

PLAYBOOK

# Home Remodeling

*Handshake Outreach email sequence, adapted.*

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Four messages, one sequence. Mail-merge ready.

## ADAPTATION 3

# Category notes

Medium-to-high sensitivity. Financial stakes are large, the project will live in the buyer's home for months, and the research period is extended — typically weeks or months across multiple sessions. Industry research highlights two patterns specific to remodeling: buyers complete most of their decision before they ever talk to a contractor, and the dual-decider dynamic (most projects are decided by couples with different priorities) doubles the trust burden. One spouse may focus on the aesthetic outcome; the other on budget and disruption. Marketing that addresses only one closes only half the customers it could.

The unspoken fear: “They're going to send a salesperson to my house.” Disarm it explicitly in Message 1. Insider terms: change orders, scope creep, design-build vs. design-bid-build, allowances, punch list.

MESSAGE 1 OF 4 / SEND WITHIN 4-24 HOURS

# Message 1: The Honest Hello

*Acknowledge the cold contact. Promise no salesperson at the door. Give one useful warning.*

**Subject:** A note from [First Name] at [Company] – no salesperson, I promise

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Hi –

You stopped by [Company]'s site recently and didn't get in touch. I want to respect that. The fastest way to lose a homeowner's trust is to follow up a website visit by sending a salesperson to the door, and that's not how we operate. No one from [Company] is going to show up at your house unless you specifically ask us to.

I'm [Name], [role] at [Company]. One note, one useful thing.

The most useful thing I can tell someone in the early phase of a remodel is this: the biggest source of project pain isn't the contractor or the budget – it's decisions made under time pressure. Homeowners who walk in knowing exactly what cabinet style, what countertop, what layout, and what fixtures they want before signing a contract have dramatically smoother projects than homeowners who decide as they go. The decisions don't have to be perfect. They have to be made.

If that's useful, I'll send two or three more notes over the next couple of weeks. Each one short. Each one about something specific that comes up in remodels. Each one written for both people in the household, not just one – most remodel decisions get made by couples and we know it.

If not, unsubscribe is at the bottom.

– [Name]

[Direct line, reply-to]

MESSAGE 2 OF 4 / SEND 3-4 DAYS LATER

## Message 2: The Inside Knowledge

*The costly signal: teach them how to read a contractor proposal — even if they hire someone else.*

**Subject:** The single biggest cause of remodel cost overruns (and how to avoid it)

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[Name],

Following up. If you're researching a remodel, the question you're probably focused on is what the project will cost. The harder question — the one that decides whether the project comes in on budget — is how many decisions get changed after the contract is signed.

Industry data and our own job records line up on this: change orders are the largest single source of cost overruns on remodels. A 10% change-order rate on a \$80,000 kitchen is \$8,000 of unplanned spending. Most of those changes are not catastrophes — they're a different cabinet hardware here, a different tile pattern there, an outlet moved, a fixture upgraded. They add up.

Here's what I'd tell you over coffee even if you never hired us. Before you sign a contract with anyone, do this: walk every room of the project with a notebook and write down every decision, down to switch plate finish. Then sleep on it for two weeks. Then revise the list. The two-week pause kills 80% of the change orders that would otherwise eat your budget. It costs nothing.

Two more pieces, if you want them: [Company]'s realistic project-cost guide for [region] is at [link — not gated]. Our portfolio of completed projects, organized by style and budget range, is at [link]. If your partner is the one focused on the aesthetic side and you're the one focused on the budget (or vice versa), the two links are designed for the two of you.

— [Name]

MESSAGE 3 OF 4 / SEND 5-7 DAYS LATER

# Message 3: The Story

*One real project with a friction moment. The realistic timeline matters.*

**Subject:** The kitchen remodel that almost didn't happen

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[Name],

Wanted to share a project.

A couple I'll call Karen and Dave came to us about a year ago looking at a full kitchen remodel – 1980s layout, dropped soffits, fluorescent box lights, oak cabinets that hadn't been touched since. Karen was ready to move forward. Dave wasn't. Dave's hesitation wasn't about us – it was about every contractor story he'd ever heard. Six-week project that becomes six months. Quotes that grow thirty percent during construction. Workers who don't show up.

What we did differently: we didn't try to sell Dave on us. We sent him three references whose projects had gone wrong – not perfectly – and let him talk to those homeowners directly about what we did when things didn't go to plan. One of those references told him our framing crew had hit a plumbing issue that added a week to her project, and we'd absorbed the cost. Another told him we'd had to redo a tile job because the first install didn't meet our standard, and that hadn't been billed to her either.

Dave called me back two days later and said the thing that won him over wasn't the polished references – it was the imperfect ones. They were real. The project ran nine weeks instead of the eight we'd quoted, came in \$2,400 under budget on materials and \$1,800 over on labor, and netted out close to the original number. Karen sent us photos at six months and the kitchen looked even better lived-in than it had on day one.

I'm sharing this because the question that actually decides who you hire isn't "what happens when everything goes right." It's "what happens when something goes wrong." Ask any contractor for the names of two clients whose projects had problems. The answer (and whether they have one at all) tells you everything.

If you want to walk through your project with someone, reply to this email or call [number]. We can do a 20-minute video call before any in-person visit – nobody comes to the house unless you want them to. One more note from me and then I'll let you go.

– [Name]

MESSAGE 4 OF 4 / SEND 5-7 DAYS LATER

# Message 4: The Clean Close

Three options. The exit is graceful. The questions are theirs to use — with anyone.

**Subject:** Last note from me

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[Name],

Last email unless you want to keep in touch. Three options:

**If you're ready to talk through a project:** Reply to this email or book a 20-minute video consultation at [link]. We do video first, in-person only after both of you (if it's a couple) agree it's worth it. The first conversation is free and doesn't commit you to anything.

**If you want to keep planning at your own pace:** [Company] sends one short note a month with completed projects, real cost ranges in [region], and lessons from jobs in progress. No urgency, no pressure. [link] to subscribe.

**If [Company] isn't the right fit:** Whoever you end up working with, four questions are worth asking before you sign: (1) can I see a project that went wrong, and talk to that homeowner? (2) what's your average change-order rate as a percentage of contract value? (3) will the project manager I'm meeting today be on my project from start to finish, or will it be handed off? (4) what does your contract say about what happens if you go over the timeline you quote? The answers separate real builders from sales operations.

Either way, good luck with the project.

— [Name]

# How to ship this

- **Replace the brackets.** [Company], [Name], [role], [number], [link], [project type] — every placeholder filled, nothing left in template form.
- **Pick a real owner or project lead as the sender.** Not a sales rep on commission. Use a real direct line and a reply-to that reaches them.
- **Render the body as plain text.** HTML email part, slightly large font (~16-17px), warmer-than-white background. Looks typed. Reads typed. People scan plain text differently.
- **Mind the cadence.** Message 1 within 4-24 hours. Message 2 at day 3-4. Message 3 at day 8-11. Message 4 at day 13-18. Then stop.
- **Honor the promise.** If you said “last email,” it's the last email. Reactance kills the relationship faster than silence.