

# Handshake Outreach

*A 4-message email sequence for visitors who didn't sign up.*

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Part 1: The handshake. Part 2: How to adapt it for your business.

PART ONE

# Handshake Outreach

*The generic four-message structure. Industry-agnostic. Adapt it before you ship it.*

## PART 1

# Core Psychology

A visitor came to your site looking for a solution. They didn't fill out a form. Three reasons matter, and the sequence has to honor all three:

1. They're not ready and still researching.
2. They're form-wary and burned by past sales onslaught.
3. They're considering you specifically but have a hesitation you haven't resolved.

Cold emails to identified visitors create a fourth problem on top: the surveillance flinch. “How did they get my email? I didn't give it to them.” Your job in Message 1 is to defuse that flinch in one confident sentence — then earn the rest of the relationship.

## PART 1

# What this borrows from cart-abandonment — and what it rejects

## KEEP

## The cadence and structure

Send the first message fast. Sequence rather than blast. Escalate value across messages. End cleanly with a clear final beat.

## REJECT

## The tone

No urgency. No scarcity. No “complete your purchase” pressure. Cart-abandoners declared SKU-level intent. Your visitor declared category-level intent only.

— *Show them what they're hungry for. Don't whack them on the head.*

## PART 1

# The four messages at a glance

01

**The Honest Hello** *Within 4–24 hours*

Acknowledge the cold contact, name the human sender, deliver one piece of value, ask for nothing.

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02

**The Inside Knowledge** *3–4 days later*

Teach something a real researcher wants to know — ideally something that costs you a sale if you're being honest.

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03

**The Story** *5–7 days later*

One real customer story with a friction moment. Narrative bypasses the evaluator.

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04

**The Clean Close** *5–7 days later*

Three options: talk now, stay loosely in touch, or leave. Recommend an alternative if you can stomach it.

MESSAGE 1 OF 4 / SEND WITHIN 4-24 HOURS

# Message 1: The Honest Hello

*Acknowledge the cold contact. Name the human sender. Deliver one piece of value. Ask for nothing.*

**Subject:** A note from [First Name] at [Company]

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Hi –

You stopped by [Company]'s site recently looking at [category]. You didn't sign up, and I want to respect that. But I also didn't want to leave you to figure us out alone, so I'm sending one note to introduce myself and offer something useful.

I'm [Name], [role] at [Company]. The thing most people in your spot want to know first is [the single most important question in the category]. Here's the honest answer: [2-3 sentences of real, non-promotional information].

If that's helpful, I'll send a couple more notes over the next two weeks. If not, the unsubscribe link is at the bottom and I won't take it personally.

– [Name]

[Title, direct line or reply-to]

MESSAGE 2 OF 4 / SEND 3-4 DAYS LATER

## Message 2: The Inside Knowledge

*Teach something a researcher wants to know — ideally something that costs you a sale.*

**Subject:** The thing nobody in [category] tells you upfront

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[Name],

Quick follow-up to my last note. If you're researching [category], the question you're probably wrestling with isn't [the obvious surface question] — it's [the deeper, real question buyers actually have].

Here's what I tell people who ask me: [3-5 sentences of substantive content. Include at least one thing that's true even if it points away from your offering — “if X is your situation, you probably don't need us, you need Y.”]

If you want to go deeper, [link to a substantial resource — guide, tool, calculator, comparison page]. No form to fill out. It's just there.

— [Name]

MESSAGE 3 OF 4 / SEND 5-7 DAYS LATER

## Message 3: The Story

*Move from information to identification. Narrative bypasses the evaluator.*

**Subject:** [Concrete, specific story title – not a benefit headline]

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[Name],

Wanted to share a story that might be relevant.

[200-350 words. Real customer or composite based on real customers. Specifics matter: name, situation, what they tried first, what didn't work, what made them choose [Company], what happened. Include at least one moment of doubt or friction – “she almost didn't go through with it because...”]

The reason I'm sharing this: [one sentence connecting the story to the reader's likely situation, without claiming to know it].

If you want to talk through your own situation with someone here, [low-commitment option]. If not, I'll send one more note and then leave you alone.

– [Name]

MESSAGE 4 OF 4 / SEND 5-7 DAYS LATER

# Message 4: The Clean Close

*Honor the promise. Make the exit as graceful as staying.*

**Subject:** Last note from me

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[Name],

This is the last email I'll send unless you want to keep hearing from me. A few options:

If you're ready to talk: [Direct contact method]. I'll personally make sure you get to the right person.

If you want to stay loosely in touch: [Low-commitment alternative]. Different cadence, no pressure.

If [Company] isn't a fit: That's fine. If you want, hit reply and tell me why. And here are [1-2 alternatives I'd actually recommend, including competitors]. Picking the right [solution] matters more than picking us.

Either way, thanks for considering us.

– [Name]

PART TWO

# How to rewrite this for your business

*Six decisions before you write a word.*

## PART 2

# Six decisions before you write a word

## 1 Who is the human sender?

Pick a real person, not a department. Name and reply-to email appear in every message.

## 3 What's the single biggest unspoken fear?

Name it directly in Message 1 and disarm it. "They'll send a salesperson to my door."

## 5 What's your supporting infrastructure?

One high-quality anchor asset — a guide, calculator, comparison — linked from Messages 2 and 4.

## 2 How sensitive is your category?

Higher sensitivity = harder lean into acknowledgment, less reference to specific page views.

## 4 What costly signal can you afford to give?

Message 2 lives or dies on this. What's true even when it points away from buying from you?

## 6 What's your alternative recommendation in Message 4?

Name a real competitor if you can. Make leaving graceful.

## PART 2

# How to use the adaptations

- **Keep the bones.** Each adaptation preserves the four-message structure and [bracketed] mail-merge placeholders for company name and sender info.
- **Read across industries.** The choices each adaptation makes about acknowledgment, tone, and costly signal teach you the moves — even outside your category.
- **Stay tight.** Word counts are deliberately short. If your draft is 30% longer than the example, you're explaining when you should be teaching.
- **Use insider lingo.** Each adaptation uses category-specific terminology (PDI, BRA, OTD, ABPS, AACD, Master Elite) to signal that the sender knows the territory. Adapt to whatever lingo your prospects use.
- **Make the emails LOOK plain.** Render in HTML with a slightly large font and a slightly warm-than-white background. Looks typed, reads typed. Eyes are trained to scan that format.

The visitor is auditioning you,  
*not the other way around.*

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If your sales team isn't slightly uncomfortable — like you're leaving money on the table by not pushing harder — you've probably got it right.