

GREETINGS READER!

Welcome to Win With Words: How to write MAGIC emails that break open the doors to your dreams and ambitions.

I never thought I'd give this information away, which is why I'm selling it instead.

First, I'd like to tell you a story of how I figured out how to get positive responses from what are essentially spam emails.

You can use this same formula to book sales meetings of your own, open up job opportunities, get in front of journalists, get famous folks on your podcast, and who knows what other dastardly things...

So, cold approaches...they're generally not liked. People ignore them. Delete them or even reply with mean words.

I've never had this issue.

The first cold email I sent was in 2012. At the time I was running an agency called Render Positive and sales had fallen flat. I realised that while I was great at closing deals at the agencies I'd previously worked at, I never knew how to open them. I was gifted good leads by great sales people. One night, I got drunk, and wrote an email. I woke up and still thought it was a good idea to send this completely absurd email to very busy, Senior Marketing Directors at large brands.

I sent 6 emails manually. It wasn't long before I got 2 replies. Both of them were highly complimentary but telling me they already had agencies in place. Then I got another response, and they wanted to meet me. I couldn't believe it. The email I created should in no way work. It was out of the ordinary and weird and ridiculous. Yet it did.

Hi Jon,

Your multi-media bombardment has captured my interest (the carrier pigeon was you, right?).

You stood out. You made me laugh.

I get about 20 agencies a week contacting me...and I think you're the first I've ever cold-contacted.

I'm not 100% I'm sure I know how to use you, but I do think I'd like to meet you.

What's your availability like in the next couple of weeks? Beginning or end of day is probably best.

I await your effervescent response,

I began sending to larger numbers of key prospects, and every time I did, I got the same result- lots of very praiseworthy responses. Some of them wanted to meet me immediately. Some said to stay in touch and some were the most complimentary rejections one could ever get. Many expressed regret at their current contractual obligations with existing agencies, as they'd love to see what we were about.

I'd accidentally created something very successful. I'd accidentally been clever.

This interested me. I could gauge from the responses that nobody else was sending emails like this, and that I stood out and they liked my prose. However, I wanted to know the reasons behind why the email I wrote when drunk worked so successfully. I bought the book "Influence - The Psychology Of Persuasion" and this gave me some answers. Over the years, I've managed to dissect the exact influences in my life that led to the copy I created.

The biggest two influences were from way back when I was just a kid. My older brother gave me some advice when I was 7 or so which was “Always be different”. And it’s something I’ve stuck to ever since. The second was that from the same age, I had a TV in my room and watched mostly American stand up comedy and sitcoms till the early hours of the morning most nights. I did stand up comedy a few years back and when it was going well, it was amazing. When it wasn’t, it sucked. I didn’t have the thick skin to keep going, so I gave up. Looking back, I was just a joke machine. I knew the mechanics, but I had no character. I may try it again someday.

Those years watching comedy definitely amounted to over 10,000 hours’ training. The amount suggested in The Talent Code to become truly talented at something.

Comedy is all about surprise and getting people’s minds to switch gears. The simplest device is called “The Reverse” where you guide people one way (the open), only for the pay off (the punch line) to take them somewhere they didn’t expect.

Being funny definitely works for me. It’s the best ‘pattern interrupt’ in the world. Better still, people will have a positive opinion of you before they meet you. You’re primed to do well. They already like you.

I understand humour isn’t relevant for all situations. However, everyone likes to laugh. This approach won’t work on everyone - but there isn’t a ‘type’ of person it doesn’t work on.

I’ve used it to generate countless meetings for myself, job interviews for friends, to get journalists to write about my clients, to get key prospects to corporate events... and tons of other stuff. Basically, it’s a system to get busy people to notice you and decide to talk to you.

This is what you will learn in this guide. This won’t just be theory. I will go through my very first email template structure (one that still

works extremely well) and teach you line by line what works. And I'll explain why it works.

This means you can develop your own style.

I knew some rules of direct response copywriting from what I'd learned from comedy. I also broke a lot of conventions.

I won't be talking about prospecting or getting data or technology to send emails or anything like that.

That's a whole other topic. This lesson is focused on the words. The construction of the actual messages. How to write captivating prose. How to maintain interest. How to stand out. You need to do all of this in a pretty short message. This is the opposite of the classic gigantic sales letters. I've never read a book on copywriting or sales, and based on the responses I get from prospects, journalists, experts and other people, I don't think anyone uses the framework I do.

The freedom to make opportunities for yourself is wonderful. You can make life exciting again.

Time for me to stop rambling on...

| Enjoy the ride/[eBook](#),

Jon

Getting Your Email Opened

The first challenge is to get your email opened.

What are the first things someone will see when they get an email.

Your name.

Subject line.

Often the first line of your email depending on what device they're using.

And often the second line too...

Think about what makes your email different to those that are getting opened.

Unless you're a well-known figure of some kind, they won't know who you are.

You are a stranger.

A stranger sending an email sets off alarm bells.

Immediately, you're in the danger zone.

I could list all of the terrible things that don't work, but that seems like a waste of time. Basically, it's what pretty much everyone else does.

RE: Our Meeting. What are the people using these subject lines hoping for? To convince the reader they have selected amnesia and somehow have also lost all record of previous emails? I'll stop there.

Let's focus on what works instead.

How do we turn this situation into an advantage?

This is a skill I learned from Dave Trott. He is responsible for some of the most successful advertising of all time, ran 3 award-winning agencies and has authored several successful books.

It's called Upstream Thinking.

We can't change the fact we are unknown.

How do we change the problem?

Getting the reader to open and enjoy your email is hopefully going to change your stranger status into "I like the person who sent me this offbeat email" status - but unfortunately, that's in the future.

So what do people see in their inbox?

They see your name, a subject line and maybe the first line of your email - depending on if they're on a computer or mobile.

FIRST LESSON: The Subject line has to take advantage of the fact the From: section causes the reader some discomfort and suspicion.

SECOND LESSON: Short subject lines work best. Keep them to 3 or 4 words max.

So we have to succinctly take advantage of your stranger status using the subject line. Simple!

We have to be a bit devious here, but don't worry. We will make up for that very shortly.

BLATANT GIVEAWAY:

Here are some subject lines that have always worked for me.

Apologies / Sorry

This works because who expects an apology from a stranger? It's also quite clever as you have reason to apologise. You're sending them a cold, unsolicited email, also known as that tinned meat you can still buy. I regularly get 30+% open rates with this.

The Audacity Of This Email

This one is similar but is a little bit more offbeat. It also works on curiosity. Much like BuzzFeed or Unworthy headlines. They didn't invent these curiosity headlines by the way.

Remember me?

This works as they will see your name and think "No... Should I?"

You can then apologise for the trickery within the email somewhere.

Blatant Clickbait

This one is funny because it openly admits what it is. This is so blatantly honest it's ironic in an Alanis Morissette kind of way.

What do they all have in common?

They get the curiosity of the reader, and are probably more effective because they're coming from a stranger. Not *despite* they're coming from a stranger, but because they are.

Think about that - and you'll no doubt think of loads of subject lines that work even better than these examples.

Let's see what we've got so far...

From: Joe Stranger

Subject: Apologies In Advance

The Unorthodox Introduction Line

This is the first line of your email.

Actually first off, time for something that should be obvious but lots of people get wrong. Time for a blatant giveaway...

BLATANT GIVEAWAY: Don't send HTML emails. Don't make it look corporate or branded or anything like that. Use plain text. You know, like a real actual human person would. Remember those people? After work people? Friends. Family. And you know what's really cool? It's not dishonest, because you ARE a real human person! Fantastic eh?

So the first line.

What do most people put?

Dear Sir/Madam

Dear Mr. Surname

Dear Henrique

Dear Henrique Surname

Hello Henrique

Or even worse just "Hey". No personalisation at all.

It may seem like a tiny detail, but you should differentiate here too.

Every part of your email should be different to all the other garbage your prospect is expecting.

This is the first line they will see - often before choosing to open your email. So it's critical it stand out and make the reader almost double take.

This part involves the use of a book that could also be the name of a dinosaur if paleontologists had a sense of humour. Got it yet? It's called a "Thesaurus".

Luckily, there is also thesaurus.com that's free of charge. Awesome.

Type in "Hello" and see what comes up.

What do we see?

Ah. You may have seen some of these in emails in the not too distant past... I'll try not to give away which ones.

Greetings

Salutations

Howdy

How goes it

Psst.

Aloha

What's happening

Amen

Crap, some of these are much better than what I've been sending.

Some of these may be too familiar.

Let's go with Salutations for now.

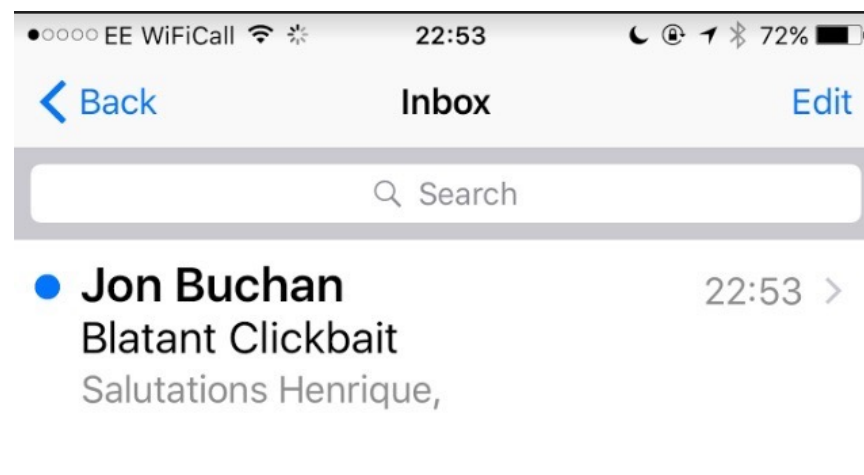
So what do we have so far?

From: Joe Stranger

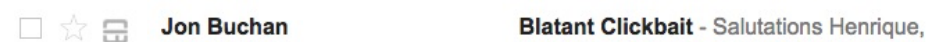
Subject: Apologies In Advance

First Line: Salutations Henrique,

On a phone this looks like this:



On a desktop, it looks like this:



We have room for the second line, which as you've come to expect, is vitally important.

The Warren Buffet Technique

Warren Buffet has this clever thing he does at presentations to shareholders of Berkshire Hathaway.

He starts with bad news.

Why Would Warren Buffet start with bad news?

1. It's probably good to get bad news out of the way first.
2. It shows he's upfront and honest.
3. Once someone has admitted a fault, or apologised, you're generally forgiven. Unless you've done something really horrendous and unforgivable like download a pirated copy of a really useful yet entertaining eBook.
4. It gives everything else Warren has to say more credibility.

Why am I telling you this?

Your first line should be upfront and honest.

This is shocking and unexpected. We're being really radical here.

You can also point out the elephant in the room.

... That's you and your unknown status.

BLATANT GIVEAWAY TIME:

Effective First Line:

"You don't know me. I'm Joe Stranger. Nice to kind of meet you!"

Let's put all these pieces together.

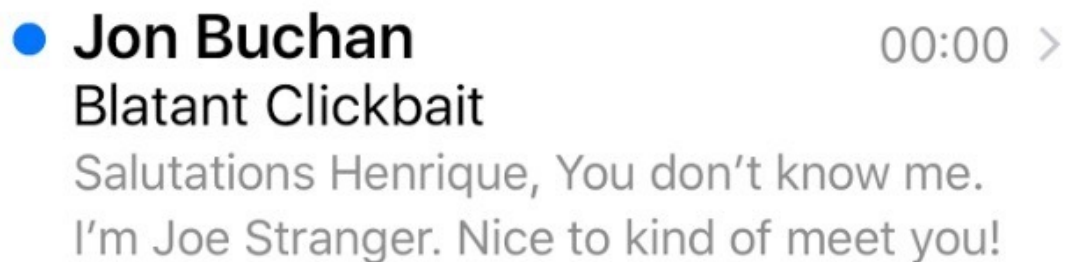
From: Joe Stranger

Subject: Apologies In Advance

First Line: Salutations Henrique,

Second Line: You don't know me. I'm Joe Stranger. Nice to kind of meet you!

On an iPhone, it looks like this:



There's some honesty.

The next line should go further, and perhaps talk about how you found their details.

I'm sure you can craft something masterful at this point.

If not, there's a handy example coming up in about 3 or 5 or 6 seconds time...

Let's see what we have so far:

From: Joe Stranger

Subject: Apologies In Advance

First Line: Salutations Henrique,

Second Line: You don't know me. I'm Joe Stranger. Nice to kind of meet you!

Third Line: I got your details from a list. *Gasp*. But hey, at least you're important enough to make a list. You made it!

Actually Likeable Soft Sell

Oh my goodness. We're actually going to 'sell'.

Well, sort of.

It's going to be brief.

It's going to be vague.

It's going to be modest.

It's going to be painless.

Your 'prospect' won't feel sold to. This is critical.

If someone feels like they're being sold to, they switch off.

If a commercial break comes on the TV, people switch off. They look at their phones. They go and make a cup of tea.

If you get cold called, you immediately feel irritated. (Unless the sales person is really fucking good.)

If a sales person at an event corners you, you immediately want to figure out how to get the hell out of there.

You have two short paragraphs to introduce yourself and/or business, and what you do.

To mitigate the damage of the coming mini sales-pitch, let's put the prospects mind at ease.

“Let me get straight to the point.”

“Let me get down to brass tacks.”

“Let me get down to business.”

Then it's time for the sales talk.

If you run a business, you could write:

I'm writing to you because [I run a consultancy business that delivers no-nonsense marketing advice] in [Clapham, South London.] I run it with [my business partner, Greg and a team of 10.]

For [5 years], we've been making clients richer and more famous. We absolutely love putting those 'big' agencies to shame by delivering incredible results. I think we could do the same for you.

You can expand a little upon this

If you're looking for a job, use the above template but make it about you. Write about your experience, your passion and your ambitions.

You may be trying to break into a new industry where you have no experience. If so, bring that up. Don't hide from it. Make your weakness a strength.

I'll be upfront. I've spent countless hours reading blogs and watching videos about marketing, but I have no experience. I know that may be a deal-breaker. All I can say is that I'm going to be hungry. I'm going to be hard working and looking to impress. Think of it this way - I won't come with any bad habits - you can mold me into the perfect employee!

Play with this. Make it 'you'. Don't go over the top. Keep it short.

That's it for the introduction part... onto something more fun.

Make Them An Offer They're Not Sure What To Do With

This section has an especially cryptic title.

I'm going to assume your goal is to get a meeting - or at least a phone call.

We could just say that - but that's what they're expecting.

They probably have lots of people who'd like to meet them.

They may be more experienced, decorated, well known, or have won more crappy awards than you.

We can't really change that.

We can make them an offer that nobody else has though. Something that makes them smile.

It can be a little silly too. They probably won't take you up on it.

I'd love to meet you. To make it worth your while, I'll treat you to coffee / lunch / tequila shots and promise to be somewhat entertaining. You never know, I may even wear a monocle!

They might do though. I've had to go to a few meetings wearing a top hat.

This uses the "Power Of Threes".

Coffee - that's normal.

Lunch - that's normal.

Tequila – LOL!

It stands out. People don't expect it. It separates you from all their other boring emails.

You're talking to them like a friend.

When they reply, more often than not, they'll reply using informal language.

This gives you a huge advantage over the other people trying to impress them. The walls are down.

This may be a little too silly for you. This works for me, as that's my personality. I can be absurd.

Time to take advantage of the principle of reciprocity!

In other words, use a cute/funny picture to make prospects smile.

Then we act like this is some huge deal.

“Finally, it's time to unleash my secret weapon. I've attached a picture of Rufus the Cat. Just what you've always wanted.”



It's up to you to decide what you attach.

I'd avoid humour that doesn't translate to a wide audience.

Stay with something silly, cute and completely arbitrary.

There's a reason cute animals are used on commercials.

We like cute animals. People... not so much.

They may think you're crazy - but that's better than boring.

| It'll make some people smile and some laugh out loud. It'll even get shared around the office sometimes.

People may choose to meet you out of sheer curiosity.

That's fine. Your foot is in the door.

Why Does This Work?

- a) It's silly and cute.
- b) It's unexpected
- c) It uses the reciprocity principle. If you make someone smile or laugh, they feel compelled to be nice back – by hitting **reply!**

You don't have to be these absurd!

This works for me as that's my personality.

You could attach a comic strip that makes fun out of a customer pain point – or points out some industry in-joke in a funny way.

The Marketoologist does this very well - <https://marketoologist.com/>

“But I’m in [insert boring industry here]. I hear you scream!”

So what?

Are the people in that industry not human?

Not everyone will like this approach – but the ones that do will love it.
As evidenced by my success – and screenshots of my responses!

I’ve used this same technique to get senior IT people and c-suites to a
Hewlett Packard event.

We split tested.

They sent 500 invites with their corporate template and jargon.

I sent 500 using my style.

I got 30 people to the event.

They got 0.

Results are what matter.

A Little Reverse Psychology

Nobody likes to get a negative response.

But we're sending an unsolicited email.

So we kind of deserve it.

Luckily, there's a way to stop this from happening.

Make reference to the fact that you're expecting a negative response.

"I await your deservedly annoyed response."

"I await your stern but fair reply."

They've read your email all the way to the end. It wasn't likely they were going to send a negative reply anyway.

Now you've pre-empted it, it makes it even more unlikely.

You may even make them smile or laugh again. Bonus.

Unorthodox Closing Line

Don't finish up with some bland line everyone uses.

Let's not be formal.

Or say "Hope you are well" or some other trite phrase.

Go over the top with politeness.

"Have an absolutely wonderful day!"

"Please have a remarkably lovely day!"

Or try and be a bit weird and funny again.

"Have a more than tolerable day!"

This may not seem like much.

It's just another point you can be different from everyone else.

Your entire email will look completely different from all the others.

Show You Don't Take Yourself Too Seriously

Your email signature is next.

Under your name, but a variety of job titles.

Here is one I use:

Jon Buchan

Your Hired Gun / Copywriter / Interim Head Of Stationery

If you're looking for work, you could use:

Joe Bloggs

Your Next Awesome Employee / Great Value For Money / Not
Desperate Just Keen

Play around with it.

Even Make The Haters Smile

You have to add an unsubscribe link to all emails.

It's the law.

Before this link, put something like:

“Go on then. Unsubscribe. I won't get too upset!”

This part doesn't matter especially.

It just adds another point of differentiation.

Every piece of the puzzle needs to paint you as different, interesting and worth taking the chance to meet.

Remember The Attachment!

Remember the silly picture we mentioned?

Make sure you attach it.

You're a professional. Don't make such an embarrassing omission!

Sales Template

Let's put all this together.

This isn't the exact template I've used before.

It's not quite as funny or snappy - but the core elements are similar.

I'm going to put one together for booking meetings - and one for people seeking a job.

You should of course edit more than the stuff in brackets! Play around - make it you.

Subject:

[Greeting] [First Name],

You've never heard of me. Hi, I'm [name]. I got your details [quirky explanation here].

I'm writing to you because [brief explanation] in [your location]. I run it with [any business partners], and a team of [x].

For [x months/years], we've been [little brief brag about the work you've been doing]. We're absolutely loving [detail results you're getting for clients]. I think we could do the same for you.

I'd love to meet you. To make it worth your while, I'll treat you to [serious suggestion, another normal suggestion, weird/fun suggestion] and promise to be somewhat [interesting, useful, entertaining]. You never know, I may even [wear something weird/silly - do a magic trick - something unusual for a business meeting].

Finally, it's time to unleash my secret weapon. I've attached a picture of [name] of [cute animal]. Just what you've always wanted.

I await your [assume negative] response,

[First Name / Surname]

Your [informal job title] / [other job title] / [silly job title]

Go on then. Unsubscribe. I won't get too upset - [unsubscribe]

Job Interview Template

For job interviews, we can use the same style.

This rhythm/structure works.

Now just adjust it to make it 'you'.

Play with all of it - not just the stuff in brackets.

[Greeting] [First Name],

You've never heard of me. Hi, I'm [name]. I got your details [Fun explanation here. Admit if you just bought data.].

I'm writing to you because [why are you writing to them - keep it brief and fun.]

I'll be upfront. [Your mini pitch here. Don't avoid your weaknesses. Be upfront. Turn negatives into positives]

I'd love to meet you. To make it worth your while, I'll treat you to [serious suggestion] / [another normal suggestion] / [weird/fun suggestion] and promise to be somewhat [interesting / useful / entertaining / something else]. You never know, I may even [wear something weird/silly - do a magic trick - or something else that's too silly for a business situation.].

Finally, it's time to unleash my secret weapon. I've attached a picture of [name] of [cute animal]. Just what you've always wanted.

I await your [assume negative response],

[First Name / Surname]

Your [informal job title] / [other job title] / [silly job title]

Go on then. Unsubscribe. I won't get too upset - [\[unsubscribe link\]](#)

The Long Game

Some people will reply but can't meet for one reason or the other.

Ask them if:

- You can add them to your mailing list (If you have one.)
- You can add them to LinkedIn (You should be on this!)
- You can email them in 3 / 6 / 9 months - just to see if anything has changed.

These 'slow burn' people are still important. If you stay in touch fairly regularly, who knows what opportunities may arise.

One person I sent an email to kept it for an entire year before contacting me.

The time wasn't right. A year later, we did business.

That's the beauty of sending emails in this style.

| It's so different that people will remember it - especially if you remind them every few months.

We can send the right words in the right order to the right people.

The right time is hard.

But it may just come around. So stay in touch.

If they're on them, follow them on Twitter or Instagram or whatever the latest social network is.

THIRSTY FOR MORE?

Just when you thought it was over, I'm going to give you three huge Tips for massively increasing the success of everything we've just learned.

To do this in any big numbers is a lot of work but I find it's worth the effort once you've found a style and tone of writing that works for what you need.

Here you go. I wanted to make sure you got your money's worth!

UNEXPECTED GIVEAWAY NUMBER ONE

I'm going to give you a tip right near the end of this tutorial that will see your email open rates go as high as 70%.

- 1. Write a letter to your prospect first.**
- 2. Send an email a few days later.**
- 3. In the email mention something from the letter you sent in the subject line.**
- 4. Make sure the email is different to the letter but in a similar style.**
- 5. You've now made a great impression twice.**

Some people will get in touch with you just because you've sent a letter.

Some people will get in touch because you've touched them twice with something unique.

UNEXPECTED GIVEAWAY NUMBER TWO

This isn't something I've done - as I've always had so many responses I haven't needed to.

However, this may not be the case in all situations.

If you want to maximise results, call those who've opened your email but not replied.

I know that's old school, but it isn't really cold calling. It's sort of warm calling.

You have a great opening line.

"Hi, It's Jon. I sent you a strange email with an a picture of an otter attached to it..."

It'll help you get past gatekeepers.

Not always - but you have more chance than most.

Logical Absurdity

Allow me to be pretentious for a moment.

All you've learned today can be applied to more than just emails and letters.

It can be applied to advertising both offline and online, creating innovative products, developing PR angles, flirting with good looking people and anything where being = interesting, novel and creative will give you an advantage.

There's a great quote from one of the greatest men in advertising, Bill Bernbach.

"It may well be that creativity is the last unfair advantage we're legally allowed to take over our competitors."

Try weird ideas. Sometimes they work.

Play with form.

What we've made today is essentially an over the top parody of a cold email. Think about that.

People expect something and you've done something totally off the wall different.

I learned recently this is called "Pattern Interruption."

It's a sales technique. Looking back, the best salesman I ever met used to start cold calls with "Hello Jill. Don't worry. You've never heard of me."

That was his version of the pattern interrupt.

He still got told to 'fuck off' sometimes, but he did a lot better than most.

I don't have the patience to cold call. This is my version of cold calling.

People can skim read emails. They can't skim read cold calls.

Make it worth their while to skim read your email.

Break convention.

Do the unexpected.

Compel interest.

Make people smile.

Write platitudes.

Win With Words.

Other Resources

Welcome to the final part of this guide.

If you really want to delve deeper, you can.

I'll go through some books, software and videos that will help you really master your craft.

Here you go...

Books

Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion

Dr. Robert Cialdini

Creative Mischief

Dave Trott

Comedy Bible

Judy Carter

These Might Help As They Influenced Me:

Kingdom of Fear

Hunter S. Thompson

Hunter knew how to write incredible entertaining [letters](#).

David Thorne

I'll Go Home Then; It's Warm And Has Chairs - The Unpublished Emails.

Check out his famous 'spider letter' <http://27bslash6.com/overdue.html>

Videos

Robert Cialdini: The Psychology of Persuasion

Dave Trott: The Persuasion Sessions

IT'S ALL OVER

You made it out alive!

If you have any comments, complaints, questions, sonnets, declarations of war or love, jokes, rants, manic ramblings or weirdly personal insults, get in touch.

Email me at jon@charm-offensive.co.uk

Tweet me @jonbuchan - although I'm not on there daily.

Add me on Facebook... Add me on LinkedIn.

Fax me if you live in a parallel universe where the 80s loop over and over.

Or find my whereabouts and shout "OI JON! I BOUGHT YOUR FILTHY GUIDE AND I WANNA HAVE A WORD OR TWO WITH YOU!" and we can talk in person.

Finally, feel free to send your attempts at cold emails to me with the subject "[Win With Words] Is this good?"

I may even reply!

I've been Jon Buchan, and you've been a wonderful yet eerily quiet audience.

May Your Lines Land Like Lasers!

Thank You,

Jon



This happened.

THE END