

The Email Bridge Report

or

“11 Ways to Love Your Leaver”



How to Bridge the Gap Between
“I Don’t Know You” and “Here’s My Credit Card!”

by Howie Jacobson, PhD
Author, *AdWords For Dummies*





Part 1: Why Build an Email Bridge?

Sad Ending to a Love Story

Scene 1: Boy Meets Girl

Say hello to a boy named Avigdor.

Avigdor is straight, single, and looking for love.

One night at a garden party he meets a girl named Zita.

He's immediately attracted to her.

Zita thinks Avigdor's kind of cute, too. The two of them chat for a while, then take a walk and end up by a pond with beautiful polished stepping stones.

Did I mention the moon is full? ☺

Inside, the party is ending. The music has stopped, conversations have faded, and car engines are revving.

Avigdor has fallen head over heels for Zita. So he makes the following proposal:

“Let's get married right now.”

Zita looks at him like he's crazy. After all, they've known each other only for a couple of hours.

Avigdor sees the confusion and consternation on Zita's face, so he quickly changes tack:

“OK, we don't have to get married right now. Let's keep this one date going until you're ready to get married. I know an all-night bakery where we can go until 6am when the diner opens.

“You can grab a shower at my place after breakfast, then we can go birdwatching at the arboretum until lunchtime. After lunch I thought we'd go biking in the park, then maybe order Thai takeout and catch a movie at my place.



The Email Bridge Report (11 Ways to Love Your Leaver)

“If you’re not ready to marry me by then, I suggest club hopping downtown. We could spend the night in a hotel, then drive out to meet my folks the next day...”

If you were Zita, at what point in that monologue do you turn on your heels and escape as fast as you can?

Avigdor doesn’t understand that relationship building takes time. That before someone will say Yes to your proposal of increased connection and intimacy, they need to get to know you, like you and trust you.

You understand that, don’t you?

But does your web site?

Do You Have a “Marry Me This Instant” Web Site?

Asking for the sale is like asking someone to marry you. It’s a big commitment. And it takes time.

Diana Ross sang, “You can’t hurry love. You’ve just got to wait. ... It’s a game of give and take.”

Jim Morrison sang, “Hello, I love you won’t you tell me your name? Girl, I want to be with you all of my life.”

Is your site acting more like Diana or Jim?

Think about it: when someone comes to your site, isn’t it set up to ask them for a decision **right now**, before they leave? If they leave, what are the chances that they will ever come back?

And if you’re using AdWords or some other money- or labor-intensive way of getting web site traffic, do you really want to take a chance by asking those strangers to “marry you” by giving you money as soon as they’ve met you?

How Long Are They Staying?

If you have Google Analytics or some other analytics program installed on your web site, then you can see exactly how long visitors are spending with you. Go check now – the number may shock you. I’ll wait.



The Email Bridge Report (11 Ways to Love Your Leaver)



A sample “Average Time on Site” calculation from Google Analytics

Write the number of minutes and seconds here: _____

Now think about this: Is that enough time for someone to go from stone cold stranger to eager buyer?

If not, what can you do about it?

The Power of Email

If you aren’t systematically and aggressively collecting email addresses of visitors to your web site, then you’re giving up the opportunity to develop a naturally-paced relationship with them over time.

Email followup is the most powerful way to build the bridge between where your prospect is and where they need to be in order to happily make a purchase.

Think of each email as a stepping stone: one more reason for your Zita to feel comfortable with you. On solid ground.

People Love / Hate Getting Email

We focus mostly on the bad part of email – the spam, the annoying un-funny jokes from the person who can’t take a hint, the silly pictures of cats on toilet seats, and of course, if you’ve even been downwind of an Internet marketer, the endless promotional emails that tout the latest, greatest product launch in a mind-numbing cascade of selfishness.

But we hate those particular emails because we love the medium. We love the immediacy – how quickly we can get an answer to a burning question. We love the quality and quantity of valuable information we can access.



The Email Bridge Report (11 Ways to Love Your Leaver)

We love getting the emails we love to get. (That sounds obvious, but I have a hunch it's actually profound.)

We love emails that are about us. That speak of things that matter. That respect our time, our intellect, and our pocketbooks.

And amid the sea of email garbage that is the typical inbox, those are the emails you will write to your prospects. You will “date” them, slowly, respectfully, inviting them to take the next step only when they're ready. Eliciting murmured “yeses” by making sensible, zero-risk offers. Sharing your unique voice and passion as an authentic human being. Gaining trust by being trustworthy.

How you court is a free sample of how you act in the marriage. How you conduct the email relationship is a free sample of how you will serve the once they become your customer.

Face it: your prospect is almost certainly going to leave your site without making a purchase on their first visit.


So you're going to offer them some really good goody in exchange for their email address and permission to follow up. Something so good, they'd pay for it. (For an entire course on how to create that something, see www.LeadsintoGold.com - as an added bonus, you get to see a photo of me from before I discovered healthy eating ☺)

And then you're going to create an email bridge from where they are now to where you know they need to go.

You're the expert – they're not. By coming to your site and giving you their email address, they've put themselves in your hands. Guide them, protect them, and teach them as well as you can. The more generous and helpful you are, the more your prospects come to see you as a wise advisor rather than a self-interested peddler.

Note: many people ask what service I recommend to send bulk emails and manage my list. I tell them I couldn't do it without AWeber, which you can find at www.aweber.com.

(If you value this report and want to shake a little coin my way, visit them via my affiliate link: <http://howie.aweber.com>. Thanks!)



askHowie
The Email Bridge Report
(11 Ways to Love Your Leaver)

Part 2: How to Structure the Bridge

So how to create the bridge? By asking and answering the following questions (use the worksheet on the last page of this report):

1. Where Should They Go?

First, assess as clearly as you can where you want them to go. What is the next thing you want them to do? Buy your front-end product? Attend a teleseminar or webinar? Join your free forum and upload their photo? Something else?

I'm no civil engineer, but I'm pretty sure you can't build a structurally sound bridge without knowing where the bridge will end.

(And of course, once they reach that first milestone, you have other bridges ready to take them the step after that.)

2. Why Should They Go There?

How will they benefit by taking that next step? Make a list of as many benefits as possible.

Here are some examples of benefits, some generic, and some quite specific:

- Save money
- Make money
- Save time
- Be more attractive
- Reduce uncertainty and risk
- Have more control over your career
- Get better gas mileage
- Look younger
- Start your own business assessing the value of baseball cards

3. Why Aren't They There Already?

Make a list of all the things that are stopping them from taking that first step right now. Things like:

They don't know enough about the product/service
They are comparing several options and haven't decided yet



The Email Bridge Report (11 Ways to Love Your Leaver)

There's something that concerns them about your product/service
They don't know you yet
They don't like you yet
They don't trust you yet
They have an erroneous belief about how to solve their problem

4. Are There Other Bridges?

What else promises them the same or similar benefits as your product/service?
Make a list. For each item on the list, explain why your product/service is dramatically different.

It could be better. Cheaper. More reliable. Available in red. Guaranteed against leakage for life. Shipped for free. Bigger. Softer. Healthier. Easier to clean. Specifically made for left-handers.

You get the idea.

If you can't come up with a single differentiator, then ask yourself: "How can I create one?"

If you can't, then ask yourself: "Why am I in business?"

Seriously.

Strive to be the best in the world. At this one thing. For this one group of people.

As Jack Black says in *Kung Fu Panda*, "There is no charge for awesomeness." It's the price of admission.

Use the Worksheet

Use the worksheet included on the last page of this report to answer the four questions. The answers will serve as your strategic template.

The next section gives you 11 different types of email. Study them, and then mix and match the type with the purpose. For example, Case Study emails are often effective at answering objections. Question & Answer emails are great at building rapport and educating customers. Pop culture references (like *Kung Fu Panda* – did you notice?) help to establish you as a real person, builds a bridge of affinity, and makes people smile (which is always a good thing in sales).



Part 3: 11 Ways to Love Your Leaver

1. Question & Answer

The Q&A email begins by sharing a question that you have been asked, followed by your answer. If you have permission to use the asker's name and company, do so – it subconsciously reinforces the idea that you are a real person

General advice – helpful to anyone. Not so specific or detailed that you deter people from asking more questions.

How do you create this email? Simple. By answering real questions. As business owners, we do this all the time. But usually we answer one person at a time, and we never repurpose the answer.

Now, when you get an email question, write a great, well-thought-out answer.

When you get a phone question, record your answer (if you do it into a desk mic hooked up to your computer and don't record the other person on the phone, there are no legal issues).

Look upon every time you share information as a chance to create a business asset that you can use over and over again.


Here's an example from the askHowie blog (www.askhowie.com/blog):

A reader whose entire online business consists of a \$20 book on a health topic wants to know how she can compete, AdWordsily, against big pharmaceutical companies bidding on the same keywords.

My answer: She can't. Not with AdWords.

AdWords is a lot like poker, a game in which I reached my pinnacle in 7th grade. I'm no shark, mind you, but my brief foray into the game at summer camp taught me two things:

1. Don't play against people who are much better than you at poker strategy, unless you want to part with your entire summer's supply of Captain Crunch and Freihofer's cookies by June 27th.



askHowie
The Email Bridge Report
(11 Ways to Love Your Leaver)

2. Don't play against people who are mediocre at poker but have a stash of junk food the size of a offensive lineman in their trunk, and aren't afraid to bet it all.

In other words, both skill and prodigious amounts of stupid cash can squash an opponent.

True of poker. And true of AdWords.

With AdWords, skill can look like marketing technique: great ads, strategically-chosen positive and negative keywords, insta-blink landing pages, and so on.

But skill in AdWords also refers to the most important metric in the whole system: visitor value.

=====
The Importance of Visitor Value
=====


Whoever makes the most money from a click, on average, gets to spend the most to acquire that click. If you sell a \$20 self-help book and you compete against someone selling a course of treatment that costs thousands of dollars a year (and that end-users don't even have to pay full price for because of insurance), you just can't make the math work for you.

What does this mean for the reader with the \$20 book and no way to compete at AdWords?

Two things.

First, use AdWords to hone your marketing, not to make money from book sales. Find out what keywords, what ads, and what sales language on your site do the best.

Second (and if you saw the passion and sense of mission in her question, you'd understand completely), use the non-AdWords web to become a prominent leader in this particular health field. Seth Godin's new book is about how to create and lead a Tribe using online tools and your own passion and personality. Sean D'Souza has been teaching me a step-by-step methodology to leverage my own expertise and personality to establish a leadership position in my field. (Hey, if you guys both happen to read this post and you haven't connected personally



askHowie
The Email Bridge Report
(11 Ways to Love Your Leaver)

yet, I highly recommend it. I'd love to eavesdrop on the conversation between two of my marketing heroes.)

Facebook, StumbleUpon, Digg, and all the others - learn from Dan Hollings (Twitter dhollings) how to leverage social media to grow your presence and influence among your target group. When people KLT (know like trust) you, the books will fly off the shelves.

And if the books are truly helpful, your tribe will joyously share them with others, giving you free viral exposure.

Third (nobody expects the Spanish inquisition), build your business far beyond a \$20 book. Come on, you've got more than that! Consulting, coaching, courses, patient advocacy, membership web site - think about how to add more value once someone has read your book. Ask your readers what they want (that's why I survey every AdWords For Dummies reader who gives me their email address).

That's where AdWords and poker diverge, and it's the crux of the whole matter. Poker is about taking. Business is about giving. As John Lennon sang, "In the end the love you take is equal to the love you make."

=====
A Blatant Pitch
=====

Hey, while I have you here, I'm offering a teleclass series for AdWords advertisers on what I call "AdWords Ball" - measuring and testing everything for quick and significant improvement. It's easier than it looks, and in 8 weeks you'll learn - and implement - all my techniques for increasing your sales while decreasing your spend.

Learn more at www.adwordsball.com

And if you're one of the kids who won all my Freihofer's in 1977, I haven't forgotten you. I raise you a raisin nut Chunky bar.

2. Education

Education is simply sharing valuable information to help your prospect make a good decision. The key here is, the more invested you are in them taking that next step, the harder it is to be credible.



The Email Bridge Report (11 Ways to Love Your Leaver)

Entertain the possibility that your product/service may not be the best thing for them. Write an email that to the best of your ability highlights the objective differences, rather than going through all sorts of gymnastics to prove yourself superior to the competition.

Often, just helping people think clearly is enough to tip the sale in your favor. People think, “Wow, this person is being upfront and honest and helpful. That’s the sort of person I like doing business with.”

And if they honestly would be better off with a competitor’s option, they’ll remember your forthright selflessness and tell their friends. What goes around, comes around. If the other merchant doesn’t deliver, you can bet they’ll be back.

Template:

“If you’re considering _____ (Action #1) to _____ (solve their problem / satisfy their desire), you may be wondering whether _____ (a competitive solution) is the answer.

“Here are the three differences between (Action #1) and (Competitive Solution)...”

3. Testimonial

A testimonial is a great way to toot your own horn, precisely because it isn’t you who’s doing the tooting.

The best testimonials are produced, rather than lucked upon.

They answer objections (even your happiest customer had concerns and doubts and objections before they became your customer – the more you can help them remember what they were and how they were overcome through experiencing your product/service, the more powerful their testimonial will be in convincing others with the same objections).

They provide social proof (especially if you include name, city/state, company, title, link to website, and whatever else you can get your hands on that makes them “real” looking).

They say things about your company that would be bragging if you said them.



The Email Bridge Report (11 Ways to Love Your Leaver)

The art of collecting testimonials is not hard, but can be immensely rewarding. Without a solid collection of other people's experiences of you in your marketing arsenal, you're basically asking people to become guinea pigs at your say-so.

I offer a short and powerful course on "Testimonial Farming" that includes an audio mp3 and a PDF transcript. You can order it at www.askhowie.com/testimonials.

4. Case Study

A case study is like a testimonial, in that it's the story of a customer's success using your product/service. The difference is, a case study follows a specific format, and is more clinical and descriptive than a testimonial, which can be highly emotional.

Case studies can be written in your voice, although it's often effective to ask a client to tell their own story.

Here's an example:

The Situation:

A client who sells a consumer product online was paying too much for their AdWords leads and sales. They came to me hoping to reduce their costs without reducing sales.

What We Did:

I installed ROI tracking on their site and hooked it up to AdWords on February 7, 2008. I started split testing ads at that point. After 3 weeks, I paused negative ROI keywords and placements, and deleted the inferior ads.

Results:

The client's AdWords spend dropped significantly, but their total sales remained the same. Before, they spent \$35 to make \$100. After, they spent only \$20. In their case, that amounts to a monthly savings of almost \$14,000.



The Email Bridge Report (11 Ways to Love Your Leaver)



This image shows the difference in AdWords statistics from before (January 2008) and after (March 2008). Notice the big difference: decreased spend for the same number of conversions.

If you send plain-text email, you can't include the visual. In that case, turn the table into text, and include a link to read the case study online to see the full effect.

I often include this line at the top of longish emails: "Read this newsletter online in full color at www.askhowie.com/whatever..."



The Email Bridge Report
(11 Ways to Love Your Leaver)

5. Free E-course

The nice thing about the free e-course is that it's both the email content AND the offer that gets your prospect to sign up in the first place.

You're also setting very clear expectations for how many emails they will receive, and how often.

Couch the e-course as a bite-at-a-time process to achieve one of the benefits you listed, or as a comprehensive list of options they can choose from.

7 steps to AdWords success

5 Secrets to Painless Recovery from Root Canal

9 Mistakes To Avoid When Starting a Diet

11 Email Formats that Turn Visitors into Customers (sound familiar?)

For some reason, I used only odd numbers. That's probably irrational, but I suppose I'm stuck in my ways. Perhaps the oddness implies incompleteness, i.e. there's more here for you after this course is over.

The challenge is, how to continue emailing after the course ends. You can offer a second course that picks up where the first one left off, add an additional bonus email, solicit questions, tell a story. The only time you have to deal with this is right when the course ends – you need a good reason to come back and bother them again.

One way to do this is to tease the next installment. In each email, you pre-sell the next one: “In the next lesson (which you'll find in your inbox tomorrow), you'll learn how to lose weight by flicking rubber bands at librarians.”

After the “final” email in the series, tell the reader that you're going to overdeliver:

“I know I promised you 5 tips, but I have a couple more that are really powerful that I just couldn't keep to myself. Look in your inbox tomorrow for Bonus Tip #1: The Spaghetti in Orbit Effect.”

6. Request for Interaction

It seems counter-intuitive to the idea of automating the process, but I'm a big believer in actually interacting for real with prospects, and not relying on the autoresponder technology to do the whole job.



The Email Bridge Report
(11 Ways to Love Your Leaver)

One way to do this is to ask them for feedback and questions. The shorter this email, the better. Make it an email that you would actually write to prospects individually if there were no way to automate the process.

For example:

Yesterday you visited Leads into Gold and downloaded two free chapters.

I just wanted to ask you, was it helpful? What were you looking for when you came to my site? (If you haven't read them yet, I totally understand. You'll get to them when you get to them.)

If you'll hit reply, I'd love to hear from you. I want to make sure the information on the site is as helpful as possible.

All the best,

Howie Jacobson

Expect to get responses, and pay attention to them. You'll learn things to help you improve your website and your lead generating magnet (the two free chapters, in the above example).


And you'll start having sales conversations with prospects – naturally, easily, and without the feel of a cold call. If they ask a good question or voice a strong objection, email them and give them your phone number and invite them to call.

7. Invitation to a Teleseminar/Webinar

Sometimes people need to interact with you live to feel comfortable. Anyone can look good on paper, and anyone can fake kindness and generosity and cleverness in an audio or video if they spend enough money on editing.

But to impress someone in person, in real time, is a powerful way to build the KLT bridge.

It's hard to schedule these emails to go out in advance as autoresponse, but you can use them as broadcast emails whenever you set up a teleseminar or webinar.



askHowie
The Email Bridge Report
(11 Ways to Love Your Leaver)

8. Goody on Website

As Perry Marshall says, the main goal of every email is to get them to open and read your next one.

Goodies are a powerful way to incent this behavior. The more value you provide up front, the more you are training your prospects to look forward to your emails.

Create additional reports, tools, audio downloads, video demos, worksheets, whatever – and just give them away in emails.

Don't forget to sell them – even free stuff needs a sales pitch – by explaining the benefit they'll receive, and the low cost.

By low cost, I mean principally time, since the price of free stuff is by definition free. “This video tutorial takes 2 and a half minutes to watch. I share a killer tip at 1:15, so make sure your pencil is sharpened...”

Technical Note: DO NOT attach the file to the email. Instead, upload the file to your website, create a download page with a link, and send the link in the email. (Like how you downloaded this report.)

9. Personal Story with Moral

This combines education with storytelling, which is the easiest way to make the medicine of learning go down. Additionally, a personal story lets your personality shine through: what you like to do, where you live, how you interact with your environment, etc.

Think about it: we all like to do business with people we like. With people who are like us. With people who are not afraid to laugh at themselves and make themselves vulnerable.

Here's an example from my www.LeadsintoGold.com autoresponder series:

Hi {!firstname_fix}

I was driving up 95 North to Providence, Rhode Island the other day during a classic East Coast traffic jam, and I was just having the darndest time finding a radio station I wanted to listen to. I was in the mood for brain food, not music (it's hard to enjoy a really good traveling tune when your average speed on a 6-lane highway is 19 miles per hour).



The Email Bridge Report (11 Ways to Love Your Leaver)

Anyway, I settled on a public radio station somewhere in Connecticut that had a noontime feed from the University of Texas called 'Engines of Our Ingenuity,' about the history of scientific advancement. I caught just the tail end of the show, which was discussing acceleration (the irony!). The moral of the story was that the concept of acceleration was too hard for even the smartest mathematicians to deal with until Sir Isaac Newton invented calculus.

The last line of the commentary was as follows:

'Mathematics allows fools to do what only geniuses could do without it.'

Wow. That's food for thought. (Especially at 19 miles per hour with 160 miles to go.)

I'd like to generalize the comment, to make it more useful:

'Effective systems allow fools to do what only geniuses could do without them.'

Or even more generally:

'Effective systems allow ordinary people to achieve extraordinary results.'

Let me give you three examples:

1. For a project for my daughter's school, I drew a large map of Africa freehand yesterday, by putting graph paper over an atlas page and drawing the same map onto a poster with much larger squares. The grid was the system that enabled me to draw something that 9 out of 10 first students could identify as a continent and not a wet sweat sock.
2. I can find the name of anyone with a listed phone number in the United States just by typing the 10 digits directly into the search box at Google. Without this complex, robust system (which I just experience as a simple tool), I'd have to spend a lot of time and money turning phone numbers into names.
3. I create compelling marketing campaigns for my clients using a very simple, step-by-step system of research, planning, brainstorming, synthesizing, and executing. If I had to be creative every single step of the way, I'd never



The Email Bridge Report (11 Ways to Love Your Leaver)

get anything done. But because I use a system, taught to me by marketing masters who have refined it over the past 100 years, I can help my clients market just about anything (as long as there's a large enough hungry audience).

One day, I sat down and transferred my system for attracting and converting new leads into a step-by-step, paint-by-numbers tool. I wanted it to be as straightforward for my customers as typing a phone number into Google.

10. Book Review

Book reviews are easy ways to impart knowledge, since you didn't have to create the knowledge. You just read it.

Think about how friends communicate with friends: they share books and movies they like, recommend restaurants and night clubs, etc. The book review, if done in a breezy and concise fashion, thus mimics the way intimates talk with each other.

Notice in the following example that the book review leads to a sales message:

I have to recommend an amazing book, *The E-Myth Revisited*, by Michael Gerber. In it, he describes why the vast majority of all small businesses fail, and why so few of the ones that hang on bring happiness and prosperity to their owners.

His crucial finding: those who fail spend most of their time working **IN** the business. Those who succeed spend most of their time working **ON** the business.

Leads into Gold is designed specifically for people who are really good at what they do - that is, those who are experts at working **IN** the business - but don't feel they have the ability or personality to get good at working **ON** the business.

11. Pop Culture Reference

Remember that pop culture changes all the time, so don't choose references that are likely to fade from collective consciousness quickly. Use current events in broadcast emails, not the autoresponder bridge.

Classic movies, long-running TV shows, children's books, "nostalgia" celebrities all make great topics for emails that use metaphor to make your points. Below is an email I wrote about Dr. Seuss's book, *Green Eggs and Ham*.



The Email Bridge Report (11 Ways to Love Your Leaver)

You want to find a popular culture reference, or at least a reference known by much of your target market. Don't use obscure references that will end up being inside jokes that exclude your prospects from the party.

I want to talk about a business book that has had far too much influence over how we conduct sales.

That's right, I'm referring to Dr. Seuss's classic, Green Eggs and Ham. For those of you who haven't read it lately, the protagonist is Sam I Am, a Green Eggs and Ham salesperson who chases, cajoles, begs, threatens, and stalks his prospect at great personal expense and risk. The end of the book vindicates this approach as the prospect finally tastes the Green Eggs and Ham and proclaims, "I like Green Eggs and Ham, Sam I Am!"

From this ending, generations of future salespeople have learned three lessons:

1. Persistence pays off;
2. "No" doesn't mean "no," and;
3. The prospect has no idea what's good for them.

Let's evaluate each of these in turn...

And the list goes on and on. The key is to develop a relationship based on KLT (you want your prospects to Know, Like and Trust you) while you develop the sales message for action #1.

Next Steps

1. Complete the worksheet on the next page.
2. Choose the biggest, most important benefit and choose an email format that can communicate the benefit to the reader. Write an email in text or Word format.
3. Sign up for AWeber at <http://howie.aweber.com> (or just www.aweber.com if you want AWeber to keep my commission ☺)
4. Paste that first email into AWeber and send yourself a test.
5. Sit back with a nice fruit smoothie and congratulate yourself for placing the first stone in your Email Bridge.



The Bridge Building Tool

Action #1: _____

What are the benefits to them of taking Action #1?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

What are their current objections/hesitations/beliefs that are keeping them from taking Action #1 right away?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____

What are some other ways they could achieve the benefits of Action #1 (competitors), and how is Action #1 dramatically different and better?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____