28: 5th Follow-up
- Day 58: 6th Follow-up
- After Day 58: Once a month

I use our sales CRM, Close.io, to create simple follow up reminders.

I also set up tasks with due dates, and create lists using Smart Filter functions.

For example, I can create a list of prospects whom I haven't emailed in 14 days, and with whom I've had a phone conversation that lasted longer than 4 minutes in the past 3 months.

You can stack all kinds of filters on top of each other to match it to your requirements. If you're not a Close.io customer, you can use Google calendar or tasks, but I find those suboptimal–too much friction.

These are not hard rules, they are guidelines

It all depends on the context, the situation, the relationship and interactions you had with the other person.

For example, if you follow up with an incredibly busy and important CEO of a large enterprise, don't send another email tomorrow and two days later and four days later. Give them more time, maybe 4–7 days until your first follow-up. Maybe follow up once a week. If you know this person gets 5,000 emails a day, be respectful of that fact.

Which medium is best for following up?

It depends on what you're after. Do you want to optimize for a positive outcome or a quick response? Here's how following up by email, phone, or in person stacks up.

For a positive outcome: Email

Email is the best medium for getting a positive outcome because you can follow up indefinitely without being intrusive. It also gives the recipient power over how and when to respond. However, it could take months to get the desired result.

For a quick response: Phone

If you optimize for a quick response (because an issue is time-sensitive), then a phone call is the best medium. However, it's also a lot easier to come across as annoying, so the risk of turning a "maybe" into a "no" is much higher.

For instance, if you call me ten times in two days, I'm probably going to turn you down *even if I was interested*. Because I'll think, "Geez, working with this person is too much pain, I'll pass."

For the quickest response: In person

If it's really do-or-die, the most effective method is to simply follow up in person at their office. But think carefully before using this trump card. If you show up somewhere 48 times, chances are high that you'll end up in jail.

That's why one of the oldest tricks in sales is to tell a prospect that you were "just in the area" and wanted to drop by their office to say hi. Many multi-million dollar deals have closed like that.

Following up via other mediums

Email, phone, or in person are the most common ways of following up but they're not your only options. Here are the pros and cons of following up by SMS, social media, handwritten notes, or even fax.

Following up with SMS

If you want a higher response rate, SMS is another option. Unlike email, it's a less cluttered medium, making it easier for your message to stand out. However, like calling, SMS is also more intrusive, which means you can't send 40 messages (at least without being blocked).

Many of our customers have used text messages with great success to move deals forward with prospects that didn't answer the phone or respond to emails. But it doesn't matter whether you use the built-in SMS feature of our sales software or just your own phone–what matters is that you realize that SMS is still a relatively unpolluted channel, and you'll get a prospect's attention here much easier.

Following up on social media

I don't do this, but some people like to tap into social media as another way to stay on the other person's radar. Doing things like retweeting or favoriting a tweet, sending a LinkedIn invite, liking or commenting on their status updates or posts.

The main piece of advice I can give here is to not overdo this and don't come across as a creepy borderline-stalker.

Following up with handwritten notes

Use your judgment if you want to do this or not. It's just another weapon in your arsenal.

Depending upon the interactions you had and the relationship you share with them, a handwritten note can still make an impression.

If you can make it work and it's authentic and it makes a difference–do it. If it's awkward, forced, and cheesy, don't. There are plenty of tools that help you do this at scale. Our customers prefer to use Maillift, which integrates directly with our CRM software, but if you just want to get started, doing a few of your own handwritten cards is a good way to see if this is effective for you.

Following up by fax

"It's the 21st century. We're a startup. Fax? Are you serious?"

Yes.

If they didn't respond to your emails, and they didn't pick up the phone, why not send them a fax?

Because nobody uses fax anymore!

Exactly. It's the least cluttered medium you can use.

In ninety-nine percent of cases, you won't need it. But, depending on who're you're following up with, certain professionals like lawyers and doctors still frequently use fax machines. Again, view it as another tool at your disposal.

The dos & don'ts of following up

1. Stay persistently friendly and nice.

Have an attitude of indifference if they don't respond. Impress them by staying on top of your game with a virtual smile.

2. Keep it short.

Avoid long-winded formalities. No one wants to read through three paragraphs of meaningless pleasantries. Be nice, but get to the point.

3. Provide value. (optional)

Know and understand their wants and needs well enough to be able to offer them something relevant. It can be an article or something else that they'll appreciate getting. (In general, clear, simple and concise works best). But manage your expectations–giving things away isn't an automatic solution. It's a jab, not a right hook.

4. Never make people feel bad or do anything guilt-inducing.

Avoid saying things like "Why haven't you responded to me so far? I've sent you 10 emails already!"

The truth is, most people already feel guilty. Their inbox is overflowing with unread emails and their to-do list is never-ending. Adding more guilt by pressuring them will only backfire.

Now, I've covered the major points of *how* the follow-up works. Let's explore *why* it works (and the single mistake that will destroy your follow-up).

Why guilt is your enemy

"You can accomplish by kindness what you cannot by force." – Publilius Syrus

I already touched on this in the previous chapter but it bears repeating: Guilt is your enemy when following up.

We've all experienced the guilt of leaving emails, phone calls, and texts unanswered. For instance, someone is awaiting your reply, yet the email still sits in your inbox. You're busy, stressed out about work, and despite your best intentions, never get around to hitting "Reply." You feel guilty about the delay and it's easier to tell yourself that "It must not have been that important" or "They're already mad and I don't want to make it worse" than to reply.

That's why it's important that you remove any negative emotions when you're following up. Your #1 job is to make people feel comfortable responding. Eliminate their guilt by making it clear to them that you don't harbor any bad will towards them for not replying to your previous emails.

The worst thing you can do is act like an angry, emotional stalker. That means:

1. Don't refer to previous follow-ups in accusatory tones. "I sent you four emails already but ..."
2. Don't follow up multiple times on the same day. "Did you get the five emails I sent an hour ago?"
3. Don't get angry at them in the email. "You must think you're too important to respond" or "I clearly see that you opened my email. Why don't you reply?!"

Follow up with a smile. Keep it simple, professional and forward-looking.

This is even more important when your prospect is someone who gets a lot of cold emails. Any negativity makes it easier for them to emotionally justify not dealing with you, whereas remaining persistently positive while following up makes you stand out from the rest and get a response.

Why timing is your friend

"I just booked a meeting with a big lead after over a year of following up. Thanks for the motivation!" – Jarrod Glasglow, Co-founder, Beloved Robot

Most people falsely assume the reason why they get a response to a follow-up email is because they've sent a better email or said something smarter.

In most cases, the real reason why people who don't respond to your first cold email respond to your follow-up email is very simple: timing!

It likely just so happened that the recipient saw the original email when they were too busy or distracted by something that prevented them from taking action. That's why it didn't register on their radar.

Then they got a follow-up email from you, which was sent at a better time, a time when they had the attention, mental bandwidth, and time to consciously process and respond to your email.

If someone reads your initial email and decide they're not interested in your offer and don't want to do business with you, then nothing you say in a follow-up email is going to turn that around and convert them.

So, you shouldn't even try to optimize for those people.

Instead, optimize only for those people whom you have a realistic chance of convincing. These are the people who are somewhat interested but either didn't have the time to respond or didn't connect the dots–all they need is just a little bit more nudging.

If you follow up until the time is right, you can also solve one of the biggest challenges salespeople face: Convincing a prospect to switch from using a competitor's solution. Here's how.

Why timing matters when convincing prospects to switch to your solution

"Deals aren't closed in the show-up, they are closed in the follow-up."

When you're trying to get a prospect to drop their existing vendor and switch to your product instead, you'll almost always encounter resistance. How do you manage–and overcome–that resistance to switching?

I'm going to assume that what you're offering them actually serves their needs a lot better than the product or service they are currently using. So switching actually is in their best interest.

The cost of switching vendors

Understand that the cost of switching is high–it's not just about how much their current solution + service costs vs. your offer, but also training, adopting new processes in the organization, and many other unquantifiable factors. That's why you're going to need two things to get an organization to switch:

1. Patience
2. Follow-up

That's doesn't sound exciting, cool, hip or new ... *but it works.* And that's all you should care about.

The #1 reason why organizations don't switch vendors

Patience and follow-up will help you overcome the most common obstacle to getting them to switch to a different solution: Bad timing.

Look at things from their perspective, and you'll understand why bad timing can make a deal almost impossible: They might just have gone through a three-month-long process of talking with different vendors and evaluating all the products in your market. The people involved in making the decision went through all these meetings, championed that solution throughout the organization, got sign-off on the budget, oversaw implementation ... and then YOU call to pitch your solution.

There's no way they're going to switch to your product at that point, even if your product is 10 times better. The cost of switching is currently higher than the value they'd gain from adopting your (better) product.

Be in it for the long haul

So, you need to acknowledge that this isn't the right time and adopt a long-term approach. The time it takes to close this deal isn't measured in weeks, but in months. Think 6–18 months to get them to switch.

That shouldn't bother you–that should excite you. You're building a pipeline of great, high-value leads that you can close next year. This is an opportunity to build a relationship with them and get to know them better and learn about their sales process.

Follow up with your prospect every month or every quarter via email or with a quick call. Stay on top of their mind (in a positive way). Just by following up consistently, you build a certain level of trust.

When their current contract runs out, or there's another change in the organization where the barriers to switching solutions are lowered, they'll remember you. And they'll have just spoken with you a few weeks ago. You'll already have a relationship with them and they'll know you. You've invested months positioning yourself favorably–it's time for the right hook.

How to decide if a prospect is worth investing time in

Of course, you don't want to waste a lot of time on prospects who will never close. Being perpetually stuck in "I'm working on my pipeline" land is the sign of lousy salespeople.

Here's what to go by: Are the prospect's problems a good fit for your product? If their wants and needs match what your solution really excels at, then keep following up with them *even if the likelihood of them buying is currently very low.*

The other question to ask is how much is this customer worth to your business? If it's not in the thousands of dollars, it will be hard to justify that much follow-up from an economical point of view.

On the other hand, if a prospect is showing some buying signals, but isn't really a good fit for your product ... then they're probably not worth following up with all that time.

The top 2 reasons why you don't follow up enough

"I've been applying your follow-up teachings. It changed my mindset (I don't get as offended anymore if someone doesn't reply immediately) and allowed me to keep pursuing leads who eventually closed." – Allan Caeg, Founder, Northbound.io

At this point, you know what following up is and how to do it. There's nothing stopping you from closing this book right now and start hustling by following up more. But I've found that most people don't follow up nearly as much as they should because they get in their own way.

Specifically, there are two false assumptions that separate people who follow up and get what they want from people who don't follow up.

1. You think silence is rejection.

If someone doesn't respond to my calls or emails, I simply assume that they are busy and that I need to follow up until they have a moment to respond.

You're not the center of your prospect's universe and they might not be responding for a variety of reasons:

- They're sick.
- They're dealing with a problem in their personal or family life.
- Their boss changed their priorities for the quarter and put a ton of new work on their plate.

However, most people give up the moment they encounter silence. When someone fails to respond to their calls or emails, or appears indifferent, they create a story in their mind that the other person has zero interest and has already said no.

For Colleen Werther, a business development director, telling herself that a prospect wasn't interested almost cost her an important deal:

> I had gotten the cell phone of a prospect at a major coffee retailer but was hesitating to call the prospect. I had created a false narrative in my head that he didn't want to talk to me. I called him and finally got answers I've been looking for–further he's put me in touch with the right people and I have a call set with that contact for this week.

Her amazing breakthrough couldn't have happened if she kept believing in the fake story she was telling herself about the prospect.

Never take silence for a lack of interest. When you do that, you take yourself out of the race before you can even begin.

Instead, assume the other person is possibly interested but busy or distracted and keep following up until you get a clear yes or no.

2. You don't want to be annoying or rude.

No one wants to be a jerk.

Being liked feels better, safer. It means you don't have to put yourself in uncomfortable situations or potentially make other people feel uncomfortable.

But here's the thing: You'll never get what you want if you always optimize for being popular. High school might be a popularity contest, but life isn't.

Even in sales, a field which has a reputation of being hard-charging and ruthless, many reps get caught up in being liked. And in the pursuit of likability, they get lost in the "building rapport" stage and never accomplish the things that matter in sales.

In sales, your objective isn't to establish all the things you share and have in common–your objective is to figure out if the prospect is a good fit and to close the deal.

I'd rather have 3 out of 10 people hate me and 7 do business with me and create amazing value than having 10 out of 10 be equally indifferent about me. My job is not to be loved or not to annoy anyone but to create value.

Rather than trying (and failing) to have everyone like you, focus on being valuable and following up with the people who matter.

The cost of not following up

"The choice isn't between success and failure; it's between choosing risk and striving for greatness, or risking nothing and being certain of mediocrity." – Keith Ferrazzi

Following up isn't hard; people make it hard because they take silence for rejection or don't want to be annoying. But there's another side to it: What happens if you don't follow up?

You end up in "maybeland", which is where everything you try to accomplish goes to die.

Yes is good. No is good. Both are clear outcomes. But if you start a relationship and don't get to a clear outcome, it stays in maybeland. You'll never know what happened or could have happened. You'll never learn your lesson. And you'll never achieve sustainable growth.

That's why it's your job to push everything to an outcome. The follow up is what will help you make that happen.

Yet, most people think that a maybe is better than a no, even though that's seldom the case.

Hopeless optimism

As entrepreneurs, startup team members, and salespeople, we are hopeless optimists. We always look at the potential, we always see the possibilities.

Let's say you've reached out to a prospect. You know you can create incredible value for them and this deal will benefit you as well. They seem to agree but then, they tell you, "We'll look into this next quarter."

Most people tend to look at the fact that they didn't say no and tell themselves, "They're going to sign the deal later. I just need to wait."

But rather than wait for a response, you need to follow up until you get a clear yes or no.

What's your Plan B?

Whenever you embark on a new project, start a new initiative or run a new experiment, don't just go into it blindly. Don't just say: "We'll try it out and see if it works!"

Determine these three things in advance:

1. What will success look like? (What results/numbers/specific outcomes?)
2. What will failure look like?
3. What are you going to do if the outcome you create is somewhere in the middle?

Before you embark on a new project or start a new initiative, define how you'll determine success or failure. That's the time when you're in the best position to make a good judgment call–not after you've already invested a considerable amount of resources into the project. It's a way of protecting yourself against the sunk cost fallacy (and yes, this cognitive bias is just as strong in smart startup folks as it is in Wall Street hotshots).

Maybe kills performance

In sales, your job is to create outcomes: yes or no. Winning and losing deals. Both are good.

Optimize first and foremost for speed and clarity.

Don't try to optimize for maximum possible conversions. It's not about getting everyone to buy, everyone to agree, every deal to close.

Because if you try to optimize for the best conversion rate possible, you'll end up wasting too much time and energy waiting for certain deals to close ... *maybe!* You're going to wait around and let the prospect "think about it", let them extend their trial again, let them delay the decision to next quarter ... and the next ... and the next. (All to avoid a no, because that would be a lost deal.)

The maybeland is a dangerous quagmire that slows down your momentum and silently exhausts your energies. A yes and a no are both great–just get them fast by following up.

HOW THE FOLLOW-UP FORMULA HELPS YOU BETTER MANAGE CONTRACTORS, CLOSE FUNDRAISING ROUNDS, GET FAMOUS INTERVIEWS, AND HIRE ROCK STARS

Become a priority for anyone

"Stubbornly persist, and you will find that the limits of your stubbornness go well beyond the stubbornness of your limits." – Robert Brault

Whether you are a CEO, an intern, or a solo-founder, you have to rely on others to do their part so you can do your job. Your success depends on how well others cooperate with you. If you manage those relationships well, you'll be able to get a great deal done and make a lot happen.

Yet, do you often find that people commit but then give you all kinds of excuses for why they didn't do it?

Do you often hear: "Oh, I'm sorry, I forgot about that," or "I didn't have the time to do that yet"?

I almost never hear these words. And it's not because my LinkedIn profile has "CEO" in its title. It's because I manage people with the power of the follow-up.

Straightforward management

There are a ton of management books out there, full of big words and fancy concepts. I don't think you need any of them. I've got a very simple,

straightforward method I've used for much of my entrepreneurial career, and it's one of the most valuable tools in my management repertoire. It ensures that whenever I work with someone, my stuff gets taken care of. It doesn't fall through the cracks, and it's not the thing that people didn't get around to yet. To illustrate my point ...

Let me tell you a little story

About fifteen years ago, my two brothers were running a small business. They always used this one print shop to create all kinds of promotional materials: flyers, posters, signage, and so on. The owner of that shop was a cool and ambitious young guy–a kind of crazy creative fun guy, but pretty chaotic.

My brothers really liked the guy. He knew his stuff, he had the skills, and he was a great craftsman. And he did the work for cheap too.

But they didn't like his way of working: Chronically late, often with some mistake in his work. Flyers would arrive late. Posters were printed with errors. He was so disorganized that my brothers were constantly dealing with some mishap, feeling frustrated. But they didn't do anything about it–they just kept complaining.

Don't complain about problems. Find solutions!

One day, after my brother got off a call with the guy, he vented his frustration to me. “He’s always late! He never keeps his deadlines! And not only is he late, but there’s always something wrong with the prints!”

Maybe you have that kind of person in your life somewhere: Someone who is consistently late and consistently delivers work that doesn’t meet your expectations.

If you see this pattern, you can do one of these three things:

1. Understand that this is how this person works. Don’t expect perfect work on the agreed deadline and don’t get worked up and stressed out each time they miss something. Instead, schedule in enough buffer time for missed deadlines and revisions.
2. Manage that person better so they stop being late and deliver great quality.
3. Find someone else to work with.

I’m not going to elaborate on point 1 or 3–they’re pretty self-explanatory.

But let’s talk about point #2 …

Managing people more effectively

That sounds difficult. But it really isn't.

Here's the thing: I was running my own business at the time and was also working with the same chaotic, creative print guy.

And you know what?

He was never late. He always delivered on time. The prints were always meticulous.

Do you know why?

Not because the guy liked me more. Not because I paid the guy more. Not because I was a better customer.

It was simply because I kept following up more. I communicated more effectively with him than my brothers did.

How to become a priority

Let's say I wanted some flyers done by Wednesday next week.

I'd tell the guy what I wanted and by when I wanted it, and once he agreed, I'd say this: "Are you one hundred percent certain that you can deliver this to me by next Wednesday?"

Print guy: "Yeah, sure!"

"Okay, so this is really important to me. I'm going to check in with you on Monday. You'll get my call on Monday, and if I don't manage to speak with you on the phone, I'll send you a text message or an email to make sure that you're on time and everything is running smoothly. And I'll do the same on Tuesday to make sure that the quality is correct and that everything is one hundred percent as we agreed on. If you ever have any questions, I want you to ask me those questions immediately. I'm there for you when you need me for anything, but I need to be a hundred percent sure that you deliver this to me on Wednesday."

What did that do?

The guy expected me to follow up with him. He expected my calls. He knew I'd be on top of this thing, and he knew I really cared that the job would be ready by Wednesday.

So when he was in the midst of his busy day with a thousand things to take care of, guess what was on top of his mind?

“Oh yeah, I need to do this thing for Steli because he’ll call on Monday.”

Don’t be rude about it. But don’t be weak about it either. Do it with friendly strength.

This is even more important when you work with people on a continuous basis. If you do it consistently, they will come to expect it from you and treat you accordingly. When they commit to something, they’ll know you will hold them accountable to their promises. It conditions people to make you a priority.

It’s your responsibility to get the best out of people you work with

If someone lets you down or doesn’t deliver as promised, either cut them off or take responsibility for managing them better next time. Everybody has a lot on their plate, and everyone's attention is pulled in a dozen directions at the same time. If you want to not get lost in the noise but to stand out and become a priority, be sure to over-communicate. Follow up more persistently than everybody else, and you’ll achieve things other people can’t achieve.

That’s how you crush it. That’s how you manage other people powerfully and become a priority: Just keep following up persistently.

How I got Gary Vaynerchuk to do an interview with the follow-up hustle

"In case of doubt, push on just a little further and then keep on pushing." – General George S Patton, Jr.

A few years ago, I interviewed the one and only Gary Vaynerchuk for our blog. To a lot of people, that was a pretty impressive feat, especially because back then we had a much smaller audience, whereas Gary had more than a million followers on Twitter and amazing Facebook page engagement.

Friends kept asking me: "How did you pull that off? How did you get Gary to dedicate an hour of his time to do an interview with you, Steli?"

How I made the interview happen

In terms of Internet fame, I was basically a zero. Until that point, most of my entrepreneurial triumphs happened under the radar, and the small amount of notoriety I had was generated by me stubbornly struggling with a startup that had been a failure many years before I realized it.

Gary, on the other hand, was getting paid tens of thousands of dollars to speak for an hour at events.

So it was a fair question to ask: how did I convince Gary Vee to do the interview?

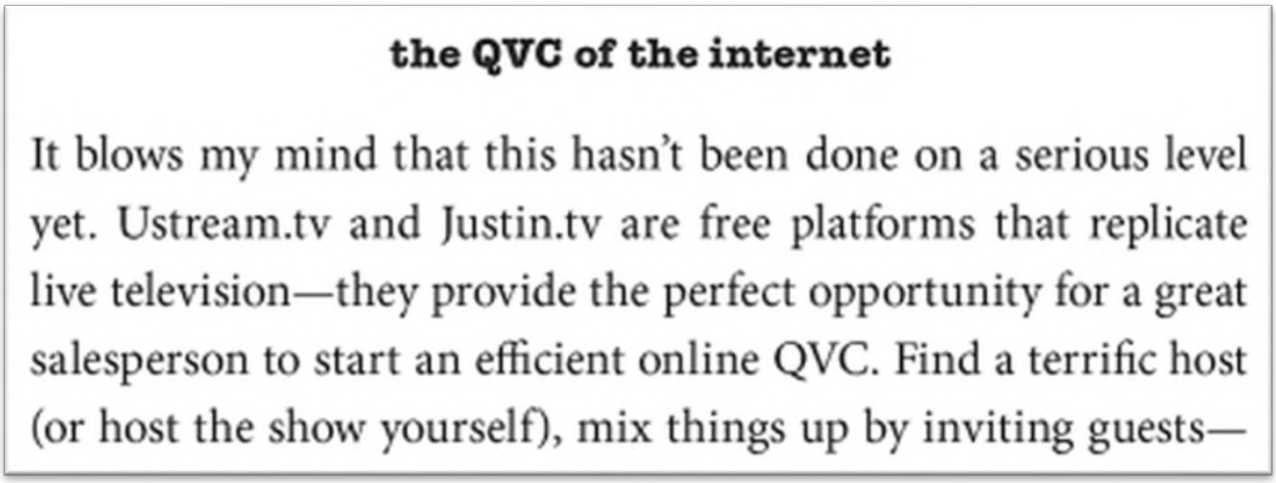
Here's the short answer: Persistent follow-up hustle.

As long as I think it's worth it, I don't give up. The first time I reached out to Gary was several years ago, even before Close.io or ElasticSales existed. At that time, a couple of my friends and I were trying to build the Internet's QVC–an online shopping channel for the new generation. We were live-streaming from a studio in Los Angeles, spending thousands of dollars on Facebook ads to buy an immediate audience, and moving tens of thousands of dollars in product.

During that period, I read Gary's first book, *Crush It!* (If you haven't read it, it's an absolute must-read even though it was published in 2009.)

At the end of the book, he listed five billion-dollar business ideas that he liked but didn't have the time to pursue. Guess what the first idea was?

When I saw that, I got very excited: "Wow! We gotta get Gary to invest in us and get him involved in this venture!"



the QVC of the internet

It blows my mind that this hasn't been done on a serious level yet. Ustream.tv and Justin.tv are free platforms that replicate live television—they provide the perfect opportunity for a great salesperson to start an efficient online QVC. Find a terrific host (or host the show yourself), mix things up by inviting guests—

We wrote Gary a very long cold email (back then I knew surprisingly little about cold emailing).

We created a website on a ridiculous domain, something like www.garyveeinvestinus.com, and plastered its background with the NY Jets logo (we had learned he wanted to buy the Jets one day). We also put in a couple of video snippets of our QVC live stream along with a business plan.

We invested a lot of time and energy into this pitch. Convinced that our pitch was irresistible, we sat back and waited for Gary's enthusiastic response–surely he'd want to invest.

His response?

Silence

Nothing. No reply. We sent another email. No response. A couple more follow-up emails, tweets, and phone calls. Nothing. Either he wasn't even aware of our efforts, or he completely ignored them.

I could have felt hurt or upset that we put in all this effort and didn't get a reply from him or anyone on his team. I could have felt entitled to get some kind of reaction.

But I didn't, and neither did my friend. We didn't attach any feelings to this non-outcome. We tried our best to get Gary's attention, and then we just moved on.

Several years later ...

Fast-forward to 2013. I was watching a video of Gary Vaynerchuk together with a friend, and we heard Gary say he's a salesperson at his core.

I've watched a ton of videos of Gary, and nobody ever asked him about sales. Everyone wanted to hear his thoughts on social media, e-commerce, Internet businesses, and marketing, but no one ever asked him about his thoughts on how to sell.

So I got this idea of doing an interview with Gary on salesmanship.

One of our investors is a close friend of Gary's, so I reached out to him and pitched him the idea.

At first, he gave us a polite pass: "Gary is currently on a book tour. Follow up with me again in a couple of months, and maybe I'll try."

Which is exactly what I did.

Our investor asked Gary if he'd be willing to do the interview, and Gary said he liked the idea.

And then, silence.

I followed up a couple of times again.

Silence.

Followed up again.

Finally, a response from Gary's team: "Gary's interested. He wants to do the interview."

Yes! ... or no?

Now I had my official yes: Gary had made the commitment!

Except I had to keep following up for *months* to finally make the interview happen. There were all kinds of scheduling conflicts, last-minute cancellations, and other obstacles in the way.

I could have thrown in the towel or gotten all indignant about this.

But I realized that Gary is just a crazy busy guy who's overwhelmed with requests. If I wanted to get an hour of his time, I'd have to work around that.

Conducting the interview

If you watch the interview, you'll see Gary isn't excited at first. Clearly, he feels there are a lot of things he would rather do than an hour-long Skype interview in his hotel room with some dude nobody has ever heard about–it's written all over his face.

But as the interview proceeds, you can see his energy changes and he genuinely begins to enjoy the opportunity to explore a couple of questions no one had ever asked him.

What the interview did for us

This video got more than 40,000 views, which might not mean much if you're posting a 30-second video of a cute cat, but it's pretty impressive for a 43-minute talking-heads Skype video with crappy sound and video quality.

I enjoyed interviewing Gary very much, but it was our company that really benefited from it.

Here is what happened as a result of the interview:

- A lot of trial signups for our sales software
- Thousands of dollars in revenue
- Some of Gary's followers started following our brand as well
- It elevated our brand and our credibility as a company

Your current results in life are an indicator of your past hustle

Everything that's going on right now in our business is the result of the work we did months or even years ago.

Just consider the interview with Gary. I was able to engage him in a really interesting conversation only because I knew his stuff: I had read his

books, I had watched his videos, and over 15 years I had developed a deep understanding of the sales process.

I didn't ask him the same questions he'd already answered a hundred times–I made it interesting for him by asking him questions that prompted him to think about himself in ways he might not have deliberated in the past.

Not happy with your current achievements?

If you think what you have accomplished thus far is not enough, it's not because of what you're doing today. It's because of what you did and didn't do in the months and years leading up to this very day. It's because you showed up a bunch of times but didn't follow up and follow through till the final result.

And if you're grinding and putting in hard work today, if you're following up with people pushing projects forward and making sure you stay top of mind, don't expect results tomorrow! That's not how real life works. That's what Hollywood movies and the media make it look like because the dream is what sells.

But in real life, your success is the result of years spent on the grind. Those overnight successes represent only 0.1% of the people who succeed, and

in many cases, even their overnight successes have been preceded by years of hard work and persistent follow-up.

Fundraising as a founder: You haven't raised anything until the cash hits the bank

"There is no telling how many miles you will have to run while chasing a dream." – Author Unknown

When it comes to fundraising, there are many mistakes founders make. These mistakes range from fundraising part-time to falling in love with investors and VC firms. However, there's one mistake in particular that founders make that could be avoided if they followed up more: In fundraising, you haven't raised anything until cash hits the bank. This is particularly true when you raise money from angel investors but this is also, unfortunately, true for VC firms.

The problem is inexperienced startups and founders think that the moment somebody signs a term sheet is the moment you've raised money. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The deal is not done until money is in your bank account. It doesn't matter who said what. It doesn't matter how many handshakes you got. It doesn't matter if the VC firm blogged about your company. You have not raised a penny until that penny hits the bank.

Never forget that. A lot of startups are surprised, especially when they raise a seed round from angel investors. They're surprised by how long it takes the angel investors to send over the money and how many of the angel investors who said, "Yes, I'm in," never send the money.

I learned this lesson first-hand. The first round one of my startups raised was a catastrophe. It was only $50,000 and it took one investor six months to give us a check for $15,000.

Besides that, there were three other investors who are multimillionaires who said, "Yes, we're going to invest," and never invested.

Just because somebody says yes doesn't mean you're going to get the money. The world is littered with dead startups that got term sheets from VC firms that promised to give them money and didn't follow through on their promise.

It's your responsibility when somebody tells you, "Yes," to turn that yes into cash in your bank account as quickly as possible.

When we later raised our seed round, $1.4 million in four weeks, you know when we had all the money in the bank? Two weeks later.

You know why? Because I followed up by email, phone, and SMS with every investor and VC firm multiple times a day until we got that money in the bank account.

It's as simple as that. You're like a bookie and it's your job to get the money that people promise you.

Don't think, "These are important investors. This is a billionaire. This is the VC that invested in blah, blah, blah. I surely don't have to micromanage them." No! You have to micromanage everybody and people who are really successful and experienced appreciate somebody who's on their game. They appreciate it when you follow up and follow through with them to make sure things get done.

They go, "You know what? If this startup acts towards their customers like they do with me, they're going to be fine. They're on their game. They're on the hustle."

Investors are not annoyed if you are on their case about getting money. And the ones who are? Ignore them. They're not serious. It's just as simple as that.

Please remember that when people promise to give you money, that a promise is not a success. Only cash in your hand, in your bank account, in

your pocket is true fundraising success. The surest way to turn promises of money into real cash is to be on top of your follow-up game until people deliver what they promised.

Recruit top talent with the power of the follow-up

“Victory is always possible for the person who refuses to stop fighting.” – Napoleon Hill

The power of the follow-up can be used to close deals, overcome rejection, and achieve the impossible. Here's how to harness that same power to recruit the unrecruitable, or how to hire amazing, talented, transformational people for your startup.

But instead of just *telling* you what to do, I’m gonna *show* you how to do it. Close.io is what it is today because of our team, and this team didn’t come without a fight. Each person here was fought for, some for *years*. In practically every case, it was worth the wait.

I’m going to share two stories from the Close.io archives that truly illustrate the importance of following up and following through. But before we get to that, let’s make sure you’ve got the right hiring mindset.

If you can’t commit to a decade, don’t commit to a day

In recruiting, you'll come across three types of candidates: Those who do good work, those who make a difference, and those who make *all* the difference.

The first two are in good supply. But those who make all the difference? They're almost impossibly rare. When you find someone you believe can make all the difference in your business, hire them, no matter what it takes or how long it takes.

And it'll probably take a lot. But that's okay, because as Naval Ravikant, the CEO of Angellist said, "If you can't see yourself working with someone for life, don't work with them for a day."

So forget hiring people to meet the demands of the next 6, 12, or 24 months. Look for people you can see yourself working with for the next 10, 20, or 30 years. That's playing the long game, and it's the *only* way to hire the best of the best.

Once you find these people, invest in them relentlessly. You probably won't win them over today, tomorrow, next week, or next month. Maybe not even next year. But continue to follow up and follow through and you will. Because eventually they will be ready, and you want to be there when they are.

Besides, what's another two years' pursuit if it leads to a ten-year relationship?

But that's enough theory. Let's talk about what this looks like in practice. Here are two true stories of transformational hires made possible through the power of relentless follow-up.

A 3-year recruiting process (that started by getting drunk at a party)

Today, Phil Freo heads engineering and product here at Close.io, so it's not an understatement when I say our inside sales CRM wouldn't be what it is today without him. In fact, it might not exist at all.

But long before Phil and I worked together at Close.io, he and I were just friends. At the time, we were both involved in educational startups. I was founding my own and Phil headed engineering at another.

Even back then, I knew I wanted to work with him and I made sure he knew that, too. I remember getting drunk at a TechCrunch party one night and saying (read: slurring) something like, "Phil, I think you're really amazing. I love your energy and your intellect. Someday, I want to work with you. I *need* to work with you. I *will* work with you."

He said he felt the same, though maybe he was just being nice. After all, what are you *supposed* to say in a situation like that? Either way, the whole thing was hypothetical. I wasn't in a position to make an offer, and he wasn't looking for anything new.

Even so, I made my intentions clear: One day, in some way, I would work with him. And so began a recruiting process that would span *years*.

The *worst* decision of Phil's life

Fast-forward a couple years: My startup had failed. While I was figuring out my next move, Phil was helping a mutual friend of ours brainstorm ideas for a new app.

Eventually, I was pitched the idea and, knowing Phil was advising the startup, jumped on board immediately. Although not an "official" part of the team, Phil was an incredibly helpful advisor. In fact, he even let us use his apartment as our first headquarters.

With Phil's help, we launched our product, found some traction, raised money, and even got accepted into Y Combinator. And as soon as we could afford to, we pushed hard to hire Phil.

There was this 3-month process where we were inviting him to breakfasts, lunches, and dinners at least once a week. We were calling him, emailing him, showing up at his apartment … We even had a few Y Combinator partners pitch him on working with us. We tried *everything*.

Even after all that, Phil broke our hearts. The answer was, "No." He wasn't ready to leave the startup he was working with.

But what happened next is critical: When most people are rejected after this level of investment, they cut ties and give up. We refused to do that. In fact, his rejection only made us more committed.

That's not to say the rejection didn't hurt, or that I didn't rib him for it. In fact, I remember texting him a photo of that day to commemorate what I called the, "Worst decision of your life."

But even with that disappointment, we continued to invest in the relationship. More importantly, we continued to make our intentions clear: One day, one way or another, we would work together.

The *best* decision of Phil's life

Fast forward another year-and-a-half: Our startup pivoted and became ElasticSales, the predecessor to Close.io, and we'd begun to develop a track record of success.

As our situation changed, so did Phil's. He'd spent the last year-and-a-half building a highly-efficient team that had become less dependent on him by the day. And once he felt comfortable doing so, he started flirting with the idea of working with us again.

You'd better believe we pounced on that. And this time, it worked. After a few months of discussions, Phil joined the team. I'm not gonna lie: *It felt amazing.*

Years of investment finally paid off. But was it worth it?

Every *second*.

Phil came in and built the technology that allowed our salespeople to succeed. He then became the first real champion for releasing that technology to the market, the technology you now know as Close.io.

The cost and ROI of following up

Recruiting Phil didn't come easy and both sides had to invest a lot. But because of that investment, there was a richness to our relationship that really allowed it to thrive.

Imagine what would have happened if we'd given up on Phil after the first year, or if we'd become defensive or discouraged by his rejection. Most likely, it would have cost *us* a hugely successful startup, and the *market* an exceptionally powerful product.

Remember: When you find someone you believe can make all the difference, pursue them relentlessly. When they're finally ready for a change, you want to be the first person they think of.

I truly believe that the follow-up is one of the most under-appreciated high-impact areas in your life. I say that because I hardly ever meet anyone who's really great at it. It applies to all areas of life. It's one of the reasons why we've got a dedicated feature to help you manage your follow-ups with our sales software.

Speaking of people that can make all the difference ...

Winning, losing, and (finally) winning again

In a different vein, here's a story of someone who left Close.io, only to come back years later because we never gave up on him.

Nick Persico initially joined us back in the ElasticSales days. He was an amazing talent who quickly rose to the top of the leadership team. When we pivoted and launched Close.io, he was the first to sell and market it. The success of our launch was largely thanks to his efforts.

Nick became so successful so quickly that he got an amazing job offer from one of our clients. And although we did everything we could to keep him, Nick ended up accepting the offer and leaving Close.io, which was a loss that cost us dearly.

But even so, we weren't angry or bitter. We knew we wanted him back, *needed* to have him back, so we did everything we could to help him succeed in his new role.

As a result, Nick's company became one of our biggest clients, and he ended up becoming a vocal advocate for Close.io on the East Coast; helping a number of companies adopt and implement our inside sales CRM.

The hardships of entrepreneurship

A couple of years passed, and Nick decided to leave his role to co-found a startup of his own. It would have been easy for us to become discouraged by this. Instead, we doubled down on our investment efforts.

We became ad hoc advisors to Nick's startup and did everything we could to help him succeed. But even as we did so, we made our intentions clear: One day, we wanted him back.

Later, Nick's startup began to struggle. I remember having these odd monthly calls where we'd spend the first 30 minutes discussing strategies to save the startup, and the next 30 minutes telling him that it probably wasn't going to work out and he should come back.

Nick rejected our offers over and over again for two years, but we never gave up.

Homecoming

Unfortunately (or fortunately, depending on your perspective), Nick's startup didn't make it. And when it didn't work out and Nick found himself needing a job, what was the first thing on his mind? Where did he know he could go where he'd be welcomed and supported?

Close.io. Because we never stopped following up and following through with Nick, we were there when he was ready.

As of writing, Nick has been back only a few weeks but he's already changing the ways we operate. In fact, the things he learned in his time away have made him even more valuable to us than before.

So it doesn't matter that it took three years to win him back. It was worth it, and I'd do it over again in a heartbeat if I had to.

Can your startup afford not to have amazing people?

If there's a single lesson here, it's this: When you find amazing people, follow up and follow through with them *forever.*

Invest however you can, whenever you can, and keep in mind it doesn't always have to be something major: Collaborate with them on a blog post. Invite them to join you at a conference. Or just hang out, have a beer, and take an interest in their career.

And as you invest, never let them forget: You *want* to work with them. You *need* to work with them. You *will* work with them. Whatever it takes, however long it takes.

Because you know these relationships are about *decades,* not months or years, and you're in it for the long-haul.

BONUS MATERIAL

I want you to crush it at following up. That's why this bonus section contains three email templates to help you simplify your follow-up, add humor, or even "break up" with unresponsive prospects. These templates are easy to use but will get you outsized results!

People don't reply to your follow up emails? Send this template!

"Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication." – Leonardo da Vinci

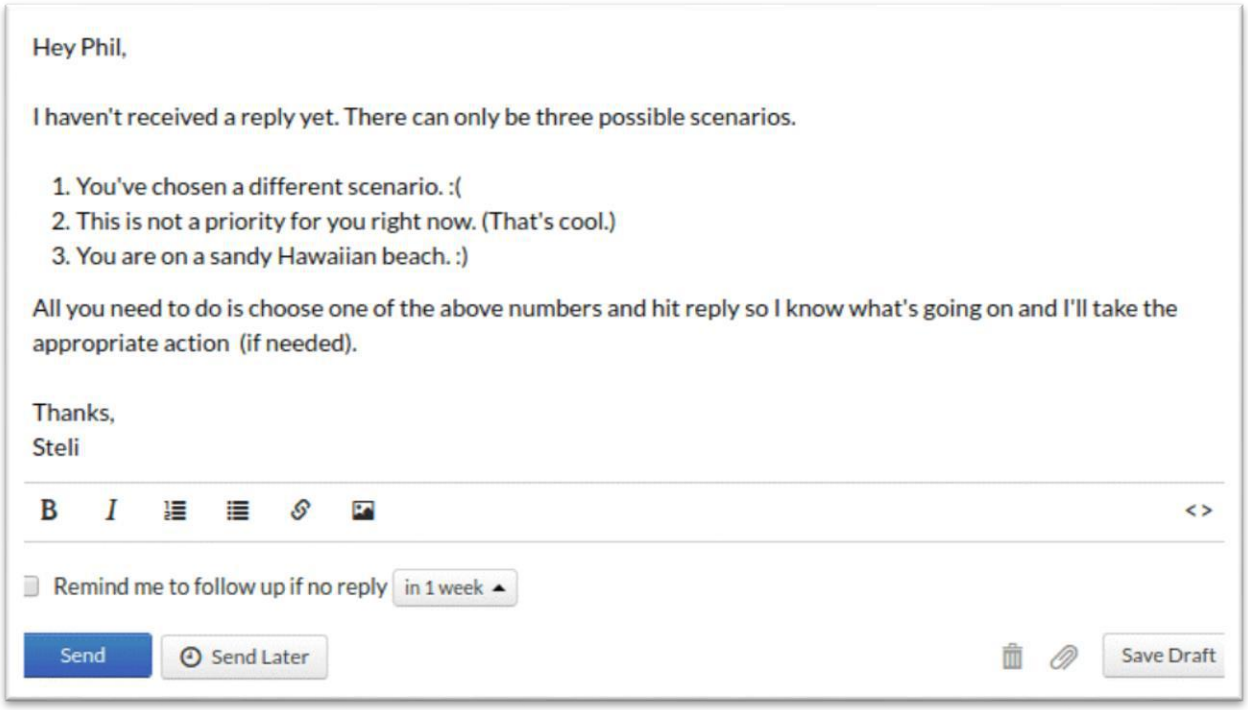
There are 3 simple rules you need to follow if you want to send follow up emails that create results:

1. Be relevant.
2. Get to the point fast.
3. Make it easy for them to respond.

Making it easy for them to respond is key, yet it's something most people forget. Sometimes, we ask people to make too many decisions and that friction prevents them from ever writing us back. The solution? The 1, 2, 3 email.

The concept is simple: Present your prospect with three scenarios that are likely to apply to them based on the information you have about them. Ask them to choose which scenario applies to their situation. All they have to do is hit reply, enter a number and click send. Friction removed.

Here's a template you can use when following up:



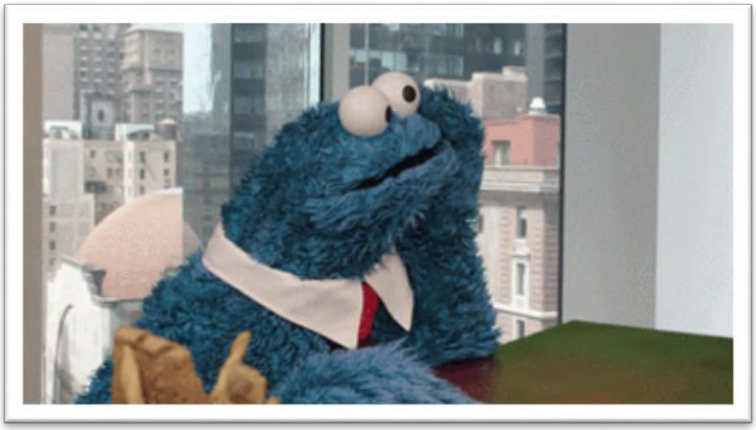
This version is a bit more tongue-in-cheek and light-hearted, but effective nonetheless. You'll probably be surprised how well it works. The email is highly relevant with an added entertainment value, creating a very powerful way of hacking your response rate and improving your follow-up game.

Put some funny in your follow-up

"There is nothing in the world so irresistibly contagious as laughter and good humor." – Charles Dickens

Many people ask me for new creative ways to spice up their follow-up hustle and I came across an awesome guy who's putting some "funny" in his follow-up and seeing great results with it.

Rachman is the co-founder of FunnyBizz and we met at the Lean Startup Conference. He gave an awesome talk on how to effectively follow up with humor. One of my favorite ideas from the talk was that he used to follow up with potential sponsors for his conference and when he didn't hear back, he would send them a funny gif of Cookie Monster waiting with no further text.



The response rates were great!

After his talk, I told him I wanted to learn more about FunnyBizz. He reached out and I thought I'd test his true follow-up hustle by not responding for a while.

It's one thing to preach something on stage and another to practice it in real life. When he didn't hear from me in a while, he sent an awesome follow-up video.

At first, I thought it would be a generic video he sent out to everyone but then, Rachman specifically mentioned my name and company's name before two dudes burst in behind him, playing the guitar while singing the "Follow-up song."

It was a great example of how to be creative in your follow-up and create immediate value in a relationship by putting a smile on someone's face and making their day a little brighter.

The baby ducks follow-up

Sometimes, readers forward me great follow-up emails they receive. I thought this one was hilarious and wanted to share it with you.

Hi [redacted],

haven't heard from you so that tells me one of two things:

1) You're not interested
2) You've been busy and my emails fell through the cracks like these unfortunate ducklings:



'd love to help you save a bunch of time on all your HR stuff with our free software, but let me know either way so I can stop bugging you

--

P.S. I hope the story has a happy ending like it did for the ducklings.



These are just two examples of funny follow-ups. Get creative but always consider how your audience might respond.

The breakup email: Before you stop following up, send this

"The breakup email works! I used it to get a reply back in 5 minutes." – Chris Giddins, Founder, Uniqodo

In most cases, people will respond to your follow-up emails, even if it's to tell you no. However, if the recipient isn't responding to your emails, the breakup email is one of the most powerful follow-up email templates you can use.

You're essentially "breaking up via email" with them. Not that your unilateral relationship was that great to begin with, but by being the one who's walking away, rather than the one who's pursuing, you turn the dynamic of the interaction around. It's high school all over again, but it's also highly effective.

It works both for outbound emails (when you're sending emails to people who have never expressed an interest in your offer or interacted with you) and inbound emails (when you're sending out emails to people who have at some point expressed interest in your offer, e.g. by signing up for a trial).

How to write an effective breakup email

It starts with writing an effective subject line. For the breakup email, here are some examples of good subject lines:

- Goodbye from Steli
- Goodbye from Close.io
- Thank you from Close.io
- Should I stay or should I go now?
- It's not you. It's me.

Email body

The email body itself should be short and succinct.

Here are four good examples of inbound break up emails.

This Trunk Club email does a good job at re-stating the value that's being lost.

Subject: Goodbye from Trunk Club

Hi Steli,

I was really looking forward to putting together a trunk of great clothes for you, but I haven't heard a response to my calls and emails. That means this will be my last email to you. If you change your mind and would like to give Trunk Club a try, please let me know and I'll have you looking great in no time.

Best,

This email by Hubspot is a bit too long-winded and they might have already changed it, but it's still a fairly good email to study.

Subject: Thank You From Hubspot

Steli,

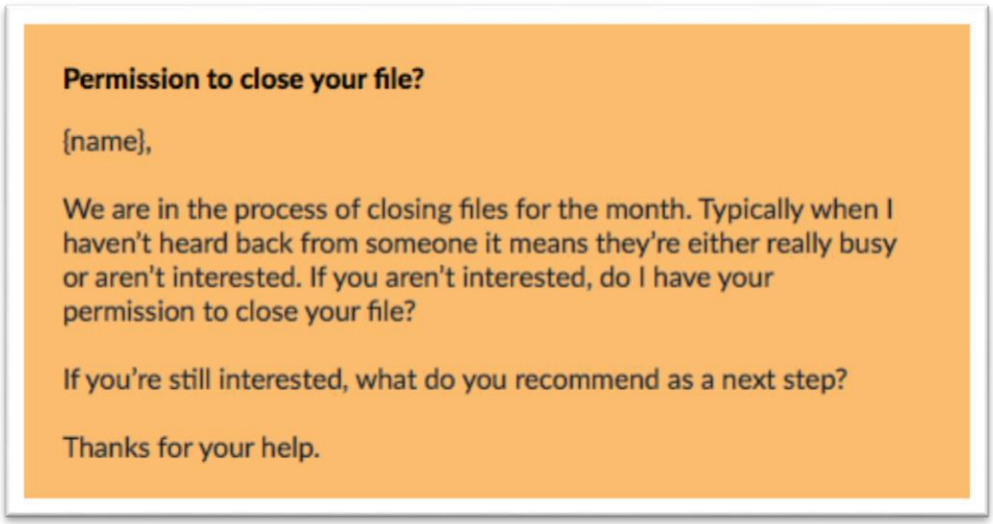
In reviewing some outstanding business today, I'll be taking Close.io out of my current follow ups at this time.

Where we'd initially agreed in the value of our service to strengthen your online engagement, I've reached out to you on several occasions following our initial discussions. Having not received any replies to date, I assume that we've either fallen off your radar or perhaps the interest has diminished to the degree that my follow up is no longer warranted.

I appreciate the opportunity to work with you and wish you the best with your ongoing marketing efforts. I'd be happy to speak with you when you are ready to invest resources into generating leads from your site.

Best,

Here’s an email from Bryan Kreuzberger's Breakthrough Email.



Permission to close your file?

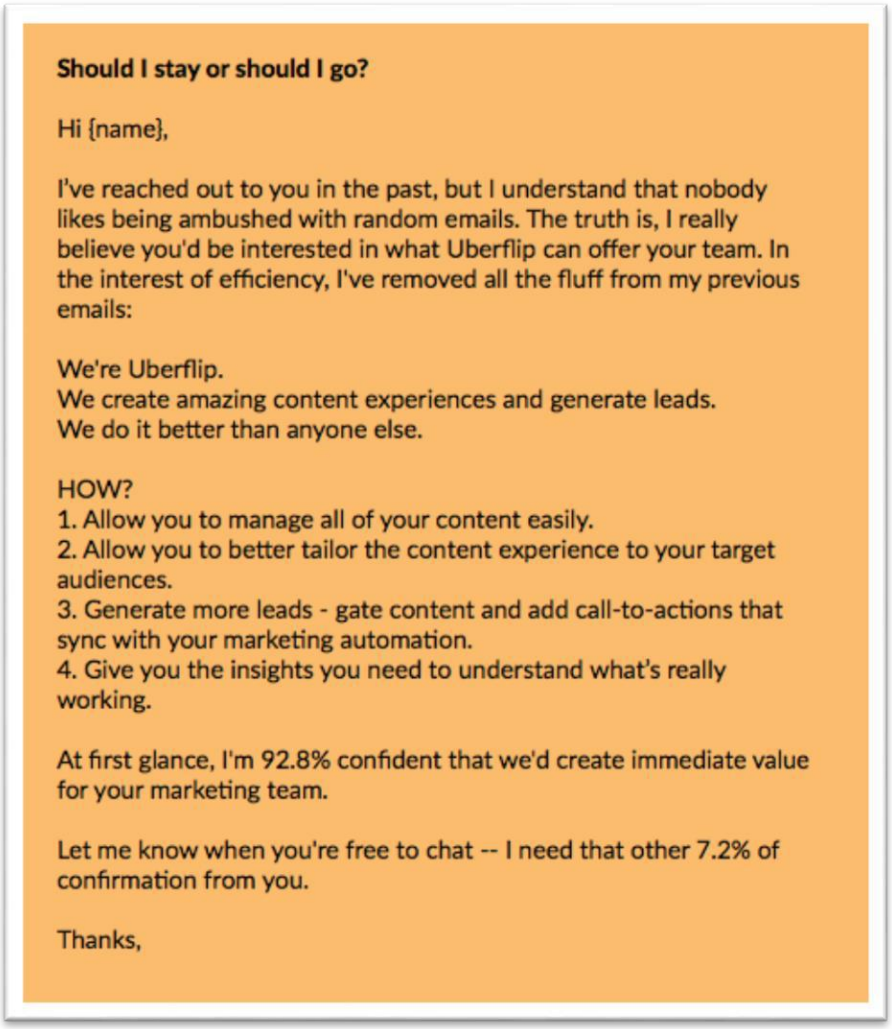
{name},

We are in the process of closing files for the month. Typically when I haven’t heard back from someone it means they’re either really busy or aren’t interested. If you aren’t interested, do I have your permission to close your file?

If you’re still interested, what do you recommend as a next step?

Thanks for your help.

"Should I stay or should I go?" is another option. Here’s an example from Uberflip.



Should I stay or should I go?

Hi {name},

I've reached out to you in the past, but I understand that nobody likes being ambushed with random emails. The truth is, I really believe you'd be interested in what Uberflip can offer your team. In the interest of efficiency, I've removed all the fluff from my previous emails:

We're Uberflip.
We create amazing content experiences and generate leads.
We do it better than anyone else.

HOW?
1. Allow you to manage all of your content easily.
2. Allow you to better tailor the content experience to your target audiences.
3. Generate more leads - gate content and add call-to-actions that sync with your marketing automation.
4. Give you the insights you need to understand what's really working.

At first glance, I'm 92.8% confident that we'd create immediate value for your marketing team.

Let me know when you're free to chat -- I need that other 7.2% of confirmation from you.

Thanks,

Use these as inspiration for your own breakup emails, and constantly track how these emails perform.

The basic structure of an effective breakup email

Here are the elements you want to include in your email:

- I've repeatedly tried to do something good for you.
- You've never even replied (maybe because you're too busy, you're not interested or you've moved on to something else).
- Thus, this is the last email you'll ever get from me.
- If at any time you ever want to [insert the desired outcome, e.g. see how I can help optimize your sales process], I'd be more than happy to speak with you.
- Here my contact details (phone number, etc.).

Mistakes to avoid

Sometimes I get breakup emails that have an almost accusatory or disappointed tone–that's not what you should do.

It's important that you keep the email on the emotionally positive or neutral side. After all, this isn't a high school breakup; you're a professional, this is business. No blame, criticism or disappointment.

Why it works

The breakup email utilizes the principle of loss aversion. When you take a good thing away from someone, it makes them want it more.

It won't work with people who never had any interest in your offer at all. If they're completely cold, nothing you write in a breakup email will get them interested.

But for those people who were somewhat interested but just didn't have the time, or haven't made it a priority yet, it might just be the nudge that gets them engaged with you.

WHAT NOW?

"If you double the number of times you follow up after reading this book, we've made the world a better place."

Congratulations, you've made it all the way to the end of the book. Here's what most people will do now: They'll feel pumped and inspired that they learned some useful stuff... and then execute on it about as successfully as most of us execute our New Year's resolutions. Meaning: They'll keep doing exactly what they've always done before.

That's also why most people live average lives.

Here's what I hope YOU will do *right effing now*:

Make a list of 10 people that you need to follow up with right now.

Open up your email client.

Send each of them an email to move the conversation (whatever it is) one step closer to the finish line. (It's totally fine if the finish line is a definite "no". Then at least you can really get it out of the way, and you've freed up a tiny bit of mental RAM for something new, something better, something more important. The goal here is to proactively and deliberately create a result much faster than it would happen otherwise.)

Do this right now. I mean RIGHT NOW. Before you keep reading.

Here, I'll leave some empty space on the page for you so you have time to do this now:

...

Alright. Did you do it? I hope so. If you want, you can send me an email to steli@close.io and just tell me "Hey, I just followed up with 10 people. Am I the greatest or what?" It'll put a smile on my face, cause I love people who actually DO SHIT (versus just thinking and talking about it).

The follow-up formula changed my life and allowed me to create multi-million dollar companies and help tens of thousands of people around the world. May your accomplishments with the follow-up formula make me look like a total loser! 😉

Want to make more & better sales calls?

Try our sales software free. Call your prospects with just one click, have every call & email logged automatically in the system and never again let a prospect fall through the cracks.

What Close.io users say about our software:

> *Hands down, the best CRM I've ever used – and trust me, I've tried pretty much everything out there. The platform is incredible flexible for your needs without being overwhelming with customization options. It covers all the bases you need, but makes your job that much easier with a simple, clean design. It really takes the headache out of trying to learn a new platform. Intuitive and powerful, it helps me keep track of campaigns and manage relationships with clients.*
>
> – Cade Proulx, Venture Capital, Entrepreneurship, Angel Investments

> *This CRM intuitively leads you to get the fuck out of the way of yourself so you can make more goddam calls effortlessly and efficiently – which means closing more sales in less time.*
>
> – Rob Hanna

We switched from SugarCRM to Close.io and haven't looked back. It's simplicity is an asset -- the feature set is thoughtful and powerful, and the native Mac OS app is a pleasant break from our other browser-based tools.

– Ryan Buckley, Cofounder & COO of Scripted.com

As a start-up, we are all about focusing on the things that matter the most. Close.io helps our sales department focus on the productivity metrics that will lead to more closed deals. The simplicity of their UI is what I love the most, as well as the integrated calling and emailing function.

– Mark Sorenson, Founder/CEO @ Social High Rise

Start your 14-day free Close.io trial now
(no credit card required)