UNIVERSITY OF LJUBLJANA – SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS

MASTER'S THESIS

EMAIL MARKETING IN START-UPS: AN EMPIRICAL EXAMINATION OF RECIPROCITY EFFECT

Ljubljana, April 2020 Matija Žiberna

IZJAVA O AVTORSTVU

Podpisani Matija Žiberna, student Ekonomske fakultete Univerze v Ljubljani, avtor predloženega dela z naslovom EMAIL MARKETING IN START-UPS: AN EMPIRICAL EXAMINATION OF RECIPROCITY EFFECT, pripravljenega v sodelovanju s svetovalcem doc. dr. Blaž Zupan,

IZJAVLJAM

1. da sem predloženo delo pripravil samostojno;
2. da je tiskana oblika predloženega dela istovetna njegovi elektronski obliki;
3. da je besedilo predloženega dela jezikovno korektno in tehnično pripravljeno v skladu z Navodili za izdelavo zaključnih nalog Ekonomske fakultete Univerze v Ljubljani, kar pomeni, da sem poskrbel/-a, da so dela in mnenja drugih avtorjev oziroma avtoric, ki jih uporabljam oziroma navajam v besedilu, citirana oziroma povzeta v skladu z Navodili za izdelavo zaključnih nalog Ekonomske fakultete Univerze v Ljubljani;
4. da se zavedam, da je plagiatorstvo – predstavljanje tujih del (v pisni ali grafični obliki) kot mojih lastnih – kaznivo po Kazenskem zakoniku Republike Slovenije;
5. da se zavedam posledic, ki bi jih na osnovi predloženega dela dokazano plagiatorstvo lahko predstavljalo za moj status na Ekonomski fakulteti Univerze v Ljubljani v skladu z relevantnim pravilnikom;
6. da sem pridobil vsa potrebna dovoljenja za uporabo podatkov in avtorskih del v predloženem delu in jih v njem jasno označil;
7. da sem pri pripravi predloženega dela ravnal v skladu z etičnimi načeli in, kjer je to potrebno, za raziskavo pridobil soglasje etične komisije;
8. da soglašam, da se elektronska oblika predloženega dela uporabi za preverjanje podobnosti vsebine z drugimi deli s programsko opremo za preverjanje podobnosti vsebine, ki je povezana s študijskim informacijskim sistemom članice;
9. da na Univerzo v Ljubljani neodplačno, neizključno, prostorsko in časovno neomejeno prenašam pravico shranitve predloženega dela v elektronski obliki, pravico reproduciranja ter pravico dajanja predloženega dela na voljo javnosti na svetovnem spletu preko Repozitorija Univerze v Ljubljani;
10. da hkrati z objavo predloženega dela dovoljujem objavo svojih osebnih podatkov, ki so navedeni v njem in v tej izjavi.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DKIM – Domain keys identified mail
SPF - Sender policy framework
LN – LinkedIn
LNH – LinkedIn Helper
LSN – LinkedIn Sales Navigator
PB - PhantomBuster
CSS – Cascading style sheets
HTML – Hyper-text mark-up language
SEO – Search engine optimization
CRM – Custom relationship management

ID - Identity
GIF - Graphics interchange format
PDF - Portable document format
B2B – Business to business
B2C – Business to customer
ISP – Internet service provider
CEO – Chief executive officer
CSV – Comma separated value
DMARC - Domain-based message authentication, reporting & conformance
CAN-SPAM - Controlling the assault of non-solicited pornography and marketing Act
GDPR - General data protection regulation
CASL - Canada's anti-spam legislation
CTA – Call to action
KPI – Key performance indication
P-A-S - Problem-agitate-solve
F-A-B - Feature, advantage, benefit
AIDA – Attention, interest, decision, action

INTRODUCTION

One of the biggest challenges for any start-up can be the generation of sales. As businesses with a limited marketing budget they are compelled to leverage methods with the highest return on investment (hereinafter ROI) in order to justify the marketing spend. Nowadays, start-ups with an aim to market on the global scale can hardly afford traditional marketing. That is why they have to adopt a more inventive approach for reaching global audiences in a more affordable and faster way. Email marketing offers an affordable and efficient channel of communication among businesses (hereinafter B2B) and end-users (hereinafter B2C).

Established businesses are to gain by employing coherent email marketing strategy as well. Insufficient lead follow-up is commonplace in the B2B sector since sales representatives ignore approximately 70% of all leads generated via marketing. An average office worker receives more than 121 emails in a single day (Radicati, 2014). Most of it is unwanted, 49.7% of all received email is considered spam (Salesforce, 2014). To break through the noise, each email needs to entice a reader to open it, read it and perform an action planned by a marketer. There are numerous factors that could affect the outcome like the use of trigger words, length of an email, design/readability, use of images, time of sending, domain reputation, spam filters, quality of recipient's email address and many more.

Copywriting is the act of writing the text for the purpose of marketing. It is written content that aims to convey a message and ultimately persuade the reader to take a particular action. Various writing techniques, formulas and models have been developed to aid marketers write more compelling copies. This thesis covers the AIDA model, F-A-B and P-A-S formulas for effective copywriting. However, there is no such thing as "one message fits all". Same business can serve different groups of customers. Consequently, it is rational to segment the customer base into smaller sub-segments and adjust the messaging accordingly. Categories of data that are commonly used for segmentation are geographics, demographics, psychographics and behavioural data. There are numerous data points encapsulated in the above categories which can be used to personalize a message. For instance, addressing by the first name, sending a copy in their respective language and more.

Furthermore, two customers with a rather similar profile can still warrant different messaging. The tone of the message needs to fit their position in the buyer journey. The buyer journey is the process buyers go through to become aware of, consider and evaluate, and decide to purchase a new product or service. The more a business grows the more customers will be in a funnel. Consequently, the complexity of tracking quickly becomes too much to handle for marketers without any aid of technology. That is why drip and lead nurturing campaigns have developed in recent years, to take some work away from marketers and make it more scalable. A drip campaign consists of any series of emails that are sent to a reader at predefined time-intervals with a specific goal in mind. Some of the most common are abandonment cart, onboarding emails and re-engagement emails.

As already seen, the success of an email campaign or email, in general, can depend on a wide array of factors. Subject line, call to action, design and timing all play a great role in the email campaign success. There is nuance to each of the listed elements. For instance, a wrong selection of words in the subject line, such as use of a spam trigger word, can push the email in the spam folder, never reaching its intended destination. Alternatively, not having a mobile-friendly template can steer readers away from the message when accessing via their portable devices.

As a business saying goes: “What gets measured gets managed”, it holds true for email marketing as well. Through years, key performance indicators (hereinafter KPIs) have developed to measure the performance of an email. Some of the most common KPIs are; open, click, reply, click-through, bounce and unsubscribe rate.

Findings from social psychology can be used to improve email marketing campaigns. Reciprocity principle, a concept that has been first introduced by Robert Cialdini (1984) refers to a social expectation where people are motivated to repay the favour that they have been provided (Gouldner, 1960). It has the ability to determine human behaviour by gaining one's compliance. Therefore, the reciprocity principle can have strong implications in the business setting to influence desirable behaviour of prospects and clients. Reciprocal concessions are one variation of the principle which occurs whenever one concedes to a person by reducing the perceived size of the initial request. The thesis will focus deeper on the “pregiving” technique, while others such as “door in the face” and “foot in the door” are also covered. These techniques present three possible ways of increasing the likelihood of the prospect’s compliance with marketer’s request.

The general idea surrounding “pre-giving” is that gifting a benefactor will increase the likelihood of compliance with the target request, asked by a beneficiary. Giving something to a benefactor, it generates a sense of obligation through the need to complete an exchange by repaying, which is the intention of the beneficiary all along.

The empirical research focuses on the examination of the effect of the “pre-giving” compliance-gaining technique in the online environment. Secondly, it aims to demonstrate a way how businesses can grow their audience. The examination was facilitated by a controlled online experiment. More specifically, it set out to investigate whether there is a positive link between how an online visitor reached the webpage and the likelihood of conversion on the form.

Hypothesis used in the experiment:

1. “Pregiving” technique is more effective at converting online visitors into subscribers than the control group

The Master Thesis consists of three parts. First two are theoretical in nature while the last one is empirical research. The first chapter covering the email marketing topic is supported with secondary data that was obtained by reviewing professional publications online. The chapter covering the reciprocity principle was also supported with secondary data by reviewing scientific publications. The empirical research is grounded on primary data generated through a controlled online test (A/B). It tries to connect the knowledge and insights gathered from the first two chapters. It includes a creation of two educational blog-posts whose primary purpose was to serve as a “gift” in the reciprocal exchange. Half of the participants (B) were able to visit the post by visiting the link. The second half (A) was forwarded to a landing-page, where in order to get access to the education post they needed to first give away their email address. Pearson's chi-squared test was used to examine the results.

The first chapter aims to provide an overview of email marketing with a goal to demonstrate how and why a business should leverage it. It is written with a hand-on approach in mind, so businesses interested in deploying email marketing can incorporate its findings in their process. It starts by demonstrating the importance of segmentation and personalization business’ contact database by accounting for buyer journey and buyer persona. Thesis then shifts focus to copywriting by illustrating examples of effective copywriting which compels readers to open, read and perform an action. It does so by describing most commonly used aiding techniques for writing, like the AIDA model and F-A-B formula. The proceeding chapter covers how to measure email’s performance and why it is important to do so by describing the most common KPIs. Next part touches on a more technical side by elaborating on deliverability and sending domain authentication. The first chapter concludes with marketing automation, portraying most common use cases, lead generation and showing the distinction between drip and lead nurturing campaigns. The second chapter focuses on a theoretical overview of the reciprocity principle. It presents findings from social psychology and behavioural economics by reviewing scientific literature revolving around the reciprocity principle. It includes findings from most influential research up until the writing of this master thesis. Thesis continues with a brief presentation of the three compliance-gaining techniques, how one can defend from them and by showcasing the potential implications for marketing and sales. The third chapter covers the experiment which combines findings from the first and second chapters and tries to demonstrate how its findings can be used in conjunction to build a prospect database for any business online. More precisely, it explores the effect of reciprocal concession technique called “pregiving” on online lead generation through lead magnet and content creation. It revolves around providing educational content in a form of the post which serves a role of a “gift” in reciprocal exchange. Lastly, the conclusion wraps up the Thesis by elaborating the experiment's results, its implications as well as limitations. At the end of the Thesis, reference list and list of appendices is provided.

1 EMAIL MARKETING

1.1 Introduction to email marketing and start-up

The email marketing is not only, a method to promote a business but also to nurture relationships with prospects, keep customers updated about a brand and offers, and much more. Since the first email had been sent in 1972, email has evolved into one of the most cost-effective forms of direct marketing due to its ease of reaching subscribers and affordability (Smart Insights, 2013). Globally, a staggering 269 billion emails are exchanged every day between 3.7 billion email users worldwide. It is expected that by 2022, over 316 billion emails will be sent each day among 4.1 billion email users (The Radicati Group, 2017). With the astounding growth in the quantity of email sent, the vast majority of received email remains unwanted. However, although 49.7 percent of all received email is considered spam, more than 90 percent of user still check their emails daily (Salesforce Marketing Cloud, 2014).

E-consultancy (2018) report found that 70 percent of businesses attribute up to 20 percent of their sales to email marketing channel. This represents a reduction from the year before, which might be attributed to the relative difficulty of attributing sales resulting from email to email marketing. Email marketing is a long-term game where it is normal for them to not take wanted action immediately after receiving an email. It can last weeks, months or even years before they decide to take action that was planned by marketers.

1.1.1 Email marketing segmentation

Email marketing segmentation represents a process of grouping of subscribers into sub-segments based on a set of chosen pre-defined criteria. Goal of grouping subscribers into smaller sub-segments is to deliver a more relevant content based on their geographic location, interests, purchase history and user online behaviour. Segments are designed to cater to each segment differently rather than creating one mass message for all. Each email segment consists of a different group of people who are unique and need different levels of motivation to convert. It is paramount for a successful lead nurturing campaign, which we will cover later.

Furthermore, each prospect is at its own stage of the buyer's journey (see 1.1.3 for more). At one end, prospects are trying to figure out what do they look for, while on the other end, some might be evaluating different providers against each-other. Using segments helps to improve user experience as the content is more likely to be relevant to the recipient since it is addressing her or his needs (van Rijn, 2014). In the following table, types of data used to form a segment are shown.

Figure 1: Types of data available for segmentation

Geographics	***Demographics***	***Psychographics***	***Behavioural***
Country	Age	Lifestyle	Benefits sought
City	Gender	Interest, opinion, activity	Purchase usage
Density	Income	Concerns	Intent
Language	Education	Personality	Occasion
Climate	Social status	Values	Buyer stage
Area	Family	Attitude	User status
Population	Life stage		Life cycle stage
	Occupation		Engagement

Source: Adopted from EmailMonday (2014).

Generally, data can be placed in the following groups based on consumer's demographics, psychographics, geographics, behavioural data and firmographics. The most common is demographics data, which relates to the structure of a population. It includes information like language, gender, age, occupation and net income. For example, knowing occupation is integral for creating an account-based campaign. Leveraging both, occupation and income data, enables us to target accounts with the most revenue potential with a niche product (Mialki, 2019).

Secondly, psychographics deal with attitudes, interests, personality, values, opinions and lifestyle. For instance, we could deduct that someone, who is an adrenaline and thrill-seeking kite-surfer and someone, who is an amateur bird-photographer taking great effort in protecting nature are probably interested in a different category of products despite coming from the same geographical area with similar demographic profile. Based on the psychographic profile, these consumers probably purchase very few of the same non-essential products.

On the other hand, leveraging psychographic traits for marketing efforts can open up new possibilities for businesses marketing the same product category to prospects with vastly different demographic and geographic profiles. Take GoPro for example, an action camera manufacturer, is an attractive option for everyone who wants to record herself or himself while performing sport activities. What this means for GoPro's marketing approach is that their target segment might needs to be defined by psychographic traits in priority and might ignore age or occupation in shaping the approach. Even if the two persons have a vastly different demographic profile, they could still be potential customers for the same product or service based on the similarity of their psychographic profiles. In short, the psychographic data gives more contextual information and allows businesses to direct marketing efforts at particular groups of people with similar traits which are more likely to buy a product or a service.

Geographics cover data such as city, county, state, region, country, or global region. Moreover, this can be further segmented into rural, suburban, and urban areas. The segmentation allows the business to target and appeal to prospects and customers in different regions. The country can be used as a base to determine the language that recipients speak. Having the country information stored for each prospect is crucial when launching a country-specific promotion or when there are pan-regional regulatory differences. Furthermore, the purchasing power might significantly differ across countries and cities, which is why demographics and geographics can be used together to create better marketing and sales strategies.

While demographics apply to people, firmographics apply to businesses. Firmographics allow businesses to consider numerous factors like industry a company is operating in, company size, number of employees, years in business and more. Having this information can be paramount for creating promotional campaigns. For example, for campaigns targeting sole proprietorship, the messaging must differ to the one used for corporate prospects. The former represents communicating with the person who will be paying, using and troubleshooting the solution while the latter most likely includes someone who does not have the decision-making power and will need to present it to the upper management.

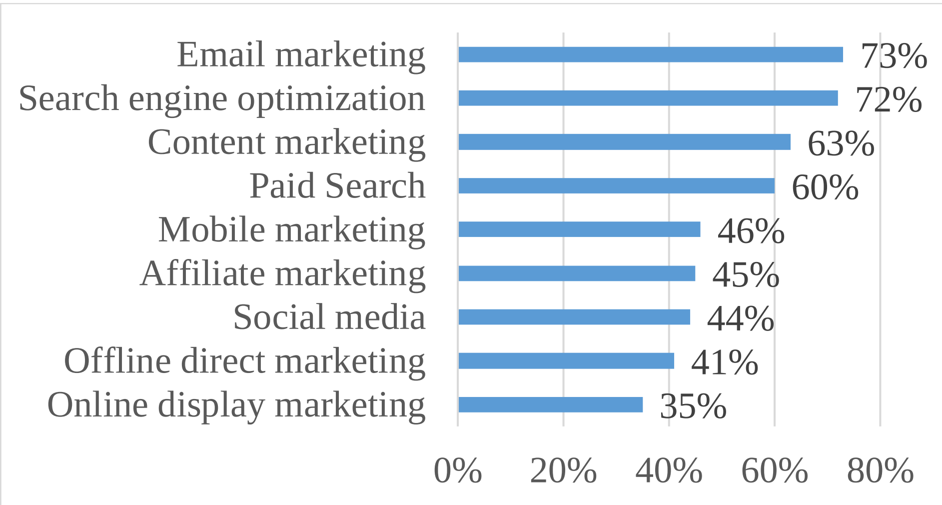
Lastly, behavioural data is generated by a customer's engagement with the business. It might store information such as the recency, frequency of purchases, spending habits, visited pages, number of visits, duration of visits, and so forth. Collected data-points can be used within marketing automation workflows like cart abandonment and welcome emails drip campaigns.

Enriching consumer profiles, or progressive profiling, is a long-term process which warrants multiple touches from both sales and marketing in order to enrich the profile. With self-segmentation, we can leverage contact interaction as a way to speed up the process of collecting subscriber data by using subtle but distinctive elements, which help to label users accordingly. It enables us to learn about the contacts' lifestyle by observing interests, concerns, values and more. However, merely knowing who they are and what they stand for is not enough. Every contact is in a different stage of the buyer's journey. Knowing at which stage the contact is in is crucial for delivering a relevant message. Providing trendy industry news is hardly relevant to someone who is in the initial phase of the buying process and is unsure which brand to buy.

1.1.2 Importance and relevance for Start-ups

One of the most important elements for start-ups is growing sales which comes from having enough qualitative leads (Content Marketing Institute, 2015, p. 22). Companies with a limited marketing budget need to leverage methods with the highest return on investment in order to justify the marketing spend. Start-ups working on a global scale can hardly afford traditional marketing methods due to their high cost. That is why it is necessary to adopt a more inventive approach to reach a global audience in a cheaper and faster way in order to match the start-up's desire for growth. Email marketing offers an affordable and efficient channel of communication between start-ups and consumers. The following graph shows the share of respondents rating email marketing from good to great for its return on investment (hereinafter ROI) (Econsultancy and Adestra, 2017).

Figure 2: Share of respondents rating marketing channels from "good" to great for ROI



Source: Adopted from E-consultancy (2017).

Email tends to be seen as a more personal communication between the business and the customer than other marketing channels. In addition, the email channel is regarded as a professional channel through which people expect to receive information tied to their professional interest (Marketing Sherpa, 2013).

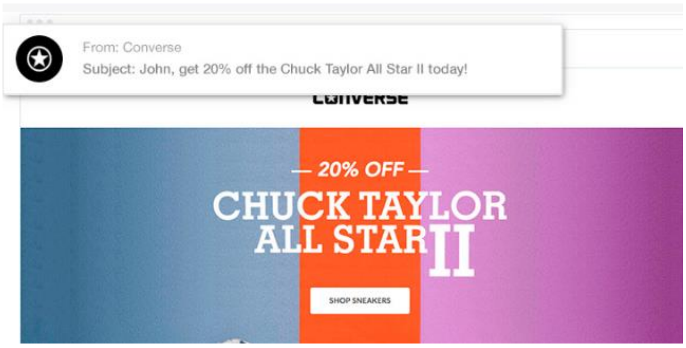
Even though emails have been with us for a very long time, email marketing is still considered one of the most efficient marketing channels. Many critics have stated that email marketing is on the decline and will be eventually replaced by social media to reach customers. However, looking at the trends, email has never been as strong as it is now, and is one of the most popular channels to reach customers and prospects for companies worldwide. Looking at ROI, email marketing presents one of the most inexpensive ways of acquiring new customers (Santora, 2019). In fact, in one research, email as a channel turned out to be 40 times more effective at acquiring new customers than Facebook or Twitter (Aufreiter, Boudet & Weng, 2014)

Furthermore, it generates a return of $38, an equivalent of 3,800 percent per dollar spent (Perricone, 2018). The conversion rates for online purchases and the average order value of the email marketing channel is three times higher compared to the social media channel (Aufreiter, Boudet & Weng, 2014). Due to technological advances, what might take a whole team of software engineers a decade ago, like sending a newsletter to a couple of thousand recipients, is now as easy as pressing a button.

1.2 Personalisation

Personalisation means crafting emails that are tailor-made for recipients. It is common nowadays to send an email with a recipient's first name in the salutation. Research has shown that human brains respond to personal names emphatically (Camody & Lewis, 2006). However, a lot more data-points can be used to personalise emails by leveraging subscriber data to create a more personalised and dynamic email. To facilitate the process, it is necessary to integrate data from the customer relationship management program (hereinafter CRM), e-commerce, website and offline sources with an email marketing software. Personalised emails have, on average, 26 percent higher open rates (Experian, 2013). In another experiment, by appending contact's first name to the subject line, researchers have achieved an increase in open rate by 20 percent (Sahni, Wheeler & Chintagunta, 2018). The same study also stated that campaigns using personalised email yields up to six times better RI compared to non-personalized emailing campaigns. The majority of marketers asked in the study, identified ongoing, personalised communication with existing customers as having moderate to significant impact on revenue (Demand Metric, 2014).

Figure 3: Email by Converse, where personalisation is used in their subject lines.



Source: Adopted from GetResponse (2017).

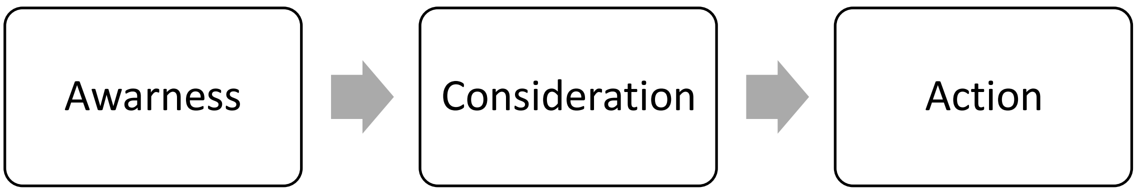
Personalised emails tend to lead to better results than generic email blasts across numerous key performance indicators like open and conversion rate. That is why it is highly recommended for every business using email marketing, to engage in personalisation as well. As a result of businesses collecting an extensive quantity of data, personalisation is not only limited to the personalised salutation. One of the main driving factors is the accessibility of advanced technological solutions and the low costs associated with it. Fine-grained personalisation leverages multiple data-points such as country, city, first name, business type and past web-activity, like visited product pages, amount of page visits, duration of the session and more. This data gives a holistic view of consumer profiles. Leveraging all types of data can lead to email messaging that resonates with the recipients and provides them with timely and relevant information.

1.2.1 Buyer journey

The buyer's journey describes a process where prospects go through stages of a buying process. The three stages of the buyer's journey can be found below (Hintz, 2018):

1) The awareness stage is where prospects just joined the funnel via marketing effort. During this stage, prospects need help to understand their problem and see how the product or service could benefit them.
2) The consideration stage is where prospects have defined their problem and are looking at how to solve it. Messaging should be created in a way that helps prospects solving their pain through educational content.
3) The decision stage consists of prospects who are now determined what will work to solve their issue. Prospects make a decision between providers. The main goal is to create a buying experience as smooth as possible and differentiate from competitors.

Figure 4: Steps in the buyer's journey



Source: Adopted from Hintz (2018).

In the awareness stage, buyers are not only unaware of a business but also their need or pain-point. The goal of the awareness stage is to firstly, make prospects aware of their pain-point and secondly, showcase how the solution helps solve their pain-points. Email marketing can help address these pain-points by providing educational material, customer reviews and testimonials. Since nearly all online activity can be tracked, offering these materials can be used to identify which stage they are in. Marketing automation tools offer the tracking of content downloads and the collection of prospect information. As prospects get more educated, they start to identify their needs and desires. At this point, prospects start to eliminate vendors who do not match their needs. Providing all the information that might be potentially relevant is crucial since almost 70 percent of the buyer's journey is completed before a potential buyer even communicates with sales (Moore, 2013).

The completion of the previous steps ultimately leads to the consideration stage, which occurs when prospects have narrowed down their choices. Prospects will begin conducting comprehensive comparisons of each provider and reaching out to sales representatives with questions and concerns.

Lastly, there is the decision stage where prospects will usually start the preparation, implementation and cost assessment. Prospects will select the solution which best suits their needs and budget (Pardot, 2014). Highlighting the product's or service's benefits through free demo or trial, charts underlining the competitive advantage over the competition, and coupons can help to tip the scale. By taking the time to empathise with the prospect and provide the information they need, a business increases the chance of securing the right customers for their products or services. This can translate into a higher retention rate for the business (Chatterjee, 2017).

At Harmony, we collect information regarding the business to business (hereinafter B2B) prospect's stage in the buying journey by providing three drop-down options when prospects request access to the professional platform. Knowing at what stage prospects are currently in, helps Harmony to send more relevant content which matches with their stage in the buyer's journey.

Table 1: Self-select options which help identify at which stage of buyer's journey prospects are in

Stage	***Option***	***Content***
Awareness	I would like to be a store owner selling CBD	Regulation and trends reports, comparison with nicotine, best practices to start the business
Consideration	I'm a store owner that already sells CBD products	Profit margins, point-of-sales materials, certificate of analysis, post-sales support
Decision	I'm a store owner looking to add CBD to my existing product line	Pricelist, order form, discount structure

Source: own work.

1.2.2 Buyer ppersona

Buyer personas are fictional characters that businesses create to represent their ideal customers. It is usually a mix of demographic, psychographic, firmographic, and behavioural data which has been collected through market research as well as insights and feedback gathered from the sales team and clients. A buyer persona includes detailed information about existing customers, such as their shopping and purchasing patterns, age, and product or company needs. Buyer personas help businesses understand buying habits, product research and more.

Buyer persona's main advantage comes to light when combined with email marketing. In one case study, a persona-based email campaign drove a seven percent conversion rate (Collegis Education, 2014). Once the personas have been established, sending an email and having the recipients self-select an option that best fits their needs and location in the sales funnel can significantly increase the conversion of email marketing. For example, creating three articles with distinct messaging that appeals only to the corresponding persona is one way to let recipients self-identify with the persona. E-books, articles, how-to guides and any other digital asset can be potentially used for self-identifying purposes. Additionally, in order to make the messaging more relevant, matching the recipient with his or her stage in the buyer's journey should help to deliver the message that resonates best with the person reading it.

Here are two of the buyer personas we have created at Harmony to better shape the content around them and address their pain-points with timely and highly relevant emailing campaigns. Rory represents an experienced user of the products offered by the competition looking to switch while Hannah represents a segment of prospects who are yet to try the product (see Appendix 4).

Lastly, a negative persona is a representation of whom we do not want as a customer. These people should be avoided in marketing efforts. Additionally, it can be beneficial to look at the underlying reasons. It may be due to not having sufficient budget. For instance, they could be students who are only engaging with the content for research or knowledge or are too advanced for what the offer.

1.3 Copy that converts

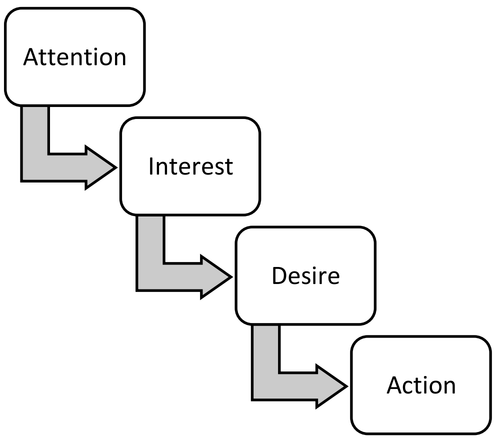
An average office worker receives more than 121 emails in a single day (Radicati, 2014)**.** It has been harder than ever to get a message in the mailbox let alone being read by recipient. That is why businesses need to pay attention at copywriting and designing emails. In order to stand out, among the plethora of messages recipients receive daily, an email needs to grab and hold the recipient's attention from the start.

When writing a copy for a product or service, it is tempting to talk about all the features and mention all the science behind the product or service. Also, the exclusive use of industry numbers and jargon with emphasis on how they are "leading the industry" with "ground-breaking" approach, is often seen as a boost to a business's perceived credibility and trustworthiness. Businesses start to speak a language called "technobabble", which is hard to understand for those outside of said business (Klaver, 2015). The prime reason being the fact that businesses like their ideas so much and want people to understand why they should follow them and buy their products and services. However, all the logical arguments that can strengthen beliefs in the new opportunity will not make prospects buy unless they have already had the same initial emotional epiphany that business employee had. All logic, features and benefits people are told before the epiphany will annoy them (Russel, 2015, p. 26).

Furthermore, prospects first need to be convinced emotionally before they will be excited by the logic. One of the key elements in telling captivating stories is oversimplification. During the 2016 primary elections, a study looked at the speeches of the Republican candidates and ran them through the Flesch-Kincaid test which showed the grade level of their speech. Trump, the ultimate winner, averaged a third-to-fourth-grade level on each of his speeches (Frischling, 2018). Keeping emails simple enough to be understood by a 7th grader can lead to best results (Printwand, 2013).

To create capturing messages, the AIDA model has been developed. The acronym AIDA stands for attention, interest, desire and action. Since its publication in 1898, it has cemented itself as one of the key principles in advertising and marketing. More generally, it describes a set of emotions that is required to move prospects from attention to action. Consumers must move through each stage of the model to complete the desired action. It has a shape of a typical funnel with fewer people at each stage. The AIDA model is used to help determine how an email campaign should be crafted to match the target audience with their progress in the buyers' journey. Like every model, it has its downsides. Even though emotions are widely regarded as a primary factor for decision making in advertising psychology, they do not have a place in the AIDA model. Likewise, targeting or segmentation is also neglected. As we have already seen before, segmentation is paramount in getting the right results. Despite all of that, it can be still a helpful guide when laying down the plan of a campaign. The next chapters will focus on each individual stage in the AIDA model.

Figure 5: Steps in the AIDA model



Source: Adopted from Rawal (2013).

1.3.1 Attention

The first step is to capture the prospect's attention. It is incredibly hard for marketers to break through the noise and capture the prospect's attention. One in three marketers says it is the top challenge they face (SurveryMonkey, 2018). Once attention is grabbed, the target audience will start to become curious about what the business does. The subject line is what captures the initial attention. The attention span is continuing to decline. A study by Microsoft found that the Canadian population has an attention span of a mere eight seconds (Microsoft Canada, 2015, p. 6).

Nevertheless, opening the email is just the first, albeit crucial, step in the process. Once it has been opened, the headline is the next point of interest. Eugene Schwartz famously said, a headline has one goal, to urge a prospect to read the first paragraph of an ad (Schwartz, 2004). We should not only care that our subject line is engaging but also everything that follows after. On average, a headline is read five times more often than the main body (Ogivly, 1985). As it stands, it is imperative to make the first words so relevant and valuable that they cannot be ignored. In the following sub-chapters, I will focus on a few methods which can help with attracting attention in an email.

The curiosity gap can be used as a method to tease a reader with a hint of what is to come, without giving all the answers straight away. In other words, headlines should be specific enough to entice the reader, but not so specific that the reader does not need to click and read through. Humans have an innate desire to learn new things which give us pleasure rush. We experience curiosity in two ways, perceptually and epistemically (Livio, 2017)

On the one hand, perceptual curiosity is the desire to understand something odd or puzzling. Something like a magic trick, for example. On the other hand, epistemic curiosity is simply the desire to acquire new information or learn something new and the resulting joy is what makes the curiosity gap an effective technique. For instance, "Learn 5 Proven Secrets to Get Rich" represents epistemic curiosity while "Tips to Score the Lowest Interest Rate on Your Car Payment" falls under perceptual curiosity. Importantly, the curiosity gap is not to be mistaken with clickbait. Even though the two appear to be similar, they differ in an important aspect. Subject lines are written to employ the curiosity gap to deliver the content that was expected upon clicking. The reader learns something more that was teased in the subject line. Contrarily, clickbait leverages headlines to lure or bait readers into reading by making headlines sensational that represent exaggerated summary of the content, often leaving a feeling of disappointment among readers.

Moreover, it lures readers into viewing a marketing message that most often does not have anything to do with the subject used. For instance, a headline such as "How I made $1000 Online in A Month.". Despite the subject line being attractive, it does not reveal how much time and money was spent on generating those $1000 of revenue. The main difference between a click-bait and a curiosity gap is that the latter manages the readers expectations while clickbait does not (Schelfhaudt, 2015).

Enticing Scarcity

From social psychology, it is known that humans value objects in scarce supply higher and attribute lower value on those in abundant supply. An item's availability is often used as a quick gauge to estimate quality and utility of the item (Lynn, 1989). According to commodity theory, scarcity leads to decision bias known as "scarcity bias" which ultimately leads to an increase of the subjective value of an offering (Brock & Greenwald, 1968). It has also been shown that the scarcity of the offering increases the favourability of the offering and accelerates purchases (Ko, Morris & Chang, 2015). Another reason why we might get more attracted to the products when the opportunities become less available is, according to the reactance theory, that losing freedom leaves us with a feeling of unpleasantness (Brehm, 1989). Preserving our ingrained paradigms is the centrepiece of the psychological reactance theory. Whenever a free choice is limited or threatened, the desire for an object often increases significantly. This is driven by the humans' innate need to retain the freedom to choose. Subsequently, we are not only potentially risking the product itself, but also the freedom to choose in the long run. People might perceive the purchase of a product as sure small loss. However, it can serve as a guard against the potential regret in the long term of not purchasing when it was available (Kahneman, D. & Tversky, A., 1979).

Here are the key factors to keep in mind when trying to induce scarcity bias within messaging (Collier, 2012). Firstly, induce the fear of losing and specify the apparent loss which will occur in case prospects do not comply. Secondly, define the timeframe in which prospects can act. Additional three guidelines can be taken into consideration. (Novemsky & Kahneman, 2005)

- Frame the offer in terms of loss
- Frame it as risky
- Offer a reference for comparison

Besides scarcity bias, there are other cognitive biases that can be harnessed to increase the probability of a reader opening an email. See examples in the following table.

Table 2: Some of the most common cognitive biases with examples

Cognitive bias	***Messaging***
Loss Aversion	The meal is already served! Do not miss the chance to order it!
Countdown effect	Order your meal in 10 minutes, and we will deliver it to you by halftime
Bandwagon effect	This meal was already delivered to 100+ clients! Be one of the – Order now!
Gain effect	The faster you order – the quicker you get!

Source: Adopted from Clarke (2018).

Use of numbers

Online and elsewhere, the majority of people does not read all the words in a text. Instead, readers glance over the text and look for headlines, highlighted words, bulleted lists, and links. Numbers can be used to grab a person's attention since it will often stop the wandering eye and cause fixations.

Furthermore, portraying numbers using digits can increase the usability for readers. This is especially true when looking for a particular piece of information without wanting to read the whole text. This works well together with the curiosity gap, where a clue is given in the subject line and the reader is interested in finding this piece of content as fast as possible.

Moreover, presenting facts as numerals can enhance the overall credibility of the copy by making it seem more useful (Nielsen, 2007). However, that is just one of the reasons why numbers should be used. Additionally, odd numbers can also have a significant effect on people's perceptions. Odd numbers appear to be more trustworthy, create interest and are easier to remember. One argument goes that odd numbers break the symmetry that even numbers provide (Megan, 2017).

Additionally, numbers take up less space than words while containing the same information. It has been shown that this "charmed prices" have a positive psychological effect on consumer behaviour, which can lead to increased sales (Poundstone, 2010). Likewise, percentages are more comfortable and faster to read when presented with a symbol (%). Monetary values shown in numbers with currency signs (€) are also quicker to read than those written in words.

Start with a question

Posing a question is a compelling invitation to encourage the reader to dedicate time to the message. The question should not be too obvious and easy to answer. A question such as "Do you like food?" will not make readers want to find the answer. When we want to invite the reader to read and find the answer to it, more specific questions are better suited.

Depending on the segment the email is being sent to, we can adapt the question that is relevant to their pain-points. Contrarily, fear-inducing sensational questions, while compelling, can destroy the integrity and credibility of the sender. Subject lines like "Does drinking water kills you?" certainly can attract attention, but it will most likely put many people off due to its weak underlying reasoning.

Furthermore, the question may never actually be answered in the body copy and can still be successful. It could be argued that whether the question is answered or not, it ultimately does not matter. What matters is how the question made the reader feel and think. It starts out with obscure questions to gain interest. In his book, Ed Oakley wrote: "Nothing redirects people's thinking better than a well-phrased question.". A good question can be provocative, even profound to readers on the verge of decision making, especially to the readers that have, at one point, asked themselves the same question (Oakley, 1994). Find an example of an ad which leverages copy camouflage to disguise itself as an article below.

Figure 6: Copy by Gary Bencivenga titled "Interviews That Win Jobs."

Do you make these mistakes in job interviews? —By Gary Bencivenga

NEW YORK—Do you know why you should ***never*** ea a spinach salad when you're being interviewed over lunch?

If you're a man, do you know why you should ***never*** wear a *gold bracelet* to a job interview?

If you're a woman, do you know the kind of blouse that makes interviewers of both sexes think you're a loser?

According to a new report, these are examples of innocent mistakes almost everyone makes when job-hunting.

to put in a good word for you....Best ways to establish rapport with interviewers, and...How to avoid numerous little traps, sometimes placed in your path on purpose.

Finally, the report gives you a masterful way to "close the sale"—the single best strategy for making the short list of finalists, becoming the #1 candidate, then getting invited back to hear those magic words, ***"You're hired."***

Job-seekers interested in gaining every possible edge can obtain this unique report for only $49.95, on a risk-

Source: Adopted from (Schauer, 2013).

1.3.2 Interest

At this stage, the goal is to build interest. It is often tempting to discuss the product's or service's features with a hope to awe readers. However, this is rarely the best way forward, and it might be better to focus on the benefits that those features bring to the table. Numerous formulas have been developed to help copywriters write better copies. One is a formula called F-A-B which stands for features, advantages and benefits. There are two compelling reasons why this formula can help. Firstly, it is challenging to communicate all the important details about the product or service in an email or two. Secondly, there is a risk of losing the reader's interest if there is too much emphasis on product features due to information overload. Even though it is essential to explain the features of the product, the deciding switch happens when the connection between features, advantages and benefits they bring to customers occurs. Trying to answer why a person would find the product beneficial is at the heart of benefit-centric marketing.

1.3.3 Desire

A copy needs to create a desire in a reader which the product or service offered will help to fulfil. In order to generate enough excitement, a business needs to make sure that the prospect’s affinity for the brand reaches a certain threshold. Excitement leads to alternation of behaviour and thinking in human beings. Rational thinking is overridden by the emotional state of excitement, which makes selling to consumers easier (Vazquez, 2011). Excitement leads to impulsivity and action instead of overthinking. It pushes readers into quick decision-making which can be crucial in moving someone through the steps of a buyer's journey (Ridgers, 2011).

Another formula that assist with generating desire is P-A-S. It focuses on three points, addressing the problem, agitating pain-points and presenting a solution. It is short for problem, agitator and solution. As a process, it presents the problem and addresses the audience’s pain-point in the first stage. The next stage is to elaborate on the problem by explaining why it is a problem in the first place and how annoying it is. Focusing on part “A” of the formula is important since attaching more negative emotions to the problem increases the chances to get into the reader's mind. Lastly, when readers are close to giving up, we should present a solution to the readers’ unique paint-point.

1.3.4 Action

After generating a desire for the product or service, it is necessary to give prospects a chance to act on it. In email marketing, the action is usually initiated via a call to action (hereinafter CTA), which should be compelling enough to prompt a user to commit to an action. It can be anything from placing an order on an e-commerce store or requesting a demo with sales, to downloading a whitepaper, and in any form such as a text, hyperlink or button. Action needs to be in line with the campaign goal. When tracking the conversion for CTAs that invites the consumer to place an order it is necessary to track the traffic source with the e-commerce analytics. This way, it is possible to gather insights about which purchases were influenced by a certain email campaign. For instance, in the case of a lead nurturing campaign (see more in 1.6.2), conversion might not happen instantaneously, and it could take multiple touches before a prospect finally converts. Among other techniques discussed in the following chapter covering attention, there is additional persuasion technique, called urgency. When a task appears urgent, there is a higher chance that people will act on it. Similarly, this is also true for the cases where urgency is artificially created. In the same way, when unimportant tasks are characterised by phoney urgency, people are still more likely to prioritize the unimportant over important tasks (Zhu, Yang & Hsee, 2018). Setting deadlines limits the prospect’s perception of time availability, which leads to increased perceived urgency that consequently leads to higher purchase intentions (Swain, Hanna & Abendroth, 2006)(2015) found a nine percent increase in revenue when introducing a countdown timer next to the deadline.

1.4 Email's key components

An email's copy is just one, albeit an important, piece of the complete email. Its success does not only depend on its copy, but also on subject line, call to action, design and send time. Each of these elements offer a vast array of possibilities how they can be used.

Each element can have a large effect on the success of an email campaign. For example, using a subject line that sets off spam filters by Google, will result in email being sent to the spam folder where it will be most likely forgotten. Similarly, an image heavy email might not load or will load slow on devices with poor internet connection speed. No matter how good the copy and the segmentation are, it will not help in getting the email into the recipient's mailbox if all other elements are not well deployed.

1.4.1 Subject line

Getting people to subscribe for the newsletter is futile if recipients do not open it. The subject line's main task is to compel readers to open the email. As more people open an email, the number of people reading it increases. The subject line is what catches a prospect's attention, and ultimately determines whether the prospect opens an email or neglects it. To grab the reader's attention, the subject line needs to be kept succinct and actionable**.** As we have already seen earlier, the use of questions tends to drive curiosity. Introducing scarcity that plays on the fear of missing out can make people click on an email who otherwise would not have. Additional elements that have been shown to have an effect are the use of numbers, personalisation and the "curiosity gap".

Subject line length

The subject line length indicates how many characters the subject line has. It is vital to know what devices and email clients, readers read their emails on. In the last seven years, email opens on mobile devices increased by 34 percent with 61 percent of emails being accessed on smart devices (MacDonald, 2019). The number is most likely to increase in the near future as more people move to mobile "first-usage". Latest data has shown that most of the users view their emails on iPhones and Android. Thus, limiting the subject line length to 41 characters for iPhone and 70 characters for Android is usually recommended (Litmus Email Analytics, 2012). However, according to a study conducted by Marketo (2018), 41 characters or around seven words is the optimal subject line length for overall engagement. The below table shows how the subject line length affects the open (see more in 1.4.1) and click-to-open rate, a number of opens and a number of clicks.

Table 3: Engagement by subject line length

KPI	***Four words***	***Five words***	***Six words***	***Seven words***	***Eight words***	***Nine words***	***Ten+ words***
Sent	100.000	100.000	100.000	100.000	100.000	100.000	100.000
Open rate	18,26%	17,10%	15,30%	15,20%	12,20%	10,30%	13,70%
Opens	18260	17100	15300	15200	12200	10300	13700
Click to open rate	8,00%	7,90%	10,10%	10,80%	6,60%	10,60%	7,90%
Clicks	1461	1351	1545	1652	805	1092	1082

Source: Adopted from Madden (2018).

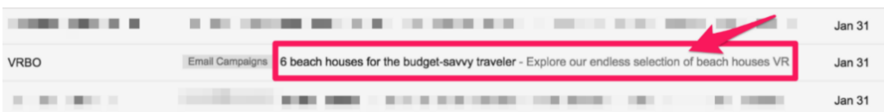
It is imperative to test what works best for each business' readership base. One way to test different approaches is to conduct an A/B or split test (see more 1.6.3). It can be used to test iterations of subject lines and ultimately find the best performing ones. Various tools, such as CoSchedule (CoShedule, 2018), offer a free subject line test and are available online.

Emojis
With the rise of messaging platforms, emojis gained popularity. However, despite the rise of emoji popularity in online communication, adoption in email marketing has not been so prevalent. Only seven percent of email subject lines have emojis included in the text (Willits, 2019). The low percentage could signal that emojis have no place in the subject line. However, it could also mean that it is still vastly unexplored field. As a result, it might be also seen as an opportunity to be unique.

Pre-header text
Pre-header or preview text is a snippet of email body which is usually displayed underneath or next to the sender name and subject line in the inbox. The pre-header text is important, and often an overlooked component of high-converting email messages. A survey has found that 24 percent of respondents look at the preview text first when deciding to open an email (White C. S., 2016).

The pre-header servers as an excellent opportunity to use a different messaging from the subject line to increase the subscriber's attention for the message. Moreover, the subject line and pre-header text should be in coherence and should complement each other.

Figure 7: Example of a pre-header text in an email



Source: own work.

1.4.2 Call to action

Call to action is an element in an email that encourages readers to act. Each email should have at least one CTA which should entice the reader to act according to the email's goal. Proposed action can vary from clicking on a link to read an article over browsing through an online store to placing an order on e-commerce.

Copy

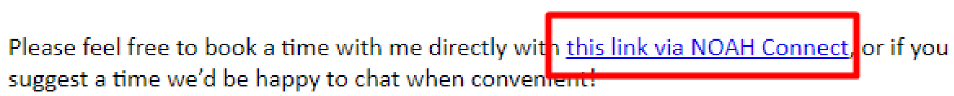
A copy needs to compel readers to act and to do so, it must be in sync with the rest of the email message and requested action. For instance, using "Find" as a first word in our CTA, the corresponding email's message should be about helping prospects finding what they are looking for. Generally, it is recommended to minimise the use of friction words since they might imply reader on acting something which the reader might not necessarily want to. Humans have an innate fear of the unknown, and we experience minimisation of ambiguity in our lives as welcoming change (Riezler, 1944). That is why explaining what exactly will happen after a reader clicks on the button could be beneficial. It is better to swap common friction words like "Download", "Buy", "Order" or "Submit" with frictionless words. Using verbs like 'Get' or 'Learn' followed by a statement which contains benefit such as "Learn programming" can make reader more likely to perform the action. This should have a positive effect on the click-through rate and overall conversion (Muhammad, 2018). CTA should stand out by appealing specifically to the audience's personal goals, interests, and pain points, as well as speak directly to their interests, in a language that will resonate with them (Sukhraj, 2015). Some examples include "View More", "Get My Article", "View More Plans" or "See More Options".

Moreover, using the first-person possessive pronouns such as "my" or "mine" can be beneficial since it gives people sense on an ownership. This has been shown to lead up to a 90 percent increase in conversion when compared to using second person possessive determiners like "your" (Aagaard, 2013).

Design

The design of an email plays a vital role in persuading readers to act. When it comes to the style of CTA, it usually comes down to two option, text-based and button-base. Using a button-based CTA can results in up to 28 percent higher click-through rate when compared to link-based (Campaign Monitor, 2015).

Figure 8: Example for text-based CTA (highlighted in red)

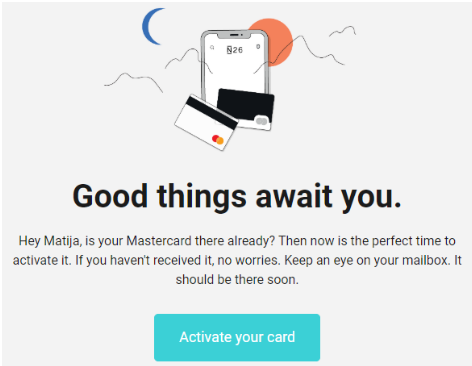


Source: own work.

Using button-based CTA gives more flexibility with design. Setting the button background colour to contrast the rest of the email makes it easier to differentiate the

CTA from the copy. One example to achieve this, would be to surround the CTA with a whitespace. The visual separation helps to guide the reader's attention. The squint test can be used to do a quick check to ensure that the intended outcome of the design is achieved. Squinting eyes partially distort the vision, which gives a high-level view of the visual hierarchy of the email. It helps to show what elements stand out and where the primary focus is (Gothelf, 2011). Size is also important, too large CTA buttons can channel the reader's attention away from the copy and can lead to up to 10 percent lower conversions (Aagaard, 2013). As can be seen in the figure below, CTA using contrasting colours to the background can be more easily visible.

Figure 9: Example of contrasted button-based CTA



Source: own work.

Placement

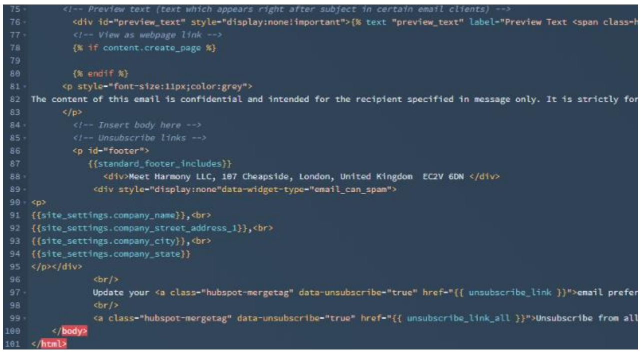
The placement of a CTA is not trivial and can affect email's performance. There is no consensus on where the CTA should be placed. Research has shown that its optimal placement is no lower than the page that is loaded at first before scrolling is necessary, called above the fold, since about 57 percent of the user's page-viewing time is spent above the fold. Furthermore, 74 percent of the total viewing time is spent navigating through the first two pages (Fessenden, 2018). Nowadays users read their email on devices of different screen size, resolution and email clients. That it is why it is recommended to use previews or test emails to double-check how CTAs are being displayed.

Moreover, some argue that placement should depend on the relative complexity of the offer. If the complexity of a message that is conveyed is low and the reader is not expected to have difficulties comprehending the message, positioning the CTA towards the top can lead to an increase in conversions. Due to its position, readers can skip reading the whole email and perform the action. For instance, when confirming subscription to a newsletter via email, readers quickly grasp the goal of the email, so it makes sense to make the CTA easily visible by placing it on the top. In case of a more complex message, readers will first need to be convinced before taking action, meaning placing CTA at the bottom of an email is the preferred option (Campaign Monitor, 2019).

1.4.3 Email design

Designing an email plays a crucial role in how an email will be rendered and ultimately displayed on a user's device. An email can be written in hyper-text mark-up language (hereinafter HTML), rich-text or plain-text format. HTML enables users to add images, graphics interchange format (hereinafter gifs), hyperlink and cascading style sheets (hereinafter CSS) code. HTML is one of the most popular choices and is used in the most email marketing services. Services like HubSpot, Drip and Mailchimp use it as a default option. Example of a HTML editor can be found in the figure below.

Figure 10: Example of an HTML email template

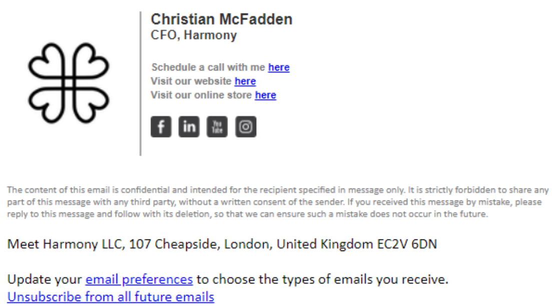


Source: own work.

There are hundreds of HTML templates available online to choose from which can be customised to individual wants. When deciding on an email template, it is necessary to pay attention to the mobile-friendliness of the template. In 2016, 63 percent of all email users opened their emails on a mobile device (Campaign Monitor, 2016).

Moreover, the email template needs to be responsive, so the content adjusts to fit the screen that it is viewed on. Tools such as HubSpot offer to preview an email to see how it would appear on any client's device. In the below figure, a HTML email is rendered into a human-readable format.

Figure 11: Example of a rendered HTML email template



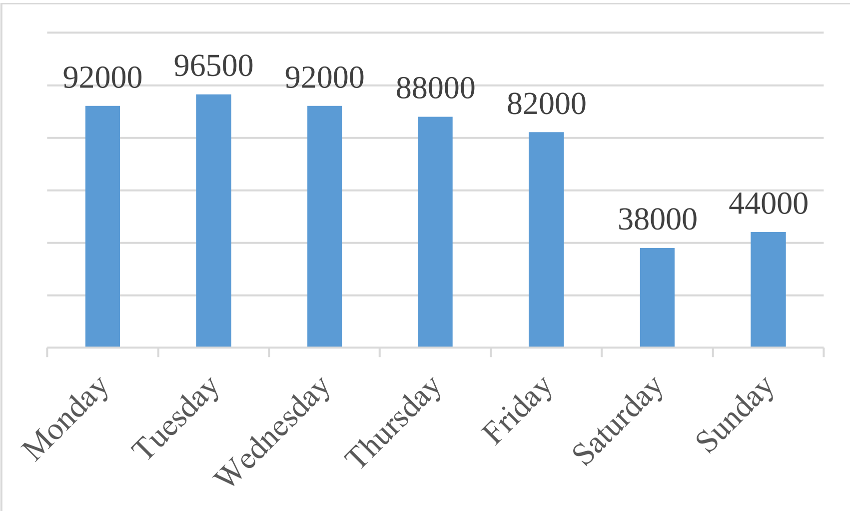
Source: own work.

Adding numerous features, styling and especially images to an email can quickly increase the size. Bigger email sizes can lead to slower download speeds and longer load time. Adding plenty of uncompressed images is one of the main reasons. It is recommended to keep the HTML weight of emails under 102KB, which is Google's upper limit. Everything above that will result in the message getting clipped or not being displayed correctly.

1.4.4 Timing of the email

Another factor that can greatly influence email performance is the sending time. As with many things in email marketing, there is no straightforward answer. It is difficult to pin down the single best time when it comes to sending an email campaign. Most of the studies found Tuesday as the best and Thursday as close second. However, the difference is far from significant according to HubSpot (2015) and Mailchimp data (2014). The below graph includes the number of email opens varies between weekdays.

Figure 12: Email opens by week-day according to HubSpot



Source: Adopted from HubSpot (2015).

It has been found that there are multiple timeslots throughout the day that are suitable for sending newsletters. The best time to send emails seems to be at 10 a.m., followed by 11 a.m. (Ellering, 2016). Moreover, over half of all opens happen between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., which means the highest open rate is throughout the day. Outside of working hours, between 6 p.m. and 11 p.m., emails can still receive a relatively high number of opens and clicks. This is likely due to people checking their email before going to bed (Hodgekiss, 2014).

As it can be seen, the ideal time can vary from anywhere from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. However, depending on the target demographics, it is necessary to get a better understanding of the type of emails, preferred devices, type of holidays, and who are our receivers.

Additionally, having a constant sending schedule can make readers get used to even nonstandard sending times.

1.5 Key performance indicators

Without tracking email performance, it is impossible to know what worked well and what did not. A popular saying "What gets measured gets managed" could be said to hold true in email marketing as well. In order to improve the future performance of emailing efforts, it is important to track how past emails have fared. When implementing numerous campaigns, all with different content, subject lines and goals, it is sometimes difficult to weed out a successful email from an unsuccessful one. Specific goals must be outlined right from the start since doing so enables us to compare results with the initial goal and determine the campaign success. In the following chapters I will discuss the most common key performance indicators (hereinafter KPI) used in email marketing and show how they are calculated.

1.5.1 Open rate

It is represented by a ratio which is calculated by dividing the number of contacts that have opened by the ones that have received the email. It is the quickest way to see how many people have opened and seen an email. Email service providers calculate the open rate by taking the number of people who open the email and dividing it by the number of emails sent that were delivered to the recipient. This excludes bounced and emails sent to invalid email addresses. According to one definition, an email is only counted as opened when a reader enables images or the recipient clicks a link in the email (MacDonald, 2019). The subject line might be the biggest determining factor when it comes to the open rate. Although, other factors which will be covered in the later chapters like deliverability, timing, spam filters, domain authority also play an essential role in getting the email into the contact's mailbox.

$$Open\ Rate = \frac{Number\ of\ Openened\ Emails}{Number\ of\ Sent\ Emails} \tag{1}$$

Since it is presented as a percentage, it is vital to keep in mind the number of open emails, especially when testing various copies, when reaching conclusions. Sending it to just ten people, of which six open it results in a 60 percent open rate. Consider this, if we were to compare it to another email with just 23 percent open rate one could conclude that first email was far more successful ignoring the fact that the second email was sent to over 1000 recipients. The point is that the open rate, as well as any other KPI mentioned in the above paragraphs, should never be looked at in isolation but together with other metrics.

1.5.2 Click rate

The click rate is expressed as a ratio between people who clicked on any link in the email and the total count of people who received the email. It is an important metric to look at when evaluating the performance of CTAs. A higher percentage would indicate more people following through with clicking the links. Since it uses all recipients as a denominator, this metric is difficult to use in isolation when assessing the performance of said email. For example, an unappealing subject line leads to fewer people opening the email which results in a lower open rate which then leads to fewer people reading the email and seeing the CTAs which ultimately leads to lower click rate. To sum up, the click rate cannot be used as a sole metric to evaluate calls-to-action.

$$Click\ Rate = \frac{Number\ of\ Clicked\ Email}{Number\ of\ Sent\ Email} \tag{2}$$

1.5.3 Click-through rate

The click-through rate should be used as a supporting metric to the click rate since it gives a clearer picture of how call-to-action has fared. This is because it takes the count of recipients who have seen the message as the denominator. As a result, it enables us to evaluate CTA in isolation of other variables. Of course, if there are multiple CTAs or links included in the email, it is necessary to evaluate more in detail which element was clicked.

$$Click - Through - Rate = \frac{Number\ of\ Clicked\ Email}{Number\ of\ Opened\ Email} \tag{3}$$

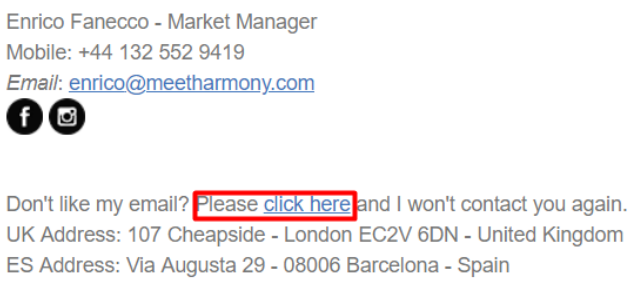
1.6 Technical and regulatory optimisation

When sending emails, it is not only important to create a personalised copy and send it to the most appropriate segment, but it is also crucial to make sure that the technical and regulatory aspects are taken care of. As with the rest of the email elements, failure of complying with these aspects could lead to a poor email results which can also have an adverse effect on the future performance. It is integral to make sure that both regulatory and technical aspects are tuned with current regulations. The former is especially gaining more attention with the implementation of the general data protection regulation (hereinafter GDPR) which applies to all EU businesses, regardless of size or industry (European Comission, 2018). It also applies to any organisation doing business in the EU where EU citizen’s data is involved. It includes rules and regulations that need to be satisfied in order to adhere to the rules of email service providers like Gmail, Sendgrid and others.

Providing an easy opt-out and honour requests promptly

It is imperative to make the process of opting out from the email communication as easy as possible. There are two good reasons why this should be followed: 1) it makes business compliant with spam laws and 2) it can lead to a reduction of spam reports. GDPR and others like the Controlling the assault of non-solicited pornography and marketing act of 2003 (hereinafter CAN-SPAM) and Canada's anti-spam legislation (hereinafter CASL), require that all commercial emails, whether one-to-one or one-to-many, include an unsubscribe link that lets the recipient choose to not receive future emails. Secondly, by allowing recipients to opt-out easily gives them an easy way out which will hopefully stop recipients from flagging emails as spam and consequently hindering sending domain reputation. Here is an example of a unsubscribe button which can be used by recipients to unsubscribe from the newsletter.

Figure 13: An example of opt-out in an email



Source: own work.

Lastly, the message must include a clear and visible explanation of how the recipients can opt-out from receiving the email in the future. The un-subscription process needs to be straightforward and the text easily visible.

Including physical address in the footer

To comply with the CAN-SPAM and GDPR, all marketing emails must include the physical mailing address of the sender. Marketing tools usually force marketers to adhere to the guidelines. Furthermore, it is necessary to review each country’s law surrounding consent for a marketing email (Federal Trade Commission, 2009). An email footer needs to contain the following information:

- Business name
- Business street address
- City
- State
- A link to manage email preferences or unsubscribe from all link

1.6.1 Deliverability

Successful email deliverability means that a message successfully arrived in the recipient's mailbox. A staggering 21 percent of emails never reach the recipient's mailboxes, which is mostly due to marketers not following email deliverability's best practices (Return Path, 2015). It is important to differentiate deliverability from the delivery rate. The latter figure is a percentage of all emails a recipient's gateway server receives which are not flagged as a hard or soft bounce of total. Additionally, gateway servers do not let the sender know whether the email was blocked by spam filters. This makes it very difficult to get an accurate measurement of email deliverability (FulcrumTech, 2018). Two significant factors affect the outcome of the email campaign in terms of deliverability. Firstly, the email authentication includes a set of protocols that identify the sender. Secondly, the sender reputation that indicates how trustworthy the sender is. Two most common factors that negatively impact the sender's domain are sending emails to addresses that have previously bounced and sent emails that consistently have low engagement with subscribers. Email bounces are further dividend into soft and hard bounces. The former stands when an email that might be sent to valid email returns because of a full mailbox or an offline server. On the other hand, a hard bounce is when an email address is invalid, or the recipient's domain does not exist, has expired or is not configured correctly. Sending emails to such email addresses hinders the reputation of the sending domain (see next chapter).

Reputation

Domain reputation is a score that an email service provider (hereinafter ESPs) assigns to a certain sending domain. This score is constantly updating based on various factors. It is not exactly known how the scores are calculated; in many cases it is considered ESP's business secret. There are numerous providers worldwide, most notable are Google, Apple, Outlook, Baidu, Yahoo, Protonmail and Yandex, which all have their specific system in place to determine domain authority and the power to determine whether email will reach inbox or not. A sender's email address from a domain with an adequate reputation gets delivered while those with poor reputations get rejected at the gateway or are forwarded into the spam folder. The inboxing rate is a term that refers to a percentage of sent email that end up in recipient's primary mailbox. However, due to the difficulty of getting this metric, marketers are mostly left with guessing.

Moreover, the sender is not aware of her or his domain score. Despite the fact, that the exact formula to calculate a domain score is not known, best practices have developed to help businesses improve and maintain healthy domain reputation. Firstly, the consistent sending volume and times are two of the key considerations for ESP when assessing the score. Sending high quantity of emails spanned over a short amount of time is usually a red flag, especially when volumes are non-consistent. Even more so when a domain is fairly "young". Secondly, keeping a low number of subscriber's complaints is imperative.

An incremental increase in spam complaints can cause a sending domain to be flagged by ESP as spammy. Thirdly, sending an email to spam traps (see 1.5.2) can instantly lower reputation and lead to deliverability problems. Lastly, having a high bounce rate is a signal that a sender might be dubious. High bounce rates are often associated with using purchased lists or sending to non-engaged subscribers.

Furthermore, commercial blacklists which serve as aggregators of all “past-offenders”, are used by ESPs to help determine the domain’s spaminess (SendGrid, 2019). For a newly registered domain it is not recommended to start sending emails in large quantities. The best way is to implement a “domain warm-up plan” to establish a good sending reputation with an ESP by increasing volume progressively.

Infrastructure and Authentication

In order to help keep deliverability as high as possible, a sending domain needs to be configured to allow an email provider to send authenticated emails on its behalf. A process includes setting up sender policy framework (hereinafter SPF), domain keys identified mail (hereinafter DKIM), and domain-based message authentication, reporting and conformance (hereinafter DMARC) records. SPF record is a domain name system record that identifies what internet protocol addresses (hereinafter IP) are permitted to send emails using the domain. Failure of doing so can lead to possible attacks where an attacker is able to send spoofed emails portraying as they originate from the vulnerable domain. This can lead to people giving up sensitive information and spreading false information. In essence, SPF provides authorisation of the email server that sends a message on behalf of a domain (Dubrovin, 2017).

Another important element is setting up the DKIM. Its main goal is to ensure that the message that arrives in the receiver’s inbox is identical to the one sent. Furthermore, it defends against malicious attempts on modification of messages in transit. Moreover, setting DKIM records helps to improve the reputation of the domain since the sender takes responsibility for the content (SendGrid, 2019, p. 10).

1.6.2 Avoiding spam folder and traps

Spam traps are most often used by ESPs to catch malicious senders. A spam trap is a real email address which does not belong to a real person. Its only purpose is to identify spammers. Depending on the type of spam trap, having even one spam trap on an emailing list can significantly impact the reputation of a sending domain. It is also an indicator of bad practices. Since it has a direct impact on sender reputation, one needs to be careful when importing an unverified list of contacts to the database, especially purchased email lists.

Every ESP has its own set of rules which are mostly unknown to the public. Certain words and phrases are used as a signal that certain email might be considered spam. Through practice, a comprehensive list of trigger words has been compiled, which can be used as a general guide when writing a copy, subject line or pre-text. See Appendix 12 for the list of trigger keywords that can set-off ESP and flag sender as spammy.

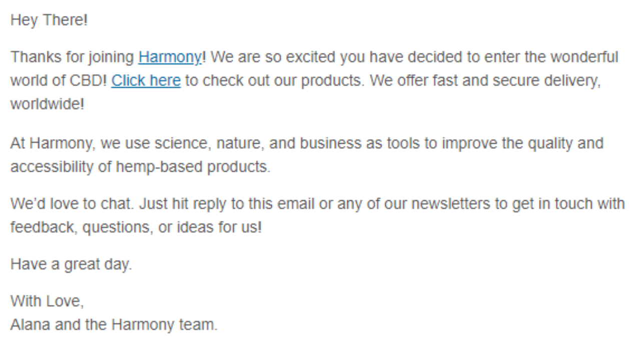
1.7 Marketing automation

We have already seen how necessary it is to re-think the email strategy and to come up with a strategy that focuses on boosting the value and relevance of its message for every subscriber. Every touchpoint should be used as a meaningful interaction with subscribers. This can potentially lead to more emails and consequently, more work. A decade ago, sending one newsletter per week might presented a technological feat. Nowadays, due to technological advancements, 67 percent of marketing leaders use some sort of marketing automation platforms (Salesforce, 2017). Modern email marketing consists of sending newsletters, drip campaigns, lead nurturing campaigns and transactional emails. Instead of manually sending an email to all of the email addresses, an email marketing automation can automate the task and send the intended message to the right subscriber at the right time. For example, sending an email to the site visitors that have filled out a landing page form for a free industry report.

1.7.1 Drip campaigns

A drip campaign consists of any series of emails that are send to a reader at pre-defined time-intervals with a specific goal in mind (MarketBridge, 2015). When a drip campaign starts, as a result of a user action, consequent emails are sent in fixed time intervals. They enable businesses to reach out to users that have committed an action such as filling out the form or signing up for the newsletter. Since the email set-up is done in advance, there is no need to manually write and send an email after each such event. Here is an example of an introductory "Welcome email" from an on-boarding drip campaign that is automatically sent after every first order.

Figure 14: Introduction email from "Welcome series" for people signing up


Hey There!

Thanks for joining Harmony! We are so excited you have decided to enter the wonderful world of CBD! Click here to check out our products. We offer fast and secure delivery, worldwide!

At Harmony, we use science, nature, and business as tools to improve the quality and accessibility of hemp-based products.

We'd love to chat. Just hit reply to this email or any of our newsletters to get in touch with feedback, questions, or ideas for us!

Have a great day.

With Love,
Alana and the Harmony team.

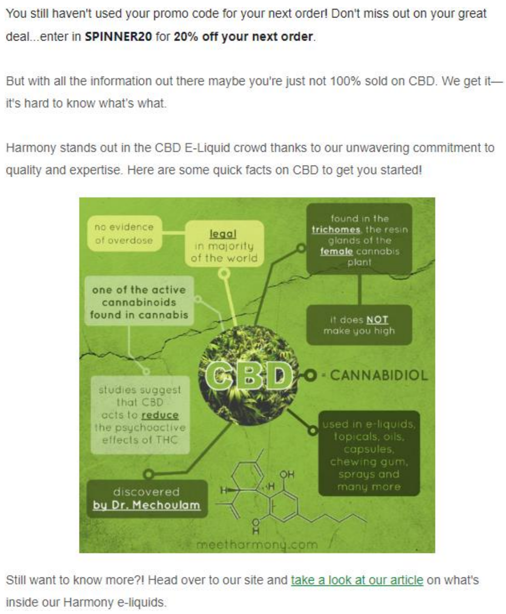
Source: own work.

A drip campaign can come in numerous forms. See below some common examples:

- Abandonment cart emails
- Onboarding emails
- Re-engagement emails

One of the biggest benefits of a drip campaign is the ease of deployment and management. Initially, it only requires setting the trigger, time intervals and writing the copy. Most of today's marketing tools offer solutions to set-up drip campaigns. Below is an example of an email, that is sent to prospects who have signed up for the newsletter but have not yet placed an order. In the following chapters I will discuss some of the most common drip campaigns in email marketing.

Figure 15: Second email – 2-day delay - in the "Welcome Series" for people who have not placed an order yet


You still haven't used your promo code for your next order! Don't miss out on your great deal...enter in **SPINNER20** for **20% off your next order**.

But with all the information out there maybe you're just not 100% sold on CBD. We get it—it's hard to know what's what.

Harmony stands out in the CBD E-Liquid crowd thanks to our unwavering commitment to quality and expertise. Here are some quick facts on CBD to get you started!

Still want to know more?! Head over to our site and take a look at our article on what's inside our Harmony e-liquids.

Source: own work.

Onboarding emails

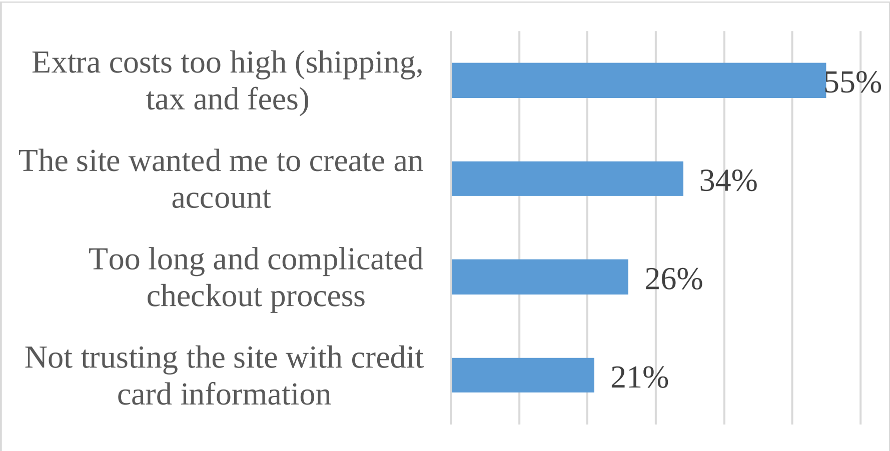
An onboarding campaign strives to build trust and credibility with email readers, engage with potential customers and share information about products or services. The on-boarding email has a variety of applications. It can be a great follow-up series for users who have signed up for a newsletter, filled up a form, downloaded gated content, visited a landing page or purchased a product. After each such event it is necessary to keep the business on top of their mind. As with the rest of the automated campaigns it is necessary to segment leads early and send them personalized content based on the actions they are taking.

One of the most common use cases is setting up an onboarding campaign for customers who have just placed their first order. This is a great opportunity for marketers to take customers on a journey, welcoming them, presenting the product on service in a more detailed way and forwarding how-to-use guides. As the shipment gets delivered, customers will be already acquainted with the product and will be ready to start using it immediately. It does not only have to be when someone purchases a product or service. Onboarding campaigns can be also used when a website visitor is not ready to buy but might be in the future. Subscribing to a newsletter is a sensible option. Once subscribed, onboarding campaigns can take place and provide the content that will help push the subscriber into becoming a customer. Prospects who do not have a purchase intent yet will likely need to first be educated on the topic, in order to help understand and realise the need for the product (Walker, 2014).

Abandonment cart emails

Cart abandonment occurs when a consumer adds a product to the online shopping cart and does not proceed to complete the checkout. The value calculated based on 41 different studies shows that the average online shopping cart abandonment rate is as high as 69.57 percent (Baymard Institute, 2019). Complicated online consumer behaviour is difficult to explain and predict (Scheinbaum & Kukar-Kinney, 2012). However, not all is lost since abandonment cart emails can help mitigate part of the problem by reminding prospects to complete the purchase. Before creating a cart abandonment campaign, it is necessary to know the most common causes why users do not complete the checkout. As it can be seen in the below figure, extra costs associated with the purchase disengages prospects from completing the most. Since, this can be different for every business it is necessary to collect information before-hand. In the case of "expensive shipping cost", offering a discount code of free shipping can be enough to make prospect finish the order.

Figure 16: Most common causes for online users abandoning their carts behind



Source: Adopted from Baymard Institute (2019).

The practice has shown that having three email series works very well and converts abandoned shopping carts for e-commerce websites. The first email should be sent within an hour of the event occurring and should be very simple messaging. It is assumed that the prospect got distracted but is willing to complete the order. This email should include a simple reminder, product photos and a single call to action. The first abandoned cart email should include a reminder of what the user has abandoned. This can have a good chance of succeeding if prospects are occupied at the moment, there is a technical issue, or prospects need to do more research on products to make a decision. Modern email marketing software enable marketers to include cart items, quantities and product images within the email. If there is no wanted action, a second email should be sent within the next 24 hours. Additional persuasive techniques such as social proof including customer testimonials or highlighting benefits of the products can be leveraged to help tip the scale. If there has still not been an action it is possible that prospect is not interested in buying the product or service yet. At this point, discount can be used to lure the prospect into buying. As seen before, loss aversion, urgency or scarcity can be strong drivers of desirable behaviour (Elias, 2018).

Re-engagement emails

A re-engagement campaign is a sequence of emails sent to inactive subscribers. The goal of it is to get people to interact with emails. Re-engagement email campaigns are necessary since over time some subscribers naturally turn into inactive contacts. Its primary goal is to reduce the list's churn rates and boost incremental engagement. This is also beneficial for deliverability since re-engaging dormant subscribers can improve or at least help keep inboxing rates healthy. A significantly decrease in engagement level can lead ESPs to tag the domain as low-quality. Engagement levels can drop due to "natural degrade" of the email marketing database. A business can lose up to 22.5 percent of subscribers per year due to contact's email addresses being expired as they move to a different provider or employer (HubSpot, 2013).

Having a re-engagement campaign set up is especially important if part of the subscribers represent churned customers. A study done by researchers found that in the financial sector, an improvement of customer retention by five percent resulted in more than a 25 percent increase in profits (Reichheld & Detrick, 2003). Correspondingly, it is paramount to encourage existing customers to return, considering that, repeat customers have a 60 to 70 percent chance of re-converting (Farris, Bendle & Reibstein , 2010). Existing customers who have completed at least two purchases are nine times more likely to convert again than a prospect (Adobe Systems Incorporated, 2012). Not only are the chances of converting higher, but customers also tend to spend more and are more likely to give a positive referral compared to first-time buyers (Baveja, Rastogi, Zook, Hancock & Chu, 2000).

People need a reason to stick around, which is why a re-engagement campaign has to show why the particular business is worth their time. Sending an email titled “Please come back” is not enough. Re-engagement campaigns should be split into multiple emails in a sequence with its own message centred around the theme of getting back together without overwhelming the reader. For instance, it is difficult to include free content, a flash sale and an offer for a discounted subscription rate in one email all at once. Therefore, re-engagement campaigns could consist of email sequences of three or more emails starting from 30 to 60 days after a subscriber has become inactive. The campaign should target people’s emotions by reminding them of the painful problems the business's solution helped solve. Secondly, it should offer something for free like a content upgrade, a discount or a giveaway which might encourage them to re-engage. Likewise, reminding inactive subscribes why they have initially signed up, reiterate the problem and show how the business can help solve it, can be enough to re-engage them (Minning, 2019). The table below illustrates an example structure of a re-engagement campaign, consisting of four emails with its individual goals.

Table 4: Four email re-engagement campaign example

Reminder	First email to open the re-engagement campaign. It can remind how the solution worked for them and what they are missing out.
Review	Ask subscribers to review their email preferences and adjust email frequency to their want.
Receive	Offer them something for free as a lure to get them back.
Regrets	Letting them now that it is time to say goodbye and unsubscribe them from marketing communication. Before doing so offer one last chance to come back.

Source: Adopted from Minning (2019).

1.7.2 Lead nurturing campaigns

Lead nurturing is a process of building and nurturing relationship with prospects. The goal is to take them through the whole buyer’s journey, from prospects to paying customers. As already mentioned, the majority of the prospects is not ready to buy yet. This is where lead nurturing campaigns step it. They revolve around addressing the needs of prospects by providing the information and support prospects seek at each stage they are in.

There are quite few differences between lead nurturing and drip campaigns. In short, drip campaigns are one-size-fits-all predecessors to lead nurturing which sends pre-set email communications at a specific cadence set by the marketer. In comparison to lead nurturing, it does not take into account user activity and behaviour. In other words, it is static and non-adaptive. Lead nurturing campaigns, on the other hand, leverage user behaviour data to deliver timed messages with highly targeted and relevant information with the hope of pushing prospects along the buying process. As prospects receive these emails, they are presented with relevant information needed at the time they seek it. The key in deploying a successful lead nurture campaign is to leverage user data, such as, what pages prospects have looked at, how often someone visited a website or what report they have downloaded (Järvinen & Taiminen, 2016).

As inbound lead generation (see more in 1.7) is becoming more prevalent, the need for having a sound lead nurturing strategy in place became crucial. This is especially important since 50 percent of the leads in any system are not ready to buy yet (Gleanster, 2010). Moreover, 79 percent of inbound leads never convert into customers. The main factor being the lack of lead nurturing (Kirkpatrick, 2012). Additionally, an insufficient lead follow-up is commonplace in the B2B sector. A study showed that sales representatives ignore approximately 70 percent of all leads generated via marketing (Sabnis, C. Chatterjee, Grewal & L. Lilien, 2013). Another study has shown that businesses employing lead nurturing have more qualified leads which are 50 percent "warmer" and come at 33 percent lower cost compared to other customer-acquisition campaigns (Hoar, 2015). It enables the sales team to focus on leads ranked with a higher lead score first, which are easier to close.

Furthermore, it enables businesses to nurture longer-term opportunities, leading to higher overall revenue contributed from qualified prospects that might be lost to competitors otherwise. Likewise, it can lead to a reduction in marketing spend and increasing customer profitability. This is achieved by educating and informing prospects at every step in the buyer's journey, which leads to prospects being engaged with the brand in more profound ways. Additionally, nurtured leads enjoy higher overall profitability since they were not drawn in by discounts or other favourable terms (Gleanster, 2010).

Nurturing prospects includes delivering blog posts, infographics, testimonials, industry reports and case studies. The content should match the prospect's position in the buyer's journey. As prospects interact with the content, information is collected that can be leveraged to make the messaging even more specific in the later stages. A lead score is compiled with more interactions occurring. Once the lead score reaches a certain threshold, it signals the sales department to take over the lead (Embling, 2016).

1.7.3 A/B Testing

A/B tests can be helpful at testing out different copies, design, CTA and send-times for an email campaign. In order to get accurate results, it is important to change only one variable at a time. This might sound trivial, but it is essential to know which change we can attribute the performance increase or decrease to.

Here are some elements for a potential test:

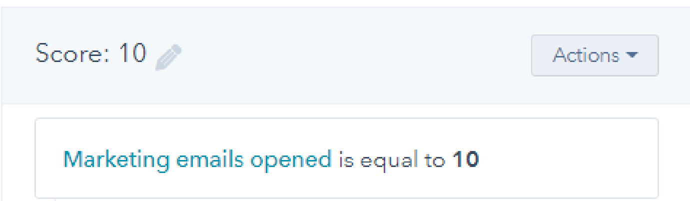
- Call to action
- Subject line
- Use of personalised information
- The layout of the message

Each element above has a different effect on the various parts of the conversion process. For instance, while altering the CTA can have a direct effect on people buying products or visiting a landing page, the subject line can only affect the open rate. That is an important factor to keep in mind since it is necessary to decide what we want to test. It is generally recommended to start with the ones with greatest significance first. The larger the sample is, the higher the confidence in the validity of the results. Big enough samples need to be used where subscribers are split in two groups at random. Otherwise, we are at risk of skewing the results and consequently choosing the sub-optimal option. Likewise, in order to reduce the probability of getting skewed results caused by time-based factors it is recommended to run a simultaneous test. Examining on large samples with the help of tools available online can greatly speed up the process (Patel, 2011).

1.7.4 Lead Scoring

Lead scoring is used by sales and marketing to rank leads. Higher ranked leads can as a result receive higher priority. Higher score represents leads which are more likely to buy a product or service. Lead scoring helps businesses determine whether prospects are ready to be contacted by sales or still need some development with lead nurturing thus resulting in higher productivity for the sales team. Lead scoring is usually implemented with the help of marketing automation platforms which attribute scores based on user engagement. This can include anything from, but not limited to, submitting from, adding product to the cart, visiting specific pages, conversion events to even social media interactions. Done right, it can play a crucial role in strengthening the revenue cycle, increasing ROI of sales activities and aligning sales and marketing.

Figure 17: Example of Lead Score setting in HubSpot



Source: own work.

A study revealed that 68 percent of marketers identified lead scoring based around user interactions with content and user’s engagement as the two most effective ways of increasing revenue (Lenkskold Group, 2013). However, lead scoring is far from being a standard practice since only 21 percent(Doyle, 2011).

1.8 Growing audience with lead generation

Lead generation involves bringing new leads to a business. The leads represent an opportunity for the business and are essential for any marketing and sales effort (Lyfe Marketing, 2018). A lead represents individual, in a business environment an employee of a business. There are two distinct approaches to generating leads, depending on how the leads have come to us. The inbound marketing approach consists of drawing users to the business. This can be facilitated with leveraging search engine optimization (hereinafter SEO), social media, influencer outreach, content creation and lead nurturing. An example would be, when someone searches for a service provider online and finds one and continuous with filling out a contact form. In this case, the business generated an inbound lead via SEO. An influencer outreach, for example, could include an influencer posting an Instagram story featuring the product with a link to the online shop. Anyone coming to the site through the link would be considered an inbound lead via referral.

Outbound marketing, on the other hand, hijacks prospects attention by putting itself in front of them. It can include a range of activities from cold calling and emailing to direct messaging on social media platforms. It is seen as a more traditional method of marketing, thinking of paid print advertisement which, according to some, is losing its prominence to inbound marketing (Patrutiu-Baltes, 2016). Factors such as improved ESP’s spam filters, information and advertising overload, all play a role in its assumed demise. It is easier than ever to search for information online, and prospects do not need to rely only on salespeople or ads to educate them. However, the main drawback of inbound marketing is the fact that until a business has established its online presence it can be rather difficult for users to find it. Outbound marketing's strength lies in the B2B field, especially with transactions involving products with higher margins where more education about the product and service is needed. Offers with higher complexity and monetary investment, often warrant a personal contact with the business representatives (Marketing Schools, 2012).

No matter where the leads come from, the fact that lead generation is an integral part of the marketing mix remains. The first argument is that existing prospects in an emailing list decay over time, and it is necessary to continually add new ones to preserve the number of leads. This can happen because businesses employ new people, employees move on, businesses get acquired, new positions are created or employees change their emails. Furthermore, users tend to be most engaged right after subscription and in the period shortly after. Normally, their open rates and engagement rates decline over time. Generating new subscribers ensures there is always a healthy percentage of subscribers that are highly engaged with the content (Paulson, 2015, pp. 100-101).

1.8.1 Lead magnets

A lead magnet is one of the most popular inbound marketing techniques to generate new leads. It is an incentive-based method where marketers offer something valuable to potential buyers in exchange for their email address or other contact information. Various types of content can be used in place of a magnet such as industry reports, e-books, whitepapers, free online tools and others. It does not only serve as a tool to collect emails and other data regarding prospects but can also be an excellent tool for screening prospects for their relevancy to a business. Since gated content is highly specialised, it should only attract a targeted segment that has a particular interest in the topic and, thus is more likely to be interested in the product or service down the line. This is very different when compared to contacts coming through scraping or buying lists where contacts might not necessarily be interested in the offer (explored in 1.7.3). In order for a lead magnet to be effective, it needs to solve a real problem that users have. Secondly, it needs to promise and deliver at least one quick win. Thirdly, lead magnets should be highly specific and have both high perceived and actual value which will lead to a better conversion of highly relevant leads. Fourthly, it should be available in a user-friendly form, like PDF, in order to not overwhelm users and be instantly accessible. Lastly, it should show an unique value proposition by demonstrating business's expertise (Fernandez, 2019).

Leadpages have put together a cheat-sheet that can be used as a reference when deciding what type of lead magnet should be used for a specific audience based on its "warmness" (Blasberg, 2018).

Table 5: Classification of an audience by warmness

Type of lead magnet	***Cold Audience***	***Warm Audience***	***Hot Audience***
Resource guide, checklist, cheat sheets	Yes		
eBook	Yes		
Webinar	Yes		
Video Series		Yes	Yes
e-Course		Yes	Yes
Consultation		Yes	Yes

Source: Adopted from Blasberg (2018).

In the below figure, there is an example of a lead magnet by Minimax (2019). A lead can get a handy resource in exchange for an email address which guide explains the difference between two forms of business organisations in Slovenia. Prospects are most probably still in the phase of deciding what business type best matches their preferences and are not immediately looking for accounting services that Minimax is offering. In this case, Minimax's goal was most likely to collect "leads" which need to be educated before they are ready to buy. Minimax can use the information in deciding where on the buyer's journey a lead is located. This can be later used to adjust the follow-up campaigns.

Figure 18: An example of a lead magnet by Minimax, provider of accounting solutions for SMEs

Source: Adopted from MiniMax (2019).

Users need to know about it and need to be able to find it. The most obvious way is to use the website of the company where a link can be placed anywhere from the navigation bar and sidebar to the footer. Additionally, a separate landing page can be explicitly created for the lead magnet. The page should not have distracting elements like a navigation menu or other things to click on. There should be only two options: opt-in or click away. Another way is to use social media to promote within the audience. Facebook offers a possibility of lead magnet ads, which can be used to reach people who might be interested in the offer but are outside of the current audience.

1.8.2 Referral system

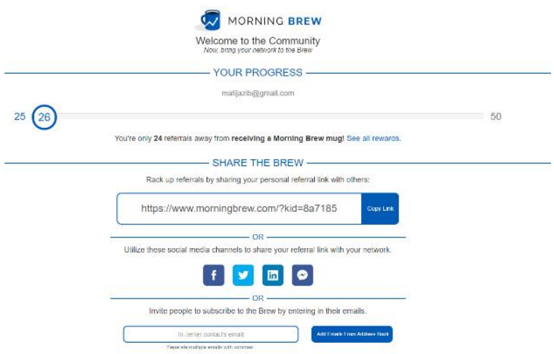
Up until now, we have only talked about how to get more people to subscribe to our emailing without any prior connection to the company. Referral systems leverage the existing audience and use the power of sharing to increase its audience and client base. Referral systems enable readers to share an email with colleagues, friends and family. It has been shown that people love to share what they like, the primary reason being to entertain, inspire, and be useful to others (Falk, Morelli, Welborn, Dambacher & Lieberman, 2012). In order to motivate readers to share more, incentives can be used. For instance, Morning Brew, a daily business briefing newsletter built for millennials, leveraged referral systems to boost their subscriber count to over a million subscribers within just a few years (AppSumo, 2019). In the figure below, it can be seen how easy it is for subscribers to share and see the current number of people referred. Beneath the referrals count, a GIF shows the rewards based on the count of people referred.

Figure 19: An example of an email referral system

Source: own work.

In the case of Morning Brew, only merchandise is offered at the time of this writing. However, start-ups offering services or products can, for example, offer discounts or free samples to incentivise their subscribers. The ease of sharing should be high priority when creating a referral system. Morning Brew achieved by having a form where referrer could include colleagues' email addresses and share to their favourite social media with just one click.

Figure 20: Referral leader board



Source: own work.

1.8.3 Web scraping

Web scraping is a practice of obtaining prospect data for marketing purposes form online sources. As we have already seen, inbound marketing is a long-term process which needs to be maintained through-out months and years before it comes to fruition. However, young businesses often seek a proof of concept that requires new leads immediately. Web scraping can provide highly relevant "cold leads" in a relatively short amount of time. Numerous data-points like business type, location, company size and others can be used to determine whether a lead is relevant to a business.

With the rise of professional social networks, business registries and other industry-specific account aggregators, it is easier than ever to create a highly qualitative list of B2B leads. Information such as company name, physical address, phone number and business email address are readily available. The following table shows few search criteria available with LinkedIn Sales navigator for filtering leads or accounts.

Table 6: LinkedIn's advanced search filters for lead generation

Company information	**Employee status**	**Position in the company**	**Geographical location**
Company size	Years at current company	Function	Location by region/state
Company type (public, private, non-profit, etc.)	Years in current position	Seniority	Location by postal code radius
Company (current/past/past or current/past not current)	Years of experience	Title (current/past/past or current/past not current)	Profile language

Source: Adopted from LinkedIn (2017).

Web scraping can be best split into three separate steps. Firstly, it includes identifying sources worth extracting from. An integral step is to define a target customer profile and its location on the web. Having a clear definition of the target customer's profile leads to a more streamlined process which avoids wasting resources on low-quality or irrelevant leads. Extracting data from competitor's store locator could be one great source. Secondly, data extraction includes an actual retrieval of the data from an online source. It often requires technical knowledge of programming languages such as Python or Node.js. However, numerous end-to-end solutions like Scrapebox and Octoparse are available. Lastly, cleansing and structuring of the data is necessary to guarantee that only valid leads are imported to the CRM for later sales and marketing activities. This process includes email verification, trimming spaces, adding prefix and suffix as well as re-formatting extracted date or time (Octoparse, 2017).

1.8.4 Email database churn

Database or list churn refers to a percentage of subscribers that leave an email list in a given period of time. If the churn is too high, it can be a symptom of a bigger problem rather than the problem itself. It could potentially mean that there is something wrong with the email content, segmentation, deliverability or the email frequency. There are two types of database churn. The first one is controllable churn which is primarily driven by the quality and effectiveness of email marketing. The second one is uncontrollable churn which happens due to changes in a subscriber's life and interests that are out of the marketer's control.

Furthermore, list churn comes in two types. Firstly, transparent churn includes unsubscribes, hard bounces and spam complaints. As this happens, any subsequent emailing is not possible due to technical and regulatory limitations. Secondly, opaque churn consists of those subscribers who have completely disengaged with the business. This includes inactive readers who ignore emails or send them to the spam folder (McDonald, 2014).

2 RECIPROCITY PRINCIPLE

The reciprocity norm is one of the psychological principles, which is present in every culture. It refers to a social expectation where people are motivated to repay the favour that they have been provided (Gouldner, 1960). According to one definition, the power of the reciprocity norm makes the receiver feel obligated to reciprocate back, resulting in increased probability to comply with any successive beneficiary requests (Regan, 1971).

The following chapter will discuss why this is the case and how reciprocity plays an important role in human behaviour and decision making. It starts with a brief overview of historical evidence, continuing with bridging behaviour economics, social psychology with marketing, and finishing off with a demonstration of how business can leverage findings in their marketing efforts.

One of the first written traces of the reciprocity norm, dates back to the time of Hammurabi (c. 1792–1750 BC). The notorious "eye for an eye" principles were at cause for many laws to be written to mimic direct reciprocity (Sacred Texts, 2018, pp. 100-199). Reciprocity norm was also at heart of ancient Greek culture. The citizens relied heavily on the reciprocity norm as a method of keeping transactions between two parties valid over an extended period of time. There was no formal system of government or trade in place. Furthermore, travellers commonly took advantage of deferred reciprocity which granted them the opportunity to receive any favour, e.g. loan, food. There was an expectation of receivers of the initial favour to repay it at another time when the initial provider is in dire need. Some argue that humans as a species survived because ancestors had honour systems for sharing goods and services (Leakey & Lewin, 1991)

Moreover, the idea of indebtedness to repay gifts is unique to human beings and their culture. The idea of “web of indebtedness” established by a cultural anthropologist, views reciprocity as an adaptive mechanism which enhanced survival (Ridley, 1997). It helped to create an interdependent environment where people shared labour to be more productive and efficient. The reciprocity principle was a bedrock of systems of aid and trade to develop, which enabled enormous benefits to societies that leveraged it (Fehr & Gächter, 2000).

2.1 Evidence from social psychology and behavioural economics

Reciprocity is a social norm that primarily rewards kind actions. One affirmative action is met with another affirmative action (Fehr & Gächter, 2000). It has the ability to determine human behaviour by gaining one's compliance. The rule of reciprocation says that people are more inclined to give, agree, or cooperate after they have received something and feel that they owe something in return. Reciprocity is an universal social norm; all cultures, from childhood onward, teach the rule and have negative names such as "freeloader", "taker" or "parasite" for people who receive but do not give back (Cialdini, 2016). Humans are taught from young age that returning kindness is the right thing to do (Kolyesnikova & Dodd, 2008). These obligations and positive behaviours are beneficial for societies as a whole (Ridley, 1997).

In cultural anthropology, reciprocity refers to the non-market exchange of goods or labour. It can take any form from direct barter to various forms of gift exchange where eventual reciprocation is expected with a certain delay. The simplest analogy being the exchange of birthday gifts (Parry, 1986). Furthermore, it has a survival value (Aronson & Wilson, 2018), which plays an important part in social interactions (Thibaut & Kelley, 2009).

Nonetheless, not all reciprocity exchange is equal. In anthropological economics, there are three distinct types of reciprocity that occur in human societies (Sahlins, 2017):

- Generalised reciprocity
- Balanced reciprocity
- Negative reciprocity

Generalised reciprocity describes an exchange where something is given without the expectation of returning anything at any point in the future. This usually occurs between people where there is a maximum amount of trust and a minimum amount of social distance. Example being parents who provide their children with home, education and food but do not expect this to be provided back to them.

On the other hand, with balanced reciprocity, there is an expectation of a return at some undefined future date with equal or similar amount. Unlike generalised reciprocity, where the giver continues to provide material assistance even though the receiver is unable to return anything for a long time, the balanced giver refuses to continue to transfer objects to the receiver if he or she does not reciprocate within the appropriate time frame. Bargaining between parties is absent.

Lastly, negative reciprocity occurs when an individual provides goods or labour with expectations to be reciprocated with equal value immediately. That is why, negative reciprocity can occur in scenarios where there is a minimum amount of trust and maximum social distance present in participant’s relationship (Sahlins, 2017).

Furthermore, reciprocity can be categorized not only by the nature of exchange and expectations that stem from it but also whether both parties entered in a consensual reciprocal relationship. It has been shown that even uninvited favours can have the same or a similar impact on the feeling of indebtedness.

2.1.1 Power of an uninvited favour

The rule of reciprocity applies also to the scenario of the uninvited first favours where a receiver of the favour did not expect nor want it, according to Paese and Gilin (2000) and Cialdini (2001). Effectively stripping people's ability to choose whom they want to be indebted to. The initial decision is made by the beneficiary – an important asymmetry. Put differently, accepting a favour from someone reduces one's freedom which often leads to an obligation to repay reflected by a need of 'having to do something' (Bell, Cholerton, Fraczek, Rohlfs & Smith, 1994). As it can be seen with the foot-in-the-door technique discussed later, people are more likely to comply with subsequent requests proposed by people who they already did small favours for in the past. This results in an outcome in which reciprocity can potentially lead to unequal exchanges (Burger, Horita, Kinoshita, Roberts & Vera, 1997). To eliminate the feeling of indebtedness, people often give in and agree to a subsequent request which is often a substantially larger favour than the one originally received.

One very common example of gaining people's response is giving out a free sample. The free samples are not just an opportunity for prospects to try out a product or service (e.g. cheese tasting in grocery stores) but are also used as initial step in engaging in the rule of reciprocity (Fehr & Gächter, 2000). It is difficult for many people to accept a free sample with "no strings attached". This is perhaps due to people feeling pressured when they are given a small gift or favour since reciprocation might be expected (Packard, 1957). Businesses might offer a gift with an expectation to reciprocate by purchasing, continuing from the previous example, a whole cheese (Kolyesnikova & Dodd, 2008), making a donation, or becoming more receptive to an argument (Whatley, J., Smith & Rhodes, 1999). A slightly different method of the free sample tactic may include giving a recipient a product or service to use for a short period which can result in higher-order rate once the trial period is over (Jones, 2011). There are additional forces to consider in the last example, such as the endowment effect, but they are outside the scope of this master thesis.

The power of the reciprocity rule is also that individuals, despite perhaps being disliked or unwelcomed, can by doing someone a favour, increase their chance of someone complying with one of their later requests.

2.1.2 Liking a beneficiary

It has been shown that liking the beneficiary has no effect on the probability of compliance with the later request. Once the initial favour is done, it makes no difference whether a benefactor targeted likes a beneficiary or not (Regan, 1971). This can be seen as an ill practice since all the genuinely free choices are made by the beneficiary. For instance, simply by giving out mints in diners, the tip waiters received increased by three percent. Furthermore, when two mints were given, tip increased by 14 percent. Additionally, after leaving only one mint along the bill but soon returning to give a second mint, the tips hiked by another 23 percent (Strohmetz, Rind, Fisher & Lynn, 2002). Consider another instance of the automatic nature of reciprocity at work; Christmas cards with a family picture and a short note were sent to a bunch of strangers which resulted in an overwhelming response from people who had never met nor expressed any desire to get to know the sender (Kunz & Woolcott, 1976). In another experiment, researchers have shown that waiters and waitresses who smiled enthusiastically received more tip than those who only presented a minimal smile (Tidd & Lockard, 1978).

2.2 Reciprocal concessions and exploitation

The reciprocity principle has strong implications in the business setting to influence desirable behaviour of prospects and clients. Reciprocal concessions are one variation of the principle which occur whenever one concedes to a person by reducing the perceived size of the initial request. The target person sees that reduction as a favour towards them and feel the obligation to repay with a favour to the beneficiary. The reciprocal concession is an integral part of a technique called “door in the face”. While reciprocal exploitation includes all techniques that exploit the power of reciprocity with the aim to benefit the requester’s goals. This thesis will cover the pre-giving, “door in the face” and “foot in the door” techniques as three possible ways of increasing the likelihood of the prospect’s compliance with marketer’s request. These techniques might have the power to promote behaviour which can be anything from opting in email communication, purchasing a product or service, or sharing on social media. All three techniques have been extensively tested in the social psychology area but not so much in the digital environment. In the following sub-chapters, three compliance-gaining techniques are introduced; pre-giving, door-in-the-face and foot-in-the-door. Despite being heavily researched, academia does not have a uniform opinion on whether they have a significant effect (Burger J. , 1999). The effect of the pre-giving compliance-gaining technique will be further examined in the empirical part. In the online environment, the reciprocity principle can be established via content creation, and sharing said content with users. Free content can server the role of the gift. Giving out an initial gift can be used to examine the effect of the pre-giving technique.

2.2.1 Pre-giving

One of the simplest ways to leverage the principle of reciprocity is via pre-giving. The concept surrounding pre-giving is giving the recipient a gift in advance to increase the probability of compliance with the later request. The power of pre-giving was first researched in a study by Regan (1971). The participants were told they were participating in a psychology study along with another person who was, in fact, working with the researchers. At the break, the actor requested to leave the room. In the control group, the actor came back empty-handed, and the experiment continued. However, in the testing group, the actor came back with two Coca-Cola bottles, which were offered to the participants in the experiment as a gift. As the experiment finished, the actor offered raffle tickets to the participants. The actor stated he would win a prize if he managed to sell the most raffle tickets and followed with asking the participants if they would buy any tickets. However, what the study has also shown is that when participants were given a free bottle, they on average, almost doubled their purchase. In another study, researchers showed an increase in compliance rates with the subsequent request from 65 to 90 percent (Burger, Horita, Kinoshita, Roberts & Vera, 1997).

Furthermore, in the same study, researchers showed that the delay between requests is to be considered. A week after a gift has been given, compliance rates, between participants who had not received the gift did not differ. This led to the conclusion that delaying the target request causes people to not feel indebted to the benefactor with the same effect. Even though the above experiments mainly focused on the physical realm, there is the possibility that it would work in a digital environment as well. One example of such gift-giving could be offering free digital content like blog posts, articles, tools, etc.

2.2.2 Door-in-the-face

As already seen, the rule of reciprocity can create a feeling of obligation to concede to someone who has made a prior concession to us (Cialdini, 1975). The technique describes a process that if an individual begins with requesting something large and the recipient refuses, the person who rejected the initial offer or proposal will feel obligated to consent to the smaller subsequent request, despite not being initially interested in any of the things. However, presenting a person with a smaller request after that person had rejected an initial larger one or simply presenting a target person with the second request of same size, does not lead to an increase in the likelihood of agreement to the second request. Under the framework, it is only effective when the proposal of the second favour is considered a genuine beneficiary's concession (Schwarzwald, Raz & Zvibel, 1979).

Further research has found that too extreme requests are portrayed as unreasonable and will fail. The beneficiary's bargaining is seen in a bad light (Raz, Bizman & Schwarzwald, 1983). In trying to find a reason why we might feel like this, O'Kefe and Figgé (1999) argued that accepting a smaller offer allows us to reduce the guilt that we have experienced when refusing the initial offer. Alternative explanation as to why we might be more susceptible to accept the second offer is that we are concerned about tarnishing the beneficiary's reputation, and we see it as an opportunity to show our willingness to cooperate and to fulfil the need for positive self-presentation (Pendelton & Batson, 1979).

2.2.3 Foot-in-the-door technique

The foot-in-the-door technique refers to a phenomenon where people are more likely to grant a favour to a person who they have already granted a favour in the past (Freedman & Fraser, 1966). This technique states that it makes it more likely for greater subsequent favours to be accepted. Its power lies in the fact that a small agreement forges a bond between the requester and the requestee. Requestees are more likely to comply with the subsequent favour since they have a need to justify themselves and feel obliged to act consistently with the internal schema they have built. A simple question can suffice to kick off the foot in the door in motion. According to Burger (1999) to increase the chances of compliance, the beneficiary should a) let individuals perform the initial request, b) label them as helpful, c) make sure that more than a minimal amount of effort is required to perform the initial request, and d) phrase the target request like a natural continuation of the initial request. On the other hand, in order to avoid the chance of reducing compliance with the target request, a benefactor should not a) inform individuals that the initial request was fulfilled by only a few people, b) present a subsequent request that demanded a different behaviour immediately after the first request was proposed, and c) monetarily compensate individuals for performing the initial request. "Foot in the door" can also be employed as a sales tactic using "loss-leads", an offer made purposely unprofitable, with the key purpose of enabling a relationship to develop with the goal of generating more profitable sales in the future.

However, despite being generally accepted as effective, a significant number of studies found no effect of the "foot in the door" technique on the compliance rates (Burger J., 1999). On the contrary, many studies have found a decrease in compliance rates.

Furthermore, peer reviews also concluded that the effect size is quite small with the overall r being in the range of .09 and .17. Additionally, none of the studies were able to identify and clarify under which circumstances failures to produce or reverse the effect are most likely to occur. However, three separate meta-analysis studies showed that the "foot in the door" technique can still have an effect according to Beaman, Steblay, Preston and Klentz (1988) and also Fern, Moroe and Avila (1986).

2.2.4 Moderation and mediation

There are several moderating and mediating techniques and factors that can mitigate the effect of the reciprocity norm for consumers. As already mention before, the time delay between the benefit and the opportunity to reciprocate seems to be important, where a limited timeframe for returning acts of kindness has an effect (Burger, Horita, Kinoshita, Roberts & Vera, 1997). Shorter delays between giving favour and the opportunity to reciprocate are generally more successful (Beaman, Preston & Cole, 1983). However, most of the studies were conducted in the field of social psychology. How these techniques fare in the online environment is yet to be seen.

2.3 The takeaway for leveraging reciprocity principle in Marketing

Successful digital marketing campaigns leveraged the findings from behavioural economics and social psychology discussed earlier and begun following the "Give – Give – Give - Get" formula. Nowadays, when visiting a landing page, it is difficult to imagine asking for a favour before first offering something of value. One could argue that giving before getting is a great signalling tool of informing marketing tactics of businesses. One of the first to define and explore the reciprocity principle and its relation to marketing and sales more in-depth was Robert Cialdini (1993). In his book, he defined additional five principles that influence human behaviour and decision making. These six principles of influence have been further consolidated into three stages (Neidert, 2008)**.** The first one revolves around cultivating a positive association. In this stage, reciprocity and liking are used to create positive feelings for the person making the request. The second stage is to reduce uncertainty, where social proof and authority are used to convince the target that compliance is a correct and feasible thing to do. The third one is to stimulate an action. In this stage, scarcity and consistency are used to spur action and follow through with commitments.

Focusing on stage one, we further identify five additional steps that help influence the customer via the reciprocity principle, all by advocating positive reciprocity (Brown & Fiorella, 2013).

1. Create the perception that the offer being offered is crafted for the customer individually while focusing on the customer's psychographic or demographic profile. This can also be achieved by providing a process where customer have the ability to choose the offer that is best tailored for them.
2. Provide customers with a gift that can be used disconnected to a business or the use of the product.
3. Propose ways how customers may reciprocate. Asking for referring the newsletter is one great way to boost the emailing list.
4. Be the first to give and first to reach out.
5. Keep the relationship alive by providing an additional gift

3 EMPIRICAL EXAMINATION: Examine the Pre-giving effect on compliance with target request

3.1 Hypothesis

As already seen, “pre-giving” is one of the techniques to leverage the reciprocity principle. It is a two-step process. First step includes, a beneficiary giving a physical gift to a benefactor. In the second step, the beneficiary requests a favour, also known as target request, to the benefactor. In this scenario, the beneficiary is the party, who is to benefit from the target request. On the other hand, the benefactor is the party who provides the target request, provides the benefit, to the beneficiary. Pre-giving describes a situation whereby giving a benefactor a physical gift, the likelihood of their compliance with the target request, increases. The intention of “pre-giving” is to trigger the reciprocity norm and to generate a feeling of obligation which is expressed through the need to finalise an exchange. Under its framework, receiving a gift “forces” the benefactor to respond by offering something of a value in return, which is exactly what the beneficiary had wanted all along (Regan, 1971).

Studies have shown that “pre-giving” can lead to a boost in the compliance rate of the subsequent request. Its effect has been found to be in region from 60 to 100 percent when compared to control groups according to Burget, Horita, Kinoshita, Roberts and Vera (1997) and Boster, Fediuk and Kotowski (2001). That is why I have decided to examine the effect of reciprocity principle, more specifically a compliance-gaining technique called “pre-giving” on behaviour of online visitors by conducted an online experiment. The goal is to convert online visitors into subscribers with the help of the reciprocity principle.

Find the hypothesis for the experiment below:

H1: “Pre-giving” technique is more effective at converting online visitors into subscribers than the control group

3.2 Research methodology for the examination of the reciprocity principle in an online environment

Reciprocity carries a social expectation where individuals are inclined to clear their debt which they have to another person (Gouldner, 1960). When a debt is unsettled, a benefactor has still not returned a favour, reciprocity norm has the power to causes the benefactor to feel obligated to repay which leads to an increase in likelihood of compliance with subsequent beneficiary’s requests (Regan, 1971). This has strong implications on determining human behaviour, especially, when it comes to gaining benefactor’s compliance. The rule of reciprocation says that benefactors are more inclined to give, agree, or cooperate after they have received something and feel that they owe something in return (Cialdini, 2016).

For examining the effect of the reciprocity principle in the online environment, I have decided to use the experiment methodology, which belongs to the group of quantitative research methods. Internet has completely revolutionized the way people communicate and retrieve information. It allows access to wider and, before difficult to reach, population in a highly specific manner. Additionally, this is now possible to achieve in an inexpensive, fast, and convenient way. In experimental psychology, Internet is gaining popularity as an alternative option to classical lab settings for conducting experiments (Onishi, Shultz & Dandurand, 2008). The experiment is one of the most effective tools for detecting causation links between various phenomena in society as it enables easy manipulation of different variables (Toš & Hafner-Fink, 1998). An experiment involves the collection of empirical evidence, and its nature gives the experimenter greater control over determining factors with a goal of estimating each factor's impact (Manoilov, 2010). It is a research process and not a data collection technique where the researcher has almost full control over the set-up and execution of an experiment itself (Toš & Hafner-Fink, 1998). Additionally, the experimenter has the ability to decide which participants will be influenced under what conditions and when (White & McBurney, 2012). Every experiment has at least one dependent and independent variable. The latter is systematically and intentionally manipulated by the experimenter. The goal of an experiment is to determine whether altering an independent variable leads to a change in a dependent variable (Saunders, Thornhill & Lewis, 2009).

In a traditional experiment, the population is divided into two groups. The first group is an experimental group which we introduce to an experimental variable whose influence is compared against the control group, the second group, where no experimental variable is introduced (Saunders, Thornhill & Lewis, 2009). In order to conclude that the measured differences between the groups are actually the consequence of the influence of the experiment variables, the researcher must ensure the identity of the two groups is identical (Toš & Hafner-Fink, 1998).

For the experiment conducted in this master thesis, I have used an online experiment method. I have primarily used it because it offers an ability to reach a much wider audience across the whole world and can be conducted fast and at low cost.

3.3 Experiment: Examining the effect of the "Pre-giving" technique at capturing visitor's email

The main purpose of the experiment is to examine the effect of the reciprocity principle on compliance with the target request. More specifically, a technique named "pre-giving". For the purpose of the experiment I have decided to conduct a controlled online experiment also named A/B test, split test, randomized experiment or control/treatment test (Springer, 2017). More than three decades have passed since the first online experiment was conducted in 1995 and since then, it has been used in a plethora of other fields (Krantz, 1996).

Generally, experiments can be divided into two groups; natural and laboratory experiments. Both types of the experiment have certain disadvantages that can be mitigated with the use of an online experiment. The online experiment method is best used for the verification and validation of past findings of natural or laboratory experiments (Birnbaum, 2000).

Moreover, online experiments are also very similar to laboratory experiments and can be used to investigate cause-and-effect relationships. A controlled online experiment allows constituting a causal relationship with high probability. Hypotheses like "If a certain adjustment or change is introduced, how and how much will it affect key performance indicators?" could be used to examine its effect with people (Springer, 2017).

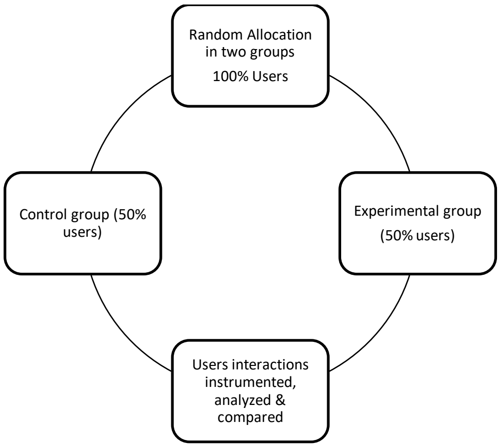
Firstly, one of the biggest advantages of conducting an online experiment is the ease of access to demographics and cultures, a diverse population of participants and a unique and previously inaccessible target population (Reips, 2000). Secondly, as it allows access to large samples, it has high statistical power. Thirdly, the experiment comes to the participants and not vice versa. Fourthly, it saves costs due to not needing lab space, equipment, administration, and workforce.

Furthermore, there are some other advantages of conducting an online experiment to the lab experiment. Primarily, the fact that experimental procedures can be automated, which leads to a cost reduction and time savings linked with managing the experiment. Likewise, it also leads to an increase in the uniformity of the process for all participants and, more importantly, it can lessen demand characteristics. Additionally, online experiments can be conducted in a broader array of settings compared to the highly constrained setting of the lab experiment (Reips, Standards for Internet-Based Experimenting, 2002). Similarly, 24-hour access can lead to increased participant's comfort (Salgado & Moscoso, 2003). As the experiment is available for public criticism, ethical standards can be maintained, and the likelihood of the participants (Reips, Standards for Internet-Based Experimenting, 2002).

Main drawbacks of conducting an online compared to a lab experiment is the instability of the environment which tends to have characteristics of being more variable, including noise, and more difficult to control technical aspects of the equipment. These adverse effects can be mitigated by making participants participate in a controlled environment and by controlling for statistical outliers. Additionally, re-submissions are more likely to occur when participants have strong opinions about a controversial topic (Konstan, Rosser, Ross, Staton & Edwards, 2005). Lastly, experiments can suffer from a lack of experimental controls, self-selection and the possibility of a major dropout (Birnbaum, 2000).

The experiment will use an experimental setup which will try to evaluate a factor with two levels, an experimental (version A) and a control (version B) version. The control is the baseline, and the experimental is the change that is tested, hence the name A/B test. Randomly assigning 50 percent to the experimental and 50 percent to the control group provides the experiment with maximum statistical power. Generally, the analysis will examine whether the difference between the statistical distribution of the experimental and that of the control group is statistically significant. See below figure for the high-level structure of A/B test (Springer, 2017).

Figure 21: Online Controlled Experiments and A/B Testing



Source: Adopted from Springer (2017).

With the A/B test, I have tried to examine the effect of reciprocity principle, more specifically the method called pre-giving. I was interested in whether "pre-giving" (A) is more successful at converting online visitors into subscribers than the control group is (B). The target segment included business owners and employees of small businesses with a headcount lower than ten. The vast majority of participants is located in the United Kingdom, Germany and Austria.

3.3.1 Experiment design and execution

The general idea surrounding "pre-giving" is that gifting a benefactor will increase the likelihood of compliance with the target request, asked by a beneficiary. Pre-giving sources its power from the reciprocity norm. Giving something to a benefactor, it generates a sense of obligation through the need to complete an exchange by repaying, which is the intention of beneficiary all along. Pre-giving has been shown to have an effect on influencing positive behaviour. Despite the fact, that some may accept the gift and not reciprocate with a favour, the social pressure to reciprocate, will make sure that they will stay in the minority. In one study, the researches have achieved an increase in compliance rates of 65 to 90 percent, simply by giving out a small gift (Burger, Horita, Kinoshita, Roberts & Vera, 1997). For pre-giving to work, the gift needs to be seen as altruistic act which is unrelated to the target request. The effect can be nullified if there is a reward for initial action or where there is no real opportunity for the participant to be “punished” in case they fail to reciprocate. The power of pre-giving was first researched by Regan (1971).

In the scientific publication, the research was mainly limited to lab experiments where both participant and experimenter are engaged in one to one conversation like in Cialdini(1993)￼ (1971)￼ and Tidd & Lockard(1978)￼. All of these studies used physical goods to facilitate an exchange. Additionally, vast majority of the research on compliance-gaining tactics that I have found were conducted in the lab environment and in the physical world. Those conducted in the online environment were hard to get by. That is why I have decided to use the findings from social psychology and apply them to digital marketing with a goal to examine the effect of reciprocity and pre-giving.

In order to establish the reciprocity relationship and examine the effect of the reciprocal principle I have written a blog post (see 3.3.2 and Appendix 2). The blog provides free content, which served a role of a gift to online visitors on the website. It was expected to make compliance with the target request, converting online visitors to subscribers, more probable (Regan, 1971). As the reader moved through the content, the reader was presented with an offer to sign up for the newsletter – target request. In exchange for signing-up, second blog post (see Appendix 3) would be delivered to the reader’s mailbox as a thank-you for the action. The second blog post was, from the content point of view, a continuation of the first blog with additional content (see 3.3.2 for content). A follow-up email was sent right after signing-up, in order to preserve the power reciprocity principle (Beaman, Preston & Cole, 1983). The experiment followed steps to maximise the effect of the reciprocity principle resulting in more people subscribing compared to the control group (Brown & Fiorella, 2013).

- Be the first to give something – provide an article, no string attached
- Offer customers ways to show their support - thank the readers and ask to share
- Keep the relationship going - send an additional article after subscription
- Be the last to give

On the other hand, the control group did not receive the blog-post for “free” like in the case of the experimental group. The control group was led to a landing page (see Appendix 7) where online visitors were able to see a preview of what the final content included. They had the opportunity to fill out the form and in return request both articles. The landing page did not provide any value in terms of new information, and it was created with a goal to be a trade opportunity, an email address, becoming a subscriber, for the content.

All the content for the experimental group was hosted on a website that can be found on the following address “https://leadxgen.net”. The website was self-hosted server using popular content managing system called Wordpress. As the website was initially without any content, I have populated the website with various articles with topics ranging from lead generation, web scraping to copywriting. These articles have not served any other purpose but to make the website look more authentic and genuine. The landing page server to the control group was created by a service called Unbounce (2019).

The experiment ran from 20th of August 2019 until 20th of September 2019. To promote the experiment, I have leveraged Facebook, LinkedIn and email channels.

3.3.2 Participants in the experiment

The target segment for the experiment included small businesses and with less than ten employees. This also included freelancers and sole-proprietors. The vast majority of the businesses who were part of the experiment are located in the United Kingdom, Austria and Germany and have been in business for less than five years (2014 onwards). The United Kingdom was chosen to reduce the possibility of the language barrier. Target segment included the businesses selling physical products and offering web design and marketing services to both business and end customers.

Furthermore, the assumption was that these businesses would be likely to be interested in the content because 1) have a need to connect with decision-makers in other companies, 2) lack the budget for outsourcing or for in-house team for the task of lead generation, 3) lack the necessary skill and 4) have good understanding of English language.

I have collected businesses from the retail, cosmetics goods, consumer goods and health and wellbeing and business & marketing consulting industries. I have used Linkedin Sales Navigator to filter the leads by their industry. In order to get young businesses, I have selected those with fewer followers on LinkedIn and with a more recent found year.

3.3.3 Overview of the content used in the experiment

Guide's content

As already stated, a blog-post was offered as a "gift" to the participants of the experimental group. The nature of the blog-post was educational, and it was created with a goal to deliver valuable content to business owners and employees of small businesses by showing them how to 1) find potential partners on LinkedIn, 2) identify decision-makers in prospective companies and 3) grow a LinkedIn network and 4) build an email audience in their niche.

In total, there were two pieces of content. The first piece of content included a blog post (see Appendix 2). It is a step-by-step guide to achieve before mentioned three points using free tools. It was assumed that this content was useful for small businesses that are still trying to grow sales and do not have a sufficient number of leads in their sales funnel. I have tried to make step-by-step as presentable as possible, including screenshots and animation of the whole process, so it is easy to follow even for someone who is not very a technical person. It was important that the initial guide provided enough value, not to make readers feel let down when they are asked to perform the target request. Moreover, asking online visitors to sign up should feel like a natural continuation of the reciprocal exchange. Failing to do so may put the reader off completely, resulting in non-compliance with the target request and failure of the experiment.

For the second content, that became available only after the sign-up occurred, I have created an additional guide that took off where the first ended. It included a step-by-step instruction on how to find direct email addresses of a company's employees (see Appendix 3). Direct email address refers to email addresses that belong to a specific employee and are not a generic mailbox. Both guides where available at once for the control group, as soon as they have signed-up through the landing page.

Invitation Copy

This copy was used to invite readers, through various channels, to visit and read the blog-post. Making sure that the copy is compelling enough to incite participants to click on the link was paramount for the success of the experiment. When creating the copy for the emails, I have tried to personalise it to each receiver by using custom variables and follow the findings covered in the first part of this Master Thesis. The custom variables are data-points that are unique to each recipient. I have used a first name (where possible), city, industry and business name to personalize the message. The aim was to make the email perceived as a friendly offer of help. The goal was for the target to believe that the gift was an altruistic act and not related to the later request (Burger, Horita, Kinoshita, Roberts & Vera, 1997). Please note that values within curly brackets "{}", changed for each recipient based on recipient's information. The link in the CTA for the experimental group led directly to the blog-post. For the control group, on the other hand, it forwarded visitors to the landing page. Each link included a tracking code to track the source and the number of visits of the participants. Same was applied across all other channels.

To reduce the length of the URLs, I have used a service called Bitly (Bitly, n.d.) and a tool named Campaign URL Builder (Google, n.d.) to shorten URLs without losing the ability to track the activities. See Appendix 13 for one example of how Bitly shortened the URL and still preserved the tracking. This was helpful with keeping character count as low as possible.

As can be seen in the below table, the content for both groups were nearly identical for the "G-suite email" method. This method includes sending email through Gmail, from mat@leadxgen.net mailbox. There is a slight difference in the copy used in the CTA. The area where the copy differs is highlighted in red.

Table 7: Copy of the "G-Suite email" method

Group	*Experimental*	*Control*
Subject line	find wholesalers for {{companyName}} around {{city|your city}} and across the EU	find wholesalers for {{companyName}} around {{city|your city}} and across the EU
Copy	Hi {{firstName|there}}, I've recently written a guide that could help you and {{companyName}} find purchase managers in the {{industry}} sector on LinkedIn. **You can use this guide to:** 1. Find wholesalers for {{companyName}} around {{city|your city}} and elsewhere 2. Find & identify purchase managers in the {{industry}} sector 3. Grow an email-list & a LinkedIn network in your niche	Hi {{firstName|there}}, I've recently written a guide that could help you and {{companyName}} find purchase managers in the {{industry}} sector on LinkedIn. **You can use this guide to:** 1. Find wholesalers for {{companyName}} around {{city|your city}} and elsewhere 2. Find & identify purchase managers in the {{industry}} sector 3. Grow an email-list & a LinkedIn network in your niche
	You can view the full guide here.	Get access to the full guide here.

Source: own work.

After the manual sending of emails was completed, broadcast email was sent out. Find the copy of the broadcast email in the Appendix 14.

For personalised notes attached to a Linkedin connection request, the copy was adjusted to satisfy LinkedIn's character limit of 300. This message did not include any subject line since the nature of the message did not allow it. Both messages are nearly identical, with the only difference being the CTA. Link to the pages was shortened for both copies with the help of Bitly, as already seen.

Find the copy of a personalised note attached to the connection request in the table below.

Table 8: Copy of the "Connection request" method

Group	*Experimental*	*Control*
Copy	Hello {{firstName|there}}, I've written an article that shows how to find decision-makers and their email addresses on LinkedIn. Having high-quality leads really helped me as a freelancer Read the article here: http://bit.ly/2ZuIYww	Hello {{firstName|there}}, I've written an article that shows how to find decision-makers and their email addresses on LinkedIn. Having high-quality leads really helped me as a freelancer Get access to the article: http://bit.ly/2kVOEBJ

Source: own work.

Messaging existing connections was a bit easier in terms of the copy since there was no upper character limit. As already seen before, copy for both groups was nearly identical, with the only difference in the CTA.

Find the copy for "message connections" method in the Appendix 15.

For Facebook Ad, I adapted the copy to match the recommendations set by Facebook. Both copies have a slightly different style compared to the above. This is mostly due to the fact that the copy was used in a post form. Again, the copies between the groups are nearly identical. Hashtags were appended to the end to increase the reach. Find the copies for the Facebook add in Appendix 16.

Lastly, the copy for the experimental and control group for the LinkedIn ad was identical. Mostly because the copy was kept very short, it contained only 171 characters. This was done so the text was not hidden behind "see more" button. Find the copy in the below table. The copy was accompanied by an image **(**see Appendix 8).

Table 9: Copy of the "LinkedIn Ad" method

Group	*Experimental*	*Control*
Copy	Is finding clients as freelancer difficult? This guide will demonstrate how to identify and message 100+ decision-makers on LinkedIn using free tools. Click to learn more.	Is finding clients as freelancer difficult? This guide will demonstrate how to identify and message 100+ decision-makers on LinkedIn using free tools. Click to learn more.

Source: own work.

3.3.4 Email capture on the website

Once the participants of the experimental group (hereinafter group A) visited the blog post, the main goal was to collect their email address. Three sign-up forms were spanned across the page to make it as easy a possible for users to enter their email addresses. One was placed in the sidebar of the blog post. The second sign-up form was placed within the text after the first chapter since mobile users do not see sidebar until the very bottom. The last sign-up form was placed just above the footer of the page. For desktop users, an exit pop-up with a delay of 30 seconds. Contrasting colours were used for sign-up forms to make them stand out.

The participants of the control group (hereinafter group B) were led to a landing page where in order to receive the access to the blogs had to first sign with an email address (see Appendix 7). There was no difference in content delivered between the two groups.

3.3.5 Generating traffic for the experiment

Generating enough qualitative traffic to the website turned out to be the most difficult task. Since target segment consisted of professionals, paid advertisement turned out to be too expensive. For instance, the average cost per click (hereinafter CPC), cost of user clicking, in 2016 on a LinkedIn sponsored post was $5.74 (HubSpot, 2016). Getting a meaningful number of clicks from sponsored post quickly increases the cost of the experiment to the laboratory one.

As an alternative, different paid and unpaid channels have been leveraged. The following were channels were explored; LinkedIn messaging, sending a LinkedIn connection request, Facebook post, sending manual emails and broadcast emails.

LinkedIn presented itself as an obvious choice since it is a professional networking platform that offers fine-grain filtering by occupation, title, years in the position, etc. Firstly, I have messaged all the existing connections in my LinkedIn network, offering to ready my blog post (see copy 3.3.2). Secondly, I have appended a personalized note to a connection request and sent it to LinkedIn users that belonged to the target segment (see copy 3.3.2). Thirdly, I have sent am email to professionals who I acquired through lead generation (see Email generation). This process included two approaches, a blast email and one-to-one approach. Fourthly, I have ventured paid channels by running an ad on LinkedIn with a total budget of $50 for the duration of three days and lastly, on Facebook with €10 budget. For sponsoring a post on both platforms, I have created a Facebook and LinkedIn business page.

Sending LinkedIn connection requests and messages to existing connections

To send connection requests, I have used LinkedIn Sales Navigator (hereinafter LSN) feature to filter the list of people who belonged to the target segment (see 3.3.1). As filter was finalized, I have extracted the results with the tool called LinkedIn Helper (hereinafter LH); this consolidated all results into one comma separated value file (hereinafter CSV). The next step included automating the process of sending connection request for each contact on the spreadsheet. For this purpose, I have used another tool called PhantomBuster (hereinafter PB), which automated the sending of connection requests with the personalised note to the list of participants.

To message existing connections, I have used the same tool with a slightly different note attached. Before sending the message, the participants were randomly assigned in two groups.

Email generation

In terms of collecting email addresses I have used two different approaches. Firstly, with the help of LSN, I was able to retrieve the list of businesses that fit the segment criteria. As the list of companies has been finalized, the contacts were extracted and exported to the spreadsheet along with their name and LinkedIn profile URL. The spreadsheet was cleaned of all irrelevant contacts and served as a starting point for further collection of the business information. This step included the collection of the following data-points; city, company headcount, year founded, short description and website. The domain names were extracted from the website addresses and were used to generate the direct email addresses. In order to do, I have used a combination of Hunter and Scrapebox, two tools that offer generating, finding and verifying email addresses.

Second approach consisted of using a combination of Google Advanced Search and Facebook. With the help of Google's advanced search operator, I have been able to search within Facebook's page category, resulting in hundreds of Facebook Pages in the target segment. Data includes all the basic information about the business such as an address, description, date founded, website and sometimes even email address. For the purpose of extracting the data, I have used Python code (see Appendix 5) to visit, log-in and extract the data-point for each page. In the below table, examples of two search queries can be found that can be used to field Facebook results on Google.

Table 10: Example of advanced search queries to find Facebook Pages

Segment	*Advanced search query*
Marketing agencies in the UK	United Kingdom intitle:"25 Best Marketing Agency" AND site:facebook.com
Web design businesses in the UK	United Kingdom intitle:"25 Best Web Design" AND site:facebook.com

Source: own work.

Knowing the company's domain was paramount when it came to the email generation since in most cases company's domain is used for an email address as well. For instance, if a business website's URL is "http://picerija-na-placu.si", its domain is "picerija-na-placu.si". Most of the generic email addresses have aliases such as info, sales, contact or support. In our case, this results in "info@picerija-na-placu.si".

In order to start contacting businesses via email, I have verified the list of email addresses for their validity. For this task I have used another service named Neverbounce. There are five different status codes. Refer to the below table for status codes as defined by Neverbounce (2018).

Table 11: Results code for email verification

Text code	*Description*	*Ok to send?*
Valid	Verified as a real address	Yes
Invalid	Verified as non-valid	No
Disposable	A temporary, disposable address	No
Unknown	The server cannot be reached	No

Source: Adopted from Neverbounce (2018).

For the experiment, I have only used email addresses that have resulted in Valid text code. This way, I could assure that I will be only sending emails to valid email addresses and avoid hampering the domain reputation.

3.3.6 Warming-up the domain and sending emails

Once the verification process has been completed, the process of setting-up the sending of emails could begin. The first choice I had to make was, whether to use complete email marketing solution, like Drip that has been used for this experiment, which uses their third-party servers to send emails from or use G-Suite account where emails are sent by Google. I have created a mailbox named "mat@leadxgen.net". Both approached has upsides and downsides. The former is the most common way of doing email marketing since there are numerous established solutions on the market. However, since they use their private email server and their own IP addresses to send emails they can result in lower open and deliverability rate. As the majority of the email addresses are provided by Google this can sometimes present a problem. Since these emails, especially if the domain is not yet warm, Google and other ESPs could be more likely to flag messages as spam.

On the other hand, emails sent via G-suite account are exchanged within the Google eco-system. In layman's terms, it is akin to exchanging an email from one to another Gmail account. It has been recently argued that these emails can have a higher chance of ending up in the Primary tab in Gmail. After registering a domain and setting up the mailbox, I have started the process of warming up the domain with slowly increasing the number of emails sent every day while maintaining healthy open rates.

Furthermore, all requirements like DKIM, SPF were followed to respect the rules of the ESP and maximize the deliverability. After the ten-day warm-up period, which included exchanging the emails with personal mailboxes, I have started sending emails to the target segment, beginning with 50 a day for the first three days and subsequently raising the send limit to 100 emails per day onwards. The sending schedule was set to mimic the traditional working schedule. Emails were sent between Monday to Friday throughout 10am and 6pm. In order to not looks spammy, emails were sent in a five and a half minute interval. To automate the process, I have used service named Lemlist which automates the process of sending emails via manipulating Gmail application programming interface (hereinafter API). It also offers everything what traditional email marketing solutions do like tracking open, reply, click, bounce and unsubscribe rate. At the last day of the experiment, broadcast email was sent to participants who have not received the email via Drip.

3.4 Experiment results

To examine whether group A has been more successful than group B, A/B test was conducted. The key metrics were the number of visits to the website and conversions. In the control group, a conversion was counted when a visitor sign-up to receive blog post on the landing page. For the experimental group, conversion occurred when visitors subscribed using any of the sign-up forms (see 3.3.2). To determine whether the difference in conversion rate between the experimental and control group has been significant, Pearson's chi-squared test has been used.

The results have been broken down in more detail and can be found in the following chapters.

LinkedIn

I have used two separate ways to leverage LinkedIn to conduct the experiment. First was via sending a connection request. LinkedIn allows adding a personalised note, limited to 300 characters, to each request (see 3.3.2 for content used). Another method included sending a normal message through LinkedIn messaging app to the existing connections. As expected, click rates for both methods were relatively high compared to the industry's average rate for the Marketing industry of 1.74% (Mailchimp, 2018). The column "Sent to" refers to the number of people on LinkedIn that have been sent a message (see 3.3.2 for copy). The column "Visitors" refers to the number of people who clicked the link in the message and visited the blog post. Lastly, the column "Conversions" stands for the percentage of participants who performed the target request of signing up for the newsletter in the experimental group and the landing page in the control group. Column "CVR" is a representation of conversions in relation to the amount of "Sent to".

Find key metrics for "Connection requests" method below.

Table 12: Key metrics for the "Connection requests" method

	Group	***Sent to***	***Visitors***	***Click rate***	***Conversions***	***CVR***
Connection Request	Experimental	622	**42**	**6.75%**	**3**	**0.48%**
	Control	612	**41**	**6.70%**	**1**	**0.16%**

Source: own data

A similar number of messages were sent via "Message connections" method. The key metrics were akin to the previous method. This could be explained by the fact that existing connections were added only recently and there has been no prior communication. Below table includes results for the "Message connections" method.

Table 13: Key metrics for the "Message connections" method

	Group	Sent to	Visitors	Click rate	Conversions	CVR
Message connection						
	Experimental	559	**36**	**6.44%**	**2**	**0.36%**
	Control	568	**37**	**6.61%**	**1**	**0.18%**

Source: own data

Furthermore, I have also tried messaging group members and running an ad on LinkedIn. Both methods did not yield significant results that is why I have chosen to exclude them from the analysis. LinkedIn ads offered an excellent way to segment. However, the minimum recommended CPC bid at $6.33 turned out to be too expensive to make it a viable option.

Facebook

To leverage Facebook as a channel to promote the content, I have created a sponsored since the CPC was almost two orders of magnitude lower compared to the LinkedIn. The column "Reach" represents the number of people who received impressions of the post. The ad did not yield any conversions for either of the groups. Due to the poor click rate, I have decided to stop venturing Facebook as a method to promote the content further. I have attributed the failure to the difficulty of reaching the right audience. The copy was identical for both groups (see Appendix 8,9).

Table 14: Key metrics for the "Facebook Ad" method

	Group	Reach	Visitors	Click rate	Conversions	CVR
Ad						
	Experimental	1,115	**11**	**0.99%**	**0**	**0.00%**
	Control	985	**12**	**1.22%**	**0**	**0.00%**

Source: own data

Emails sent via G-Suite

The last channel to generate traffic to the website was email marketing channel. Below table includes blended figures for the emails sent to all segments via G-suite. All emails were sent during working hours (10 am and 6 pm) between 10th and 19th of September on weekdays in five and a half minute intervals. Most surprising KPI was the click rate which which was higher than the industry average (Mailchimp, 2018). See below table for the key metrics (Appendix 10).

Table 15: Key metrics for the "G-suite email" method

	Group	Recipients	Visitors	Click rate	Conversions	CVR
Email						
	Experimental	403	**13**	**3.23%**	**1**	**0.25%**
	Control	365	**12**	**3.29%**	**0**	**0.00%**

Source: own work.

Emails sent via "Blast email" method

An email blast was sent on the last day of the experiment using tool called Drip. This was reserved for after all emails via G-Suite were sent. This was done to minimise the risk of hampering the reputation of the new domains (Mailgun, 2019). However, key metrics turned out to be quite poor compared with the previous method but in-line with industry averages (Mailchimp, 2018). The email was sent to all recipients in one big broadcast on September the 19th.

Find key metrics in the table below (see Appendix 11 for more).

Table 16: Key metrics for the "blast email" method

	Group	Send to	Visitors	Click rate	Conversions	CVR
Blast Email						
	Experimental	1451	**24**	**1.65%**	**2**	**0.14%**
	Control	1454	**27**	**1.86%**	**0**	**0.00%**

Source: own work.

Blended data

I have used Pearson's chi-squared test which belongs to a group of the null-hypothesis statistical tests. It is used to determining whether the difference in the conversion rates between the experimental and control group is statistically significant. It is the statistical tool most often used in controlled online experiments, often called A/B or split test, to determine better performing version of the landing page, email, etc (Springer, 2017). The first step includes performing a hypothesis test to assess whether there is statistical evidence that the conversion rates between the two scenarios truly differ.

The null hypothesis states that conversion rates for the experimental and control group do not different. In other words, the null hypothesis states that the two factors, how someone reaches the website and likelihood of conversions happening, are statistically independent of each other. Conversely, it means that knowing whether someone was sent a blog-post in advance with no strings attached or if someone had to fill out the form with their email address on the landing page for the same blog-post tells you nothing about the chance that they will sign-up.

The null hypothesis states that there is no statistically significant difference in the conversion rate between the control and experimental group.

$$H_{0}: \pi_A = \pi_B \tag{4}$$

Whereas the alternative hypothesis states that the conversion between groups differ.

$$H_{1}: \pi_A \neq \pi_B \tag{5}$$

The final experiment's results can be found in table 20. Total number of participants, visitors, conversions and results of the Pearson's chi-squared test can be found in the below tables. The number of participants was calculated by summing the number of people who had an impression of the Facebook Ad, received a message or a connection request on LinkedIn, opened a manually sent and bulk email. See the aggregated data below.

Table 17: Key metrics for the Experiment

Group	***Recipients***	***Visitors***	***Click rate***	***Conversions***	***CVR***
Experimental	4150	**126**	**3.04%**	**8**	**0.19%**
Control	3984	**129**	**3.24%**	**2**	**0.05%**

Source: own work.

Next step included conducting Pearson's chi square. The first step included calculating the observed values. In the below table you can find columns "Conversions" and "Non-Conversions". The later has been calculated by subtracting the number of conversions from the number of visitors in table 17. Column "Conversions" was copied over from the table above.

Table 18: Observed values for Pearson's chi-square

	Group	Non-Conversions	Conversions	Total
	Experimental	118	8	126
	Control	127	2	129
TOTAL		245	10	255

Source: own work.

Next step included calculating the expected values from our data. Calculation was done following the formula below:

$$E_i = \frac{Row\,Total * Column\,Total}{Overall\,Total} \tag{6}$$

Find results for the expected values in the below table.

Table 19: Expected values for Pearson's chi-square

	Group	Non-Conversions	Conversions	Total
	Experimental	121.06	4.94	126
	Control	123.94	5.06	129
TOTAL		245	10	255

Source: own work.

Finally, the Pearson's chi-squared test was calculated using the following formula.

$$\chi 2 = \sum_{i=1}^{n} \frac{(O_i - E_i)^2}{E_i} \tag{7}$$

Based on the results of Pearson's chi-Squared test, it can be concluded that experimental group has a higher conversion rate than the control group. The p-value of 0.0482 is small enough that we can reject H_0. The p-value of 0.0482 is statistically significant at $p < .05$, but not at the 0.01 level. The chi-square statistic is 3.8959. There is enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis at the 5% level of significance and accept the alternative hypothesis. It can be concluded that there is positive correlation between how a visitor from groups A and B reached the website and the likelihood of conversion, which was in our case represented by subscribing for a newsletter. The result suggests that providing visitor "free" content positively correlates with the likelihood of them becoming subscribers.

Table 20: Results for Pearson's chi-square test of the experiment

	Group	Non-Conversions	Conversions	Total
	Experimental	0.08	1.89	1.97
	Control	0.08	1.85	1.93
TOTAL		0.15	3.74	3.90
		$\chi2$ = 3.90	df = 1	(p = 0.0482)

Source: own work.

DISCUSSION

The results from the experiment accept the alternative hypothesis stating that "Pre-giving" scenario is more effective at converting visitors to subscribers than in those without. Participants of the experimental group, that were first given the content for "free" and were later asked to perform the request of subscribing to the newsletter were more likely to comply with the request than the control group. The control group was led to a landing page, where the recap of the content was provided, however, to receive full content being they were required to sign-up with their email address. The results imply that reciprocity principle can have positive an effect in online environment and not only in a traditional lab setting (Cialdini, 1993).

Results from the experiment are in line with existing scientific research, which has shown that pre-giving and reciprocity, in general, can have a positive effect on the compliance with the request (Regan, 1971). Businesses that would like to grow their audience should leverage the reciprocity principle, by providing valuable content for free without the immediate expectation that they will profit from it. Building trust is a long-term process that can yield results after numerous interactions.

Work limitations and assessment

The theoretical limitation was the absence of scientific literature on the topic of email marketing and the absence of the online experiment on the topic of reciprocity. According to numerous professional publications on the topic, I would suspect this is mostly because email marketing is mostly employed by businesses, and its rise in relevancy is relatively recent. The methodological limitation of this Master Thesis was mostly the difficulty of generating enough traffic to the website to produce a big enough sample size. I would argue that this is mostly because the website was new and had no existing reputation and traffic. Low amount of website traffic hindered the possibility of running different or iterate existing tests. Finding an existing business with a website that would let you run the experiment turned out to be harder than expected. Additionally, due to limited time-window of planning, setting up and executing the experiment, it was difficult to build trust with the participants over only one interaction. Ideally, there would be more interactions with the recipients which would help solidify the relationship and help weed out part of the demographics that are not particularly invested in the topic.

Furthermore, since the set-up of the experiment contained a lot of technical aspects, a lot of time has been spent on technical preparation and execution. Additionally, since the content created was relatively specific in its nature, it most likely did not apply to majority of the segment. That is why by running experiment for longer duration and with more interactions could yield in more significant findings. Having small sample size, limited time and resources have prevented me from examining more compliance-gaining techniques in an online environment such as foot-in-the-door and door-in-the-face.

Despite its limitations the content of the experiment can be leveraged by businesses to:

- Find prospective companies and their employees in any niche on LinkedIn,
- Identify decision-makers on LinkedIn,
- Build a network of decision-makers in your niche,
- Find and verify direct email addresses of decision-makers

Recommendations for further research

In the midst of fierce competition in the online environment, it is necessary to turn to Social Psychology and Behaviour Economics to better understand individual behaviour. There have been many interesting findings from a lab experiment on the topic of scarcity, liking, social proof, authority and their significant part in influencing positive human behaviour (Cialdini, 2016). As they tap into human nature, they can have important implications for marketing and sales. Due to a relatively low amount of scientific studies and online experiments conducted on this topic, I would welcome any further research.

I would recommend conducting an experiment on a bigger sample size and run it for extended period of time. That could be achieved by using an existing business website, e-commerce or social media page with existing following. Having an existing presence, database and compiled ideal customer profile can ease and reduce the time needed to set-up this kind of experiments. Moreover, online experiment should examine incremental changes to reduce the number of factors that can influence each group. Ideally, there should be a difference in one element between the control and experimental group.

CONCLUSION

The goal of this master thesis was to provide an overview of email marketing and try to show how and why start-ups should leverage it. The second part covered a theoretical overview of the reciprocity principle. In the last part, experiment tried to examine how reciprocity can be used in conjunction with the email marketing to build an audience for any business.

For the first part, thesis included findings from professional and scientific publications that have been reviewed and summarized in a succinct and actionable way. This was done with the goal of enabling businesses to apply the best practices in their business processes. Despite email marketing being one of the oldest digital marketing channels it is still a highly relevant method of growing business which complements other channels. However, it has been harder than ever to get to in a recipient's mailbox. With attention span reducing, businesses need to invest time and resources to get it right. In order, for email marketing to be successful, it needs to be a part of a coherent marketing strategy. Businesses need to spend time to create their ideal customer profile, buyer personas and target segment based on psychographic, demographic and other data. Email marketing represents just one cog in the wheel, albeit important one. It is a long-term process where reputation takes long to build but can be quickly lost.

The second part covered the reciprocity principle. Thesis started with a review of scientific literature revolving around the reciprocity principle. Vast majority of studies included, came from the fields of Social Psychology and Behavioural Economics. The chapter started with a more scientific approach and presented findings from most influential research up until of the writing of this master thesis. It followed with a brief presentation of the three compliance-gaining techniques, showcasing the potential implications for marketing and sales. The persuasion techniques like this can potentially have an immense effect on person's decision-making process and how someone will behave. The thesis covered just few of those techniques, but there are plenty more. Due to their innate strength it is paramount to study the effectiveness of such techniques in depth. Not only because it is to find new ways for how to leverage them as marketers but also how to protect against them as consumers. The empirical part focused on the examination of the effect of the "pre-giving" compliance-gaining technique in online environment. The examination was conducted via controlled online experiment. Results from the experiment suggest that there is a positive correlation between providing someone with free content and them becoming subscribers. The experiment also tried to demonstrate a way how businesses can grow their audience. Even though investing time and resources to create a piece of content just to later give it away for free might sound like an irrational decision, it goes a long way in building a long-lasting relationship with users.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Povzetek (Summary in Slovene)

Trženje preko e-pošte (angl. Email Marketing) v poslovnem svetu ne predstavlja samo enega izmed načinov komunikacije s strankami, ampak tudi kanal za negovanje odnosov s potencialnimi strankami, obveščanje obstoječih strank o novi ponudbi, izobraževanje naročnikov in še veliko več. Po nekaterih ocenah je na svetu 3,7 milijarde uporabnikov e-pošte. Ti letno izmenjajo 269 milijard elektronskih sporočil. Trženje preko e-pošte predstavlja enega najugodnejših načinov pridobivanja novih strank (Santora, 2019). Raziskava s strani družbe McKinsey je pokazala, da je tovrstno trženje do 40-krat ugodneje pri pridobivanju novih strank kot uporaba kanala socialnih medijev, kot sta Facebook in Twitter (Aufreiter, Boudet & Weng, 2014)

Povprečen pisarniški delavec prejme dnevno več kot 121 e-poštnih sporočil (Radicati, 2014). Posledično je dandanes težje kot kdajkoli prej dostaviti sporočilo v glavni poštni nabiralnik. Zaradi obsežne količine sporočil, so ponudniki storitev postali zelo striktni kaj dovolijo v nabiralnik in kaj ne. Trenutek zbranosti, ki ga bralec posveti sporočilu je vse krajši, tako da je sestava besedila, ki bo poskusila le z uporabo logičnih argumentov prepričati potenicialnega kupca k nakupu, nezadostna (Microsoft Canada, 2015, str. 6).

Za kreiranje sporočil, ki bo zajelo bralčevo pozornost, se lahko uporabi model AIDA. Z pomočjo modela, ki ga sestavljajo štirje koraki, oblikujemo sporočilo, ki se ujema z bralčevo pozicijo v nakupovalnem procesu. Cilj prvega koraka je pritegniti bralčevo pozornost. En način doseganja le-tega je z pomočjo tako imenovane "curiosity gap-a". Ta opisuje tehniko sestave besedila, ki izkoristi radovednost za pritegnitvijo bralčeve pozornosti. Uvodni del besedila bralca z namigi pritegne tako, da mu ne ponudi vse podrobnosti naenkrat, temveč postopoma na način, da v bralcu ohranja interes, da nadaljuje z branjem celotnega sporočila.

Med branjem tekstov, večina bralcev ne prebere vsake besede v stavku, temveč "skenira" za naslove, poudarjene besede ter sezname. Številke v besedilo še posebej "padejo" bralcu v oči. Predstavitev dejstev z uporabo številk lahko pripomore k višji verodostojnosti sporočila (Nielsen, 2007). Po nekaterih raziskavah, neparne številke delujejo bolj zanesljive, vzbujajo zanimanje in se jih je lažje zapomniti (James, 2017).

Z zastavljanjem vprašanja lahko dodatno spodbudimo bralca, da posveti svoj čas prebiranju sporočila. Ta tehnika je lahko uspešna tudi, kjer v samemu tekstu ni odgovora na vprašanje. Besedilo mora bralcu ustvariti željo k dejanju in privesti do stanja, kjer je racionalno razmišljanje preokupirano s čustveno vznemirjenostjo (Vazquez, 2011).

Za zagotovitev, da je vsebinsko relavantno sporočilo dostavljeno prejemniku se je v trženju razvil koncept kupčevih person (angl. Buyer personas). Te predstavljajo izmišljene like, ki jih podjetja ustvarijo z namenom, da opišejo značilnosti svojih idealnih strank. Persona običajno vključuje kombinacijo demografskih, psihografskih, firmografskih in vedenjskih lastnosti. Te se običajno izbere na podlagi zbranih podatkov iz tržnih raziskav in povratnimi informacijami, ki so bile zbrane s pomočjo prodajnih ekipe, strank in ostalih družabnikov.

Dodatni element, ki pripomore k uspehu sporočila je personalizacija samega sporočila po merah vsakega naročnika. V primerjavi s tradicionalnim pristopom h kreiranju elektronskih sporočil, kjer so vsa sporočila za vse prejemnike enaka, sporočila s komponento personalizacije pogosto vodijo do boljših rezultatov. V povprečju so se izkazala v 26 odstotni višji stopnji odprtja (angl. Open rate) (Experian, 2013). Dandanes, napredne tehnike personalizacije uporabljajo več podatkovnih točk o bralcu. To vključuje podatki, kot so država in mesto bivanja, bralčevo ime in priimek, vrsta zaposlitve ter pretekla spletna zgodovina aktivnosti. Slednja zajema zgodovinske podatke, ki jih lahko podjetno zbira skozi čas s pomočjo trženskih orodij, kot je HubSpot. To so lahko podatki o obiskanih strani izdelkov, številu obiskanih strani, dolžini obiska, konverzijski poti in mnogo več. Ti se lahko uporabijo za podrobno segmentacijo, ki združi heterogene bralce v homogene skupine na podlagi nabora izbranih določenih dejavnikov. Cilj združevanja bralcev v manjše podsegmente je posredovanje vsebin, ki so relevatne za specifini segment.

Uspeh e-sporočila je odvisen od večih dejavnikov, med najbolj odločilne spadajo: zadeva, poziv k dejanju (angl. CTA), oblikovanja samega sporočila, čas pošiljanja in ugled domene. Zadeva je prvi element, ki ga bralec vidi ter ima posledično ključno vlogo ali bo bralec odprl sporočilo. Zadeva ima moč, da bralca pritegne ali odvrne od branja sporočila kljub svoji kratki, nekaj besedni dolžini. Priporočena dolžina je med 41-50 znakov, daljša se ne bo v celoti prikazane na večini mobilnih naprav. Predogled sporočila (angl. pre-header text) se prikaže desno od zadeve in imena pošiljatelja v poštnem nabiralniku. Uporabi se ga lahko kot povzetek za celotno besedilo ali kot podaljšek zadeve. Dolžina je običajno med 40-130 znaki. Poziv k dejanju je element v e-poštnem sporočilu, ki bralca spodbudi k dejanju. CTA je lahko v obliki gumba, slike ali poudarjenega besedila. V praksi velja pravilo, da vsak e-mail potrebuje vsaj en CTA, ki mora biti skladen s ciljem sporočila. Oblikovanje same e-pošte ima ravno tako ključno vlogo pri tem, kako bo sporočilo sprejeto. Poglavitvenega pomena je, da je oblikovano na način, da se pravilno prikaže na različnih napravah, predvsem mobilnih. Naslednji dejavnik, ki vpliva na uspeh je čas pošiljanja. Za to, kateri čas je najboljši, ni enoličnega odgovora. Večina dosedanjih raziskav je zaključila, da sta torek in četrtek med delovnih časom najboljša za pošiljanje, vendar bistvenih razlik med ostalimi delovnimi dnevi ni (Khim, 2015) (Mailchimp, 2014).

Da bi izboljšali uspešnost bodočih e-mail sporočil, je ključnega pomena, da se spremlja ključne dejavnike uspešnosti (angl. KPI) vsakega e-sporočila in kampanije. Ti podatki so referenčno izhodišče za primerjavo za vsa nadaljnja sporočila. Dejavniki kot so razmerje med odprtimi in poslanimi sporočili, razmerje med številom sporočil z klikom na povezavo in poslanimi sporočili in delež prejemnikov, ki se je odjavilo od nadaljnja korespondence.

Vzpostavitev enostavnega procesa, preko katerega se lahko naročnik odjavi od prejemanja spletne pošte je pomembno iz večih vidikov. Prvič je pomembno iz zakonskega vidika, drugič pa za zagotovitev, da sporočilo ne bo označeno kot neželena pošta. Uspešna dostava e-pošte pomeni, da je sporočilo uspešno prešlo filtre ponudnikov storitve in prispelo v prejemnikov nabiralnik. Kljub temu da je sporočilo bilo dostavljeno, še ne pomeni, da je končalo v glavem poštnem nabiralniku. Na t o kje bo sporočilo končalo, vplivajo številni dejavniki, med katerimi je bistven ugled domene na katerega vpliva njena starost, pretekla frekvenca in volumen pošiljanja sporočil, število spam pritožb, uporaba spam besed in besednih zvez in uvrstitev domene na sezname nizko kakovostnih pošiljateljev (angl. Blacklists). Ugled domeno je predstavljen v ocene, ki jo vsak ponudnik elektronske pošte dodeli domeni.

Avtomatizacija marketinga (angl. marketing automation) je skupek tehnoloških rešitev, ki omogočajo avtomatizacijo trženjskih procesov. Podjetja lahko poenostavijo in avtomatizirajo svoje trženjske napore preko različnih kanalov ter hkrati izboljšajo učinkovitost trženja in povečajo prodajo. Po študiji s strani ponudnika trženjskih storitev Salesforce, 67 odstotkov voditeljev trženja uporablja platforme za avtomatizacijo procesov (Salesforce, 2017).

To lahko vključuje pošiljanja biltenov, drip kampanj ter transakcijskih e-poštnih sporočil. Drip kampanja je serija sporočil, ki so poslane v določenem časovnem razmiku. Med najbolj uporabljeni so, "on-boarding" kampanje, kjer so cilji vzpostaviti zaupanje in verodostojnost z bralci e-pošte, vključiti potencialne stranke in deliti informacije o izdelkih ali storitvah. Kampanja za opustitve nakupovalne košarice (angl. Cart abandonment) se sproži, ko potrošnik doda izdelek v spletno nakupovalno košarico, vendar ne nadaljuje z dokončanjem nakupa. Kampanje za ponovno trženje vsebuje e-pošta sporočila (angl. re-engagement campaign), ki so poslana neaktivnim naročnikom z namenom, da se jih ponovno angažira. Obstoječi kupci, ki so opravili vsaj dva nakupa, imajo devetkrat višjo verjetnost, da bodo ponovili nakup (Adobe Systems Incorporated, 2012).

Kupčevo potovanje (angl. Buyer's journey) opisuje postopek, pri katerem uporabniki gredo skozi korake v procesu nakupa. Proces vključuje tri stopnje, kjer vsak korak vključuje uporabnike z drugačno ozaveščenost o svojem problemu (Hintz, 2018). V fazi zavedanja (angl. Awareness stage) se posameznik sooči s problemom nezadovoljene potrebe, ki sproži nelagodje ali napetost. Faza preučevanja (angl. Consideration stage) je tista, v kateri so potencialni kupci opredelili svoj problem in iščejo rešitve. Ta zajema zbiranje, obdelava informacij ter ocenjevanje in izbiranje najboljše možnosti za rešitev problema, povezanega z nakupom. V fazi odločanja (angl. decision stage) se potencialne stranke odločajo med različnimi ponudniki odvisno od ujemanja z njihovimi potrebami.

Seveda je nujno potrebno imeti pri pošiljanju elektronskih sporočil vzpostavljeno poslovno bazo ali seznam kontaktov, s katerimi lahko komuniciramo. Lead generation vključuje različne procese generiranja novih kontaktov, ki so relevantna za podjetje. V splošnem delimo vhodno (angl. Inbound) in izhodno (angl. Outbound) generacijo kontaktov. Vhodna generacija vključuje vse metode, ki aktivno privabljajo uporabnike, da "prostovoljno" oddajo svoje podatke podjetju in se prijavijo na nadaljnjo korespondenco. Ta lahko vključuje kreiranje spletnih obrazcev, informativnih člankov, bele knjige ali spletnih orodij. Vsi našteti elementi so kreirani z namenov, da uporabniku ponudijo nekaj uporabnega, kar lahko uporabi izboljšanje svojega poslovanja. Po drugi strani, izhodna generacija kontaktov ali sledi obrne pristop na glavo. Tukaj, podjetja aktivno dostopajo do potencialnih strank. To vključuje, obiskovanje sejmov, hladne klice in sporočila, oglaševanje ter prenos spletnih podatkov (angl. web scraping). Ima sloves bolj tradicionalne metode trženja, ki po mnenju nekaterih izgublja na veljavi v primerjavi z "inbound" trženjskimi tehnikami (Patrutiu-Baltes, 2016).

S pomočjo sodobnih orodij trženjske avtomatizacije in ustreznimi vsebinami je mogoče spremljati obnašanje uporabnikov in jim ponuditi pravo vsebino ob pravem času ter jim pomagati napredovati po nakupni poti. Proces se imenuje "Lead nurturing" in strmi k negovanju odnosov s potencialnimi strankami na vseh stopnjah kupčevega potovanja, s ciljem pripeljati do nakupa. Korespondenca je oblikovana na način, da poskuša prepoznati potrebe kontaktov in dostaviti relavantne informacije, ki ji ti v danem trenutku iščejo. Podjetja s kakovostnim vsebinskim marketingom pridobivajo status avtoritete na svojem področju. Sodobna orodja nudijo tudi možnost rangiranja kontaktov glede na njihovo obnašanja, tako imenovani "lead score". Višji rezultat predstavlja večjo angažiranost stranke za produkt ali storitev, kar posledično pomeni višjo prioriteto za prodajno osebje.

V drugem delu magistrske naloge sem se osredotočil na družbeno normo recipročnosti ali vzajemnosti in njeno mesto v trženju. Prvi zapisani dokazi o obstoju načela recipročnosti segajo v čas Hammurabija, približno 1792–1750 pred našim štetjem. Rek "oko za oko" opisuje neposredno recipročnost po katerem so bili tedaj napisani številni zakoni (Sacred Texts, 2018, str. 100-199) Načelo recipročnosti je eno izmed družbenih norm, ki je prisotno v vsaki družbi in kulturi. Nanaša se na družbena pričakovanje, kjer so ljudje motivirani, da povrnejo uslugo, ki jim je bila narejena v preteklosti (Gouldner, 1960). V skladu z eno definicijo, moč načela recipročnosti izvira v tem, da se človek čuti dolžnega povrniti uslugo. To se posledično izrazi v povečani verjetnost, da bo ta oseba izpolnila kakršnokoli nadaljnjo zahtevo, tudi po povrnitvi prvotno usluge (Regan, 1971).

Ima sposobnost vplivanja na človekovo vedenje in lahko posledično vpliva na to, kako se bo določena oseba, v nadaljevanju dobrotnik, odzvala na prošnjo (zahtevo) koristnika. Koristnik je v tem kontekstu oseba, ki pridobi korist in doseže svoj zastavljen cilj v recipročnem razmerju. Še več, pokazano je bilo, da tudi usluge, ki so bile "ponujene" imajo enak ali vsaj podoben učinek pri ustvarjanju občutka zadolženosti, kot tiste ki so bile zaprošene. To se lahko izrazi v nepravični izmenjave (Burger, Horita, Kinoshita, Roberts & Vera, 1997). Ljudje kot rešitev za odpravo nelagodnega občutka dolga, se hitro “vdajo” in sprejmejo naslednjo zahtevo. Ta je po večini primerov večja kot je bila prvotna. Brezplačni vzorci tako niso le priložnost, za potencialne stranke za preizkusiti izdelek ali storitev, ampak tudi prvi korak pri vzpostavitvi recipročno razmerje za koristnika.

Pokazalo se je tudi, da dejstvo ali imata koristnik in dobrotnik “prijateljski” odnos ne vpliva na verjetnost izpolnitve naknadne zahteve (Regan, 1971). V literature so se razvile številne tehnike, ki imajo moč vpliva na dobrotnika. Koristnik, ki uporabi tovrstne tehnika, lahko povečajo verjetnost, da dobrotnik sprejme njegovo prošnjo ter posledično dosežejo svoj cilj. Recipročna predaja opisuje primere, kjer dobrotnik popusti zahtevam koristnika. Ena izmed tehnik je “Pre-giving”. Pri tej koristnik vzpostavi recipročno razmerje z darovanjem vnaprej, kar vodi do povišane verjetnosti za povrnitev usluge dobrotnika v prihodnosti. Naslednja tehnika se imenuje “foot-in-the-door”, ki opisuje stanje, kjer je verjetnost da bo dobrotnik izpolnil prošnjo nekomu večja, v kolikor je tej isti osebi že izpolnil uslugo v preteklosti (Freedman & Fraser, 1966). Ta tehnika je še posebej zanimiva, kajti trdi, da tudi večje nadaljnje prošnje so izpolnjene. Kljub splošnemu odobravanju tehnike kot učinkovite, številne študije niso uspele dokazati dejanskega učinka tehnika na verjetnost izpolnitve nadaljnje prošnje (Burger J. , 1999). “Door-in-the-face” opisuje proces, kjer koristnik poskuša vzpostaviti recipročno razmerje z najprej zahtevano veliko prošnjo, katera je najverjetneje zavrnjena. Tehnika veleva, da se dobrotnik občuti krivdo, ker je zavrnil prvotno zahtevo in se bo čutil dolžnega sprejeti nadaljnjo manjšo zahtevo. Dobrotnik je tako bolj verjeten, da bo sprejel sekundarno prošnjo, kljub temu da ni zainteresiran v nobeno od stvari. Obstajajo tudi tehnike, s katerimi se dobrotniki lahko “obvarujejo” pred “zlonamernim zahtevami. Več moderacijskih in mediacijskih tehnik obstaja, da ublažijo učinka recipročnosti za potrošnike. Časovna zamuda med koristjo in možnostjo povračila se je izkazala za odločilni dejavnik. Obstaja omejen časovni okvir za vračanje koristi, pri katerih učinek recipročnosti še vedno ima vpliv (Burger, Horita, Kinoshita, Roberts & Vera, 1997).

Za empirični del magistrske naloge sem poskusil preveriti učinke “Pre-giving” tehnike pri vplivanju na izpolnitve kontaktnega obrazca za pridobitev e-mail naslova obiskovalcev spletne strani. Rezultat eksperimenta je potrdili alternativno hipotezo, ki je navajala, da je scenarij »Pre-giving« bolj učinkovit pri konverziji obiskovalcev v naročnike kot v kontrolni skupini, kjer recipročna tehnika ni bila uporabljena. Rezultati kažejo na to, da ima načelo recipročnosti lahko vpliv tudi v spletnem in ne le v tradicionalnem laboratorijskem okolju. Teoretično omejitev je predstavljala odsotnost znanstvene literature na temo trženja preko e-pošte. Metodološka omejitev je bila težavnost pri pridobivanju dovolj velikega vzorca za eksperiment.

Appendix 2: Blog post 1 titled "BUILD A LINKEDIN NETWORK OF 1000+ DECISION MAKERS IN YOUR NICHE FOR FREE"

Hi there!

LinkedIn is the world's largest professional networking site with over 610 million members and 120 million daily active users (DAU).

It is also the best place to find B2B leads since 80% of all leads from Social Media come from it.

But how do those businesses generate those leads?

They probably do it by running ads, but before you get too excited let me tell you that **it**

can cost you from $3 up to $15 for a single click on your ad.

Imagine I'd need to pay, on average, $3.72 to get you to visit this blog-post.

Hardy an economically rational decision for a small business.

Here comes the solution … Your LinkedIn network!

You can build a business network which can be used as the launchpad for your products, services or your personal brand.

What's the best thing? It's absolutely free to do it. LinkedIn allows you to have upwards of 30,000 connections. Imagine being able to post a content which can be seen by the that many professionals over and over again.

What you'll learn in this guide can be applied to any industry or niche. It describes a very simple growth-hacking method which can have huge effect on the success of your business.

- Find prospective companies and their employees in any niche,
- Identify decision-makers and
- Build a network of decision-makers in your niche

Everything in this guide can be achieved using free tools (although it doesn't hurt upgrading it).

Feel free to share it with the person responsible for lead generation in your company The task will be achieved by mainly using two brilliant automation tools; **PhantomBuster** and **LinkedIn Helper**.

At first glance, they might look quite intimidating. No worries, for this guide we'll only use a tiny portion of their arsenal but still enough to give you a glimpse of the possibilities.

PB can be used for a variety of tasks like extracting Facebook Group members, endorsing LinkedIn contacts, auto-following on Instagram and more. On the other hand, LinkedIn Helper's only playground is LinkedIn. Two main differences between the tools are: PB is run on a cloud – i.e. nothing is done on your PC/MAC – while LNH is run in your browser window. PB absolutely wins here. However, unlimited run time is what brings LNH back into the game. While PB lets your run so-called APIs for 60 minutes per day (free trial), LNH doesn't mind if it's run all the time. For instance, if the extraction of company information takes 30 seconds for each profile, that means we can extract around 120 profiles per day. Of course, you can raise the run-time for PB, but that comes at a price (well worth it).

All in all, PB is a more robust growth-hacking tool with many applications but in order to make the process free, we'll need a combination of both tools. That's why this guide will show how we can find decision-makers with both tools.

After a quick introduction of the tools, let's dive into. Here is the outline of the guide for you to quickly navigate through. Feel free to re-visit this guide whenever you feel stuck.

GUIDE OUTLINE

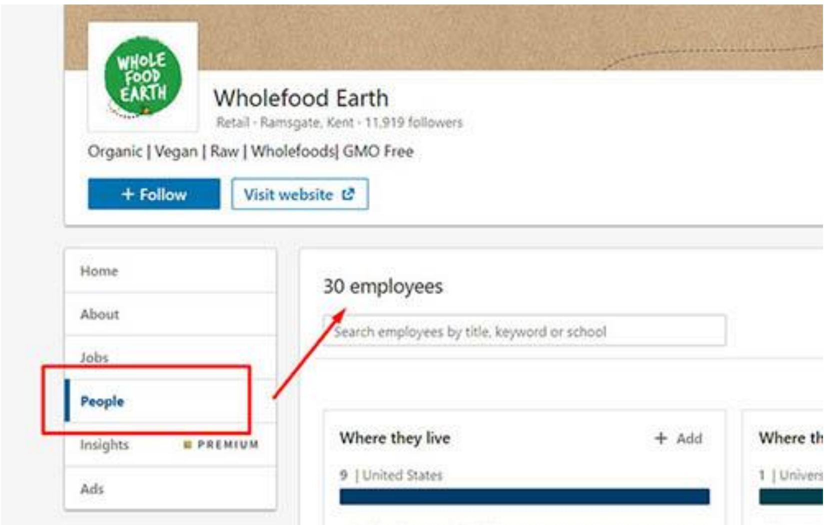
Introduction

I've chosen LinkedIn as it is the biggest professional social network and holds thousands of potential customers for your business, no matter the industry and niche. What makes LinkedIn stand-out, is its users' level of investment and dedication in making their profiles as complete as possible. Likewise, the same is true for business as most of the business owners want the business to look as good and as big as possible. Therefore, it is quite easy to find contact information about employees' title and position in the company.

With this information, we can quickly identify decision-makers that we should get in touch with. For instance, if you are a small accounting firm you could look for business owners in your area, get their email and send them a message.

- Find companies in your niche
    - Find companies via LinkedIn internal search
    - Find companies via Google search operators
- Collect companies from search results and identify best prospects
    - Collect results from LinkedIn
    - Collect results from Google
    - Identify the best companies to work with
- Collect employees and identify decision-makers on LinkedIn

    - Extract all employees' data (first, last name and title)
    - Identify decision-makers and create a "hit-list"
- Build a LinkedIn network building machine
    - Personalise the connection request
- Find direct email address, headcount and location
    - Collect and verify the direct email address
    - Enrich the company's profile with company size, number of employees, industry and location
    - Send 100+ daily emails (to primary tab) directly from your Gmail account

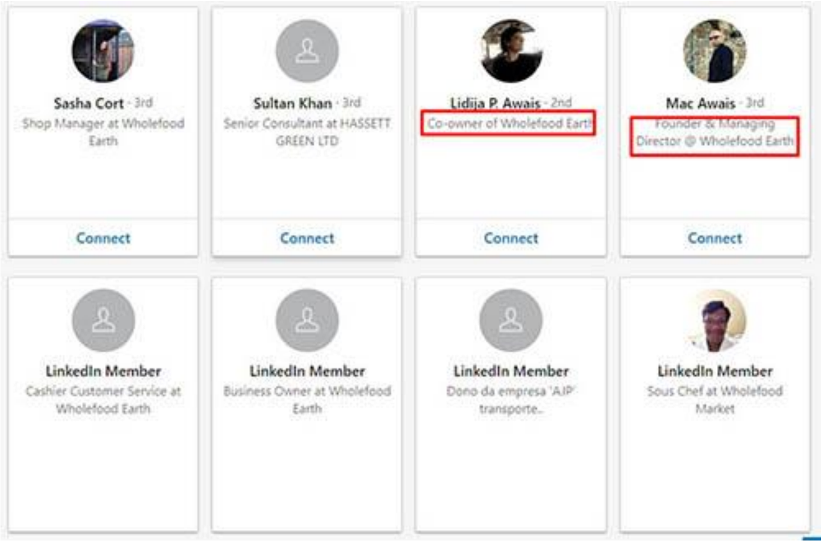


People's ribbon hold the association to all contacts that identified themselves as employees of the company

Subscribe here If you are interested in learning how to **send 100+ emails daily that end up in *Primary tab* with 70%+ open rate**.

When visiting ***Company page*** on LinkedIn you will see a ribbon named *People*. This is where LinkedIn stores all information regarding employees that have associated with a company.

In most cases, the list is fairly accurate but it can happen that there are some **ex-employees** or people who have selected the wrong company due to the similarity of the company names. It's recommended to do quick "screening" of the contacts, which will be shown in greater detail later on.



Complete list of employees for demo company on LinkedIn. Notice the decision-makers.

1 Find companies in your niche

The first step includes finding prospective companies that are interesting for your business and collect them in a spreadsheet for later processing. LinkedIn internal search is a great place to start. Alternatively, Google search can be used to find LinkedIn company pages as well. I will present you both ways because I believe they can be used in synergy to create the most complete "hit-list".

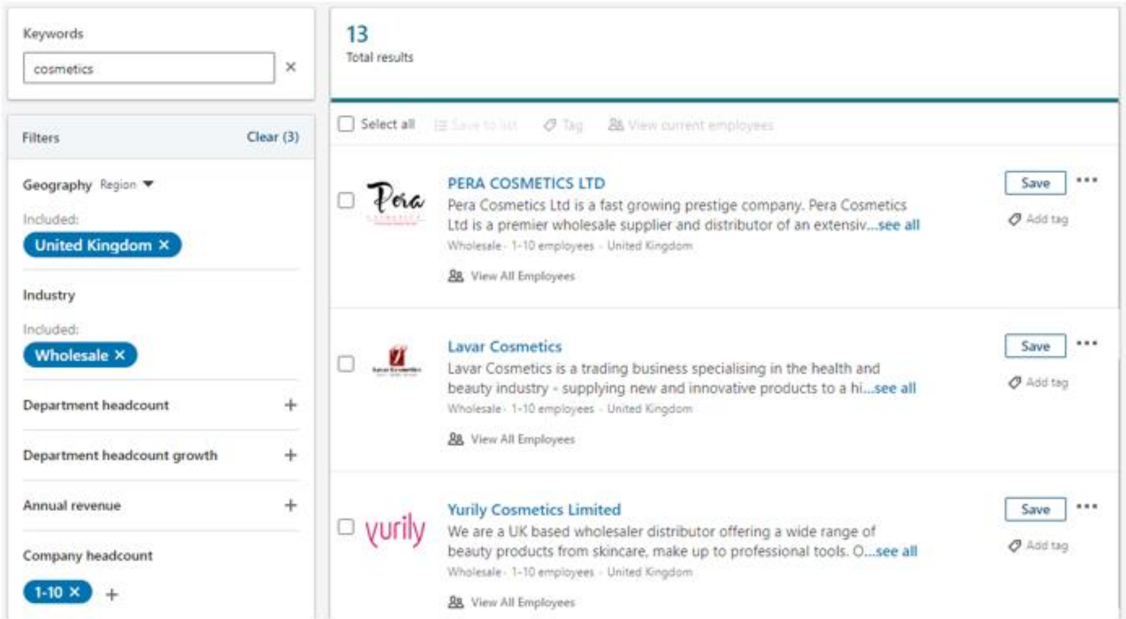
We're going to cover two ways of finding businesses that have a LinkedIn profile:

LinkedIn internal search

Google search (*Operators & Advanced Search*) – **Read More**

I usually use a **combination of both methods to create the most complete list.** In case, you own ***Sales Navigator*** licence this task can be achieved with ease. It enables far more sophisticated filter with filter conditions that are hidden from standard users.

LinkedIn offers a free 1-month trial which can be cancelled immediately after signing up (so nothing is charged). I'm gonna be sending a guide describing how to best leverage **free trail for Sales Navigator** to my subscribers. You can subscribe here to get it first.



1.1 Find companies via LinkedIn internal search

Before starting the search, it is necessary to have an idea about what kind of businesses you are looking for. Knowing this will help you with **choosing the right set of keywords** that will not only yield more relevant results, but it will also, reduce the amount of work dedicated to cleansing later on.

For starters let’s look into LinkedIn internal search. To illustrate the process, I’ll try to find businesses on LinkedIn selling vaping, hemp and cannabis products. However, that doesn’t mean it can’t be applied to any other industries and niches.

Besides normal search queries keywords like *vape shop* and *CBD shop* we can use a set of more **advanced search operators** which helps us to narrow down the search criteria.

The most common, and the one we will be using, are **‘AND’, ‘OR’** operators and combinations both. Additionally, the use of quotes (“*search query*“) is used to further narrow down the search criteria to a literal string within quotes.

Using **“*CBD shop*“** will yield results which have that exact string in the title, description or in other places on their LinkedIn page.

Order matters, “CBD shop” and “shop CBD” will yield slightly different results. The string in quotes is case insensitive but operators need to be capitalized in order to work.

See the full list of all the operators and how to use them in the below table:

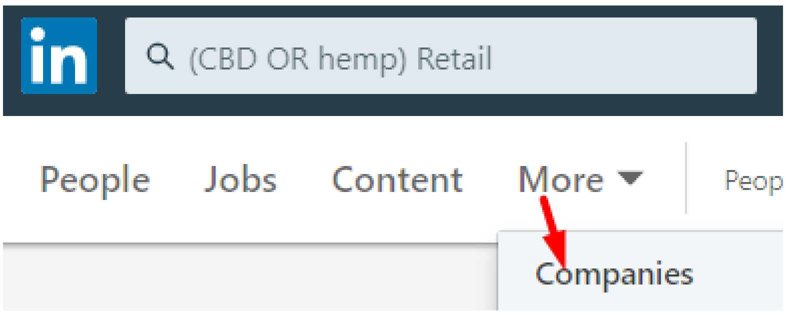
Quotes	*"search query"*	*For an exact phrase, enclose the phrase in quotation marks. For example, type "product manager".*
Parentheses	("search query1" OR "search query 2") AND keyword	Parentheses let you create complex OR statements. Here we basically run two queries at the same time. "search query1" + keyword and "search query 2" + keyword
NOT	"CBD shop" NOT dispensary	Type the word NOT immediately before a search term to exclude it from your search results.
AND		Type the word AND to see results that include all items in a list.
OR	(CBD OR hemp OR cannabis) AND shop	Type the word OR to see results that include one or more items in a list. This typically broadens your search results.

Let's take a look at an example:

Let's say we would like to find businesses that sell CBD or Hemp products. Using what we have learned, we can search – (CBD OR hemp) Retail -. When pressing search **don't forget to select *Companies* under *More*** (see screenshot).

Changing search query to ***(CBD OR HEMP OR CANNABIS) Retail*** would now also include results with hemp shops. However, be careful with expanding the criteria too much, since it can lead to less relevant results. Moreover, more results mean more run-time.

You shouldn't worry about a few irrelevant results too much since we will easily exclude them in a spreadsheet later on. Sadly, search criteria can't be set specific geographical area without *Sales Navigator*. However, translating keywords into the language of the target segment you are trying to reach can serve as a potential workaround. For instance, using "***dampf store***" will show vape stores in German-speaking markets.



Choosing Companies will limit search results to companies.

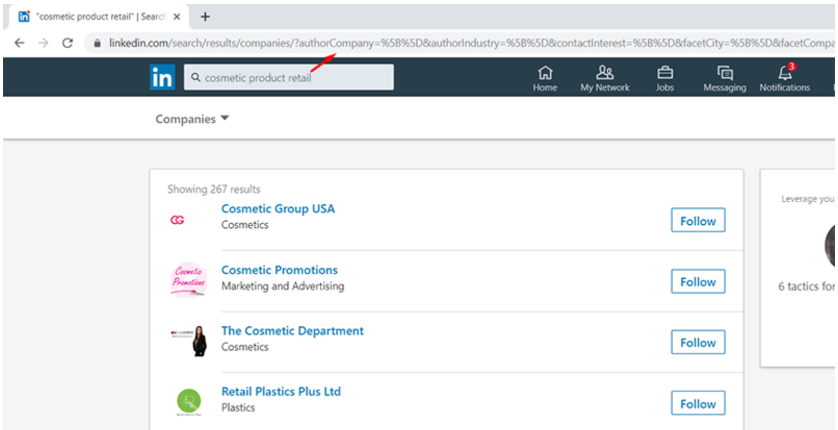
It will take some time to perfect the search query. In most cases, multiple search queries can be used to achieve the best results. If you are particularly interested in a specific industry, you can append its name to the end of the search query.

Here is the list of some official LinkedIn industries. See full list [here](#).

- Health, Wellness and Fitness
- Consumer goods
- Alternative medicine
- Retail
- Tobacco
- Wholesale
- Cosmetics
- Pharmaceuticals and many more

Whenever the search is done on LinkedIn, it generates a URL that includes all the search criteria used. This can come in handy when we want to revisit the search results at other times.

For instance, if we are doing 10 different searches to find companies of our target segment, we can save those URLs in a spreadsheet for easy management.



As you find search queries that work for you, continue to **[part 2](#)** to see how to **save the search results in a spreadsheet**.

Find email addresses & send 100+ emails to the Primary tab with 75%+ open rate a day

1.2 Find companies via Google search operator

Instead of using LinkedIn internal search we can use Google's search engine to search "within" LinkedIn database.

In many cases, Google can give us better results than LinkedIn itself. Mostly because LinkedIn wants to charge money via Sales Navigator and other subscriptions while Google doesn't.

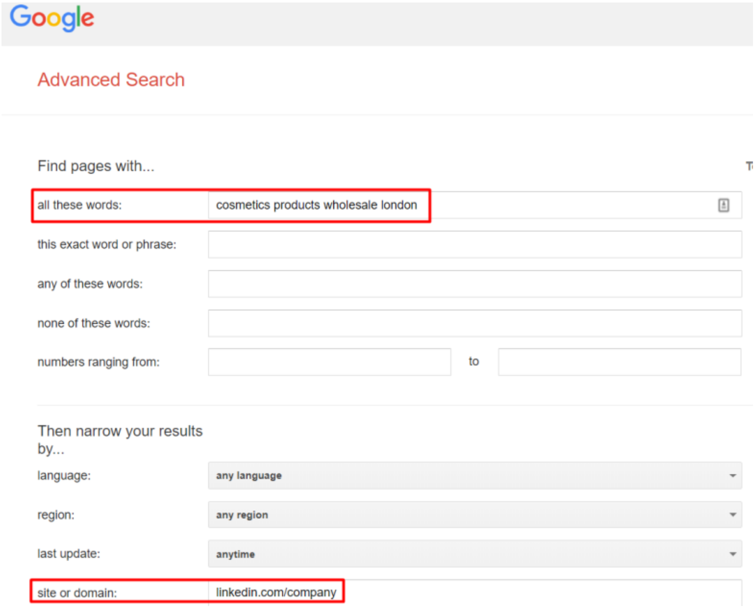
Google Advanced Search is a built-in feature of Google which allows a user to specify additional requirements for a search. By giving additional information to Google, we can get more refined search results.

It enables us to refine results by using explicit phrases, excluding certain words, looking for words in title, text, …

Google achieves this by using so-called **Search Operators** which can be found in the table below.

Google Operator	***Example***	***Description***
site	site:linkedin.com	It limits search results to only Linkedin.com domain
intitle	intitle:"CBD"	Results must have "CBD shop" in their title.
intext	intext:UK	Can be useful when we want to limit results to a certain geographical location.
inurl	inurl:linkedin.com/company	Show results that contain what is in inurl in their actual URL. In most casese, it is better to use *inurl* instead of *site* since it provides more accurate results.

Google has gone an extra step to make the user experience easier and created an interface where users can compile those queries. Based on the input it automatically generates an advanced search query for us.



In the example above, using only two search operators yields in the best results. With this query, I've tried to search for cosmetic products wholesalers in London.

Sometimes adding language can be helpful, especially if we want to limit the results to only a specific region. It boils down to your use case and a different set of operators can work for you. The only one that must not be forgotten is ***site or domain* restraint** which tells Google to look for LinkedIn pages only.

[Google Advance Search]

As you become more accustomed to the operators you will be able to write queries without the interface like the ones below.

Use of more complex operators:

---

wholesale inurl:linkedin.com/company intext:whitelabel intitle:CBD

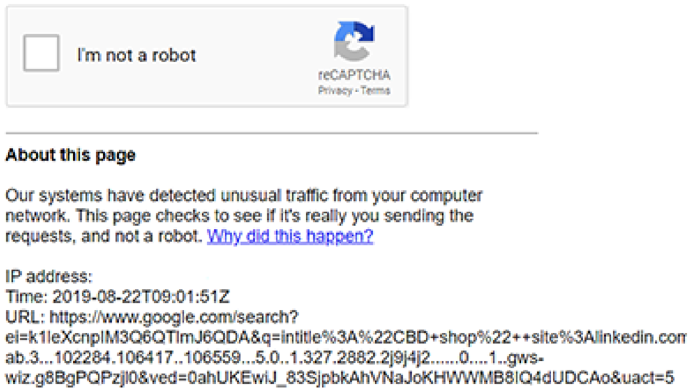
*Search query results in LinkedIn Company profiles that deal with **CBD or CBD** wholesale and offer whitelable*

wholesale inurl:linkedin.com/company intext:whitelabel **AND (intitle:CBD OR intitle:hemp)**

*Search query results in LinkedIn Company profiles that deal with **CBD or HEMP** wholesale and offer whitelable.*

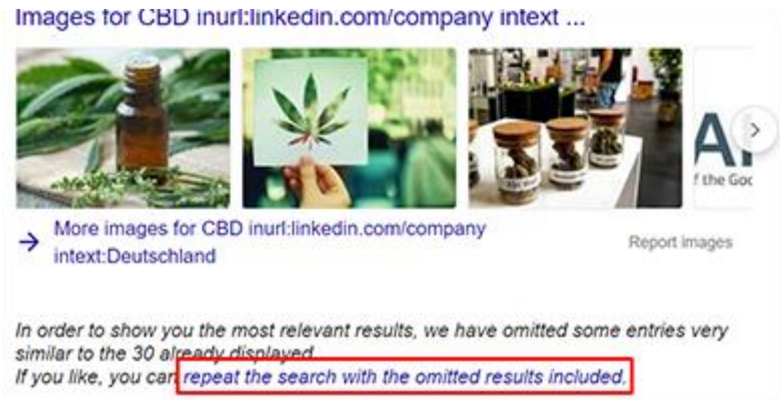
These are the most helpful operators that can be used for Google search. Of course, there are many more but their benefits decrease. Furthermore, the likelihood of getting prompted with the *Human Verification* page (see image below) increases by adding more operators in a search query thus making it more complex.

Complex queries are signalling to Google that queries are being for web scraping by bots. When this happens you can simply press *I'm not a robot* and continue with your hunt (*no consequences whatsoever – similarly to YouTube pause if you watch for too long*).



Don't get scared! This is a normal occurrence when doing more complex search query. Press **I'm not a robot** and you will be fine.

To show the full results, scroll to the bottom of the page and ma sure to click on *repeat the search with the omitted results included*. Thankfully, this is only needed once but be sure to double-check if you suspect that there are too few results in your search.



Click to show "similar results", this will greatly increase the number of search hits.

Get first access to the following guides:

How to send 100+ emails to the Primary tab with 75%+ open rate a day through your G-Suite account

SIGN-UP FORM

2 Collect companies from search results and identify best prospects

As we have found set our “killer” search queries that yield in a big enough number of relevant LinkedIn pages, let’s now look at how we can collect those URLs and store them in a spreadsheet for further processing.

Firstly, I recommend you to **create a spreadsheet**, preferably in Google Sheets, where you’d keep all the search results, queries used to generate results and all the additional data we will collect throughout this guide.

We can use two tools to collect the results into the spreadsheet**:**

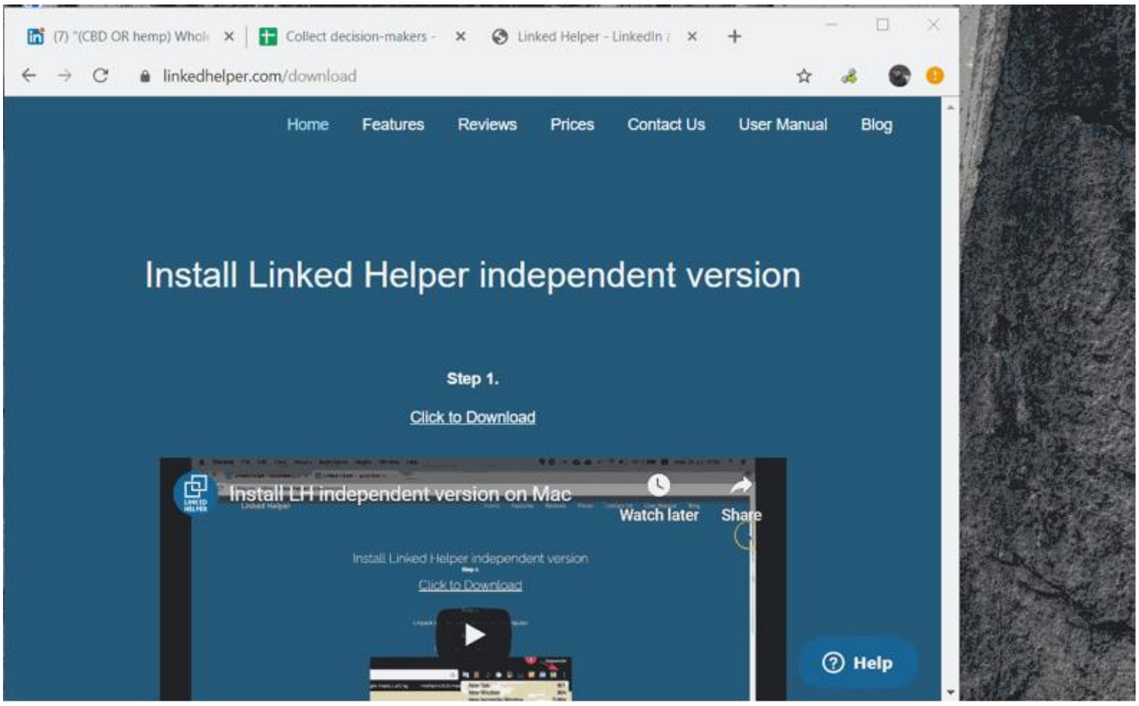
- LinkedIn Helper (free 14-day trial)
- Custom Javascript Code (free)

2.1 Collect search results from LinkedIn search

LinkedIn Helper helps us automating the collection of all company profiles with a single click. This can be achieved with a feature called *Collect companies* which it will **automatically loop through all the pages and extract URLs for you.** This process needs to be repeated for every search query we have compiled.

Steps required to set up LNH:

- Create a free account on their website
- Install the extension (Chrome – **see animation below**)
- Refresh the windows with LinkedIn search results

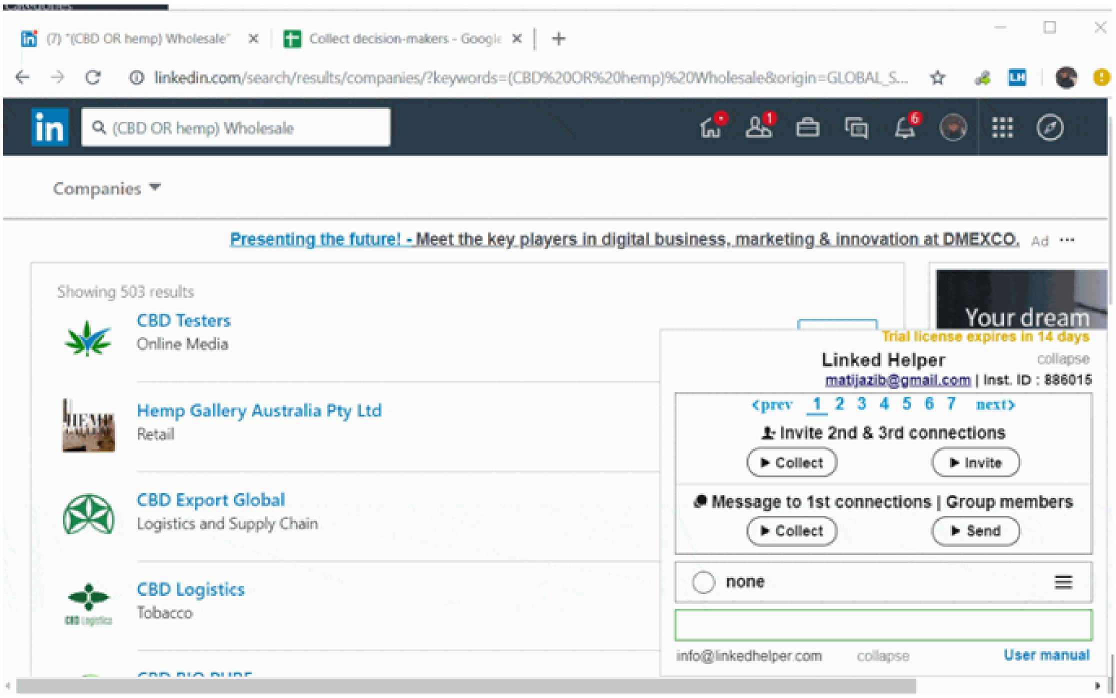


Quick demonstration how to install LinkedIn Helper

As you've installed the extension and refreshed the page with search results, you should be able to see LNH in the bottom right corner. It will prompt you to log into your account (create an account from the form). Once you do it, you'll notice you've received a 14-day trial.

Next step, select *Collect companies* under *Company extractor tool*. The collection will loop through all the pages and will append results to the list for easy exporting. Once the process is finished **continue to export the CSV file** and copy results into the spreadsheet.

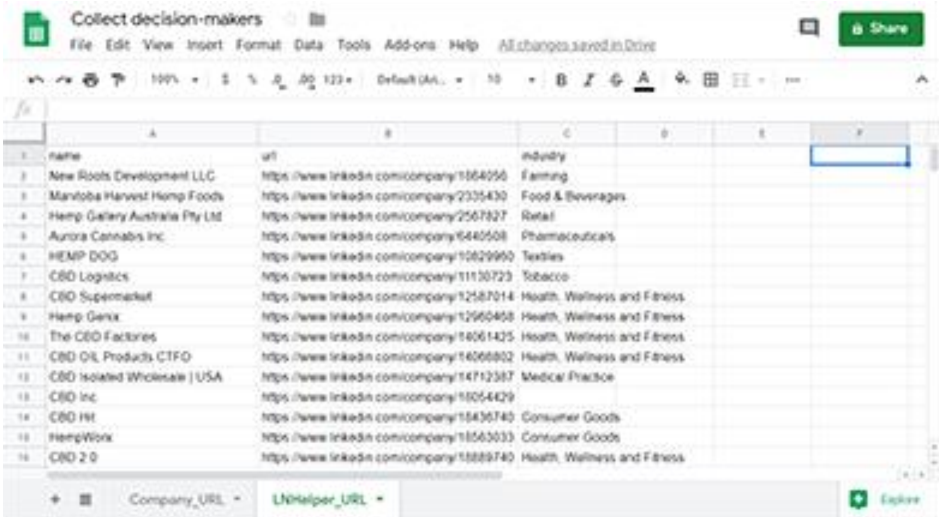
Use **split text to column function** in Google Sheets or Excel, as seen in the animation, to make the data more manageable. Your spreadsheet should now include company names, URLs and industry.



How to run LinkedIn Helper to collect companies, download results and copy onto the spreadsheet

Next, we need to tidy up the spreadsheet to only include information needed for the next stage which includes cleaning the list of irrelevant or invalid entries and later exporting employees' profile URLs.

I recommend keeping the **name, URL and industry** columns. First and last will help us weed out irrelevant entries. Feel free to delete any rows that do not fit into what you are looking for.



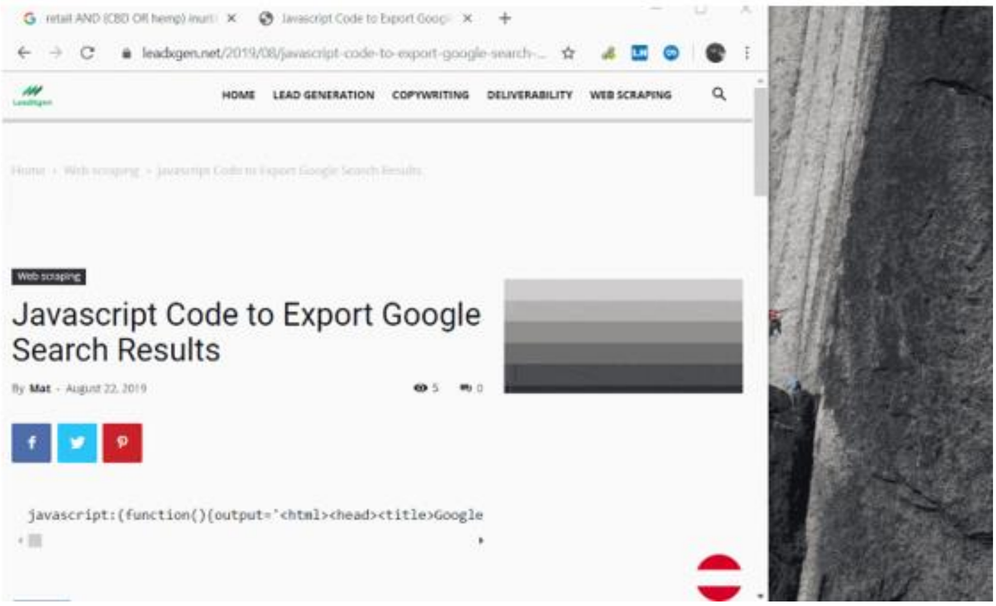
Example of how to edit results from LinkedIn Helper

2.2 Collect results from Google

Now let's see how we can extract search results from Google and add it to a spreadsheet. For this task, we will use *custom Javascript code* and another Chrome extension called *Infinite Scroll* which can be installed via this link. What this plug-in does is load all search results in one page for easy extraction.

See the Code

In the below animation, you can see how to install the Javascript snippet in just a few clicks.



Installing Javascript code in-place of a bookmark which will enable us extracting all Google Search results

With *Javascript code* and *Infinite Scroll extension* installed let's adapt the ***search queries*** that we have created in [part 1.2] and use it in Google.

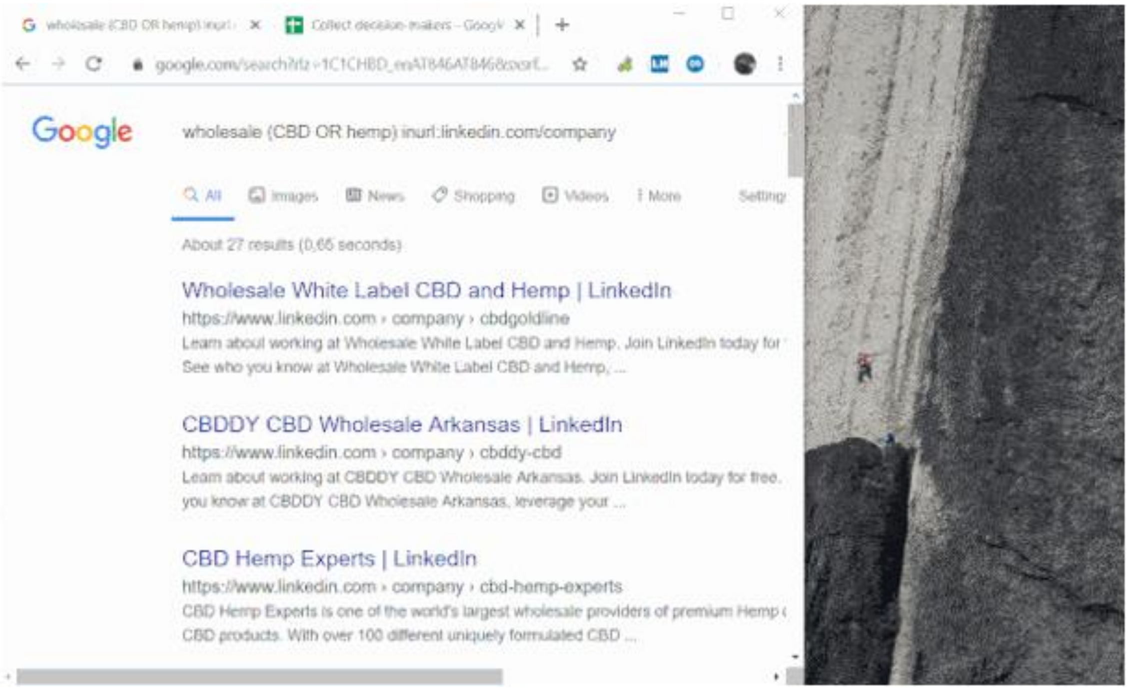
Let's use the same following query to demonstrate extraction:

wholesale (CBD OR hemp) inurl:linkedin.com/company

Should result in companies dealing with wholesale sale of CBD and hemp products

You can see both of them in action in the below animation. I would recommend **scrolling until you stop seeing relevant businesses in the search results**.

Once you are satisfied with the results press on the saved bookmark and copy the results into the spreadsheet. As before, feel free to go through the sheet and remove all entries that seem irrelevant to you.



Populating the search result with Infinite Scroll and its extraction with Javascript code

2.3 Identify the best prospective companies to work with

This above method is "*quick and dirty*" since it can capture everything that Google and LinkedIn deem relevant. Often times the reality is that there are plenty of leads that aren't that important and should be removed from further processing.

I would recommend quickly going through the list and remove rows containing irrelevant entries. This will make the process of collecting employees ways faster and more efficient.

3. Collect employees and identify decision-makers on LinkedIn

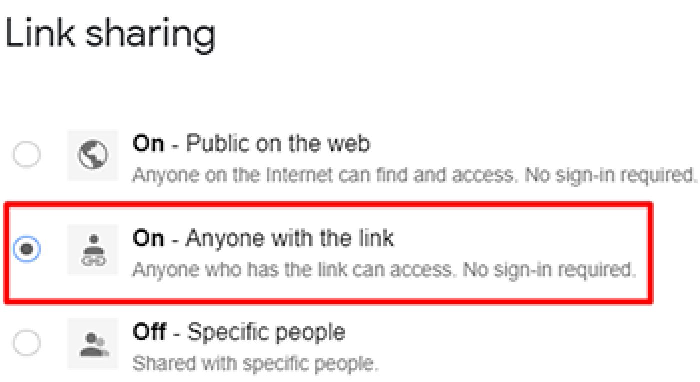
3.1 Extract all employees' data (first, last name and title)

As we have collected and cleaned the list of companies let's start with retrieving all employees of those companies. For this, we will use PB since LNH doesn't have the corresponding feature**.** Its free tier gives you 10 minutes of run-time per day. That's is not plenty of time that we need to use both LNH and PB. Remember, we are trying to do it completely for free.

<u>Steps required to set-up PB:</u>

- Create a PB account
- Install Chrome extensions here (one-click)
- Make sure you are logged into your LinkedIn profile
- Visit API page here & **Press use API**

Before we are able to use we need to make sure that PB has access to our LinkedIn profile and to the spreadsheet where URLs of company profiles are stored. To make the spreadsheet available to PB we need to set link sharing to "**anyone with the link "**so anyone who has the link can access. Check out this guide for more information.



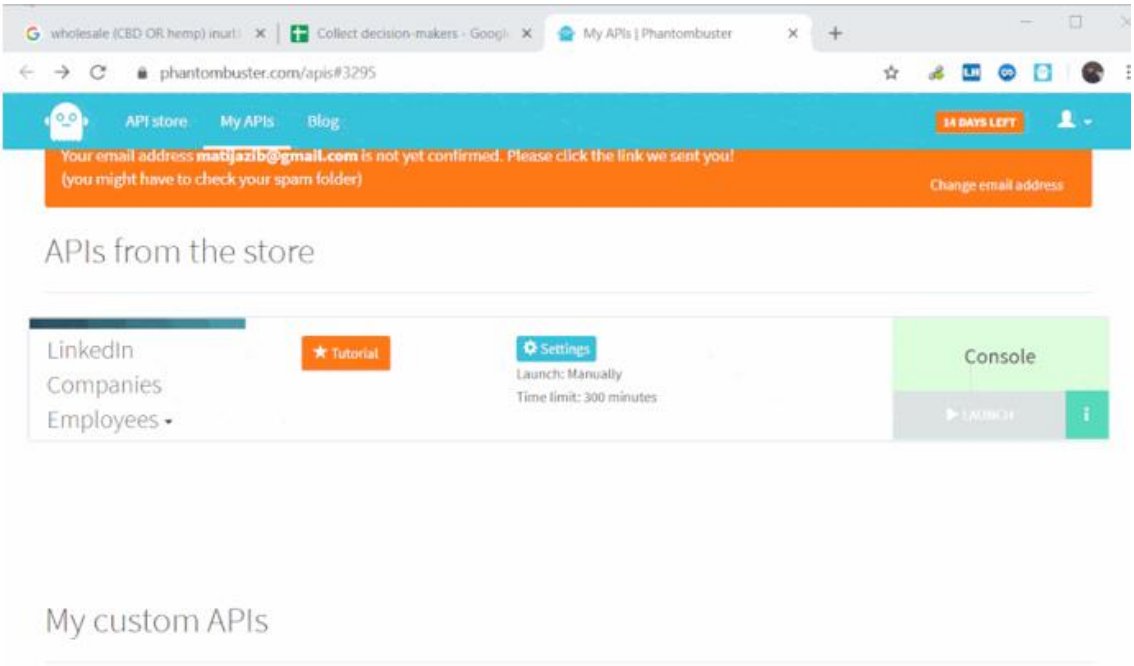
Press **Share** on top-right corner on the spreadsheet then **Advanced->More** to get to here

Let's head up back to PB where we will configure the API that will collect the data. Three elements are crucial for successful configuration of PB; 1) **LinkedIn session cookie* (PB uses to log-in into your account), 2) spreadsheet URL and 3) column name containing LinkedIn URLs**.

***** you will never share your log-in credentials with PB

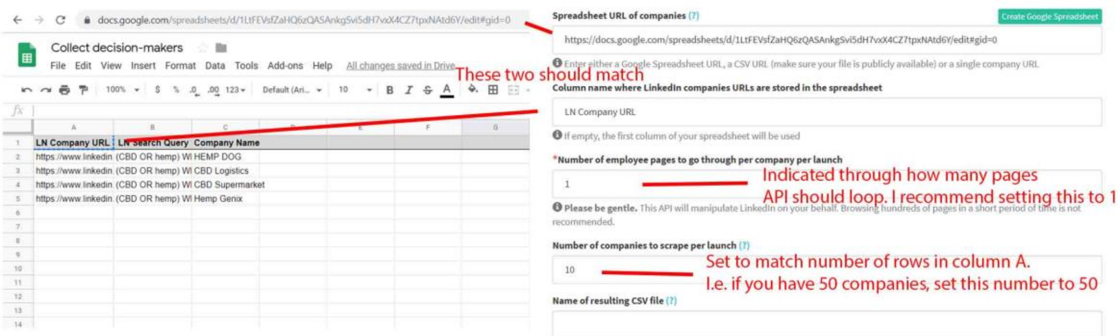
If you have installed the extension, session cookie can be inserted with a single click. I'd recommend keeping other settings as they are for now. Once you are finished with configuring API I would recommend setting "Delete all previous files at launch Low space usage" under Settings->File storage. This way new file that stores the data is generated with every run

Refer to bottom animation for a brief demonstration. These settings apply for the majority of PB's APIs.



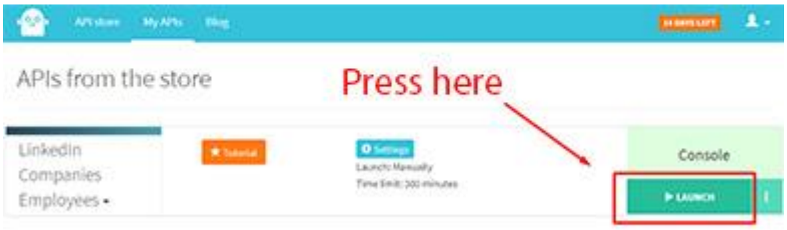
Demonstration on how to configure PhantomBuster's API for Company Employees Extraction.

Find a more detailed explanation on how to set-up the API and spreadsheet to work correctly below.

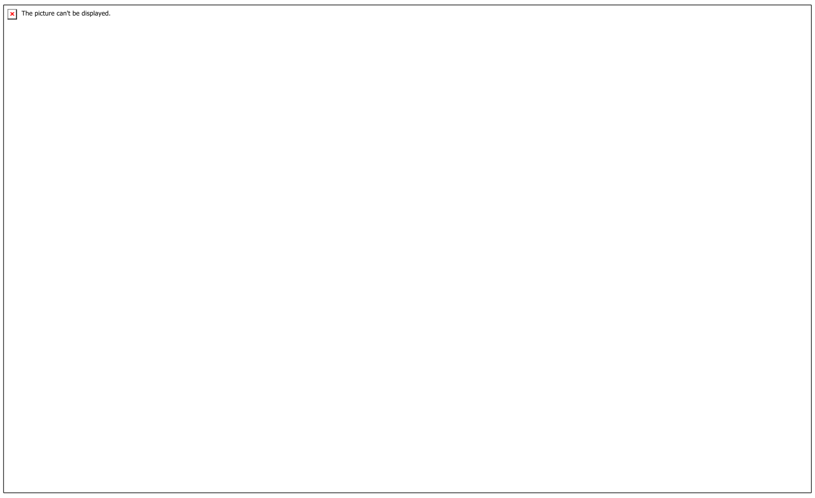


Make sure that your settings match to the one in the screenshot above

We are finally getting closer to extracting employees' profiles. Once you have configured the API correctly continue with pressing the ***Launch button*** and let PB work its magic.



Pressing Launch will take you to **Console view where you can observe API do its** work. It will now loop through all the companies' profiles in the spreadsheet and extract the first page of employees' profiles. Once this is done, results will be available for download in a CSV file.



Demonstration on how to collect LinkedIn profiles and copy them in the spreadsheet

3.2 Identify decision-makers and create a "hit-list"

As you go through the list you might notice that there are some people who are not relevant for your business. Because who only want to connect with decision-makers in our niche we need to clean the list.

You might also notice that for some rows, there might not be any data. This is because some users are out of your network, meaning you are not able to see their profile unless you have a common connection. This is expressed with ***Profile out of your network*** in the error column. Feel free to remove all rows containing such information.

Columns	*Descitpion*	*Relevant*
profileUrl	URL to **employee's** LinkedIn profile	**Yes**
name	Full name of the employee	No
firstName	First name of the employee	**Yes**
lastName	Lat name of the employee	**Yes**
job	Current job title	**Yes**
location	Current residency	**Yes**
query	URL of **employer's** LinkedIn profile	**Yes**
timestamp	Timestamp of collection	No

Let's now look at how to clean the list of employees to only include those who we would like to connect with.

For instance, if you are looking for purchasing managers, titles like ***Purchasing manager***, ***Sales manager***, ***Account manager*** or ***Business developer*** might be used to describe such employees.

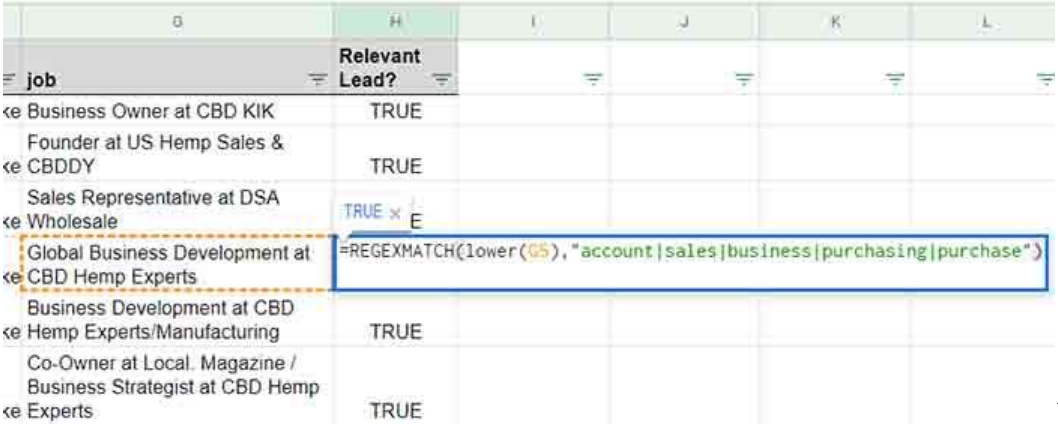
To help save time **we can use a regular expression**, or regex for short, which is a sequence of characters that define a search pattern. It will check the text in a specific column for the occurrence of pre-defined words – i.e in our example function will return TRUE if the employee has one of the job titles.

In Google Sheets, you can create it with the following formula:

$$REGEXMATCH(lower(A2),"purchasing|sales|development|account\text{“})$$

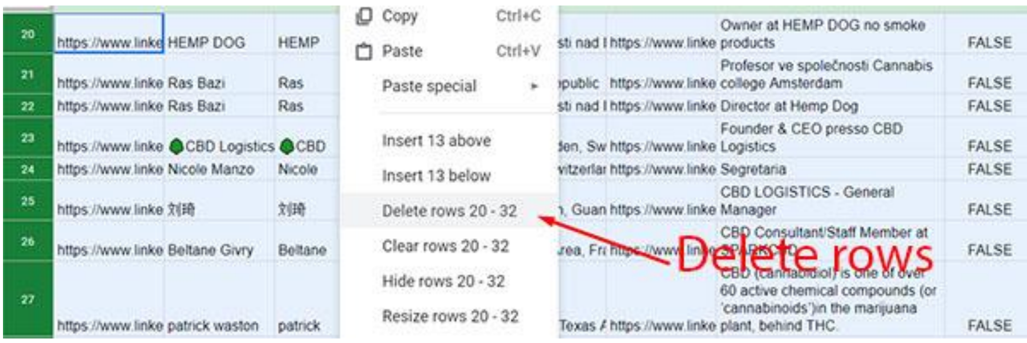
Let's break down the above formula: **A2** indicated a cell with the **job title.** It is encapsulated in function **lower()** to make all the text in job title lowercase (it will match both *Sales* and *sales*)

2. *“purchasing|sales|development*|account*“* – pipe character stands for the **OR** statement. In our case, the statement will match all rows that have **text equal to any** of the *purchasing*, *sales* or *development*. The output when this happens will be **TRUE** as it can be seen in the below image. I recommend omitting *manager* from any search criteria since it can refer to many positions in the company (*Stock manager. customer success manager, marketing manager*, ….).



Using Regex to find relevant leads containing owner, founder and business in their job title

Feel free to adjust criteria to your liking. I've added ***purchase*** since I've noticed many employees having "purchase manager" in their title. Once you are satisfied with results remove all rows where **Regex** output was **FALSE**.

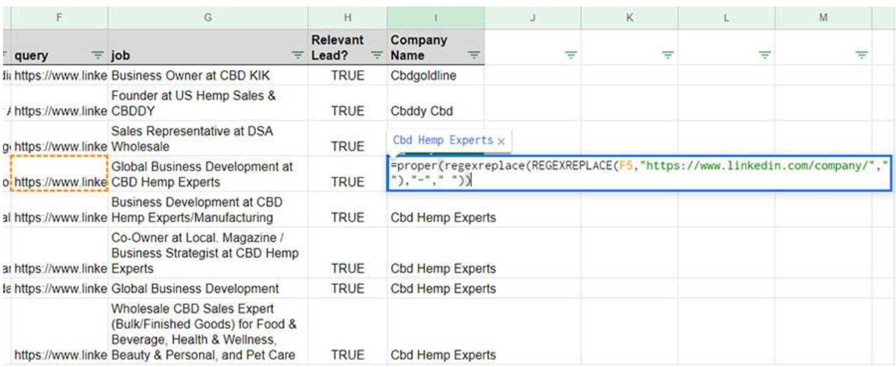


To add companies name at the end we can use another Regex trick.

Since in most cases, LinkedIn URL includes company name we can extract append it in the separate column. This will give an overview of how many contacts there are for each business and will later be used to send a personalised message.

Here is the formula that you can use to get the company name from URL.

$$proper(regexreplace(REGEXREPLACE(F2,\text{"}https://www.linkedin.com/company/\text{"},\text{""}),\text{"} - \text{"},\text{" "}))$$



Adjust F2 cell to that holding information about the company's *LinkedIn* profile URL

4. Build a LinkedIn network building machine

Now you have collected tens, possibly hundreds, of new highly relevant leads. Instead of having them stored in the spreadsheet, wouldn't be better to connect with them and build your own professional network?

Automatically sending invitations and connecting to a list of LinkedIn users with a personalized message can help grow your business network tremendously. Imagine sending tens of connection requests each day, all with personalized message while you are focusing on your work.

Now that we have refined our list of contacts that we have collected, we can move on to the next stage which includes

- sending a connection requests on LinkedIn
- adding a personalized message to the request**.**

Adding a personalized message can be the difference between accepting and ignoring your request. I recommend adding a good reason when sending a request. You do not want to be seen as a spammer/bot. You can check some suggestions here.

Both LNH and PB offer this feature. During the trial, we are able to add up to 5 APIs for free, however, once the trial expires the number of APIs available for use reduces to 1. PB excels because it offers custom run-time compared to LNH which needs to be started and stopped manually. However, both can be used to achieve the same task.

4.1 Personalise the connection request

For this task, we will need **Network Booster API** which can be found here. Moreover, we will need to have a sheet containing URLs to contacts' profiles that we would like to connect with and send a personalised message to. API will automatically send a connection request to everyone on the sheet. This can be a huge time-save and a great way to increase the size of your network.

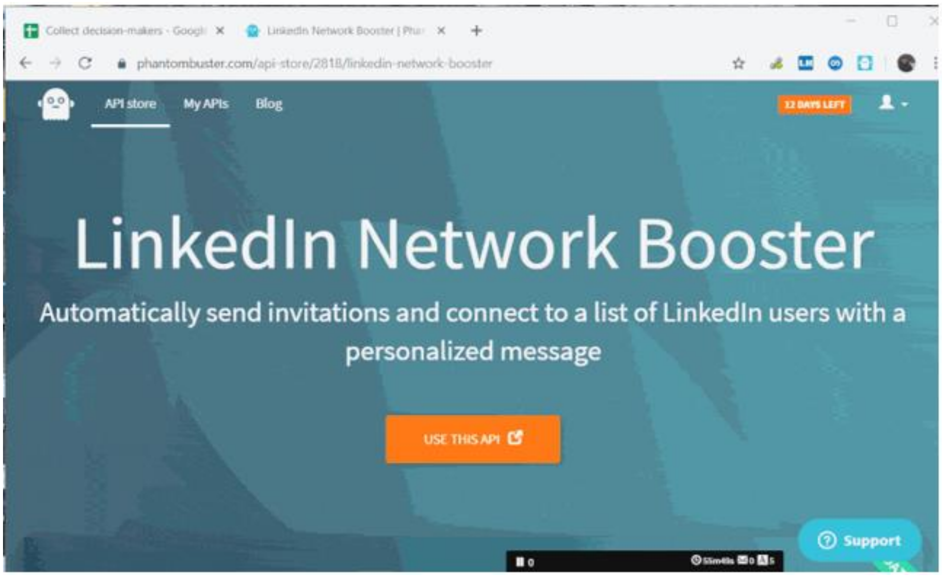
You can customize your message by using #firstName#, #fullName#, #company#, #jobTitle#, and #school#. In fact, any column from the input file can be interpolated by writing down its name between # hashtag signs. **Make sure that your note is under 300 characters, custom fields included**. You need to make your copy succinct.

Hi *#firstName#*,

I’ve stumbled upon your *#company#* while browsing for best
around *#city#* in *#industry#* industry.

I’m looking to connect with like-minded people in #city#.

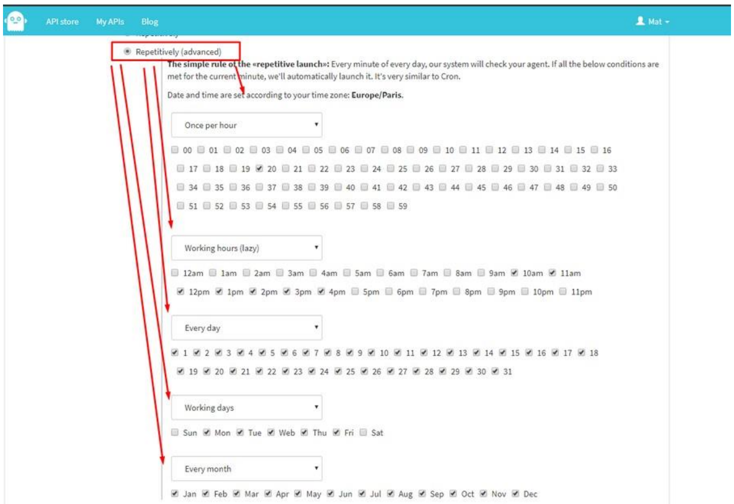
Best,



Setting Network Booster API to send connection requests with a personalised message.

For standard accounts is it recommended to not send more than 80 connection request per day. Phantom Buster set to send a connection request to a maximum of 10 accounts per launch which is then repeated 8 times a day. Try setting sent time to working hours on weekdays like seen below.

Under Settings, I recommend choosing the ***lazy-worker schedule*** to avoid raising suspicion from the LinkedIn anti-bot system. According to the configuration below, PB will trigger the automation once per hour between 10 am and 4 pm on workdays. Meaning 70 requests (7 hours*10 requests per run) will be sent in one working day, bringing the **weekly tally to 350 connection requests!** This setting is ideal since it will copy the behaviour of a normal human worker.



Once you are all set-up, continue with pressing launch and enjoy your watching network building machine at work.

Example of sent connection request with a personalised message.

5. Find direct email address, headcount and location

Find direct emails of your LinkedIn connections and decision-makers outside your network. See how you can enrich decision-makers profile with data about company size, number of employees, location and more.

Subscribing for educational newsletter will get you first in line to receive the guide about: – **Send up to 100+ emails that will end up in Primary tab** per day with your Gmail

SIGN UP FORM

Appendix 3: Get Direct Email, Industry, Date founded, Company size and More from LinkedIn

This is a follow-up from ***Find Prospective Companies and Its Employees and Extract Their Data From LinkedIn***.

Sending a message on LinkedIn is great, but the majority of professional still use email as a primary tool of communication. That's why this guide will focus on **getting a direct email** for any LinkedIn profile. To do so we will need the following information:

1. First name,
2. Last name,
3. Company name and
4. Domain

In the previous guide, we have already collected the data for the first 3. The final piece missing is the **company domain**. Moreover, **VARIANT A** will show you how to collect more data regarding companies. Information like company size, location, year founded and more can help generate an overview of its size and potential

1 Collect company domains

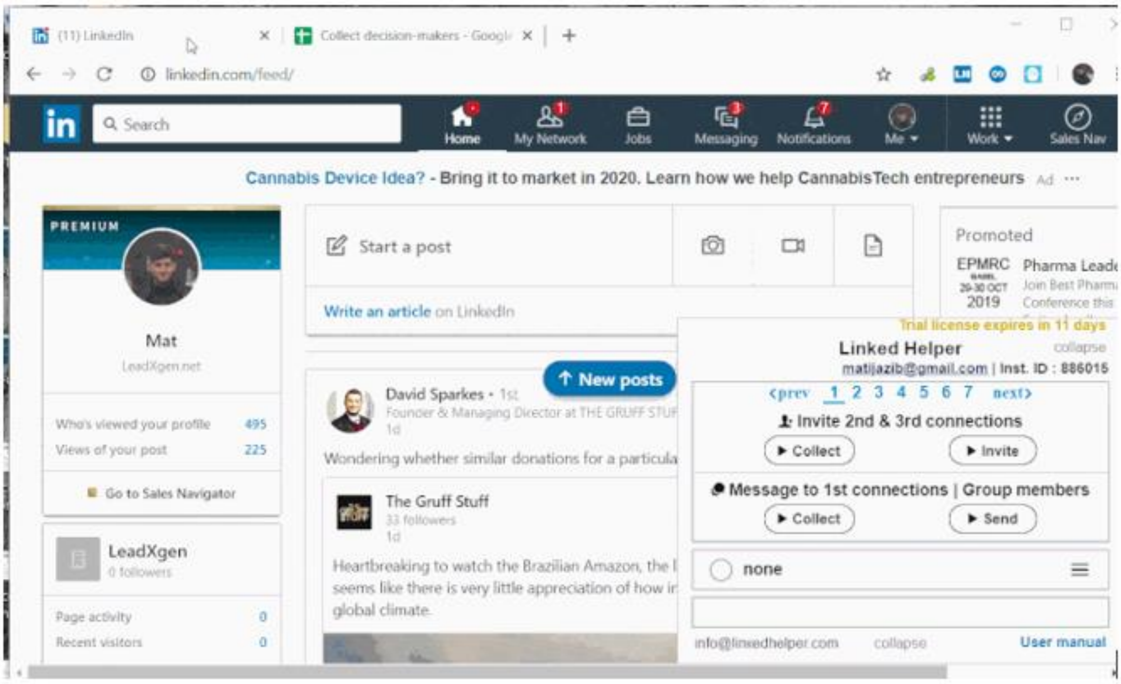
Since we have already collected first and last names, the only thing missing is domains. The information which is in most cases stored on the LinkedIn's company page. Let's return to our spreadsheet that. To achieve this goal we can use two tools:

- **Companies extractor** *by LinkedIn Helper*
- **LinkedIn Profile Scraper API** *by PhantomBuster*

1.1 [OPTIONAL] Companies extractor by Linkedin Helper (VARIANT A)

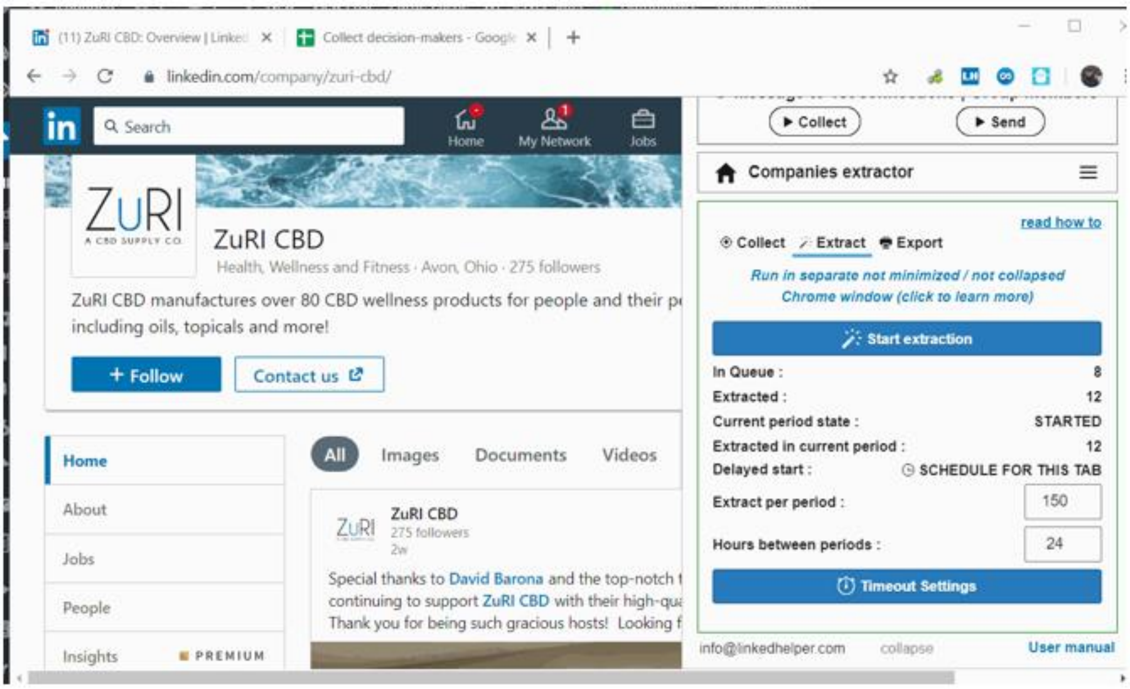
Firstly, let's take a look at how we can use **Companies extractor** by LinkedIn Helper to collect domains and much more information connected to businesses. The main advantages of LN Helper are, extracts a lot more information which can help better describe the businesses and is a more robust method compared to PhantomBuster. The downside is that you'll need your PC or MAC open for the duration of the process and might require a bit more technical skills to finish for the first time.

For this task, you'll need to prepare a list containing companies URLs which will be imported into LN Helper. The tool will visit each company page and extract all information associated with it.



Starting the exporting of the data with Linkedin Helper

Once the extraction is finished, download the data and copy it onto the spreadsheet. You can see there is a lot of information available. It comes to your own preferences what you would like to keep. However, for the purpose of getting the emails, we will need only **domains**.



Exporting and copying the companies' data onto a spreadsheet

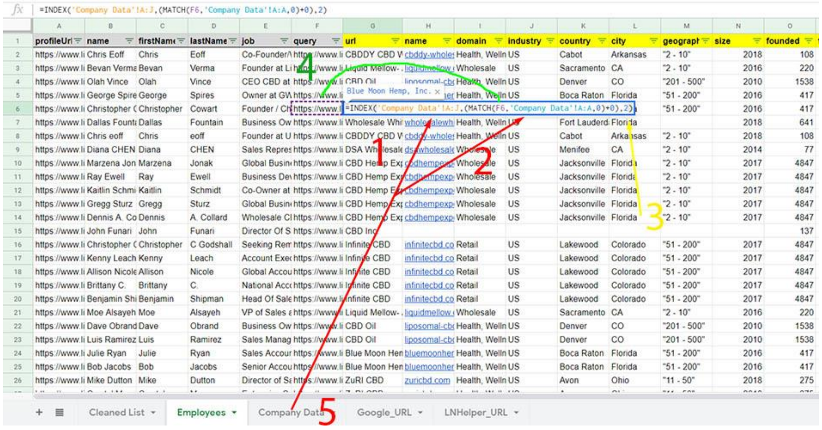
For this test I've decided to keep the following (*the ones tagged with* * *are crucial for getting emails*):

Property name	***Desciption***
name	Name of the business
url*	Company LinkedIn profile URL. **Required to connect the data with employees' profiles**
domain*	Domain of the business. **Required for email generation**
industry	Industry of the company. See full list here.
country	Country where company is based in
city	City where company is based in
geographical area	State/Region where company is based in
size	Number of employees. Can indicate the potential size of the business
founded	Year that business was founded
followers	Number of page followers. Can indicate popularity of the business.

$$INDEX(\text{“}Target\ Columns\text{”}, (MATCH(\text{“}Key\ cells\text{”}, \text{”}Key\ column\text{”}, 0) + 0), 2)$$

If you are not familiar with INDEX and MATCH function in Google Sheets or Excel it might be a bit puzzling at the beginning. That it's why below image should help.

1. Includes all columns in *Company Data sheet that are filled with data.*
2. *Includes the* first column where the URLs of the Companies' LinkedIn profiles are stored in *Company Data* sheet
3. The Column from *Company Data* that should be shown in column G on *Employees* sheet (from 2 to 10 for column O)
4. Should equal to the cell including URL of the Company LinkedIn profile on *Employees* sheet.
5. Shows the sheet where companies' data is stored



As you merge the data finish of with copy-paste values only so we get rid of the formulas.

Copy-paste the cell values as values only to get rid of formulas

2 Generate direct emails

Finally, we have reached the stage where we will generate the direct emails of employees based on their first, last name and domain. There are two ways to achieve this depending on whether you have completed 1.1 or not. Step 1.1 requires an extra step compared to 2.2 but it provides more information regarding companies.

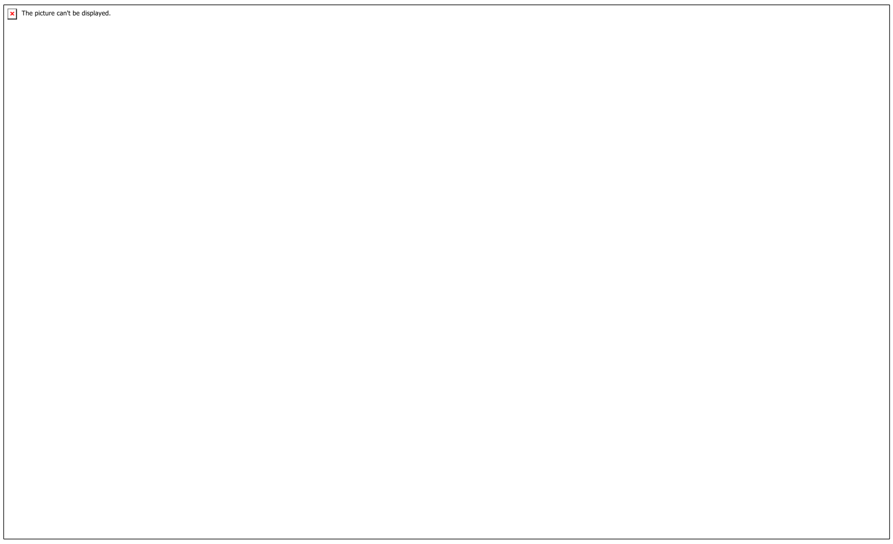
2.1 Generate direct emails with Hunter (VARIANT A)

Hunter is the leading solution to find and verify professional email addresses. Before we start collecting email addresses let’s make sure our spreadsheet, the data we will import to Hunter, is ready. To maximize the efficiency of Hunter we need to include the following information

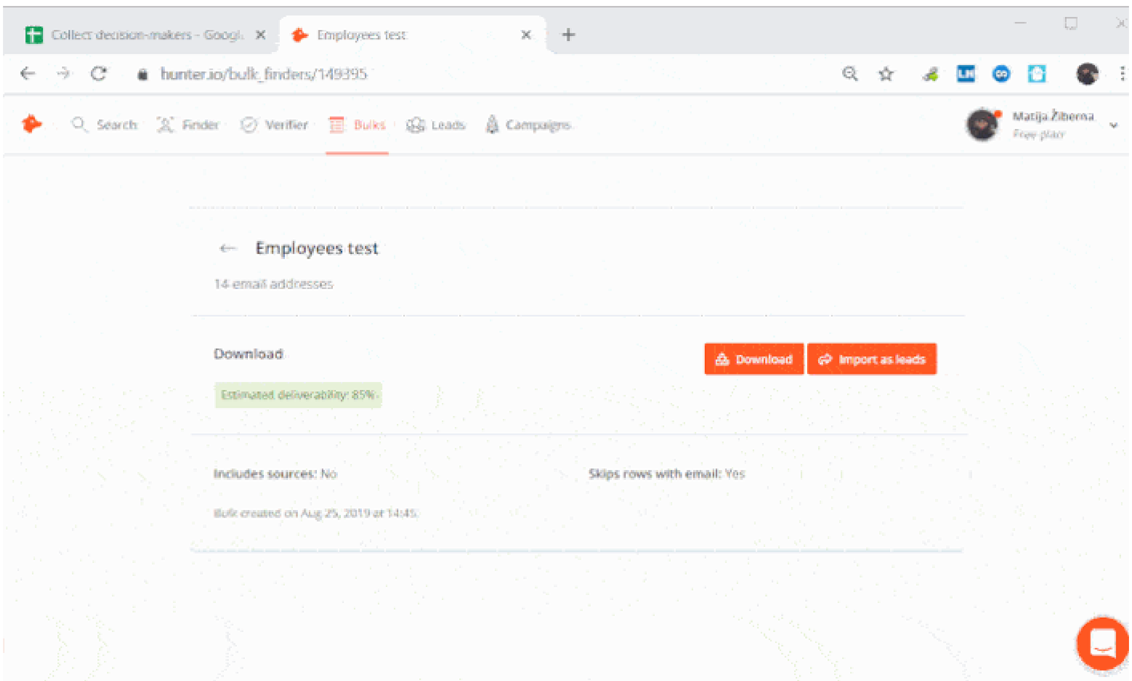
- First name,
- Last name,
- Domain and
- Company name

First, set up a free account which gives you 100 free emails per month.

Considering you have successfully completed step 1.1 let's export the *Employees* sheet and upload it to Hunter. To find emails with Hunter click on the **Bulk** tab and select **Email Finder** option (direct link).



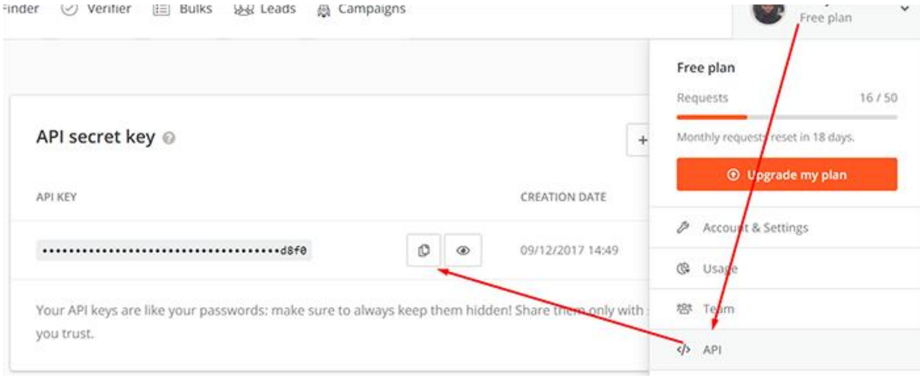
Once Hunter is finished download the leads. Of course, it will not always be able to find emails for each contact. However, there is a way to guess the email based on the information collected.



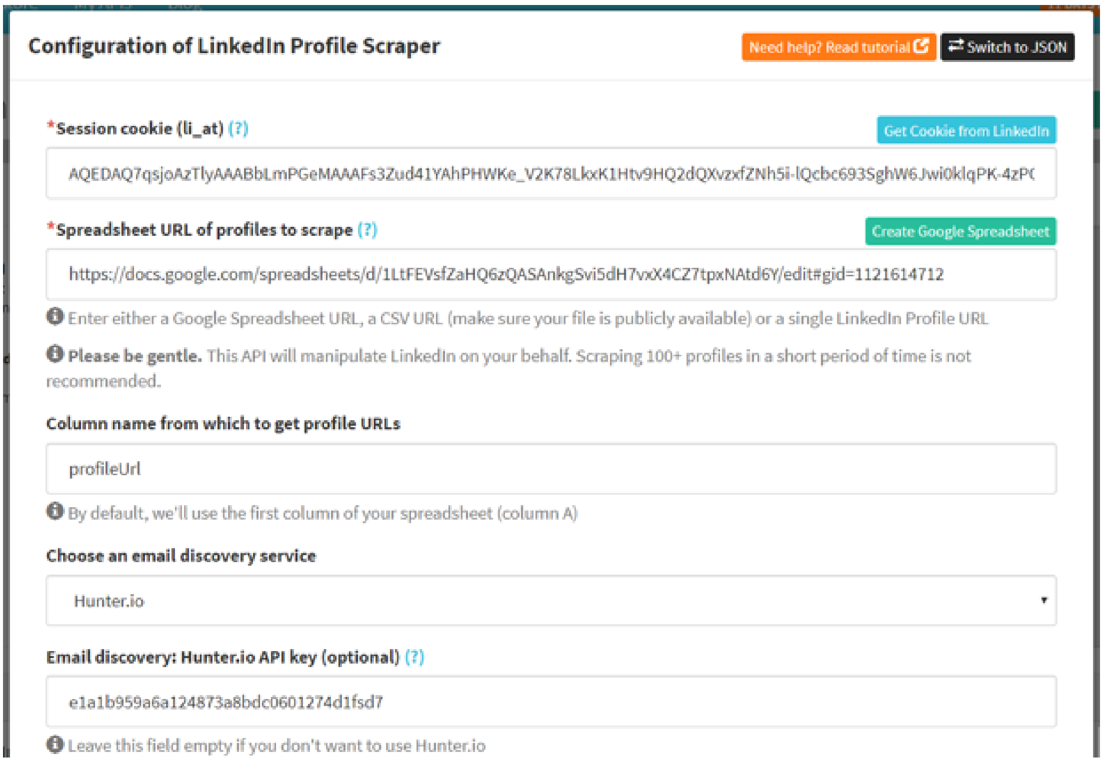
2.2 Generate direct emails with LinkedIn Profile Scraper API by PhantomBuster (VARIANT B)

This method is quite faster and it requires less effort. The only disadvantage is that it does not provide with the same amount of information like **VARIANT A** does.

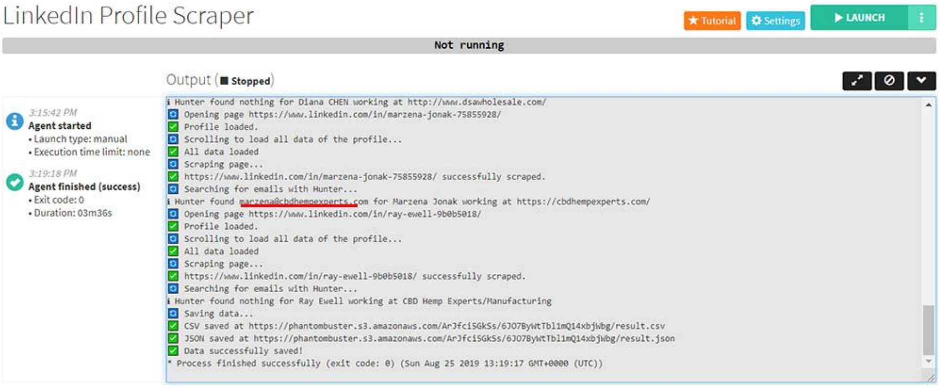
- Install *LinkedIn Profile Scraper API* via here
- Configure the *LinkedIn Profile Scraper* API
- Copy Hunter.io API key



Copy *API Secret key* into PhantomBuster API configurations



When you are satisfied with settings launch the API and let it work its magic.



There you have, API will automatically extract company domain and connect with Hunter to find a direct email address.

Conclusion

Above you have seen how to get a direct email and other information from LinkedIn. In our example, Hunter was able to **retrieve about 47% of contacts' emails**. It is not a bad start, but there it can be the yield can certainly be improved. A professional email is most commonly a combination of the first and last name followed by a website's domain.

For instance, let's look for a hypothetical employee named John Wick whose company's domain parabellum.com.

First placeholder	***Second placeholder***	***Email variant***
First name	*Empty*	john@parabellum.com
Last name	*Empty*	wick@parabellum.com
First name	Last name	john.wick@parabellum.com
First name [0]	Last name	j.wick@parabellum.com
Last name	First name	wick.john@parabellum.com
Last name [0]	First name	w.john@parabellum.com

Above table gives you an idea of how knowing first, last name and domain can be enough to get a direct email of an employee. Of course, we need to make sure that email is actually valid and will reach the recipient's mailbox. This is where email verification software comes into the equation.

There are many providers, one that offers **free 100 daily verifications** is QuickEmailVerification for which you can create a free account.

I will be shortly creating a guide on how to **guess** the direct email by using first, last name and domain. Furthermore, it will also include how to verify those emails using free services online. Stay tuned!

Appendix 4: Examples of two buyer's personas used at Meet Harmony

Placeholder	**Rory - Experienced Vaper**	**Hannah - Newbie**
Introduction	Vaper of 4 years and educated about vaping & CBD but wants the best quality e-liquids and newest technology.	New to CBD and vaping, to improve wellbeing but not always effective in the necessary actions
Type	Age: 29 Work: Personal Trainer Family: Single Location: London Character: Experienced Vaper	Age: 33 Work: Physiotherapist Family: Married, no kids Location: Northampton Character: Newbie
Goals	Improve physical fitness Live a comfortable life Grow his business and progress financially	Quit smoking Start a family Be healthy and happy
Frustrations	Friends and clients are sceptical about CBD Too many brands on the market Wants new flavours	Lack of willpower Not having enough time to dedicate to personal growth and wellbeing Giving in to convenience
Online Places	Instagram, YouTube, fitness blogs	Facebook, food/fashion blogs, Pinterest
Offline Places	Gym, fitness magazines, trade shows	Yoga, cafes, gym, festivals
Short desc	Rory lives in East London and runs his own business as a personal trainer which he has grown over the last five years. He is very proud of his achievements and likes to enjoy luxuries to celebrate his success.	Hannah is a young professional living in the suburbs of Northampton, the UK with her husband. She graduated from University and worked in retail for several years, working her way up to assistant manager until her mother had to retire due to early onset arthritis.

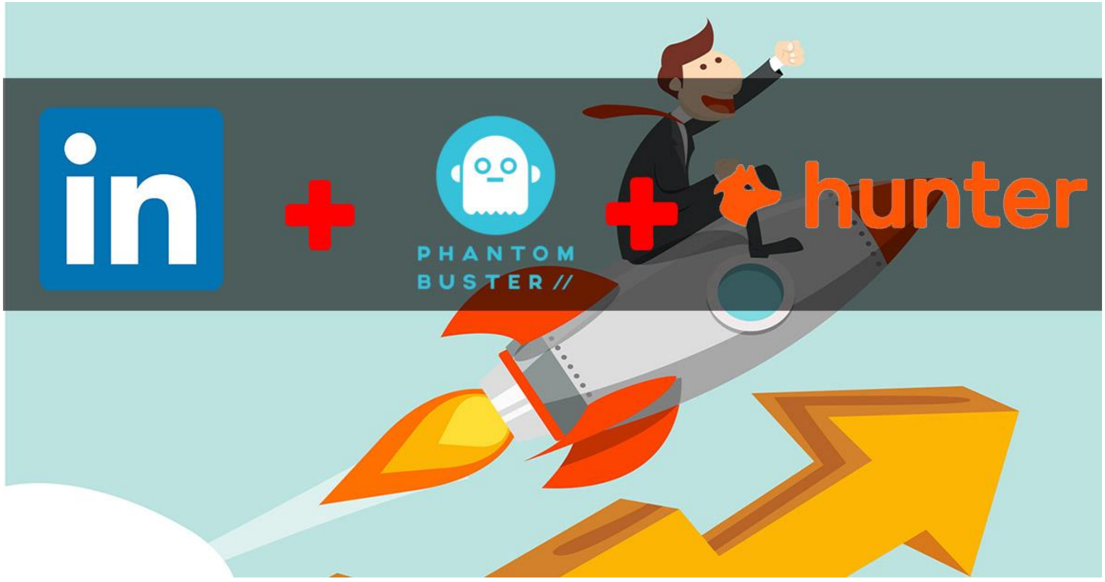
Cannabis Story	Fitness and health are very important to Rory and he quit smoking a few years ago with the aid of vaping. He was one of the first out of his friends to begin vaping, often with the latest technology, and open to trying new things. As a fitness fanatic, he read about CBD and felt it was better than vaping nicotine. He has a large collection of devices and e-liquids and knows a lot about the technicalities of them.	This caused a change of heart for Hannah. Retraining as a physiotherapist she became more engaged with wellness and, planning a family with her husband, wants to quit smoking. Not a heavy smoker, Hannah only smokes at the weekend and after-work drinks. As a teenager, she smoked joints with her older brother and still enjoys one occasionally.
CBD Story	The quality and brand image is important for Rory, he wants the best and does not mind paying for it. He also likes to be in the know about new technology, new flavours and enjoys educating his friends and clients about CBD. His main concern is the image around cannabis and is not into the 'hippie' vibe.	She was first introduced to CBD by her cousin who suggested it for her mother's arthritis, after some research they purchased a high concentrate CBD oil from a well known US brand. One of the articles suggested vaping CBD for smoking cessation, so she searched for a brand shipping to the UK. Harmony was the first to appear and she was particularly attracted to the clean, professional looking website and cannabis flavours.

Source: own work.

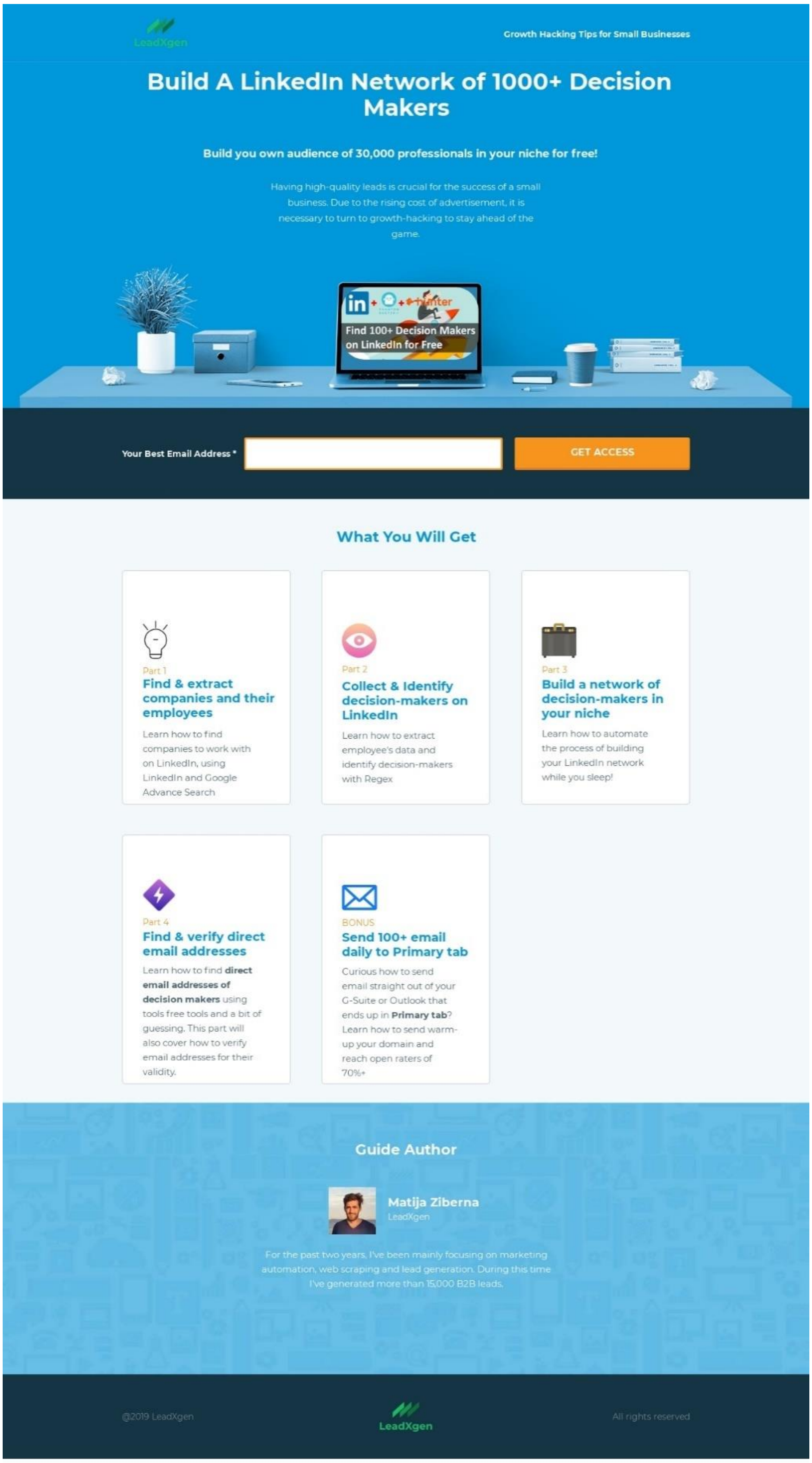
Appendix 5: Python code snippet

```
import scrapy
from items import OnlineDirectoriesItem


class QuotesJSSpider(scrapy.Spider):
    name = 'quotesjs'
    start_urls = [
        'file:///C:/Users/Matija/Desktop/Harmony/facebook_pages_scrapy/fb_search_3.html',
        ]


    def parse(self, response):
    #    item = OnlineDirectoriesItem()
        item = OnlineDirectoriesItem()
        for items in response.css('div[data-testid=browse-result-content]'):


            try:
                item['facebook'] = items.css('a._32mo::attr(href)').extract()
            except:
                item['website'] = 'Unknown'
            try:
                item['rating'] = items.css('div._pac>a::text').extract_first()
            except:
                item['rating'] = 'Unknown'
            try:
                item['name'] = items.css('a._32mo>span::text').extract()
            except:
                item['name'] = 'Unknown'
            try:
                item['city'] = items.css('div._pac::text').extract_first()
            except:
                item['city'] = 'Unknown'
            try:
```

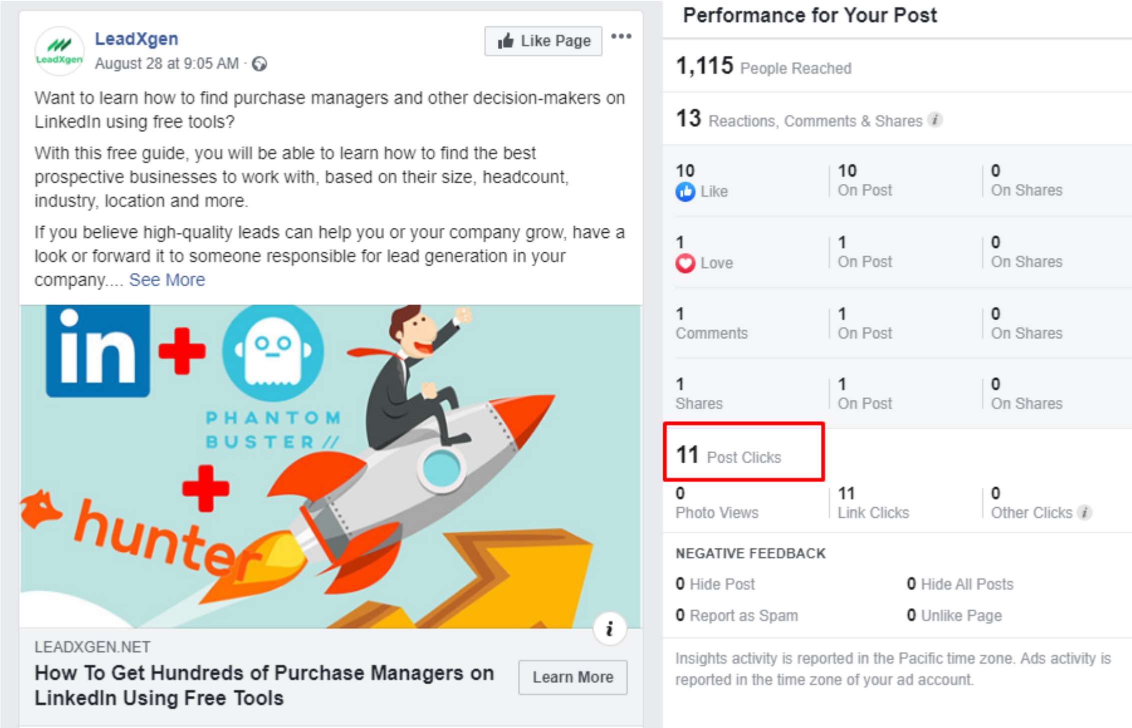
Appendix 6: Blog-post header image



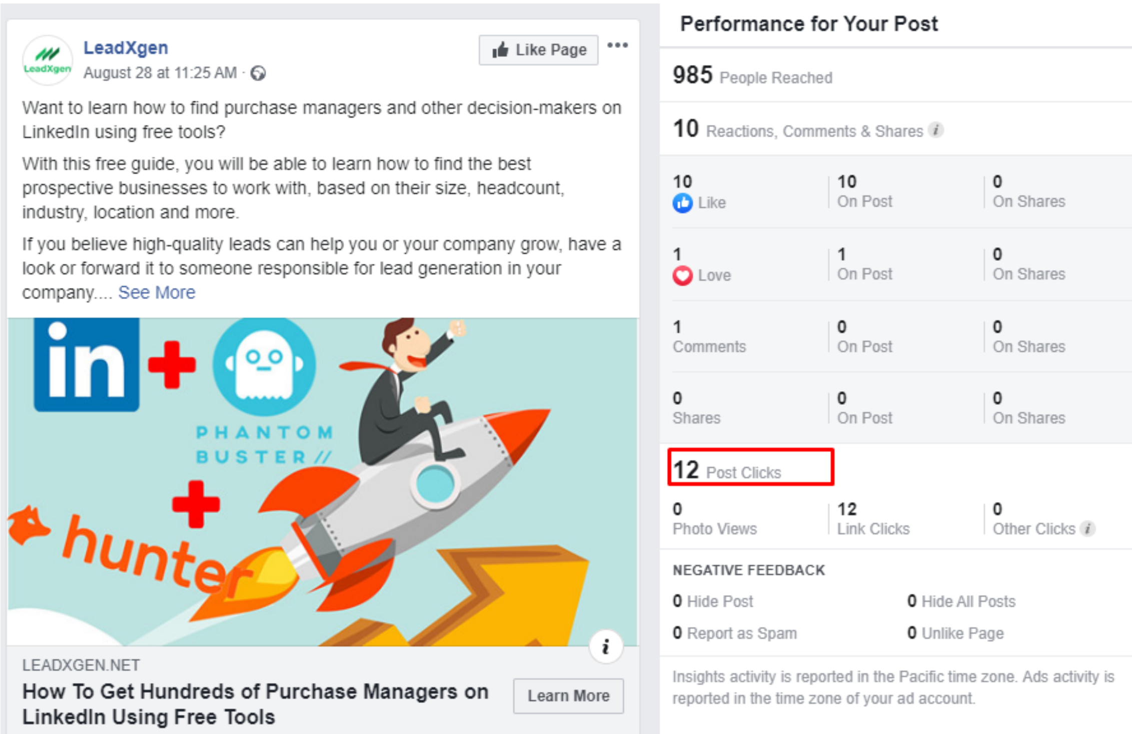
Appendix 7: Landing page for the control group



Appendix 8: Results for Facebook Ad - experimental group

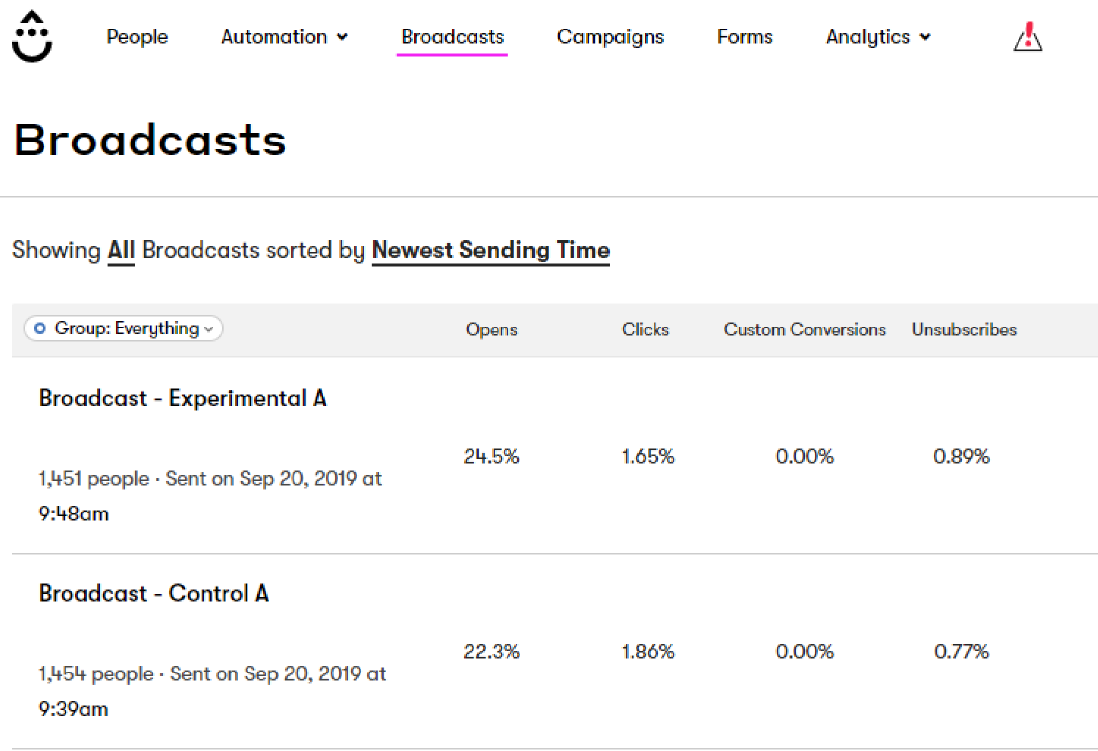


Appendix 9: Results for Facebook Ad - control group



Appendix 10: Results for the "G-suite emails" method

Appendix 11: Results for the “Blast email” method



Appendix 12: Spam trigger words per YesWare as of 2016

% OFF	*Double your income*	*Great offer*	*Never*	*Remove*
$$$	Earn $	Guarantee	No gimmicks	Reverses
100% free	Earn extra cash	Help	No hidden costs	Sample
100% satisfied	Extra income	Hidden	No investment	Satisfaction
Acceptance	F r e e	Hidden assets	Now only	Satisfaction guaranteed
Accordingly	Fast cast	Increase sale	Obligation	Save $
Act now	Free	Increase traffic	One hundred percent free	Search engine listings
Affordable	Free gift	Increase your sales	One time	Serious cash
Apply now	Free info	Incredible deal	Opportunity	Solution
Avoid	Free installation	Info you requested	Order now	Special promotion
Billion	Free investment	Lifetime	Order today	Stop
Cast bonus	Free leads	Limited time offer	Please read	Success
Chance	Free membership	Lose	Prices	Test
Cheap	Free offer	Maintained	Problem	Thousands
Click here	Free preview	Make $	Promise you	Urgent
Compare rates	Free trial	Medium	Refinance	Visit our website
Credit	Get started now	Miracle	Reminder	Web traffic

Source: Adopted from YesWare (Williams, 2016)

Appendix 13: URL shortening to tracking activity

Elements	*Description*	*Data*
URL	Url to the blog post	https://leadxgen.net/2019/07/add-1000-connections-on-linkedin/
Platform	A platform where the blog post was promoted - LinkedIn	linkedin
Medium	How was the blog post shared on the platform – Sending connection requests	connection_request
Segment	Who was the blog post share with – Freelancers from the UK	freelancer_uk
Final URL	Final URL that enables exact tracking in the Google Analytics	https://leadxgen.net/2019/07/add-1000-connections-on-linkedin/?utm_source=LinkedIn&utm_medium=connection_request&utm_campaign=freelancer_uk
Shortened URL	A shortened version of "Final URL."	http://bit.ly/2ZuIYww

Appendix 14: Copy of the "broadcast email" method

Group	*Experimental*	*Control*
Subject line	add 80 new LinkedIn connections every day!	add 80 new LinkedIn connections every day!
Copy	Hi there, Did you know you can add up to 30,000 connections on LinkedIn? I've recently written a step-by-step guide that shows how to find more clients and automatically add them as connections on LinkedIn. Best thing? All the tools used in the guide can be used for free (PhantomBuster, LinkedIn Helper). Click here to read it on my blog. Among other stuff you will learn how to: 1. Find new clients in your region on LinkedIn 2. Identify decision-makers in any business on LinkedIn 3. Scale your LinkedIn network by adding 80 connections daily	Hi there, Did you know you can add up to 30,000 connections on LinkedIn? I've recently written a step-by-step guide that shows how to find more clients and automatically add them as connections on LinkedIn. Best thing? All the tools used in the guide can be used for free (PhantomBuster, LinkedIn Helper). Click here to read it on my blog. Among other stuff you will learn how to: 1. Find new clients in your region on LinkedIn 2. Identify decision-makers in any business on LinkedIn 3. Scale your LinkedIn network by adding 80 connections daily

Appendix 15: Copy of the "message connections" method

Group	*Experimental*	*Control*
Copy	Hello {{firstName|there}}, I've written an article that describes how to find purchase managers and other decision-makers on LinkedIn using free tools. With it, you will be able to learn how to find the best prospective business to work with based on their size, headcount, industry, location and more. If you believe high-quality leads can help you or your company grow, have a look or forward it to someone responsible for lead generation in your company. Link to the article: http://bit.ly/2m4Wwkn	Hello {{firstName|there}}, I've written an article that describes how to find purchase managers and other decision-makers on LinkedIn using free tools. With it, you will be able to learn how to find the best prospective business to work with based on their size, headcount, industry, location and more. If you believe high-quality leads can help you or your company grow, have a look or forward it to someone responsible for lead generation in your company. Get access to the article: http://bit.ly/2kuMXem

Appendix 26: Facebook Ad copy

Group	*Experimental*	*Control*
Copy	Want to learn how to find purchase managers and other decision-makers on LinkedIn using free tools? With this free guide, you will be able to learn how to find the best prospective businesses to work with, based on their size, headcount, industry, location and more. If you believe high-quality leads can help you or your company grow, have a look or forward it to someone responsible for lead generation in your company. http://bit.ly/30F8fWs #growthacking #leadgeneration	Want to learn how to find purchase managers and other decision-makers on LinkedIn using free tools? With this free guide, you will be able to learn how to find the best prospective businesses to work with, based on their size, headcount, industry, location and more. If you believe high-quality leads can help you or your company grow, get your access or forward it to someone responsible for lead generation in your company. http://bit.ly/2kIX937 #growthacking #leadgeneration