



How To Diagnose And Revive A Dead Email Campaign – The Get Clients Series



You can't expect all your cold emails to get results, but you can fine-tune your campaign with some advice from William Wang in this SuperFastBusiness episode.



Will Wang

James: Okay, welcome back to SuperFastBusiness.com. This is Episode 640. Wow, we're getting through it. Welcome back, William Wang from [GrowthLabz](#). How are you?

Will: Good. Thanks, James. How are you ?

James: Going great. We've been getting some terrific responses to this series. And this series is [The Get Clients Series](#). So far, we've talked about [getting clients with cold outreach](#); we've talked about [how to use emails for cold outreach](#); we've talked about [powerful conversations processes for inbound leads](#). And then we've talked about [lead nurturing and handling objections](#).

So today, we're going to delve into what we're going to call response clinic. We're going to talk about what happens when we're sending out our campaign, our emails, but we're not getting the response that we hoped for. And we're going to see what you might do in that regard.

Will: Yep. Awesome. So, it's something that I hear quite often, where people have kind of started trying this for themselves, you know, they might have heard us talking about it, or they might have heard someone else talking about it, and they thought, hey, this sounds pretty good. It's a thing that I can do without having to spend money on ads, it's something that I can get up and running pretty quickly.

So, first of all, if you're taking action, that's fantastic. The number one thing if you take action with the emails in the cold outreach, and you continually refine your process, it might take a little while, but you will eventually get there. You will eventually get some really good emails as well. So, hopefully, what we cover today will kind of help them speed up the process and help them to understand. A few things that they need to look at to debug a campaign if it's not working as well as they hoped it will.

The elements are in place, but...

James: Great. So why don't you paint a picture for us of where would someone be at, what would have had to have already happened to be at the point where the campaign's running and they're starting to, you know, it's that nervous moment, we've all been there, where we set something up and then we turn it on, or we start doing something, and then we wait for the big reaction. I'll never forget when I put up my very first web page, which was with my internet service after I'd just gotten my ClickBank link, this is about 2005, right? I've built this page and I put my links to the product. Once I'd turned the page live, I was ready to be banking all that cash, that droves of traffic were going to come and click on my link and purchase things. And of course, that didn't happen. And it can be very disappointing.

I even remember back, years before that in the dealership, when we were running newspaper advertisements, it was quite a lot of work, getting the artwork set up and thinking about the copy for the ad. And then you get it there, and it's published in the paper. And you open up the paper and you read your own ad, and it was amazing. And then you wait for the phone call and people to walk in the front because the ad's out. And nothing.



I mean, advertising can just be a brutal business if you don't factor your expectations. And especially if you're not that good at it, which we mostly start out at, not being that good. So, what would have had to have happened for us to have had the campaign go live? I guess we've crafted some emails and found out, you know, some people who should be receiving them.

Will: Yeah, exactly. I mean, it's such a good point that you bring up, because they've just got to understand that it's not something that only happens when you're starting out. So even now, when we launch campaigns, whether it's a campaign that we're trying to do for cold emails, or Facebook, or whatever medium that we're using, there are times where even someone who's been in the game for a little bit, we can launch a campaign and just get crickets. It's not something that's a medium problem. And you could be going into every single campaign you do with the expectation that, hey, this might just not work. And if it doesn't work, I'm going to have to have a plan B in place.

So generally, when we get to the point, they would have had an email list, probably have about anywhere between 50 to 100 contacts most of the time. Before, people kind of give up and say, "Hey, this isn't working." They might have only sent to a small of people. And the second part of that is they might have just a few emails in a sequence, and they kind of put together quite roughly what they're going and try to get it out the door as quickly as possible. So, they've written the email in a kind of just a rough fashion as well. So typically, there's a list, and been emails sent to that list.

James: Nice. So, you've got all the key components happening, and you've started out. And then in this scenario, which we're really specifically zooming in on, we're not getting the response we want.

The responses you don't want

So, what would be typical of a response we don't want? I'm guessing there'd be a range between nothing, through to aggressive emails back, you know, unwanted attention. Like, what possibilities are there?

Will: The very worst that can happen is someone sends you a rude and aggressive email back saying, "Don't ever contact me again." But you know, people are actually not too bad when they respond to cold emails. If you've written it correctly, most of them would just say, "Look, I'm not interested, can you please take me off your list?" The other responses you get is people just saying opt out, or just people not replying to the emails, or just marking the emails as spam, which is something that you definitely don't want to have. So, ways around that. But generally, it ranges from not responding all the way to actually responding with a very negative response.

James: Okay, so let's say probably a typical one is you just not getting the response that you want. What are our action steps?

The numbers you've got

Will: Yeah, so with all the technology we've got to use, to send the emails and everything like that, it's actually not that big of a problem to not get responses. But the reason that I say that is because we can look at the numbers. Now, for example, if you're doing a newspaper ad or anything like that, you know, there's such a long turnaround from people reading it, to it coming in, it's really hard to track. But at least with emails, we've got the numbers right in front of us that we can keep referring back to, and figuring out what we need to change to improve the campaign.

So, what we typically look at is a few numbers across the entire process. We look at the open rates of the emails, we look at their reply rates, and then obviously, we look at, from the people who replied, how many are turning into a client.

So, I guess we'll start at the beginning, which is the open rates. And what the open rate can actually tell us is, are our subject lines actually doing a good enough job, or building enough curiosity to get the emails opened?

After we look at the open rates, what we then look at is the reply or your number that we focus on, is the reply rates. So, if we're getting the right number of people opening the emails, and we can dive into all the numbers and the benchmarks and a lot of it later on...

Open rates and what to check for

James: You know that I'm going to ask you, right? Like, we can't just say we check the open rates. I'm going to say, "Will, tell me, what sort of open rate would you want to see?"

And as a side note, I was wondering if, before that, if you even check if there's something wrong with the tech. You know, from time to time, there can be issues with emails not actually going out, like someone did a draft but didn't hit publish, or the date was set in the future, or, you know, links are broken or something like that. Or the deliverability's suffering because the domain is blacklisted somewhere. Maybe you purchased a domain to use for your campaign and the previous owner had run it into the ground. There must be occasionally some tech things that are even more meta than just the subject line.

Will: Yeah, yeah, definitely. I mean, so if they're kind of going through and they've created the campaign and launched it and did not get any open rates, or open rates are low, that can actually tell you, hey, there might be something wrong in the background. We do recommend checking things like, you know, is your domain listed on the spam registers? Are you using the right systems to send it? Because some systems obviously, you know, they are not built for cold email outreach. So, you might even be using the wrong systems. And then other things as well like, you know, what are you putting into the emails that will likely get it to be flagged as spam?

So, a few things to look at before you even send the first emails. But I guess they've kind of gone through the process already, and kind of ignored all that, and got really eager and actually sent emails, but their open rates aren't great. Then, obviously, that's an indicator that there's a lot that we can check out.

And a really great resource to look at in terms of if your email domain is okay or is a server called mail-tester.com. And what it is, is you can send the example or you can send emails to this service, and what it does is, it looks at not only the messaging of the email, but also your domain, just to make sure that, you know, everything's lined up, that you've got all the tech stuff set up correctly, that some of the more technical things, like, some of the things that you might not want to do yourself, you might want to bring someone else in to do, or that background stuff has been set up correctly.

James: So, it's mail-tester.com.

Will: I think it's .com.

Are you using the right system?

James: Cool. That's a good resource. Do you have any examples of systems that are not good for sending cold email? I mean, some of the typical auto responders that we use, they definitely have a checkbox to ask you if you have permission to send emails to the list, and they sometimes have a manual audit process to review your account before they let you send any broadcasts, and you have an example of a system that you do like sending. I think you mentioned in a [previous episode](#) you sometimes set up your own mail server on a similar domain.

Will: Yeah, the systems that we definitely don't send cold emails on are the ones that don't like people sending cold emails through their servers, services like MailChimp, [ActiveCampaign](#). Most of the autoresponders we use, they've been set up to send automated emails to warm subscribers on our list, and not cold prospects that we find in the market, that we're going to send cold emails to. So, it's quite important to understand that there are programs built specifically for cold emails, and programs that are built specifically for warm emails and not this cold process.

So, in terms of the systems that I do recommend, there are two that we use quite often. One of them is QuickMail.io, and the reason why we like QuickMail is a really, really powerful system. It's got some really cool automation, so if a prospect replies in a certain way, or if you know, if a lead comes through and does a certain action, you can actually move them into another automated sequence. So, you can build some really powerful automation in terms of just, if someone replies, you can do different things. But if you want something a little bit simpler, then I'd recommend Mailshake.com, I think it is. And Mailshake is just a super easy system to use. And it was built specifically for the purpose of sending cold emails.

Rates to look for

James: That is a fantastic resource. Thank you. So now you've set up your QuickMail or your Mailshake, you've sent out your broadcast. What sort of open rates are you looking for, as a seasoned pro, to get a vibe on this?

Will: Yeah, so look. So, this is kind of with a caveat there, that this is, you know, our bread and butter, we do a lot of this. But when we send a campaign, what we typically look for, across maybe five to eight emails, as part of the outreach process, is we want to see an open rate of 70 percent and above. So that's across all five emails, which means, if we have a hundred people going through the sequence, 70 of them should really at least open one of our emails, and at least have read what we have to say in one of those emails.

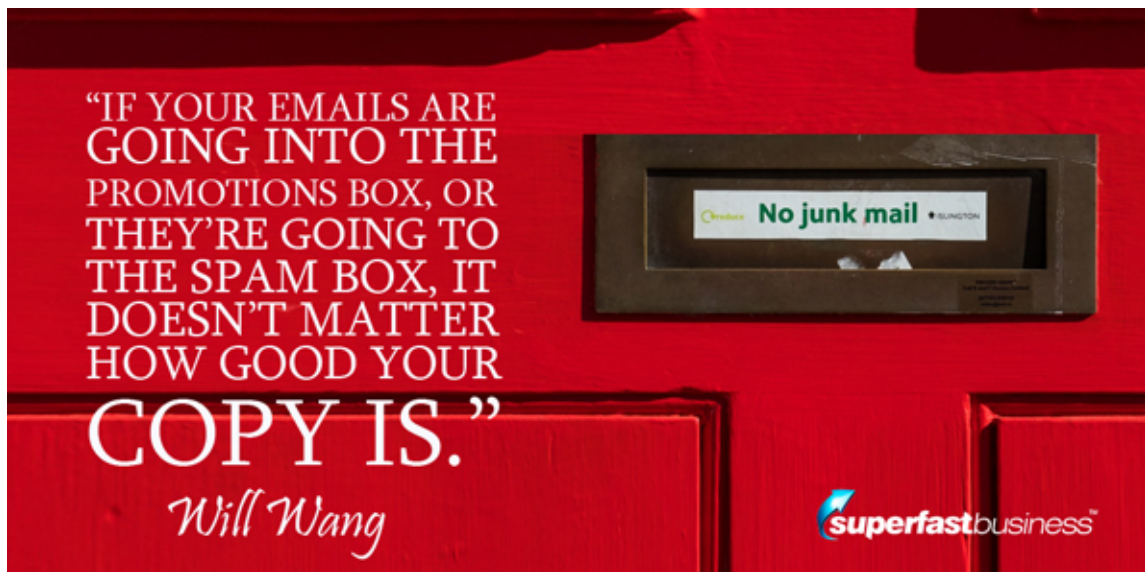
James: Yeah, it's like a much better open rate than most people would be experiencing on their warm, double opt-in house list.

Will: Yeah. I think that the good thing about cold emails for me as well, especially if you're trying to get B2B leads, is that if you got the right , you can try and knock on the door several times. Whereas I think, with the warm list, like, warm lists are definitely really, really good, and I'm not saying you know, don't use warm lists. Because in our business, we obviously love warm lists. We love people opting in so we can share the message with them. But it's a different kind of message, because the warm list that we've got, typically, rather than going direct and asking for the sale, we need to build up that relationship, whereas the cold emails, what we can do is, we can keep trying to knock at the door until they say, "Hey, look, I'm curious." Or they can come back and say, "Hey, I'm actually not curious at all. Stop sending me emails." So, it's kind of one of those things where we're not perfectly trying to burn that bridge, but we're trying to get a super quick response off the cold list, whereas a warm list, we do have to be, not more respectful, but just nurture that experience a little bit gentler.

Tech first, then copy

James: Interesting. Okay, so you've got the email there. So, the first thing you diagnose is a very low open rate. And the fix to that, I imagine, lies somewhere in the realms of copywriting?

Will: Yep. So, I mean, we kind of mentioned before that tech plays a part of it as well. So, if the emails in have a really low open rate across all the emails, then I'd be looking at tech first and foremost, and then I'd be looking at the copy.



So even though we're talking about copy, tech is quite important, because if your emails are going into the promotions box, or they're going to the spam box, it doesn't matter how good your copy is. The emails just aren't going to get read. So, tech is always the first focus, and then we look at the copy that we're writing.

James: Nice, okay. And just on that, you know, people can see more than the subject line when you send an email. They can see the send from address and they can see, often, the first line as a preview. How important is that when it comes to the email?

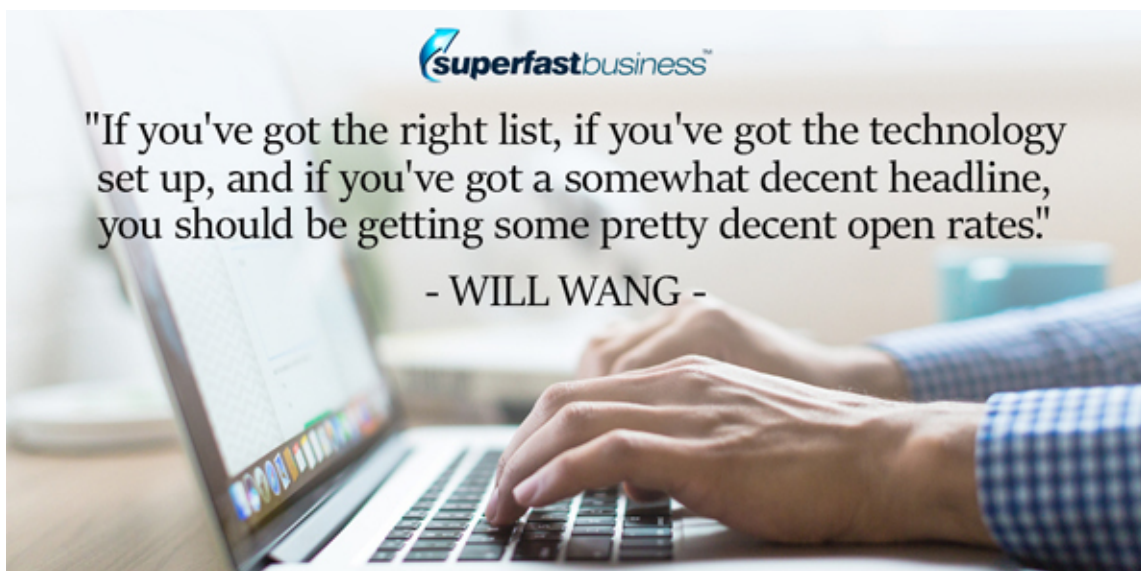
Will: Yeah, so that's actually super important. Because that first line, that preview line, they can have a really big impact on if they're going to open the email or not. People automatically, when they get an email from someone they don't know, they are going to be curious, but they've also got their defenses and their guard up as well. So, if it sounds like someone reaching out from the cold, or it's someone trying to promote something that they don't know about, then automatically, they just go for it and delete the email. So, it's quite important to lead the conversation in the right or to at least open the curiosity with the first line, rather than going straight into the pitch from the first word of the email.

James: Nice. Okay, so what other things can we do to revive a campaign that's not performing to our expectations?

Wrong message, wrong audience?

Will: Yeah, so with a campaign like that, a few things that we kind of look at. The number one thing, and I think this is something that people don't focus on enough, is, have I got the right audience? So, a copy is something to focus on, obviously, that's going to make a difference down the track. But if you're talking to the wrong people begin with, then that's just not going to help you at all. So, if the tech's not set up correctly, people can't see the emails. But if you're sending the wrong emails to the wrong people, well, that's just kind of, you know, you're just shooting yourself in the foot again with that one as well. So, the audience is massively important. And if you're sending emails to things like, info@, contact@, depending on the size of the business that you're trying to prospect into, that might be a big reason why people just aren't responding, because you're getting through to the gatekeepers, and you know, they're allowed to say "No," very easily, but they're not allowed to say "Yes," very often.

James: Right. So, it's a matter of like, screening out.



Will: Yeah, so just making sure that you've got the right list as well.

So, in theory, if you've got the right list, if you've got the technology set up, and if you've got a somewhat decent headline, you should be getting some pretty decent open rates. Anywhere between 50 to 70 to 80 percent, if the opening of the subject line's been written correctly, and everything else is lined up.

Where the most work is

James: So, would you say the target audience is probably the biggest variable where work goes in? When you're dealing on campaigns, say, over at your website at [GrowthLabz.com](https://www.growthlabz.com), is the audience part the part that you're working on the most? Is that the hardest work? Because you've already got a sense of what emails need to be said, I imagined for someone trying to do this cold, like, everything's going to be hard work – finding the right tools, setting up the tech, writing the emails, knowing exactly what to say, and having a strategic campaign as to leading people through the right sequence, is all going to be hard work. But you've got that already as an agency. So, I guess building the audience itself is the highest variable?

Will: Yeah, it is. And, you know, with the emails that we write, we do split test emails, but the emails take a little bit of time to go for it. Because we're not messaging people every day, there's a bit of a gap, and there is a bit of a sequence. So, it's not like we're changing and swapping out emails every single day. So, what we do on a daily basis is building that list, cleaning that list, making sure, you know, it's the right people on there. So that definitely is probably the biggest bunch of work that we have to do. It's something that you've got to keep doing as if you want to fill that pipeline.

James: Gotcha.

Okay, so what's next?

How many are replying?

Will: Cool, so after we know that people are actually opening emails, next thing that we've got to check is how many people are replying to the emails, and what type of replies we're actually getting.

So obviously, you know, if we're looking at the numbers, and again, I'll be more specific with the numbers, what we look at with our campaigns is across the entire sequence, we're looking to get a reply rate of anywhere between 15 to 30 percent on average. And, you know, so as a higher end, we've had campaigns do 60 to 64 percent, I think it was. But if it goes anywhere lower than 10 percent, we're starting to look at the copy going, what's wrong? You know, what are we saying that's not resonating with the market? And, you know, where are we missing the mark in terms of the copy?

So, you know, there's a lot to break down in terms of the body copy as well. The one main thing that I see people get wrong all the time is their call to action, or the is just way too big. So, if you're going in from the cold, trying to prospect into a company, and you're asking them for an hour phone call, people are busy, and time is definitely worth a lot. So, if that's what you're asking for, you're just not going to get the right responses. So, the course of action that actually them to do is probably one of the biggest things that you have to check. Make sure that it's reasonable; make sure that given that they don't know you, and you don't even know if you actually can help them or not, make sure that you take the time to explain why you want the phone call. And also, just to make that call to action as small as possible, to move the relationship in the right direction.

James: Nice. So, the goal is to move the relationship along, and you're getting a nice type of responses. What are the best responses? Like, what would you aim for?

Will: So now this kind of comes back to the product, and how you typically sell the product. Most of the stuff that we work on for ourselves and for our clients, of course, the action is just an initial 15-minute phone call. So that phone call just kind of lets us, you know, scope out if they're the right fit; it gives us enough time to explain a little bit about what we're trying to do as well. And then, if both sides line up and if it sounds good to both sides, then you can go into the phone call. We actually pitch our services, and go to deep dive and help them further.

So typically, the first call to action for us would be a 15-minute call. But we've had campaigns where the first call to action is also to shoot back an email as or to request a case study. It just really depends. And you can have multiple calls to action within a single campaign. So, if your prospects aren't responding to a call or a request for a call, maybe you can change tack and see if they want a case study that you've created.

James: Nice, okay. And again, so if you're getting the wrong feedback, you start to get pushback or nothing, then, you know, okay, I've got to go and do your little checklist: tech, open lines, right audience, these sort of things.

Does it ever work straight off?

How often would you start a campaign and it actually works straight out of the gate?

Will: Yeah, rarely. Rarely is the short answer. With all the campaigns, it does take a little bit of time to refine. Now, typically, when we do send emails, though, we're not sending a huge volume. But the amount that we send, it's enough for us to get some kind of idea of how the entire campaign is going to react within a week or two. So, we'll be sending about 20 to 30 emails a day. So quickly, within the space of a couple of weeks, you should get to look at it and go, have I got any response to that at all? Have people even opened my emails at all? And then you can refine fairly quickly based off that.

But you know, for us, it's not about what the campaign does as soon as we launch it, but it's about what it does in the next 30 days, in the next 60 days. Given that we are going after B2B leads as well, the sale cycle can be a little bit longer, but the leads and the clients going through should be worth a fair bit. So, you know, if we take a long-term approach and look at how can we be a lot better tomorrow than we are today, it doesn't really matter how they connect as soon as we launch it. It just matters how much data we get, and how we can improve it going forward.

James: Will, that is awesome.

In closing...

Any closing advice on this topic? I mean, really, what I've gotten from this is we've got to make sure we got the right system, we're not trying to use a system that's not set up for this; that we can check our emails through that service you've mentioned; you can use a good system for sending out cold email; you want the right subject or the right first line, etc. We want to move people through a process.

If we're not getting the opens, if we're not getting their responses, then we have a things like (assuming all the other stuff's in place), we check the market that we're sending it to. And we expect that there's going to be a little bit of a learning curve. And of course, if you need help with all this, I know you've been looking after a bunch of my clients over there at [GrowthLabz.com](https://www.growthlabz.com), and they're already starting to get their leads through, which is very exciting for everybody. So, thank you so much for coming on the show and sharing these tips. Final words?

Will: Yeah, my absolute pleasure, James. Final words , done is better than perfect. You know, if you've been sitting on an email sequence for a while, or if you're just not if you're a little bit gun-shy to pull the trigger, look, I completely but is actually better than perfect. Get your message out into the market and see what happens. You might just surprise yourself. You might just have a campaign that at least brings a few leads back, and you can improve further. So, you know, if you've been sitting on it for a while, hey, just go ahead and do it.

James: Thank you so much, Will. We'll speak to you on the next one.

Will: Yeah, catch you then.



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