

Stop Selling Time



If you'd prefer to watch the video training session instead, [click here](#).

I remember writing the draft of my first ebook, *Win With Words*. I released a version of it on the Traffic & Copy Group. It taught people how to write disarming cold emails. It was just 35 pages long. It was received well. People emailed me thanking me after taking my advice and seeing success.

It was based on this that I started the Charm Offensive Facebook Group 6 months later.

Fast forward to another 6 months later, and I have an entirely new career. I'm now an "influencer"... and my inbox is filled with payment notifications:

From: [Stripe](#) >

To: jon@charm-offensive... > [Hide](#)



Payment of \$547.00

Today at 21:04

Congratulations! You have just received a payment of \$547.00. You can view the full details of this payment in your dashboard:

The phrases “thought leader” and “influencer” are much mocked. Even by me. I run a satirical news website called [The Influential](#). It seems a little arrogant to self identify as one of those terms. It makes me uncomfortable to do it even with the benefit of quotation marks. However, there is an important distinction between someone who leads a community, tribe or movement, and someone who is a follower, fan or participant.

Starting my Facebook Group, and my email list, has been one of the best business decisions I’ve made in my 18 year career. It has completely changed how I see business. Suddenly, all of the platitudes about “time is money” make sense. I am much more strict with who I will do even a 15 minute call with. I rarely do meetings. This isn’t because of arrogance. A meeting requires travel time. It disrupts your day. That’s fine if you’re pitching to a potentially gigantic client, but it makes less sense for almost all other reasons.

I have packed my expertise into ebooks and courses. I can help more people. Digital products are infinitely scalable. Whereas time, is finite. Warren Buffett once said “I can buy everything in the world, but I can’t buy more time.” Even Warren Buffett’s billions can’t change that. Now, I guard my time, who I spend it with and how I spend it. My time is better spent building my following, building new products, and scaling up my business.

I no longer have to take on private clients and I I do, I can charge more for my time.

I maintain that cold pitching is an incredible way for anyone to be able to generate opportunities for themselves. You can start immediately and see results just as quickly. I am proud of all the results my students have had in following my unorthodox advice. There is a point where you become so adept at cold pitching, that you develop an awareness that you’re always going to be ok. You’re always going to be able to book sales meetings. You send the right words in the right order to the right people and you receive compliments and

sales opportunities in your inbox. It's been great helping people get to that place.

I've not learned how to do something else. In the last 6 months, I've build a Facebook group that has over 5,000 people in it, and grows daily. I have an engaged email list. I have a suite of digital products. I sell something every day. When I launch something, or do a flash sale, I love looking at my inbox to see all the payment notifications arrive. This is a great place to be. I would like to help other people be in the same position.

I know there's a plethora of guides about building an email list, but I feel I'm in a unique position.

When a 'famous' marketer offers advice, it may seem impossible to get where they are. To get where I am is within reach. If I did it in 6 months by hard work and trial and error, you can do it too. Especially as I'm giving you the blueprint. You need not make the mistakes I did. You can only make the right moves. I also believe I have a unique approach to building a following, owing to the fact I didn't take any courses on the topic myself. I learned by doing and I've created something unique and interesting.

Like my 'drunk cold email', I've accidentally been clever again, and I've been able to reverse engineer the whole process. I know the tactics that worked, and the ones that didn't work, or weren't enjoyable.

Today, I am writing my second ebook, "Stop Selling Time" which you're reading right now. I hope it gives you insight into my thinking, and some actionable steps that you can take right away. As you'd expect, I do have a full course on the way for those of you who want a laser targeted roadmap detailing every single little step and nuance.

Let me start this by answering a few questions.

Why did I start my Facebook Group?

I felt I could help people. Nobody was teaching my particular method of writing cold emails. I knew my style was effective and I could prove it. I liked Colin Theriot's "The Cult of Copy" group. It had this fantastic 'atmosphere'. It is cult-ish. I loved the branding. It seemed like it would be a lot of fun to lead something like that. I paid for a 1 hour consultancy call (at \$250, which also got my attention. I wanted to be able to charge that for a call!) with Colin. I showed Colin my approach to cold email and direct mail and he said I had something unique enough that it would work. I asked him "Should I call it Charm Offensive, or Brilliant Deviants?". I'm glad I asked him. I wasn't sure which to go with. I think I made the right decision.

Why do you think the group's message resonated and grew so quickly?

I didn't start the group with any revenue projections or goals or grand ambitions. I felt like I could help people. It wasn't long before the group 'took off'. My pinned post told the story of "the drunk cold email that changed my life" which turned out to be an irresistible hook.

I've used this story to appear on podcasts, get PR coverage and to promote my group on Reddit. I got the top of 4 subreddits. Most importantly, r/entrepreneur, without any shady tricks. You can find the post here:

https://www.reddit.com/r/Entrepreneur/comments/6e066a/the_drunk_cold_email_that_changed_my_life/

I did some analysis of why I had such success on Reddit:

- "The *drunk cold email that changed my life.*" is a great title... if I do say so myself.
- This formula is likely reusable.
- Have a compelling story. The Identity, Struggle, Discovery, Surprise formula works.
- Make people laugh or at least smirk within the first 10 seconds of them

reading.

- Talk about the benefits to your life. Expand on these. I deliberately covered multiple sectors, company sizes and uses so people couldn't respond with "Well, that's good but I bet it won't work for XXXX"
- Provide solid proof (This was easy for me to do, due to people placing the letters on Twitter. Which annoyed me at the time but I'm happy about now!)
- Provide tons of useful content. Go overboard! I even included the template – without it, I would have struggled as it would have been "vague".
- This gives you a pass to post a URL at the very end of your post. Without it, you'll get downvoted to hell.
- Make sure to respond to all comments obsessively.

You can learn more about why my Reddit post was successful in my [deck here](#), or this post on [Maître](#).

There is one little trick I used to great effect. My pinned post shows people the incredibly positive responses my cold emails were generating but when I first started the group, I didn't show the copy I'd sent to elicit those responses. This, when combined with the posts I'd made detailing the methodology and theory beyond my approach, engendered an enormous amount of intrigue. This would not have worked if I hadn't made my theory content actionable and useful.

Eventually, I had to show my copy. This was hard for me, as I knew a lot of people could 'swipe' it and benefit from it without paying me a dime. It turns out, giving away the magic was the best thing I did. If you help other people succeed, they will say nice things about you. Social media means those nice sentiments get heard by a lot of people. It all adds up.

Before long, I was getting messages from people asking for my help. In the beginning, I helped most people for free. When those people saw success, they posted their results. This built a 'culture' where posting these screenshots was normal behaviour. I had created a system that generated frequent social proof.

This meant I didn't have to engage in 'hypey' marketing activities to the same degree as others.

To sum up, the key factors of the group's growth were:

- Engender curiosity
- Show people a 'new' approach that breaks a lot of rules.
- Helping people succeed - building an engine of reciprocity
- I went and found my audience by cold pitching my way onto podcasts, posting valuable content in other groups, making the Reddit post etc.

I don't want you to think you have to replicate everything I did. In some regards, I've been lucky. I was gifted a hook. You shouldn't try to artificially create something that isn't there. However, there is a basic framework that may help you when you're designing your own tribe.

What are the key factors to a successful tribe?

You have to stand out in some way. One way is to defy convention.

In my case, it was telling people using humour in business shouldn't just be avoided, it should be encouraged. Colin has a similar thing where he goes against some of the 'golden rules' of learning copywriting. He tells people the process of handwriting sales letters isn't needed. This goes against the gospel. It stands out by default.

Above all, you must try to teach people in a way that's entertaining, or at least easily digestible. Your primary goal is to help people become competent in a useful skill, and make the process as enjoyable as possible.

People talk about 'authenticity' a lot. I find this weird as for me, I know of no other way. However, there is value in authenticity. If only because the world of marketing is filled with charlatans. Just being honest and a good person has value.

I can imagine people were wondering "Just what the fuck is this guy is sending to people?" Perhaps cruelly, I would even censor parts of my response screenshots that would give some clues into what I was doing.

Showing up every day is important, especially to begin with. All the other little tricks and nuances don't work unless you're putting out good, unique, interesting content regularly. This becomes easier.

I was worried I would struggle for content ideas. At a certain point, everything becomes inspiration for content. You can also mix it up.

Curation has value too.

I differ from some folks who say only promote your own content. I don't agree with this. I don't have all the answers. If someone else's content can help my audience, I'll tell people about it. While I try to avoid posting too many external links, I don't ban them outright.

Curation enables you to educate your audience and further your 'agenda'. Take for example, this post:



This aligns well with what my group is about, using humour and lateral thinking in business. By showing people this example, I'm helping influence people's thinking. They'll likely remember it was me that showed it to them.

This also helps further cement the theme of the group, as other people will begin to post similar content.

Lastly, you should talk about your members. I promote people using my “Charm Offensive Spotlight” feature. This is where I ask for 3-5 posts or videos, and then we follow up with a Facebook live interview. This creates a sense of community. You can’t make it all about you.

Is having an email list important?

Absolutely. I love Facebook Groups. However, Mr Zuckerberg could reduce their reach, or remove them completely. This isn’t likely, but it’s an externality you must consider. You own your email list. It can’t be taken away from you. You can also target Facebook ads to those on your email list, create lookalike audiences and other nerdy fun which I won’t go into here.

What skills do I need?

You need to be able to:

- Create content that educates and entertains
- Write email sequences and sales pages that persuade people to buy
- Have payment systems set up so you can accept payments online
- Create optin forms and sales funnels.
- Create basic FB ads.
- Create lead magnets (like this one you’re reading now).
- Create products people want at each step of the value ladder.
- Show up a little every day. Or at least, most days.

It would also be beneficial to be able to invite yourself on relevant podcasts, book speaking gigs, get PR or get organic exposure. This isn’t essential, but it will increase how quickly your following grows.

I'd also suggest becoming comfortable with live streaming. This isn't essential but appearing on video builds trust and engagement more than any other medium I've seen. It is like social media on performance enhancing drugs. Don't worry if you don't possess any of these skills now. These are all things you can learn, and learn quickly.

What technology do I need in place?

You will need:

- An email marketing package such as [SendX](#) or [ConvertKit](#).
- The ability to sell online. I use Stripe and Paypal and connect these to [Booklikeaboss](#) (quick and easy), or connect them with a sales funnel I've built in [Clickfunnels](#).
- Google docs for drafting content.
- [Zoom](#) or some other platform to record training sessions.

How do I decide what my theme is?

The first thing you need to do is figure out what your tribe should be about.

I've provided a handy set of questions you can answer to help figure this out.

The answers I have provided are based on if I were to do this process myself, before I started Charm Offensive in March this year. I didn't do this process, but I feel it may help people who wish to start their own group, but don't know where to start, and such a process would help them.

What is your primary area of expertise?

Cold pitching - cold email, direct mail, social media.

What is your secondary area of expertise?

Digital marketing. Running an agency. Sales pitches.

How can you help people?

I can show people how to write in a way that gets positive responses when cold pitching.

Who can you help?

Company founders. Freelancers. Consultants. Sales professionals.

Any geographic location.

All levels of expertise and experience.

What problems can you help people avoid?

From sending boring cold emails that nobody wants to read. Saving them time.

What experience do you have?

I've been sending cold emails for sales purposes since 2012, when I wrote my first cold email, admittedly whilst 'desperate and drunk'. This led to meetings with RedBull, Pepsi, Symantec, Hewlett Packard and countless other global brands, corporations, startups, and SMEs.

I used this same style of cold email to get journalists to respond to me, leading to coverage in national and international publications, to get my friends as many job interviews as they want, to successfully invite senior IT professionals to an event for Hewlett Packard, to book experts onto my podcast, to get onto 'big' podcasts, and to get the attention of influential people I wanted to collaborate with.

Do you have a 'story' that will hook people in?

Indeed, as above, 'the drunk cold email that changed my life' -

*[https://reddit.com/r/entrepreneur/comments/6e066a/the_drunk_cold_email_t
hat_changed_my_life/](https://reddit.com/r/entrepreneur/comments/6e066a/the_drunk_cold_email_that_changed_my_life/)*

Do other groups exist like the one you're thinking of creating?

Yes

How can you differentiate your group?

My approach is completely different. I combine humour and cold pitching. Nobody else teaches my style of writing.

What would your first 10 posts be about?

Impact - Communication - Persuasion

How Dave Trott's teachings about successful television advertising apply to cold pitching.

The Warren Buffett Technique

How a persuasive technique used by Warren Buffet in his stock presentations can be used in cold pitching.

Disarming Candour

The common mistakes people make when writing cold emails

How to not suck at writing to potential clients

An introduction to the "Charm Offensive" style of writing cold pitches

Playing it safe sucks

Why not being daring is a recipe for lacklustre results

Data - Copy - Offer

The 3 key variables to review when sending cold emails

How to be somewhat funny > The reverse

The joke formula for 'The reverse' explained

How to be somewhat funny > Triples / Power of 3

The joke formula for the comic triple explained

How to be somewhat funny > The triple reverse

The joke formula for the triple reverse explained

Will this approach work on [X]?

A humorous post dealing with the most common objection to my approach

What would your first lead magnet be?

A 'magic email cheat sheet' detailing the key components of the Charm Offensive style of cold email.

What 3 questions will you ask new members as they join?

What do you do? (E.g. Company founder)

What is your biggest pain point? (E.g. winning new clients)

Would you like a magic email cheat sheet? If so, put your email below. If not, leave it blank. I won't be too offended.

What would your 5 group 'tags' be? (Keywords to describe the group)

Cold email

Copywriting

Email marketing

Lead generation

B2B Marketing

What content themes do you want in the group?

Uses of humour in business communications.

Persuasive copywriting.

How to attract / win new clients

Examples of 'pattern interruption' in business communications (including Facebook ads)

People showing their cold pitching efforts

Here is a copy of these questions -

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1U-s6-dqQ6PAwxnPPCTmpTWyT_mk8etyOiC3IYQSoGI/edit?usp=sharing

Make a copy of this document (file > make a copy) and fill out your own answers.

This will help you piece together a theme for your own group.

Inspiring Influence

I have a paid programme called Inspiring Influence where I guide you through this process every step of the way.

Inspiring Influence covers:

- Planning and positioning
- Adding your own 'spice' to any niche - creating something unique, intriguing and interesting
- Content creation for your group and email list
- Creating compelling lead magnets
- All of my growth hacks and tactics to build exposure and grow your following
- Getting a quick and easy online store online
- Creating your first sales funnel, email sequence and sales letter
- Quick and easy Facebook ads to build your email list
- Developing your first paid products
- How to launch your first course - without having made the content yet
- How to write entertaining emails that sell

It comes with templates too!

- Entertaining broadcast emails template pack
- 5 Email "Charming Introduction" Autoresponder Sequence Template
- Pinned Post / Group Description Structure Template
- Product Launch Template Pack
 - Sales Funnel
 - Email Sequence
 - Group Posts

Enrollment

Inspiring Influence is currently closed.

If you'd like to be informed when it will be back open again, please email me at jon@charm-offensive.co.uk