JobHacki
OPPORTUNITY GUIDE

⚡ Premium Action Guide

Build an AI Cold Email System That Books Calls

Design, automate, and scale a value-first cold email engine that finds leads, personalizes at scale, and turns replies into booked calls.

📌 **Updated for 2026** 📄 **5–10%** Target reply rate 'golden zone' (source-reported)

📣 **@jobhacki** · JobHacki Community

🚀 **Start Fast**
Clear first steps you can take this week.

📋 **Real Sources**
Built from people who actually did it.

💰 **Honest Numbers**
Source-reported pay, costs, and risks.

Get the Full Guide Vault →

🔒 Includes checklists, scripts & source-backed insights

YOU WILL LEARN

- ☑ What you'll build
- ☑ Platforms & tools
- ☑ Step 1 — 🎯 Pick one niche and one outcome
- ☑ Step 2 — 📐 Map your funnel and KPIs
- ☑ Step 3 — 🧭 Build a targeted lead list
- ☑ Step 4 — ✉️ Verify emails and enrich context

▸ MODULE 01

What you'll build

An end-to-end AI-powered cold email system: source leads, enrich them, craft personalized icebreakers at scale, send plain-text campaigns, handle replies instantly, and book calls. You'll ship fast with ready-made prompts, objection handlers, and automations that grow from outbound to inbound over months.

Use primary platforms for sending and orchestration, add lightweight personalization with AI, and track the right metrics to improve week over week.

1. Lead list → AI icebreakers → plain-text campaigns
2. Make/n8n/Zapier orchestrations with Slack alerts
3. Omnichannel touchpoints + Loom micro-demos
4. Speed-to-lead routing that books calls in minutes
5. Retainers from one-time wins; grow to inbound

▸ MODULE 02

Platforms & tools

Lead & Outreach — 1 free · 7 paid

Instantly · Apollo · LinkedIn · Loom · Upwork · Fiverr · Smartlead · Cal.com

Website Builders

0 free · 8 paid

GoHighLevel · Lovable · Wix · Squarespace · Webflow · Bolt · WordPress · Hostinger

AI Models

0 free · 5 paid

OpenAI · Claude · ChatGPT · Gemini · Anthropic

Dev & Hosting

0 free · 6 paid

GitHub · VS Code · Supabase · Cursor · Replit · Vercel

Automation

1 free · 3 paid

Make.com · n8n · Zapier · Apify

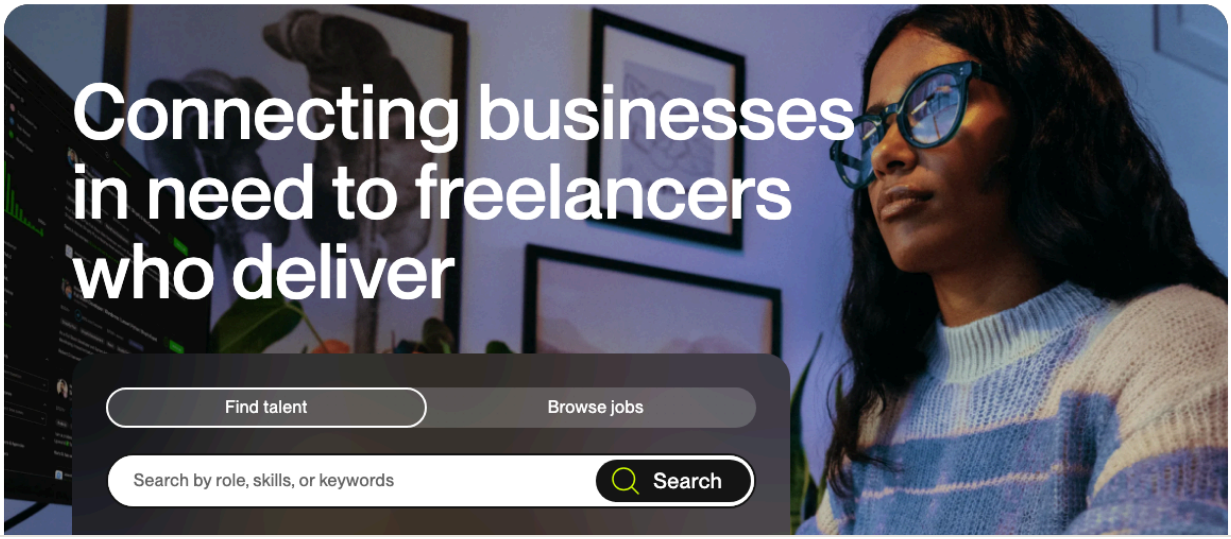
▸ MODULE 03

Step 1 — 🎯 Pick one niche and one outcome

Choose a single buyer type and a single painful problem your emails will solve (e.g., “never miss another after-hours call” for local services). Avoid low-ticket, low-call-volume niches.

First-week sprint: Day 1 pick niche; Day 2 find 20 businesses with expensive problems; Day 3 write audit questions; Day 4 reach out to 100; Day 5 book your first audit call.

> **Tip**
>
> Don’t pitch a menu of services. One simple, money-tied promise is clearer (e.g., speed-to-lead or review generation). Your brain will resist narrowing—lean into it.



Upwork — where you'll do this

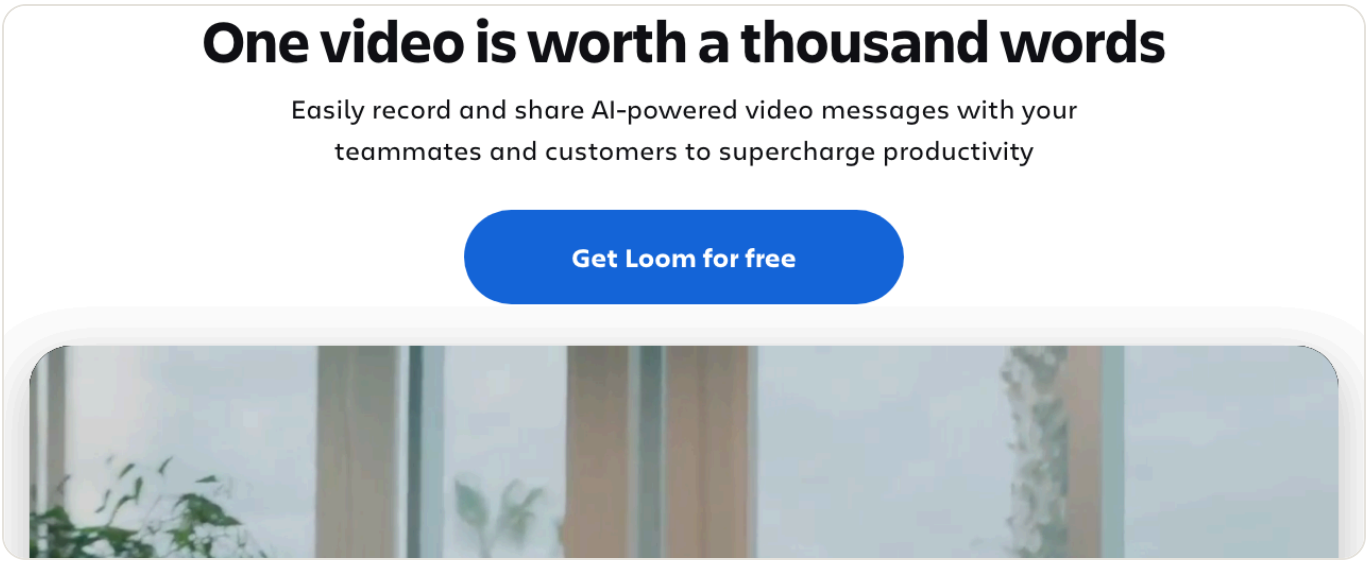
▸ MODULE 04

Step 2 — 📐 Map your funnel and KPIs

Your system: value-first email + optional Loom → speedy reply handling → booked audit. Build a single landing page (use GoHighLevel) with one CTA to book.

Track open, reply, positive reply, booked calls, cost per lead, conversion to deal, and retention. Reply rate benchmarks: <2% bad, 2–5% needs work, 5–10% strong, >10% excellent (source-reported).

> **Tip**
>
> The single biggest open-rate driver is your From name—use a recognizable human name. Keep emails plain text to avoid HTML formatting glitches showing as one line.



Loom — where you'll do this

▸ MODULE 05

Step 3 — 🧭 Build a targeted lead list

Choose your data source by market: LinkedIn-based tools for white-collar B2B; Google Maps for local SMBs. Enrich with reviews, website link, and recent activity.

Create a Google Sheet with columns: URL, first name, last name, email, company, website, headline, location, phone, multi-line icebreaker. Add lead ID, query, category, address, owner/team contacts, enrichment status if you operate multiple sources. Consider a VA for sourcing; it’s often cheaper than fully-automating at the start.

LEAD RESEARCH EXTRAS

Meta Ad Library — Find advertisers to target with conversion-focused offers. ↗

> **Tip**
>
> Filter out big/recruiter listings by excluding URLs containing 'linkedin' or 'careers.linkedin.com', and limit company size. Look for signals like few/no recent reviews or missing booking links.

▸ MODULE 06

Step 4 — ✉️ Verify emails and enrich context

Find a valid email per contact. Use provider verification endpoints or pattern matching (firstname.lastname@, f.lastname@, first@). Store a boolean success flag and the verified address.

Scrape or snapshot the prospect's site to extract services, reviews, FAQs, and key gaps (e.g., no online booking). For dynamic sites, use a headless scraper; simple HTTP often returns blank content due to JavaScript rendering.

> **Tip**
>
> Most people follow standard email naming conventions—try multiple combos before discarding a lead. If no site text is parsable, send a templated but still personalized fallback using the lead's name and phone.

▸ MODULE 07

Step 5 — 🧠 Create AI prompts for personalization

Use AI for the first 1–2 lines (icebreaker) and specific variables, not the whole email. Feed compressed website or profile text and instruct the model to return strict JSON your automations can parse.

Prefer GPT-4.1 or Claude for heavier reasoning; cheaper models are fine for short merges. Add tone controls to avoid over-friendly fluff.

PROMPT — LINKEDIN ICEBREAKER (JSON ONLY)

```
System: You write 1-line, Spartan icebreakers from LinkedIn profiles. Avoid
generic company facts; find personal nuggets (podcasts, background, side
projects).
User: Profile text:
[PROFILE_TEXT]
Output JSON only:
{
  "icebreaker": "[12-18 words, specific, casual, no emojis, no fluff]",
  "reason": "[what you referenced, 6-12 words]"
}
```

PROMPT — WEBSITE-AWARE FIRST LINE (JSON ONLY)

```
System: Create a crisp icebreaker from site content to open a sales email.
Avoid superlatives.
User: Company: [COMPANY]. URL: [URL]. Compressed site text:
[COMPRESSED_TEXT]
Output JSON only:
{
  "icebreaker": "[1 sentence, ~18 words, mentions a specific finding]",
  "gap": "[specific problem spotted, 3-6 words]"
}
```

PROMPT — SUCCINCT PERSONALIZED REPLY

```
Write a short, clear reply that:
- Greets [FIRST_NAME]
- References [COMPANY] and [UNIQUE_VALUE]
- Suggests a 15-min audit with [BOOKING_LINK]
Max 70 words. Tone: calm, practical, not salesy.
```

PROMPT — UNSTICK EMAIL IDEAS

```
Write me a high-converting email in the style of Adam Airheart using proven
marketing psychology. Keep it conversational, story-driven, and designed to
educate, build trust, and lead naturally into my offer. Before writing, ask me
2-3 specific questions about my business, offer, and target market.
```

> **Tip**
>
> AI is flexible—add 'bumpers.' Specify JSON schema, length, tone, and forbidden phrases. Personalize 10–20% of the email; let templates handle the rest for scale.

▸ MODULE 08

Step 6 — 🔗 Orchestrate the workflow

Automate: pull a lead row → find/verify email → scrape/enrich → generate icebreaker JSON → assemble email → push to sending platform → log to Sheet/CRM → Slack alert. Add sleeps to space events.

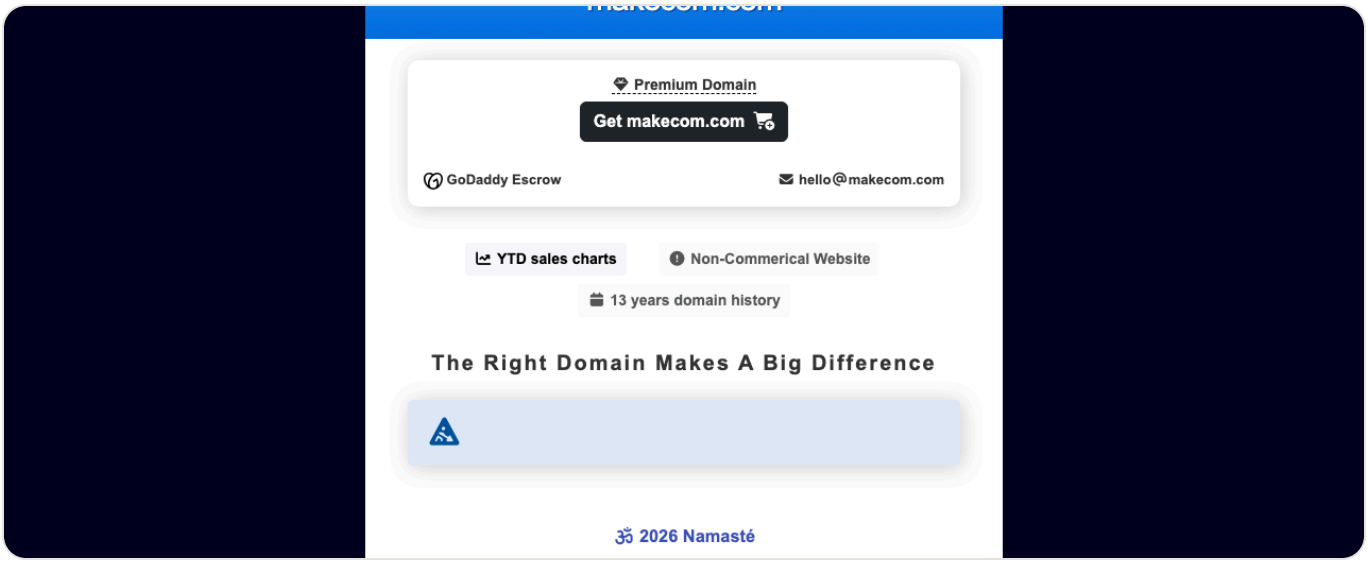
Build two paths: (A) send to email finder and await callback; (B) on verified email, enrich with AI and handoff to your sender.

Platform	What to do in this step
Make.com	Google Sheets Watch → Email Finder API (HTTP) → appify scrape (HTTP) → OpenAI/Claude (JSON) → format plain-text email → POST to Instantly/Apollo/GHL → Slack → Update row. Insert Delay nodes between sends.
n8n	Cron/Spreadsheet Trigger → HTTP nodes for verification/scrape → AI node for icebreaker → Switch/IF on verification boolean → Email platform node → Slack node → Set row state. Use Split In Batches for pacing.

Platform	What to do in this step
Zapier	New Row Trigger → Webhooks (verification, scrape) → Formatter (JSON) → OpenAI step → Instantly/Apollo/GHL action → Slack action → Update Row. Add Delay After Queue for spacing.

Tip

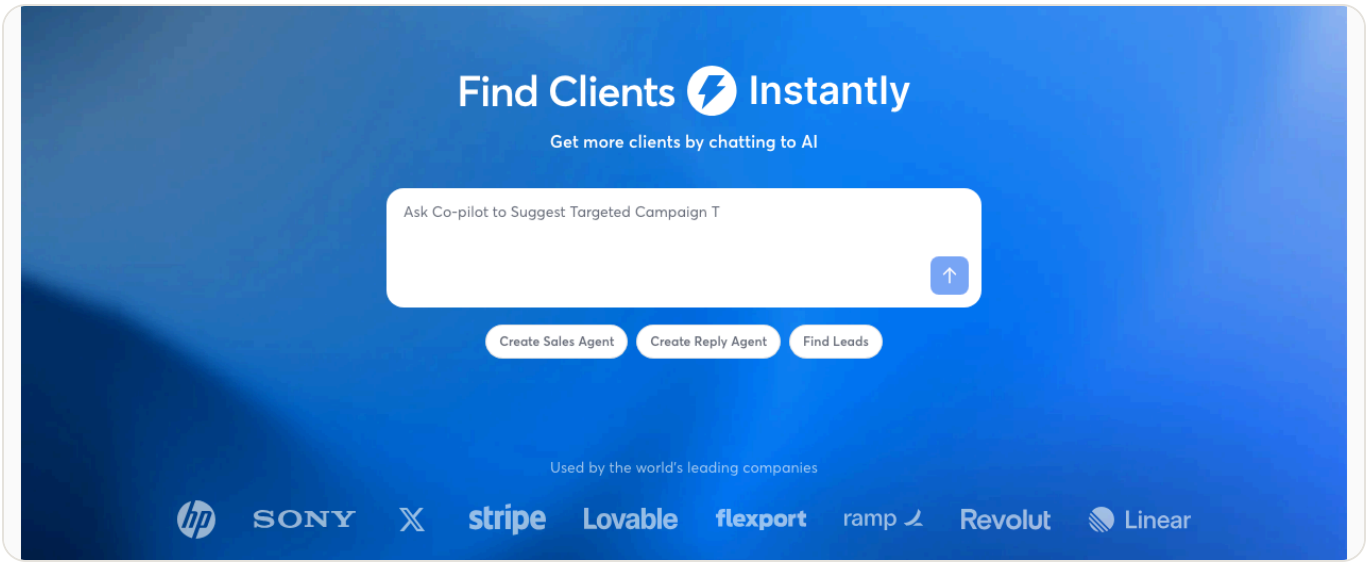
Starting with Make.com typically yields faster revenue due to lower technical overhead (source-reported). Add delays between emails to reduce blocks and warm up domains gradually.



make.com — where you'll do this



Google Sheets — where you'll do this



Instantly — where you'll do this

▸ MODULE 09

Step 7 — 🔐 Connect Gmail/API with OAuth 2.0

Register an OAuth app, add client ID/secret, authorization and token URIs, set the redirect to your automation platform's OAuth URL, and enable scopes (e.g., Gmail). Publish your OAuth

app to use in production.

For Gmail API: create a Google Cloud project, configure OAuth consent screen, publish, and create OAuth client credentials using your platform's redirect URL.

WHERE TO SET THIS UP

Google Cloud Console — Create project, enable Gmail API, OAuth credentials. ↗

> **Tip**
>
> 'Unknown mailbox' errors usually mean the account isn't connected or the folder label is wrong. Re-auth with the right mailbox and specify the correct folder in your node.

▸ MODULE 10

Step 8 — 📨 Set up sending, domains, and sequences

Use dedicated sending domains, authenticate, and rotate multiple inboxes (horizontal scale) at modest daily volumes. Keep sequences plain text with short, direct copy.

Do not use newsletter tools (e.g., Mailchimp/Constant Contact) for cold—many prohibit scraped or purchased lists and may suspend accounts.

Platform	What to do in this step
Instantly	Connect multiple domains/inboxes, set sending limits, warm them, create a sequence with fallbacks, auto-stop on reply, and enable per-lead custom fields for icebreakers.
Apollo	Import lists or build from Apollo, verify emails, create sequences with dynamic fields, set rules for time windows and reply handling, and enable meeting link personalization.

Platform	What to do in this step
GoHighLevel	Create a pipeline + campaigns with email/SMS steps, add dynamic fields, throttle sending, set stop-on-reply, and connect calendars for booking.

> **Tip**
> Use many mailboxes each sending fewer emails rather than one mailbox blasting. Rename the From name to a recognizable human. Test on yourself to verify formatting.

▸ MODULE 11

Step 9 — ✍️ First-touch email templates (by use-case)

LOCAL SERVICES — AFTER-HOURS MISSED CALLS

```
Subject: Quick win for [COMPANY]

Hey [FIRST_NAME], noticed you might be missing leads after hours
(nights/weekends). I help [NICHE] book more appointments automatically with an
AI receptionist + follow-up—no new staff.

I recorded a 30-sec demo for [COMPANY]. Want me to send it over?
```

GENERAL — SPECIFIC PROBLEM SPOTTED + SHORT DEMO

```
Subject: [COMPANY] — quick idea

Hey [FIRST_NAME], I was looking at [COMPANY] and saw you might be leaking leads
due to [SPECIFIC_PROBLEM: slow follow-ups/no reviews/unanswered calls]. I set
up an AI system that handles [SPECIFIC_PROBLEM] for teams like yours.

Made a short demo for [COMPANY]. Want the link? Takes ~30 sec.
```

NO WEBSITE — BUILT YOU A STARTER

Subject: Built this for [COMPANY]

Hey [FIRST_NAME], I tried to find your website when searching for [NICHE] in [CITY] but couldn't. Bit out of the blue—I went ahead and built a quick version optimized for calls. Okay to send the link to check it out?

HAS WEBSITE — QUICK IMPROVEMENT

Subject: Small tweak for more calls

Hey [FIRST_NAME], I came across your site—great reviews by the way. I found a few things likely costing leads, so I mocked up a version optimized for calls and bookings. Okay to send the link?

HEALTHCARE/DENTIST ANGLE

Subject: Turn website visitors into booked patients

Hey [FIRST_NAME], I help [SPECIALTY] turn website visitors into booked appointments—without increasing ad spend. Open to a quick example for your office?

FREELANCER ANGLE — ATTRIBUTION + FREE SAMPLE

Subject: [ROLE] help w/ [RESULT]

[WHY I'm reaching out/attribution]. I'm a [ROLE] and can handle [SPECIFIC TASK]. I'll create a free sample/mini-audit so you can judge fit—no strings. If it's useful, happy to continue. Open to a quick look?

AI RECEPTIONIST — 10-MINUTE INSTALL PITCH

```
Subject: Never miss another call

Hey [FIRST_NAME], noticed after-hours calls may be going to voicemail. I can
add an AI receptionist that answers every call, books appointments
automatically, and protects every lead. It takes ~10 minutes to set up. Want me
to add it for [COMPANY]?
```

Tip

The bar for value keeps rising. Attach a short Loom demo or actionable audit snippet.

Personalize the opener with your AI icebreaker; keep the rest templated and tight.

▸ **MODULE 12**

Step 10 — 🚀 Optional ‘performance-style’ offers (example-only)

PERFORMANCE-STYLE SUBJECT OPTIONS

```
Use responsibly; edit for compliance and accuracy.

1) Subject: I will get you [X] booked meetings in [Y] days or you don’t pay
Body: I’ll generate [X] appointments in [Y] days or you don’t pay.

2) Subject: I will help you close $[AMOUNT] in [Y] days or I’ll keep working
free until I do
Body: I’ll work until we hit $[AMOUNT].

3) Subject: I’ll write [N] SEO + AI blog posts free
Body: I’ll write [N] posts for $0 as a sample. If you love them, we can discuss
performance-based terms.

4) Subject: Free brand-sniping automation for your next campaign
Body: I’ll build it for $0; pay only if you love the system.
```

WARM OUTREACH DM NUDGE

```
Subject: [Personalized hook for [Name]]

Hey [FIRST_NAME]—curious what you planned to use my SOP for. Love that you do
[X/Y/Z]. If helpful, I can point you to the fastest way to [OUTCOME].
```

Tip

Avoid income guarantees. Treat these as framing only; ensure claims are truthful, allowed, and tailored to your actual offer and proof.

▸ MODULE 13

Step 11 — 🎥 Record a 1–3 min Loom micro-demo

Structure: 15s intro (why you reached out) → show their Google listing/reviews/competitors/website issues as evidence → 30s on the biggest problem and your fix. Close with a no-pressure next step.

Send a 1-minute Loom before the meeting to lift show rates; it takes ~5 minutes to prepare and boosts attendance.

PROMPT — PERSONALIZED VIDEO SCRIPT

```
System: Write a 60–120s script that starts with “Hey, this is [YOUR_NAME] from [AGENCY].” Include [LEAD_NAME], [COMPANY], [NICHE], [CITY], [TOP_ISSUE], and [NEXT_STEP_LINK]. Tone: calm, specific, no hype.
```

▸ **MODULE 14**

Step 12 — 📣 Launch omnichannel touchpoints

Send your asset via multiple channels: email first, then LinkedIn connection with a personalized note, optionally Instagram DM or X message. Keep messages short and consistent.

For LinkedIn requests: personalize with a casual note tied to their profile. If connecting, follow with your 1-line icebreaker and value.

LINKEDIN CONNECTION NOTE

```
Subject: [Personalized hook for [Name]]

Hey [FIRST_NAME], saw [CASUAL VERSION OF COMPANY]—think we’d vibe given our overlap in [TOPIC]. Would love to connect.
```

▸ **MODULE 15**

Step 13 — ⚡ Speed-to-lead reply handler

Auto-route replies to Slack with categories (positive, neutral, negative). Trigger instant personalized responses with your AI prompt and include your [BOOKING_LINK].

Respond within minutes—following up inside 5 minutes makes you up to 10× more likely to convert vs. 30 minutes later (source-reported).

PROMPT — AUTO-REPLY WITH BOOKING

```
System: Craft a short, on-topic reply using this context. If positive/neutral,
include this booking link: [BOOKING_LINK].
Context: [WEBSITE_SCRAPE_JSON] [LEAD_FIELDS_JSON] [LAST_MESSAGE]
Constraints: 60–80 words. Plain text. Human tone.
```

> **Tip**
> Space system emails with short delays to feel human (e.g., wait 4 minutes for a thank-you, 3 more for next steps). Stop all sequences on any reply.

▸ MODULE 16

Step 14 — 🛡️ Handle objections and ask for the audit

Use soft curiosity, not pressure. If ‘not interested’: “Totally understand. Would it be alright if I sent one quick thing that’s useful whenever timing is right? Takes 2 minutes—no pressure.”

If ‘we already have someone’: “Most teams I work with did too. Okay if I show one thing we do differently—just for comparison?”

If ‘tried this before’: “Useful to know. Usually the system is the issue, not the idea. May I show you how we handle that so you can see the difference?”

If still ‘no’: offer a free 15-minute AI audit and explain you’re building relationships now so they have a contact when ready.

▸ MODULE 17

Step 15 —  Run the discovery call (70/20/10)

70%: diagnose problems, costs, urgency; 20%: present solutions tied to business outcomes; 10%: objections/next steps. Ask for the sale explicitly at the end.

Capture structured info live (form or fields) so proposals can auto-generate from your notes.

ONBOARDING/DISCOVERY CHECKLIST

```
- Welcome + expectations
- Timelines & communication cadence
- Platform access & 2FA
- Goals, KPIs, budget, decision process
- Confirm next step: proposal or start date
- Q&A
```

CLOSE — ASK PLAINLY

```
Subject: [Personalized hook for [Name]]

Hey [FIRST_NAME], are you ready to move forward with [OFFER] tomorrow? I can
slot the setup for [DATE/TIME].
```

▸ MODULE 18

Step 16 — 📦 Convert with a project, then retainer

Cold → retainer conversion is low; start with a one-time project (e.g., speed-to-lead + review system), then upsell into a deliverables-based retainer with weekly/biweekly strategy, priority

plans, training, and unlimited maintenance within scope.

Price anchors: outcome-tied or savings-tied. Present what's different (e.g., AI receptionist vs. staffing costs) to normalize change.

PROMPT — PROPOSAL GENERATOR (JSON OUTPUT)

```
System: Generate a client proposal from this form data. Return JSON only with
fields: title, context, problems, solutions, deliverables, timeline,
price_options, KPIs, terms, next_steps.
User: [FORM_DATA_JSON]
```

> **Tip**
> Use price anchoring by comparing to traditional costs (e.g., front-desk + call service). Many teams had 'someone already'—that normalizes switching when value is clear.

▸ MODULE 19

Step 17 — 🏁 Onboard and implement fast in GoHighLevel

Open GoHighLevel, import your warm client template, add business info, activate workflows, apply brand, and connect calendars. Aim to ship v1 in one day, then iterate.

Source-reported setup time: ~20 minutes total for core components (opening, importing, info, activate, brand, calendar).

> **Tip**
> Prototype quickly, QA internally for a week with sample/real data, then give clients a week to QA. Communicate more than you think they need—retention rises with cadence.

▸ MODULE 20

Step 18 — 🔁 Follow-up, nurture, and reactivation

Create multi-touch nurture sequences that stop on reply or booking. Segment past contacts (no-shows, unresponsive, past customers) and send context-aware reactivations referencing their history.

Build a speed-to-lead path that captures form submissions, qualifies, routes to the right owner, and sends a personalized first touch within seconds.

▸ MODULE 21

Step 19 — 📊 Measure what matters and improve weekly

Monitor open rate, reply rate, positive replies, booked calls, CPL, CPA, proposals sent/accepted, conversion, and channel attribution. Use suites like Lighthouse/API analytics for objective evals.

Define specific eval criteria (clarity, legibility, no fluff); improve prompts iteratively. Use the DO framework: Directive (goal), Orchestration (agent manages), Execution (scripts).

> **Tip**
> Most work is invisible; make deliverables tangible—emails, Slack alerts, calendars, reports. AI kills the trade-off between personalization and scale; keep quality guardrails tight.

▸ MODULE 22

Step 20 — 🧠 Proof and authority assets

Overdeliver to first clients and ask to document results as case studies. Capture testimonial specifics (client, problem, numbers).

Dig your watering hole: publish useful insights where your buyers hang out; keep one channel consistent so people come to you for this problem.

CASE STUDY ASK

```
Subject: [Personalized hook for [Name]]

Hey [CLIENT_NAME], glad we achieved [SPECIFIC_RESULT]. Would you mind if I documented this as a case study to help others in the same situation?
```

▸ **MODULE 23**

Step 21 — 📈 Content and inbound over 90–365 days

Months 1–3: warm outreach + begin content. Months 4–6: mix outreach + early inbound. Months 7–12: mostly inbound + referrals. Build a simple one-page offer site in GoHighLevel and drive all content to it.

Weekly cadence: 1 helpful email to your list + 1 video (tutorial/proof/deep dive) + promote a relevant lead magnet. Use micro-CTAs that prompt small actions (comment/DM) to trigger automation.

> **Tip**
> Match channel to audience intent: search for high-intent, social for discovery. Media amplifies what's there—clear offers get clearer; vague offers get vaguer.

▸ **MODULE 24**

Step 22 — 🧩 Expand automations & proposals

Package ‘five workflows’ for upsell: speed-to-lead, follow-ups, database reactivation, internal reporting, and document processing. Add automated proposal generation that builds slides/docs after an email trigger—work backwards from ‘send proposal’ to ensure data is captured.

Offer connected AI solutions (AI phone answer, site chatbot, follow-ups, reviews, staff notifications, lead segmentation) once the core email engine works.

▸ MODULE 25

Step 23 — ⚖️ Compliance and operating guardrails

Respect cold email laws and provider terms; avoid newsletter platforms for cold. Keep emails plain text, personalized, and targeted. High-regulation niches (e.g., HIPAA) add disproportionate burden.

Scale by adding mailboxes (not volume per mailbox), pacing sends, and using VAs where cost-effective. Focus more on sales/communication than extreme technical tinkering once the system works.

POLICY REFERENCE

FTC **FTC CAN-SPAM compliance guide** Understand commercial email requirements. ↗

Tip

Legal agreements can add friction for small/mid international clients; payment received is often the better signal. Keep backups (3-2-1 rule) and avoid scraping that violates terms.

▸ MODULE 26

Mistakes to avoid

🚫

WRONG TOOLS FOR COLD

Don’t use newsletter platforms (e.g., Mailchimp/Constant Contact) for scraped/purchased lists—accounts can be suspended.

🪨

OVERCOMPLICATING TECH

Spending weeks perfecting automations beats sales practice. Ship a simple, working system and iterate.

🎯

VAGUE, MULTI-SERVICE OFFERS

Pitching SEO + ads + branding confuses buyers. Solve one costly problem end-to-end.

📭

GENERIC PERSONALIZATION

Referencing company boilerplate lowers replies. Use personal nuggets and specific gaps your AI found.

💥

IGNORING PACING

Blasting from one inbox triggers blocks. Scale horizontally with delays and auto-stop on reply.

🔍

SHALLOW TARGETING

Requesting too many contacts without filters swaps quality for quantity. Tighten ICP filters.

📎

HTML-HEAVY EMAILS

Formatting issues (single-line walls) and spam risk rise. Use plain text.

🧪

ONE-AND-DONE TESTING

Prompts are noisy; evaluate over multiple runs with explicit quality criteria.

▸ MODULE 27

Income Forecast

$500–$5,000/mo
Typical SMB automation retainer range (source-reported)

$300–$5,000 + $2–$700/mo
Common one-time setup + ongoing fee (source-reported)

$1,500–$2,000/mo
Lead gen & ads management tier (source-reported)

$2,500–$3,000/mo
Full suite incl. Google Ads & SEO (source-reported)

5 × $50,000/yr
Five clients can annualize to ~$25,000/mo (source-reported)

25–50% of savings
Performance pricing against cost savings (source-reported)

5–10% reply rate
'Golden zone' campaign benchmark (source-reported)

▸ MODULE 28

Resources

RESOURCES

- **Google Cloud Console (Gmail API & OAuth)** — Create project, enable APIs, set OAuth. ↗
- **FTC CAN-SPAM compliance guide** — Commercial email rules and compliance. ↗

Meta Ad Library — Research active advertisers by industry and locale. ↗

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THE JOBHACKI ARSENAL

What All-Access members get

All 7 JobHacki tools on one membership.

Hack your career.

AI Auto Apply

Swipe real jobs. We get each application ready; you check it and press submit.

Job Directory

Live jobs pulled straight from company hiring systems.

Resume Builder

A role-ready resume in minutes.

Resume Match

A 0-100 match score against live roles.

Interview Role Play

Free practice tests with an account; voice mock interview after the trial.

Playbook Directory

Step-by-step income and job playbooks.

Tool Directory

Tools, prompts, GitHub repos and GPTs, by category.

Create your free account

Get All-Access — see price and terms

See the community & what's inside

A free account opens the job hubs, playbook library, Tool Directory and Interview Role Play's practice tests.

Learn More →

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