

The 5-email cold sequence that gets replies

The exact structure behind a ~16% reply-rate campaign — opener, bump, asset, nudge, second angle — with send delays and the reasoning behind each step.

Email 1 — Opener

Day 0

Subject: {{companyName}}

I almost just called about this, but figured a short note was less annoying.

I figured you're probably [specific pain, hypothesised — e.g. "losing a few deals a month to slow follow-up"].

If [that were handled for you], would it help?

I put together a short example of what it looks like.

Mind if I show you?

Disarming first line, one hypothesised pain (not a claim), soft permission CTA tied to a real artifact. Subject is just their company name.

Email 2 — Bump

+3 days

Subject: (reply — empty subject)

Is there someone else at {{companyName}} I should be sending this to?

The 'wrong person?' nudge. One line, threaded as a reply. Reopens without re-pitching.

Email 3 — Asset

+4 days

Subject: [Name of your asset]

I put together [the asset — e.g. "a quick teardown of your current setup"], specifically for {{companyName}}.

Want me to send it over?

Offer a tangible, name-droppable thing. The subject IS the asset name. People reply to artifacts, not pitches.

Email 4 — Nudge

+1 day

Subject: (reply — empty subject)

Had a bit of time so I figured I'd follow up.

Did you get a chance to see my note above?

Short, casual, human. References the message above without repeating the offer.

Email 5 — Second angle

+4 days

Subject: (reply — empty subject)

[One observation from a different angle — e.g. "The teams that keep clients longest are usually the ones that over-communicate."]

[Tie it back to what you do.]

Mind if I show you how that works?

Pivot to a fresh angle to catch the people the first pain didn't land with. One observation, one soft question.

The rules that make it work

All follow-ups go in the same thread. Plain text, no images, 0–1 links, no attachments, no signature banners. Swap the bracketed parts for your offer — keep the rhythm. Personalize the company, not the person: a clean {{companyName}} in the subject beats a first name. And a sequence can't outrun a bad list or a bad domain — verify the list and check the sending domain at coldops.io/tools/deliverability-checker before it goes live.

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