SOP: Find Prospect Contact Details for Link Outreach

Use this process to build a targeted list of people to reach out to for building high-quality links that boost search rankings and domain authority.

Goal

The goal is to identify:

- Who to contact within an organization
- How to best reach them
- What to say to them (i.e. what link building tactic you'll be using)

Why It's Important

Building high-quality links helps improve your website's authority and organic search rankings.

- Backlinks remain one of the most influential factors for SEO success.
- Effective prospecting ensures outreach efforts focus on relevant, high-impact opportunities.
- Personalized outreach increases the chances of earning backlinks.
- Building relationships with the right people can lead to ongoing collaborations.

Tools to Use

- Ahrefs' Site Explorer
- Ahrefs' Link Intersect Tool
- Hunter.io (for email lookup)
- Link Prospecting Template: [T] Ahrefs Link Prospecting Template // MAKE A COPY

When It's Done / Frequency

Perform prospecting at the start of every new link-building campaign or quarterly for ongoing efforts.

Who Does This

Link Building Specialist or Outreach Specialist

Prerequisites or Requirements

- Access to Ahrefs' Site Explorer and Link Intersect Tool.
- A list of pages and or websites you want to get links on.
- A clear understanding of your link-building goals.
- Access to your company's version of the Link Prospecting Template.
- Your brand's outreach email templates, tailored to different tactics.

Steps to Follow

1. Confirm the websites and pages you're aiming to build links on

Before you start finding specific prospects to reach out to, it is ideal to have a list of websites or specific pages on which you want to build links.

You can use many methods to find these, including:

- Competitor link gap analysis
- Broken link building
- Podcast link building
- Skyscraper link building
- Linking unlinked brand mentions
- Guest posting
- Resource page link building

These website and page targets should also be contained in a list, ideally in a copy of the Ahrefs Link Prospecting Template.

If you do not already have this set up, take a moment to make a copy now.

Go through the above processes to find websites and pages you'll be targeting in your link outreach campaigns. Add these to the spreadsheet.

Status	Link Type	Priority	Owner	Page / Site
To Outreach	Citation / Business Profile	High	Jane	prospect1.com
To Outreach	Guest Post	Medium	John	prospect2.com
To Outreach	Link Insert	High	Olivia	prospect3.com

2. Find out who is the best person to contact for each website

Once you have your list of website and page targets you're aiming to build links on, you'll need to research who to contact.

If you have specific pages…

Click on the URL for each page and look for the author of the post.



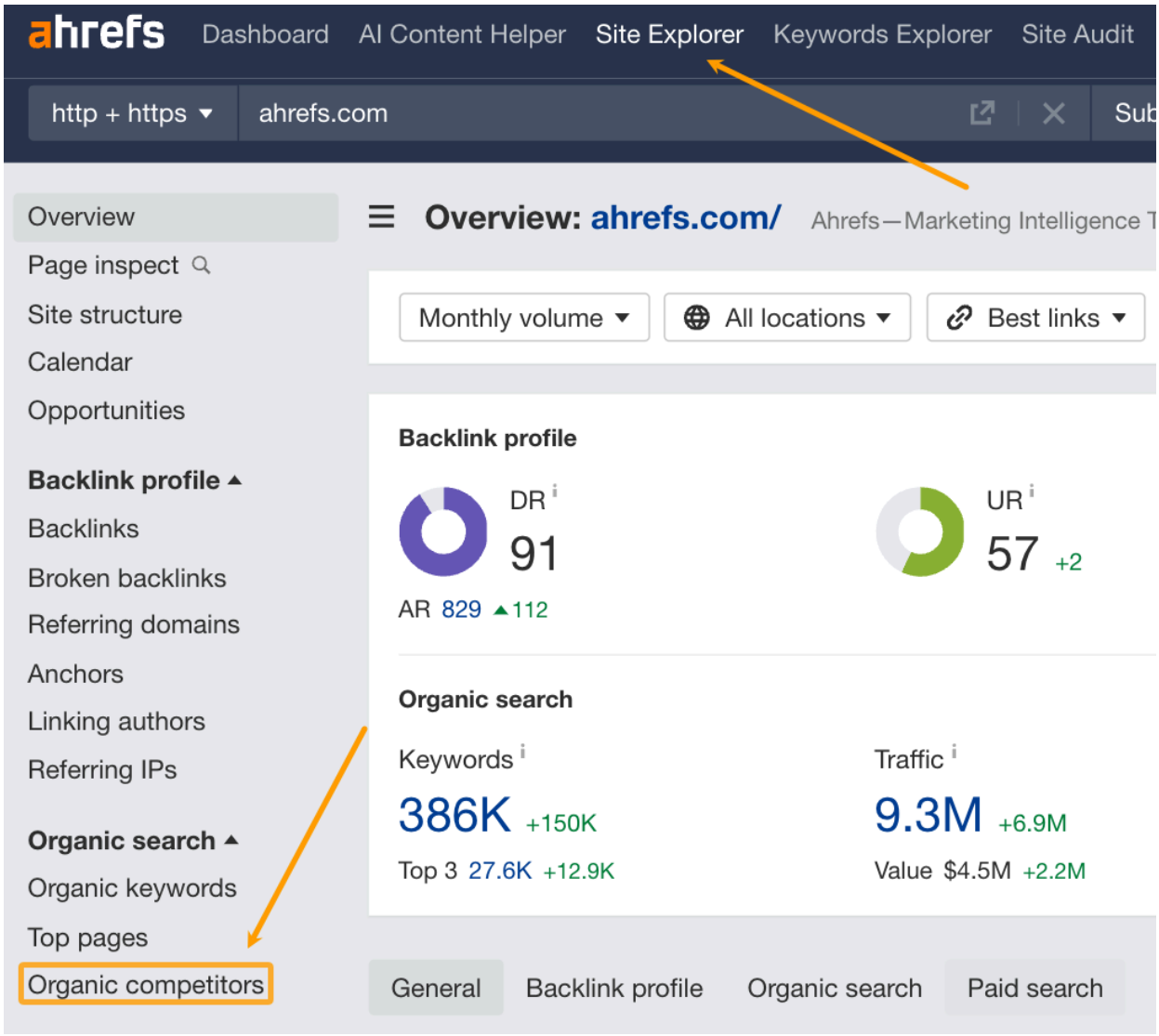
Add their name to the spreadsheet under “Contact Name”.

If you only have a list of target domains…

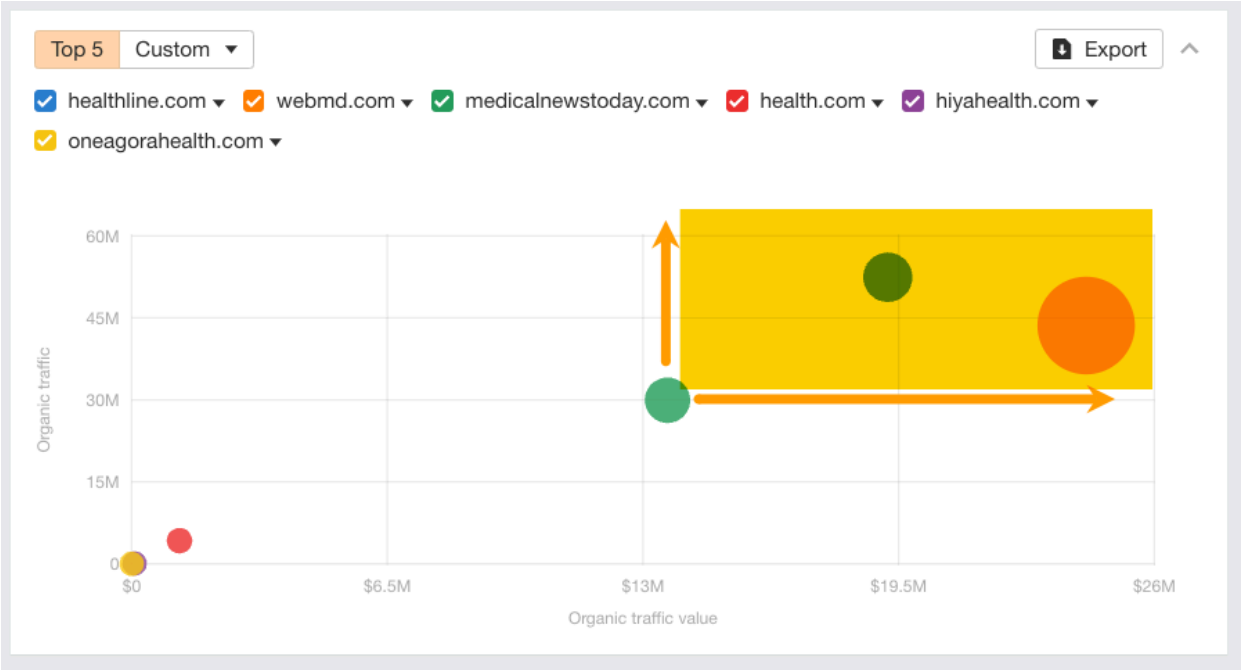
Knowing which domains to target is very helpful but also difficult to know who to reach out to and what to say to them.

The easiest way to overcome this hurdle is to check out your top competitors in Ahrefs’ Site Explorer.

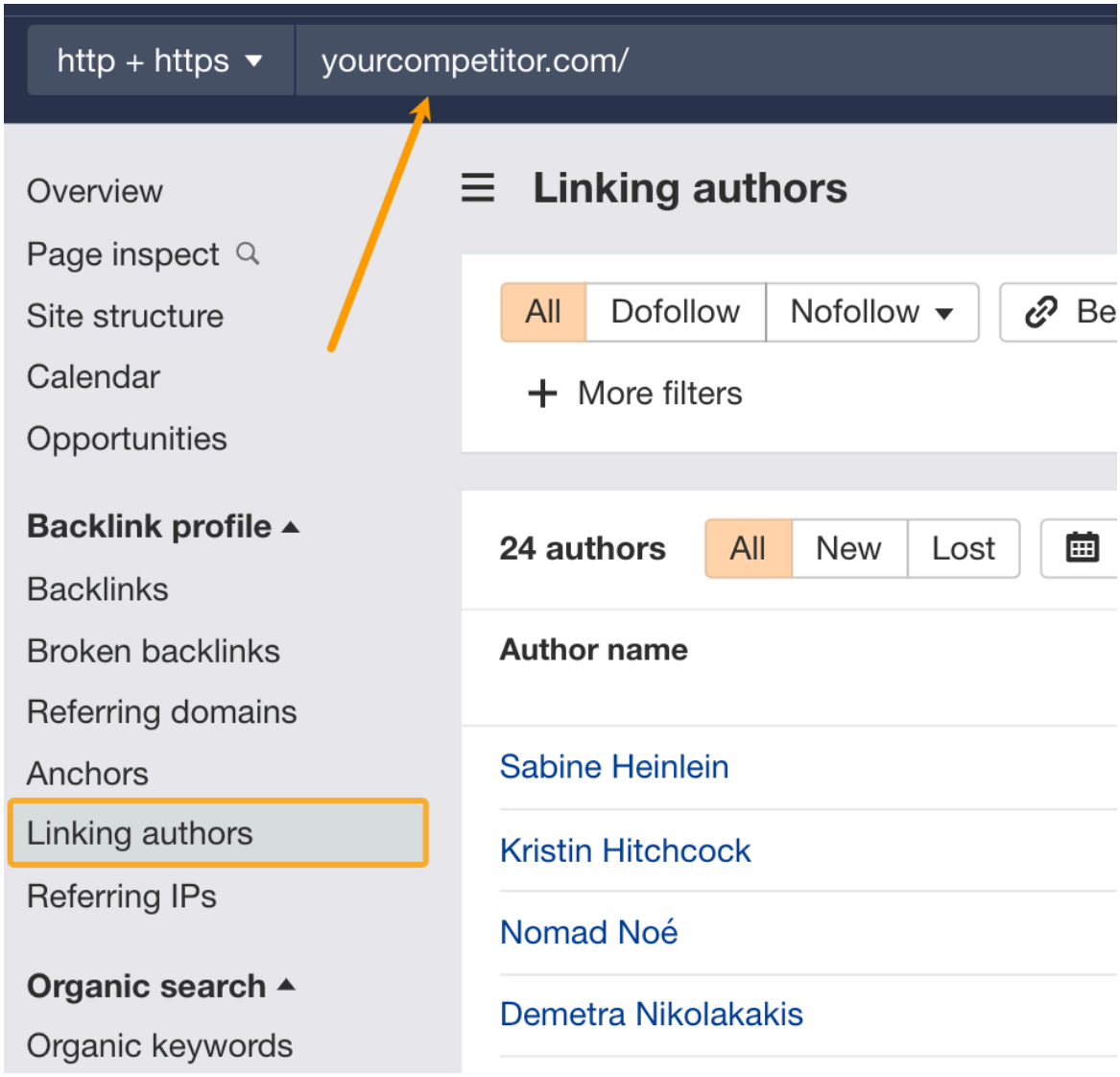
If you don’t already have a list of competitors, enter your website and navigate to Organic competitors.



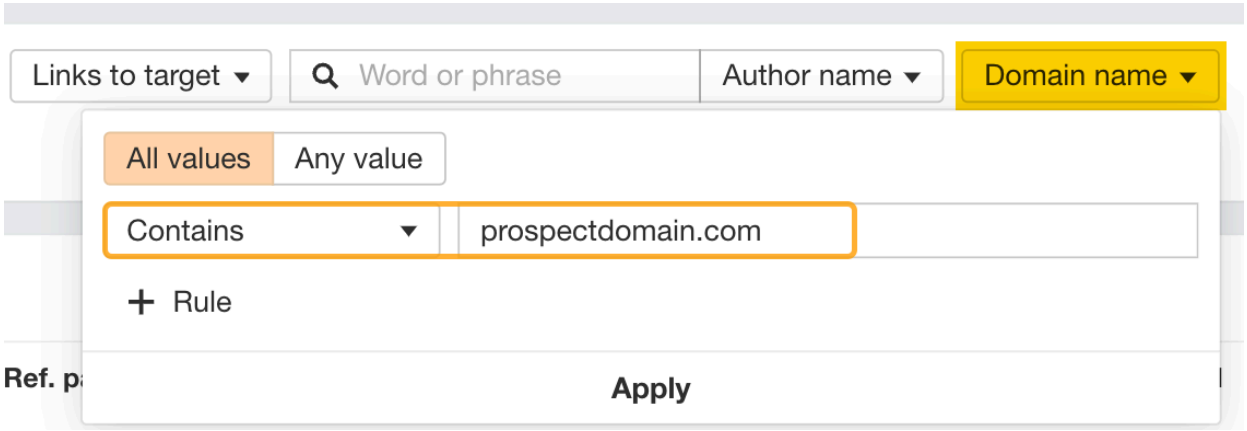
Make a list of each competitor who is outperforming your site either because they are higher (have more traffic) or further to the right (their traffic is worth more).



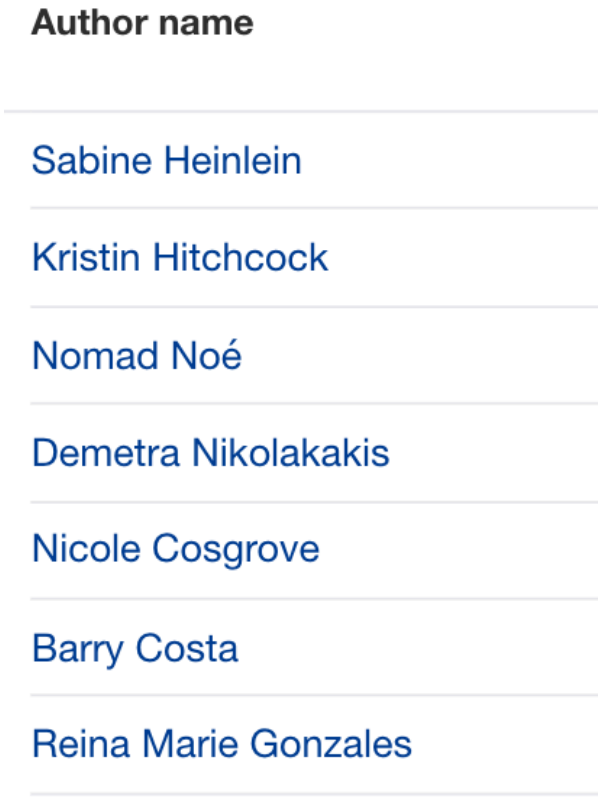
Then, search each competitor who is outperforming your site in Site Explorer. Navigate to the Linking Authors report.



Filter for the domains you're targeting.



You'll be left with a list of people who write for the websites you're targeting. They've linked to your competitors, so it's likely they may link to you as well.



This means:

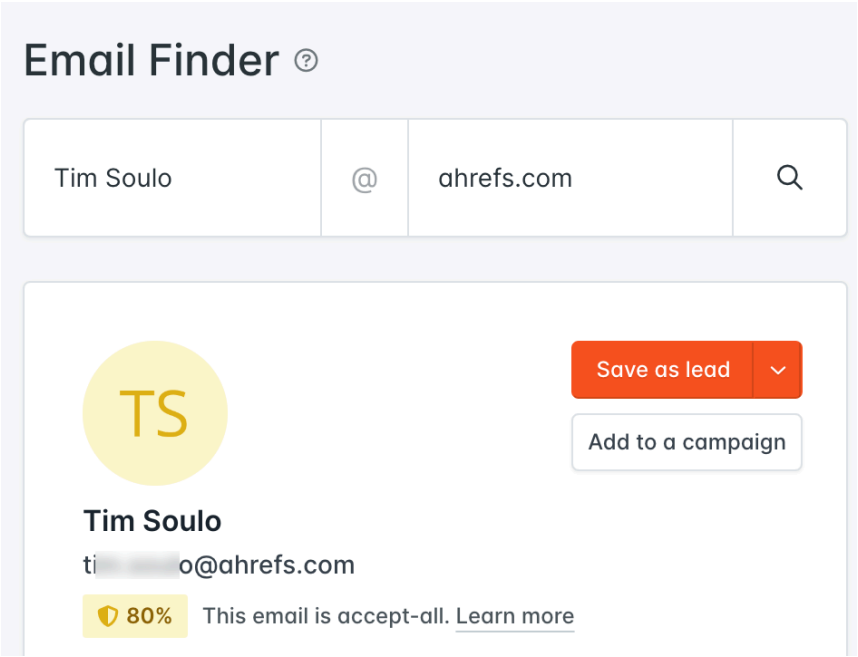
- They're up to speed with your industry
- They likely have already heard of your brand
- They're more than likely open to a partnership with you
- They may be able to feature you on more than one site (if they write for multiple publications)

Add their name to the spreadsheet under "Contact Name".

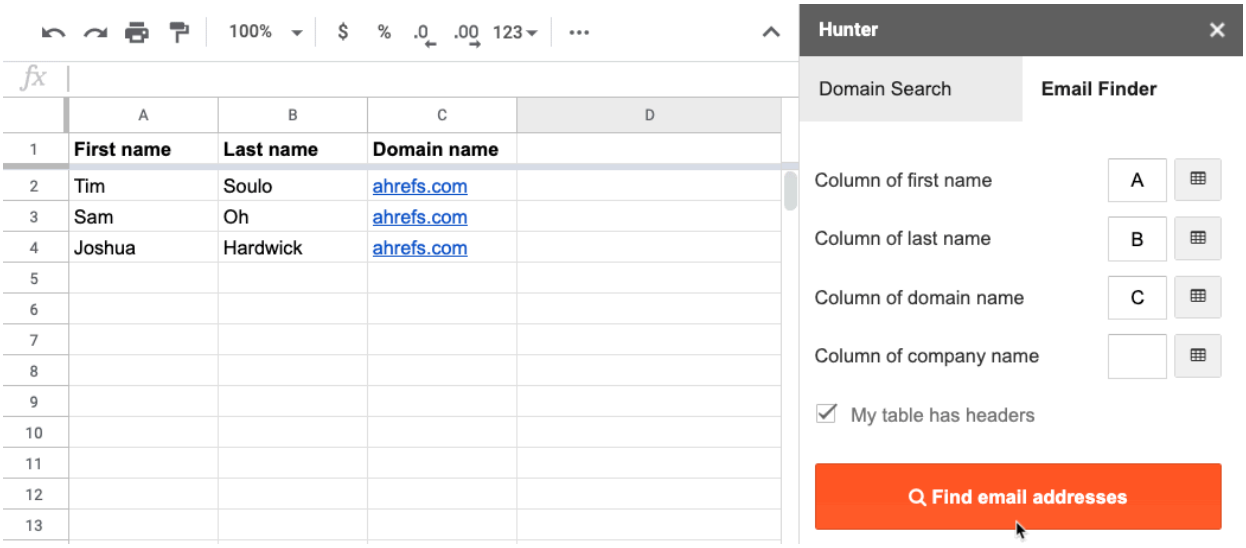
3. Get their contact details

Once you know which specific people you'll be reaching out to, you'll need to find their email addresses.

You can use tools like Hunter.io to help find their email address. Just enter their first name, last name and the domain of your target prospect. Hunter will find their email address for you:



To prevent tearing your hair from searching for hundreds of emails one-by-one, most email lookup tools allow you to upload a CSV list of names and domains. Hunter also has a Google Sheets add-on to make this even easier.



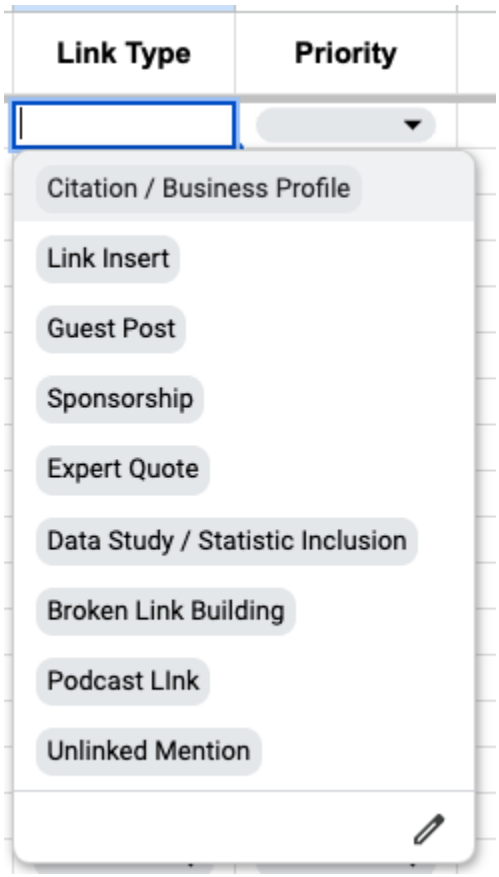
4. Decide on a link building tactic and craft a personalized email

Now you know who to reach out to and how you'll contact them.

The last step is deciding what you'll propose to them in your outreach campaign.

On some websites, offering to write a guest post makes sense, but on others, it doesn't. So, you'll need to assess potential angles that can work for each prospect.

That's what the "link type" column is for in the Link Prospecting Template:



- **Citation / Business Listing**: If the website is a directory-style site, choose this option. There's no need to outreach, usually you can just create an account.
- **Link Insert**: If you're aiming to get a link in an existing post, choose this option. The goal is to reach out to the author and ask them to add your link.
- **Guest Post**: If the website accepts content contributions, this is a good tactic to consider. You'll need to create the content, add your link in it, and they'll publish it.
- **Sponsorship**: If you find authors who frequently cover your industry, mention competitions, or have a decent social following, consider sponsoring their content in exchange for mentions.

- **Expert Quote**: If any of the people on your list are news journalists, this might be an easy way to get your foot in the door and be featured as an expert in their stories.

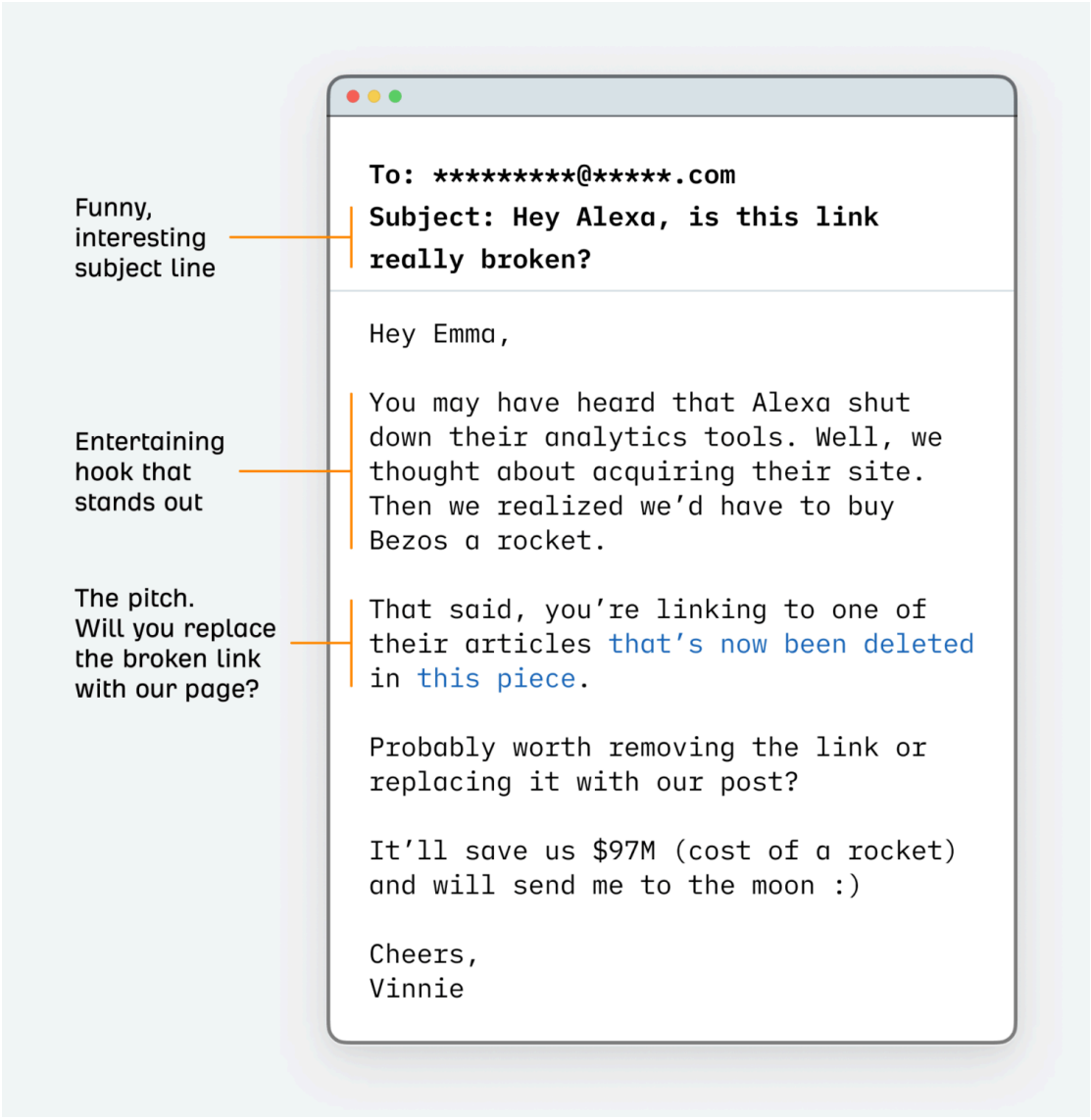
- **Data Study / Statistic Inclusion**: If you have any interesting data to share that can replace outdated statistics in posts, consider this tactic instead.

- **Broken Link Building**: If you notice any links on the website that are going to pages that no longer exist, you can use this tactic to ask editors to replace the broken link with yours instead.

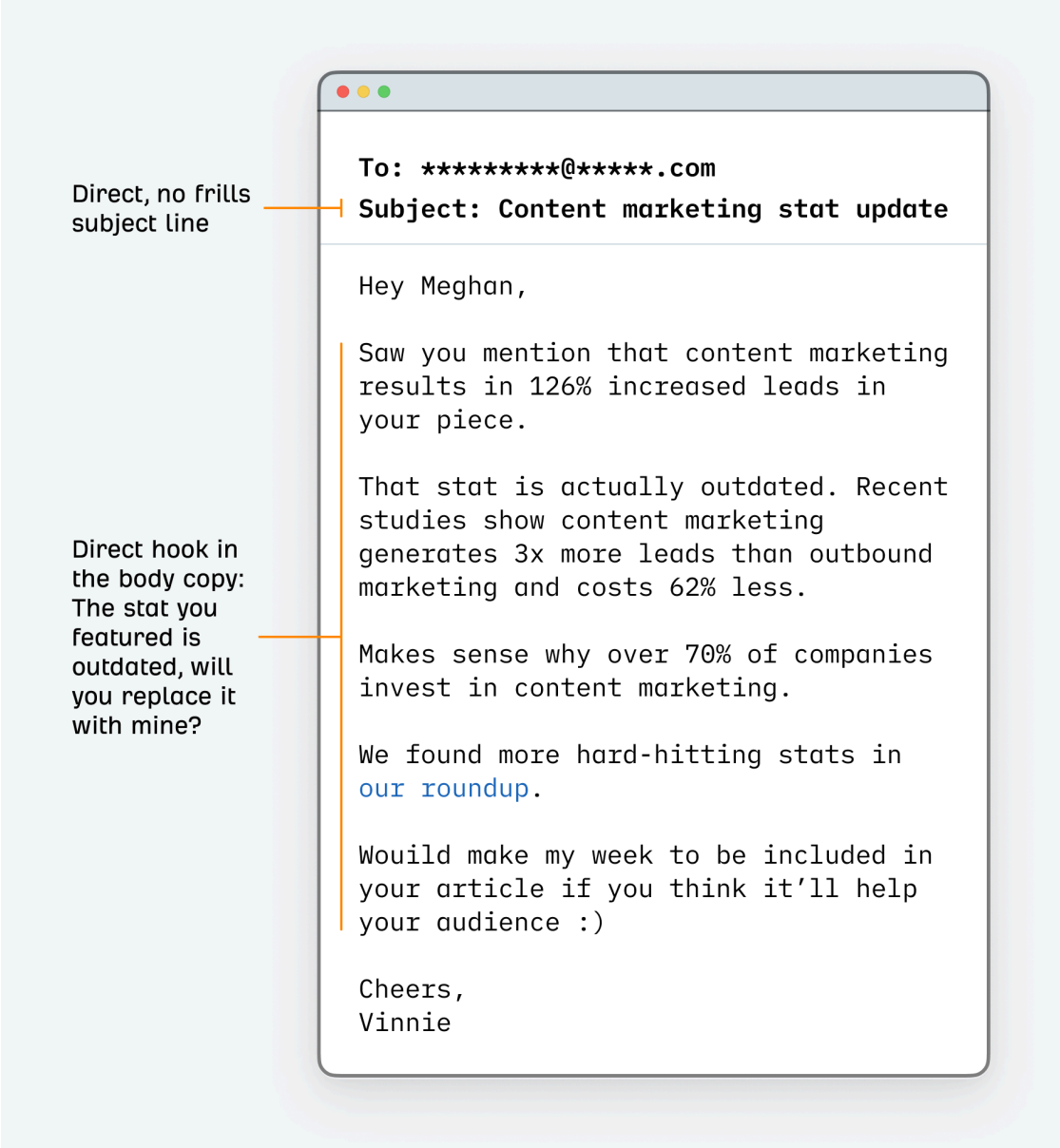
- **Podcast Link**: If the people you add to your list for outreaching are affiliated with any podcasts, consider asking to be a guest. Include a link to your site in the show notes.

- **Unlinked Mentions**: Only use this tactic if you've already been mentioned in content, but the author did not link to your website. Many authors will add the link if you ask nicely.

Each of these tactics requires a customized email template. For example, here's an example using the broken link building tactic:



And another using the statistics / data study tactic:

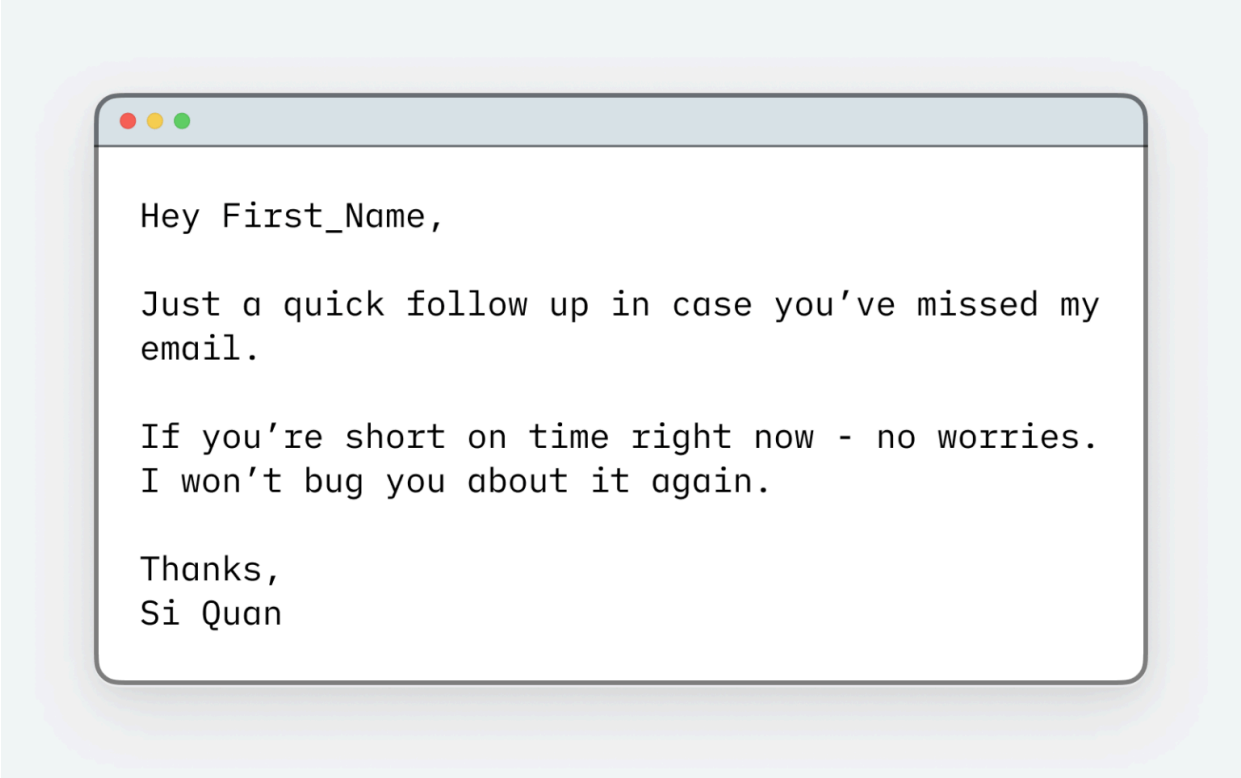


It's ideal to use the templates your brand may already have set up.

5. Follow up once, if you don't hear back

People are busy, and their inboxes are crowded. They might have missed your email or read it and forgot.

Solve this by sending a short, polite follow-up.



One is good enough. There's no need to spam the other person with countless follow-up emails hoping for a different outcome. If they're not interested, they're not interested.

6. Track progress in the Link Prospecting Template

As things change or you receive new updates, make sure to update your team's copy of the Link Prospecting Template.

The columns you'll need to update regularly include:

- **Status**: So everyone knows where each link is in the outreach process.
- **Owner**: Assign a team member to be responsible for sourcing that link.
- **Link Price**: Update this column after negotiating with the website owner.
- **1st Contact Date**: Add the date you first reached out.
- **Follow-Up Date**: Add the date you followed up with the prospect.
- **Notes**: Add anything your team needs to know about each link target.