HOW TO SUCCESSFULLY

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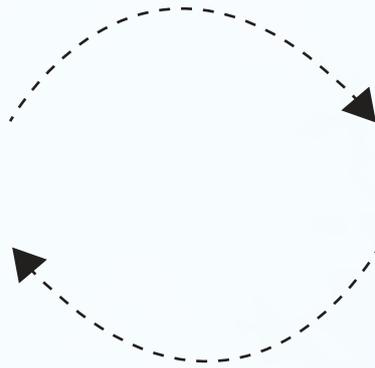## FORTUNE

1000

CONTRACTS

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Introduction

This chapter aims to share the vision of closing the gap between "Traditional" and "ITAD" digital marketing by utilizing both strategies.

Traditional Marketing

ITAD Digital Marketing

Dear reader. It is not my intention to bloat you with useless information about myself, although there were plenty of fun moments, such as running from 2 racketeering thugs when I was nine years old. The former Soviet Union was a wild place in the 90s. But let's leave this for another story.

In this book, you will find well-defined tactics and strategies to scale your ITAD business. From last-minute calls to local transportation companies trying to make a **$2,000 deal cost-neutral to high-stakes negotiations with Fortune 500 companies.** It's a roller coaster ride of twists and turns. The strategies revealed in this book come from years of blood, sweat, and tears and a few champagne - soaked celebrations when bideals closed. I've made every mistake possible, so you don't have to.
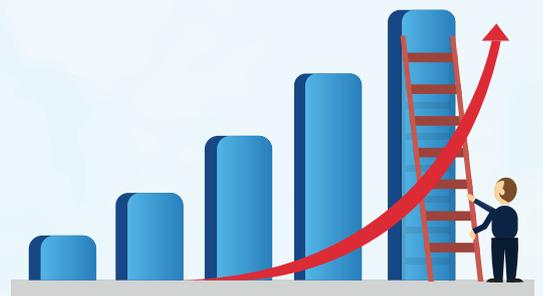
You will find marketing and sales tactics used successfully by dozens of sales reps fresh out of college who have never had anything to do with ITAD.

Rather than following the industry where ITAD organizations steal salespeople from each other in hopes that they would steal some of their old accounts back, I focused on two of the most significant problems regarding **ITAD scaling - lead generation and logistics.** Throughout the five years of working in ITAD marketing and lead generation, we made 9 out of 10 new hires profitable for organizations, bringing **$170-$360k** in new gross profit their first year and double the next. Everything I list in this book, including software, marketing templates, responses, sales process, etc. , has been personally tested . throughout the last six years.

These tactics can push smaller ITAD companies **($2-$5mil)** into hyper-growth, packing an additional **40%-80%** of new revenue every year, and work even better for midsize companies**($30m-$150m)** if they have more locations and established sales teams that can handle the lead volume.

Please feel free to skip this chapter.
However, you will get plenty of helpful information from my tral-and-error introduction.

I am a first-generation immigrant who has lived in the US for approximately **20 years**. I have **2 Bachelor's** Degrees (a Bachelor of Science in Mathematics from Uzbekistan and a Marketing from Arizona State University)

2013-2016 - Corporate Sales. How I got into ITAD:
My first big corporate sales job was with Verizon Wireless from **2013 to 2016**. I was selling cell phones, and I loved all of it: the thrill of chasing your monthly commission check, the multipliers, and the ability to dictate your own pay.

I made it to the winner's circle (company-wide celebrations) every year, got recognized for being in the **top B2B** sales, and even missed the president's cabin by one spot (top 5 fully paid trips to Hawaii).

Unfortunately, **all the good things must end**, and Verizon was one of those good things.

Company changed... Commissions got smaller; quotas got tougher to hit; store traffic was dwindling with all the online sales, and the management got a lot more "microey."I consistently hit **300%+ over quota 11 out of 12 months**, and even after all that, I had to adhere to a new policy of talking to my assistant manager three times with each customer.

They called it -

Pre-Coach   Mid-Coach   Post-Coach

I understand how this could be helpful for sales reps who did not care about their commission pay and were there just to collect their hourly salary, but for me, it was torture.

It seemed too inefficient for my mathematical brain because I had to spend 10-15 minutes talking to my Assistant Manager with each new customer. Most of my Assistant Managers were "cool" - I met the numbers and made them look good; in return, they would leave me, give me high fives during our "mid-coaches," and fully trust me with sales. However, one assistant manager, Chad, considered himself a sales god and always "knew" what products to offer customers.

He and I will get into fights all the time. "Chad, I am not offering a mobile hotspot to an old lady who does not know how to use her basic phone. She barely has money to pay for her plan as it is. Stop." - you would hear me yelling in the back frequently. It got so bad that I called his previous store four states away and asked them if he did well as a sales rep. He never hit over 300% of the quota in his two years of sales. Imagine taking 18 customers a day and spending 3 hours talking to Chad daily... I was going insane...

During that time, I saw most of the top sales reps in the district left Verizon to start working for Waste Management. In fact, at that time, four of my direct co-workers also switched to working for Waste Management and kept irking me to do the same.

Everybody told me that **Recycling and Waste Management** is the new hype!

The changes were introduced in **January 2016, and by June 2016,** my inner Russian finally took over. I went off on Chad, the store and district managers, and quit the company.

After working there for three years, I established relationships with many local business owners in the valley when I left Verizon. I had half a dozen invitations for an interview without even applying for a single job the first month.
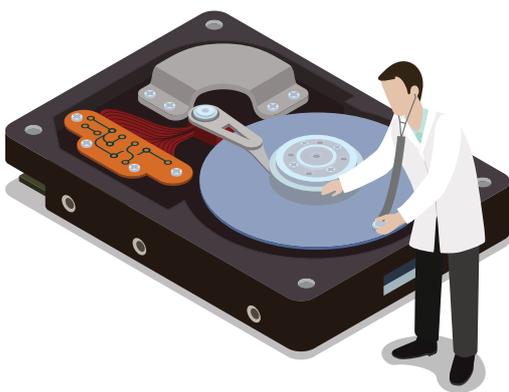
At that time, one of my consistent business clients owned an **ITAD business called DMD Systems Recovery** in Tempe, Arizona. When he heard that I quit Verizon, he invited me for lunch and told me that his previous sales rep made well into six figures and needed somebody to build the whole process from the ground up—and invited me for an interview. It was everything I needed to hear - I could make more money in ITAD and have the flexibility to try out new things - SOLD.

2016-2020 - ITAD Phase: Three interviews later, I was hired as an account executive for a small ITAD company, and my journey in the ITAD world started. A little bit about myself - **my name is Vladimir**, and I have a goofy Russian accent. I quickly found out working in ITAD that a guy named Vladimir with a heavy Russian accent cold calling into Fortune 1,000 accounts and talking about their data security was NOT an excellent prospecting idea. Especially after **Trump won the election** and the news was filled with **"Russian Hackers."**

I crashed and burned for two months straight, cold calling. Luckily, we had a subscription to a contacts database called Rainking (bought by discover.org and then bought up by Zoominfo) and a marketing **SMTP server named Sendgrid.** I remember specifically asking the owner how he was able to grow his existing business, and he told me that most of **it was email marketing.**

It is where my journey to digital marketing started. However, my direct supervisor was not convinced as he saw **email marketing** attempts with other more prominent companies with dedicated staff fail miserably, and there was this stubborn Russian kid who had never done **digital marketing or an ITAD** before telling him that it would work.

For the record, I would be doubting too. Luckily, the **owner and the CEO** were very open to new ideas and strategies, and we made a friendly bet the company hired another sales rep who specialized in cold calling. The race began with who would close most of the business and **sign contracts in the next three months.**

While my counterpart was cold calling and positioning ITAD on the phone, I was day and night reading, searching, and researching everything there was to know about email marketing. My competitor was honing her cold-calling skills, and I was learning and honing my marketing skills.

I would try one setup with specific settings and templates and record the results. Then another, and another. I remember two months into trial and error, I was about to give up. Setting up a technical email and domain for optimal inbox delivery requires precision, as every mistake can cost months of lost time. The competition was getting to me, and I was losing on the lead count. I sent thousands of emails daily to **any company with 1,000+ employees,** while my competitor only focused on **companies with 10k+ employees.** I would gain 0-1 calls per week with lesser sized companies, while my counterpart would consistently generate 2-3 calls weekly.

One evening during dinner, around 8:00 PM, I came up with what I thought was "the best setup I could think of." I was too excited, and I knew the security lock key... I drove back to work and entered the facility, nearly triggering an alarm. Set the whole campaign up and then left at 2:00AM. I could not wait; this was my first title and **seniority-driven multi-step campaign.**

I created 3-5 templates depending on the recipient's Job Title and sent emails from top to bottom, C-level down to M-level, referencing my previous attempts. Campaign worked! It brought four meetings on the first day and consistently 2-3 calls daily. **Company sizes varied anywhere from 1,000+ to 50,000+**. My SalesForce pipeline and activities started exploding!

Two weeks later, I had an urgent meeting with the CEO about how I was getting so many opportunities and handling them. I was told to share my leads with my counterpart as I would be overloaded soon. In hindsight, I should have because it would have been better for the company overall. But I did not. I took the competition too far, and I was getting paid commissions. I was hungry, and I was hustling.

Two months later, **I was consistently bringing $20k+ in gross profit**, while my boss had to let the cold caller go. The cold-calling experiment failed, and the sales rep got burned out. Three months later, I grew a pipeline to over $250k with over 80 different opportunities with companies of 1,000-50,000+ employees.

Four months after I launched my finally refined digital marketing campaign, we started consistently hiring sales reps every 5-9 months. As the result of a consistent supply of 150+ leads/opportunities per month, we grew the company by 285% in 3 years. So yes, ladies and gentlemen, emails do work. Research shows that email consistently generates around 30% of all incoming leads for B2B companies, making it the highest converting channel for cold outreach, and only **10% of the businesses successfully implement B2B email lead generation.** The leads and opportunities unlocked through carefully crafted email campaigns have proven to drive cost-effective growth. Simply put, organizations that do not actively pursue email outreach are leaving money on the table.

I enjoyed ITAD and working for some of the industry's most competent and tenacious people. I did both sales and marketing for four years, fulfilling two roles. It was the first role where I got to do marketing consistently and at scale. It reminded me why I picked Marketing over anything else in University, and it reignited my passion again. I remember telling my boss why I loved digital marketing so much. "It is like sales but with a much bigger and very loud microphone!" - I told him. The more excited I got about digital marketing, the less time I wanted to spend on sales.

I remember I worked for nine months straight on one of the Fortune 1000 contracts, and I got to the finish line waiting for the final signature. Only to hear that the CTO left the company, and new leadership put the whole project on hold for an unidentified period. I was furious. I spent so much time with this account, their legal team, negotiations, etc, the time I could have spent arranging 2-3 marketing campaigns.

There were so many great digital marketing tactics that I wanted to test, but I either needed time or money because I was doing sales most of the time. I wanted to try other channels, such as paid media, direct marketing, PR, publishing, and endorsements. Over the years, I asked my management a few times to move me 100% into marketing, but I was never told no or yes. It was more of a just wait, you are doing great in sales; we need you in sales.

Unfortunately, I realized that ITAD is different from the industry that rewards creativity in marketing. Most ITAD organizations do not even have a marketing department; if they have, it is usually a "part-time activity." ITAD marketing is very dry and limited to a direct approach, and for me to grow as a digital marketer, I had to look outside the industry. Let me take a moment to explain why ITAD marketing is stuck in a perpetual cycle of bad surface-level marketing.

What is the first thing an **outside digital agency** trying to break into ITAD does?

They would try Google Ads:

The problem with Google Ads is that the search term "ITAD" only has roughly **900 monthly searches across nine states** and is relatively competitive on the web.The keyword search "recycling" has almost **2,300 monthly searches**, but unfortunately, most ofthe traffic from that search is from consumers. Not many ITAD companies want to deal with consumers individually, and from my experience, the results of paid search - "recycling" brought consumers 85-90% of the time.

Facebook and Instagram Ads:

This would be a big no because it only attracts consumers unless targeted.

LinkedIn Ads:

While still a reliable lead generation source, LinkedIn is getting over-saturated and expensive for Ads. In mail - While this tool will generate leads, it is costly when it comes to cost per lead. I developed a few leads, but the price was **$500 - $1,500 per lead**, which was too expensive.

Traditional marketing models are less effective here, and ITAD business owners have been burned too often to invest in continuous trial and error. Digital Marketing agencies simply give up after the first or second failed attempt.

While traditional marketing did not work, what worked in ITAD for me was E-mail marketing, LinkedIn prospecting/messaging tools such as LinkedIn Helper, hiring SDRs for manual reachouts, and even ringless voicemail (a tool that drops a voicemail without a call) brought a few fantastic results. These **direct marketing tools** are not very traditional regarding digital marketing.

What essentially happens here is a dichotomy and a double-blind between traditional and ITAD marketing. Digital Agencies outside the ITAD need more knowledge and trial and error experience to understand ITAD digital marketing.

On the other hand, ITAD digital marketing directors have limited experience with ads, funnels, AI, and other traditional marketing tools because they simply did not work in the past, and no business owner wants to spend money on another trial and error.

We are jumping ahead but plan to run several tests this fall. Here is one of the strategies we plan to try for **Facebook and Instagram:** The problem with Facebook is that it is a consumer place, and you must focus more on a targeted approach.

First, I would create a custom target audience of CTOs and CIOs of Fortune 1,000 companies. I would then locate their profiles on LinkedIn and use the software that scrubs their information, including personal email accounts. Most 80-90% of the emails you scrub from LinkedIn are personal Gmail, Yahoo, etc., which people use for other social media platforms. Usually, people use the same Gmail account for Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn. (Sign up with the Google feature made it very easy!)

I would then create targeted Omni Channel marketing that included all of the above - PR, email, LinkedIn, Facebook, and Instagram ads to direct one consistent message.

In 2020, I left the ITAD company I worked for and decided to follow my passion for digital marketing while also providing consulting services. I wanted to learn everything about marketing: affiliate marketing, paid media, ads, funnels, websites, you name it. I saw an excellent opportunity to work with startups because they gave me the much-needed freedom to try different marketing approaches. Little did I know then that pursuing digital marketing consulting and working with those scrappy startups would thrust me into the Wild West of growth hacking. The strategies I had to employ opened my eyes to an entirely new world of marketing possibilities - though they sometimes went differently than planned. But the lessons, disasters, and victories along the way gave me unique expertise and some crazy stories. But more on that later.

2020-2022 - Startup Phase:

After doing ITAD for four years, I realized that while very deep, my knowledge was still limited to email and LinkedIn marketing. After researching where I wanted to take my digital marketing skills, I decided to focus on startups as they could give me a complete and unrestrained reign over their whole marketing process. I went on Indeed.com and applied for every marketing startup position possible, holding over 12 different interviews. I was fortunate to have some funds saved from my previous ITAD employment because I was not getting paid much.I would take on 2-3 startups at a time, learn about their product, and build different marketing channels more suited to business.

Here, I learned to be very frugal, dealing with low budgets and no leads or contacts. I also learned how to segment your potential customers and build an "ideal customer persona." My dear reader, let me tell you that in no way can my bachelor's degree in Marketing possibly compete against the training and learning I received during these two years.
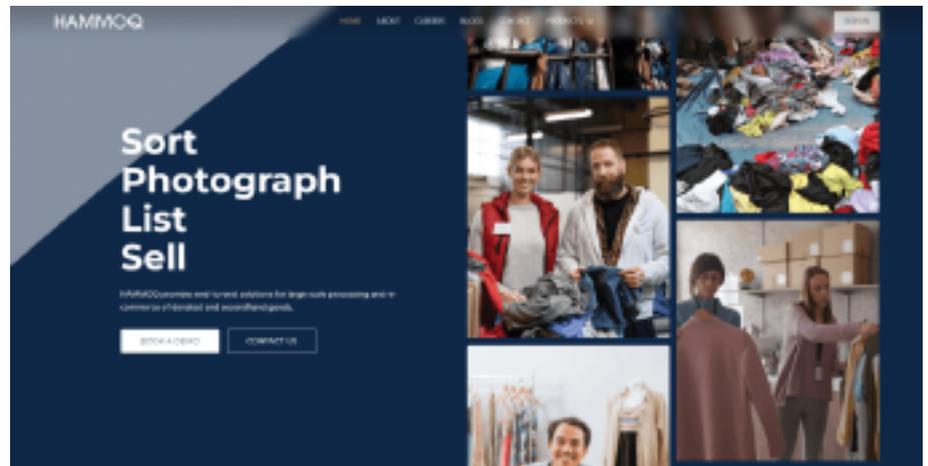
My most notable experience was HammoQ. An e-commerce SaaS startup company that needed fractional CRO for marketing and sales. It was a roller coaster ride! I was doing sales, customer service, and marketing. The company's owners decided to pursue funding through Venture Capitalists consistently, and let me tell you - these guys know how to set up aggressive growth goals that you need to hit. It is where I picked up skills such as Paid media- Google, Facebook Ads, Batch Email Marketing, affiliate, influencer, and online celebrity endorsements. Applying some of my digital marketing skills and setting up an affiliate program for YouTubers propelled our company into hyper-growth for ten months straight. We secured our first pre-seed **investment of $3m in May 2021** and another $15m in October 2021. Not too shabby for a 17-month startup… And let me tell you a secret: cold emails work like a charm when targeting influencers, investors, or affiliates. Crafting effective cold emails is a valuable skill you can leverage in countless ways, yet many people have yet to learn how effective it is. I went from being a one-man army to quickly putting together and offloading a staff of over 45 people, including sales, marketing, customer service, and some minor ops teams. My marketing brain kept having epiphanies (I know it's not professional, but imagine how I felt going from starvation for leads to getting consistently 500+ leads per month).

During my startup phase, some of my most notable marketing experiences and deliverables were:

Facebook and Google ads -140-180 B2B leads per month ($10-20k monthly budget),

Influencer Affiliate Marketing - 170-320 B2B/B2C leads per month ($5k budget)

Email Marketing (batch, highly targeted) - B2B enterprises 20-40 leads per month

Industry Celebrity Endorsements - worked with the most prominent content creators in the industry to create B2B/ B2C promotional content.

We ran this program once every 2-3 months and would generate a bulk of 200+ leads at the $6,000-$13,000 cost. (average was $3,000-$5,000 cost per video)

SEO and Domain authority - I moved the 2-year-old website from 15 DA to 39 within six months. I enjoyed working with starups; the flexibility and freedom to do anything were genuinely intoxicating. While working with startups, I often had to offload my responsibilities to more permanent staff as companies hire for more streamlined positions with fixed roles after they get funding. I remember when I was unloading our entire marketing setup, which consisted of influencer affiliate, email, LinkedIn, Facebook, and Google ads to the Senior Marketing Director that the company hired.

I was super excited! It was the first time I got to talk to a real marketing professional who started his whole career in marketing instead of being thrown into it by a necessity and failures of cold calling. I remember I was trying to impress him with the setup we had. It was… "cute". **My $20-$40k a month marketing budget** made my trainee giggle because those people deal with multi-million dollar budgets. This Russian proverb really hits home here -"Do not try to impress a hedgehog with your naked butt…". I felt harmless; while my digital marketing strategies worked, I lacked some serious punching power to make any dent in digital marketing. It was when I realized that I needed to work for more prominent companies to complete an entire cycle of digital marketing.

2022-2024 - Traditional Marketing Phase:

Over the last two years, I have focused solely on streamlined traditional digital marketing. I took on a project and worked as a multi-brand Marketing Director for a midsize local corporation. I cut out any sales responsibilities (even with startups, I had to train and onboard salespeople and frequently participate in "high stakes" sales calls). I lived and breathed nothing buttraditional marketing for the last two years. I met many incredible people who did extraordinary things, such as building $30-$60mil online sales funnels and 100% server-side tagging (a way to keep track of 100% of all your online traffic at the time).

During my traditional marketing phase, I learned that **Sales funnels** are a conventional way of building websites and landing pages for hyperconversion. Some of my landing pages converted 45% of the traffic they received. (conversion is when a visitor leaves their contact information)

YouTube, Instagram, and More Facebook Ads -
I started with managing some small off-brands with a $600k annual ad budget that quickly grew into a $ 6.5mil yearly ad budget focused on B2C. We converted over 5,000 leads and generated over 1,400 sales calls monthly!

Heavy utilization of AI - our marketing department used AI for nearly everything. To analyze campaign data, develop copywriting, and produce ad designs and creatives. One of my most notable experiences was building a $20 mil funnel for an online course that teaches various financial tactics for acquiring business funding. One of the biggest challenges was that the course creator needed an established reputation. While our ads converted great on the front end, there needed to be more clarity in purchasing products on the back end. Sales reps kept stating that the main objection was customers were required to think that the course was legitimate. Our strategy was clear - build as much public presence and reputation for course creators! We contacted a few Forbes Business and Entrepreneur journalists and published two articles. We went on popular YouTube entrepreneur podcasts and featured our course creator there with all our published articles. Afterward, we signed affiliate agreements and ran YouTube ads on those podcast channels and our other marketing efforts. The result was crazy - we went from converting 25-30 units per week to 50+. In just under eight months after releasing the course, we averaged $400k+ in weekly sales. Marketing is genuinely fascinating and broad. There are so many different layers and complexities to it that I would have never seen if I stayed in place the entire time. I went from being a store sales rep to a Senior Marketing Director with multi-million dollar budgets in 10 years. This 10-year journey was not easy; it was chaotic, and I failed plenty of times, but I am ultimately grateful for the chances I took.

Now to present:

My dear reader, I hope you understand our point of view here now. My brain is going wild after drinking marketing knowledge outside ITAD from the fire hydrant in the last four years. ITAD marketing is criminally underserved; dozens of different marketing tactics and strategies worked well outside the ITAD we will bring over the next two years.

This book serves as an introduction to digital marketing and sales flow for ITAD precisely. My dear reader, you are in quite a treat.

In 75 pages, you will learn how to methodically scale your ITAD business through marketing, sales, relentless contract hunting, and even some tips and tricks on how to lower your transportation costs. These methods consistently worked for my ITAD clients, ranging from small organizations ($10m or less) to midsized ITAD companies ($100m or more). I'm sharing all of this to save you the same headaches I endured. Why go through the same fruitless trial and error when you can leverage my hard-won lessons instead? This book condenses years of experiments into a proven blueprint for ITAD success. I painfully filtered out the ways that don't work so you can zoom ahead with what does.

By learning from my journey, you'll save thousands in wasted spend and avoid countless sleepless nights. My model optimizes every critical phase - customer targeting, lead generation, sales process, and account management. Do what I show you here precisely as prescribed; the results will speak for themselves. Consider this a master key unlocking profits left on the table. And to keep accelerating after you finish the last page, I've set up an exclusive community of ITAD professionals. We go beyond the book with additional training, networking, deals, and growth opportunities. My path got bumpy at times but ultimately led to a pot of gold. Yours will, too, if you stick to the course!

Digital Marketing from 0 to Your First 50 Leads

This chapter aims to show you, my dear reader, a complete step-by-step system to set up your first lead-generating campaigns.

This section will cover all the basics to set up your campaigns. I will also share my experience working with multiple IT databases and email relays. This chapter is 40% of the entire book. It is long, but it is also necessary. To encourage our readers to read the whole Chapter, we came up with an interesting idea - we will provide you with a free full-hour consultation on your **digital marketing efforts** if you read the whole of Chapter 2 and send us an email with the subject title of which you will find out throughout this Chapter. We split the title into three pieces scattered across the entire chapter.

We do this because 90% of the time, our initial consulting call with the clients is about teaching proper setup and basics. We want to talk about direct strategy, statistics, numbers, and contracts, but we can only discuss those once we first cover the basics.

When we meet, it will be a genuine consultation rather than a sales call. Please prepare a list of questions beforehand. We are trying to kill two birds with one stone with this Chapter:

1. We want you to be fully armed with knowledge of what it takes to set up digital marketing campaigns that generate leads.
2. Have a more productive consultation call if you decide to proceed.

So buckle up; it's about to get real.

First, let's see what we need to send our first successful email marketing campaign.
The checklist includes:
1. Get Contacts (minimum 10k, recommended 50k)
2. Create alternative domains
3. Signup for SMTP Email Relay
4. Warmup: domain, server, and email inboxes
5. Records setup and Domain Authentication
6. Contacts Segmentation
7. Template Creation
8. Domain Reputation and Maintenance
9. Monitoring and Improving

Step 1: Understanding Contacts data:

Clean contacts should be a number one priority for any digital B2B marketer that is worth a salt. It is where it all starts. First, let's talk about what "clean contacts" really mean. Any database that is currently selling contacts will have some level of inaccuracy. I have seenthe inaccuracy as low as 10% and as high as 68% for some leading databases. This is where things get a bit tricky... Any email service provider (SendGrid, amazon AWS, MailChimp, etc.) will tell you that you cannot have more than a 3% bounce rate on any campaign as it will hurt your reputation with the email service provider, domain reputation and possibly land you in spam traps and burn your domain out. The problem is that even top leading databases will have at least 10% of their contacts bounce. To avoid being fired by your SMTP

email provider, use a third-party contact cleaning tool such as debounce.io or zerobounce to clean and validate your contacts. Honorable mention here that we noticed that cleaning the data multiple times with different platforms yielded cleaner contacts that produced better open and reply rates.

After you clean the exported marketing list from the third database, you will get three main types of contacts:

1. Valid Contacts:

This one is easy. The current email address is valid and receives the outbound emails you send. The only thing you need to watch out for are recent people who left the company or retired, but there is a specific strategy to capitalize on those as well, a few pages down. You must only watch out for retirees whose emails were not taken down or moved to "catch-all" status.

2. Invalid Contacts / Bounces:

About 10-22% of the contacts you download off the platform will be invalid. It happens because people switch jobs and change email addresses, and databases do not have a chance to validate and update the contact. Yes, Apollo, Zoominfo, and every other database will sell you on their 95-99% accuracy rate; sadly, this is not the case. If the contact is invalid, it will bounce back as "email delivery failure." You probably experienced those before when you sent an email to an incorrect address and got an email failure delivery notification. Bounced emails can jeopardize your relationship with the SMTP server provider and harm your domain reputation. On average, an outbound email service will fire you from their platform if you are above a 3% bounce rate, and the data that you download from the database has a bounce rate of 10% and as high as 22%.

will tell you that you cannot have more than a 3% bounce rate on any campaign as it will hurt your reputation with the email service provider, domain reputation and possibly land you in spam traps and burn your domain out. The problem is that even top leading databases will have at least 10% of their contacts bounce. To avoid being fired by your SMTP

3. Catch ALL:

This one is very tricky. About 15-35% of the contacts you download will also be marked as catch-all. Those email addresses are weird; they can be spam traps, left thecompany, and valid. Essentially, these emails are configured to accept all emails, and based on the configuration behind the email settings, these "catch-all" emails act differently.

Spam Traps: These contacts are a reverse fishing net that focuses on 1 task only - to catch spammers. Numerous C-level executives usually have 2-3 different emails. One is for their primary use, and the other one or two are to detect all the spammers. This one is tricky because your emails will land and even be marked as open, but nobody from the phantom email address will ever respond. Worse of all - spam traps usually block the sender's domain, making it impossible to reach anybody in the company.

Left / Retired: If you use databases such as Apollo, Seamless AI, or Zoominfo, you will get a lot of retirees, people who left their jobs or were fired. These are tricky, but they can be your best friend. These contacts can be spam traps but can also be some of your best referrals.

Let me explain: Let's say you send a cold email to Jon Doe and you receive the following message:

"Thank you for your email. I am no longer with XYZ company. For any other inquiries, please contact my "successor" Michael Smith."

The glass is half full, my dear reader! I would update the contact and add a referrer's name.
Afterward, I would make a targeted campaign with the subject line.
"Retired Person's Name recommended I get in touch."

There, I would use the insertion of a person who retired as a reference for referral. The whole email looked similar to the following:

Subject line: Jon Doe recommended I get in touch.
Body:
Hi Michael,
I tried reaching Jon Doe, and he recommended I contact you. We provide IT asset disposal, zero landfill recycling, and DOD-approved data destruction.The best part about us is that we use the equipment's resale value to offset our costs and pay our customers back. I'd like to know your current IT asset disposal setup/ needs. Are you available for a quick 15-minute call this week or next? (Monday or Tuesday. Please finish closed-ended questions with a choice for your CTA (call to action) or open-ended questions such as "When would be a good time for us to e-meet? What is your availability like this or next week?")
This strategy works well; you can effortlessly get one qualified lead out of 50-100 emails sent. However, filtering the contacts and creating insertions will require some time. This strategy worked well because

a) you had a "referral," and
b) new employees always try to improve processes and are not bogged down by endless meetings.

Catch: All contacts vary a lot, and you need another third-party tool to properly segment and clean these contacts.
Usually, for a company started in ITAD in digital marketing, we strongly recommend ignoring these contacts until you accumulate enough to run them to another third-party cleaner.

Step 2: Choosing your Contact Database:
My endless love and hate relationships with databases. They try to sell their data as 95% or even 98% accurate. However, the reality begs to differ. In this section, I will review some of the databases I used to get contacts and their breakdowns. The first part of the free consultation email subject is: **"ITAD."**

Zoominfo + Engaged: Zoominfo is the most significant player in ITAD regarding providing contacts. Especially after they gobbled up discover.org and Rainking, my experience workingwith Zoominfo for over six years varies.I used the 95% accuracy meter provided in the platform, and the contacts I downloaded varied from 68% accuracy down to 32% accuracy. Overall, Zoominfo does provide a reliable source of contacts, and their email relay (Engaged) works; however, I found their data claims not to be as accurate as they claim. If you are looking for an all-in-one solution and have money to spend, Zoominfo will do the trick. However, Zoominfo is a lot more expensive than its counterparts. The minimum plan starts at $5,000 for 12,000 contacts (1,000 per month), with an average plan ranging from $9,000 for 25k contacts and $20,000 for around 65-80k and anything in between with a myriad of "custom" plans. Be careful using their engaged platform, as it can go as high as a 40% bounce rate; since their SMTP relay is part of their service, you will never have to worry about them firing you. However, with a very high bounce rate, you will risk permanently hurting your outbound domain.

Apollo.io+SMTP Tool: Apollo is very similar to Zoominfo in structure, contact segmentation, and having their own outbound marketing SMTP tool. On average, you should expect 10% less accurate data from Apollo compared to Zoominfo (those are independent tests I made while researching two databases); however, Apollo is also 75% less expensive than its counterpart. Both Apollo and Zoominfo's SMTP relay services yielded promising results, with Zoominfo coming just a bit ahead regarding lead generation. Apollo, on average, costs $9,000 for 250k contacts, making it much more affordable!

An excellent example of an email marketing campaign from these platforms would be something like this:

Sent Email

Sent at: Wed, Feb 7, 2024 at 10:24 AM
From:
To: Bill I
Subject: Can I buy your old IT assets?

Hey Bill, - Would you be the person responsible for retiring & disposing of old IT assets? If not, would you mind passing me along to the right person?

E
https://www.forbes.com/companies/

Cell: €.__ ... ____ | :.com | William@ :.com

Bill opened Can I buy your old IT assets?
iPhone | Dallas, TX
2 total events
Feb 7

Jeffrey to You
FW: Can I buy your old IT assets?

Hello ,

We are definitely interested in hearing more about your service.

Thanks,

Jeffrey S

IT

: Blvd. | Dallas,

Direct: |Mobile:

Seamless.AI: This platform does not have the built-in email outbound tool that Apollo and ZoomInfo have, and their contact accuracy is lower than Apollo's; however, this is probably one of the most affordable solutions. For under $1,000 a month, you will get a daily contact allowance of 1,000 contacts per day or 365,000 per year, making this platform one of the most affordable. This platform also utilizes Chrome extensions to hunt more contacts on LinkedIn. Remember that the less accurate the database, the more time you need to spend cleaning and nurturing data. We finally finished steps 1 and 2, and there are a few more steps to go before we launch our first successful lead generation campaign.

Step 3: Choosing your Email SMTP Relays

We have our clean contacts - HOORAY; however, manually sending thousands of emails dailyis not feasible. The second step in setting up lead generation email marketing for ITAD is to find a reliable SMTP relay service.

SMTP (Simple Mail Transfer Protocol) relay is an email server enabling your business to send thousands of cold emails daily without using your email servers. SMTP relays are designed to protect your IP reputation and enable bulk sending. I used several services over the last **seven years for B2B prospecting.** I will go over some of the most reliable services I used, their cost, and average results that I could generate.

Massive outbound SMTP giants:

These SMTP servers will let you send 3,000-10,000 emails per email address daily. I utilized this server type for years, bringing over thousands of leads. These servers are affordable and a great place to start. On average, you should expect a 12%-18% open rate and one lead out of 2,000-5,000 cold emails sent, depending on the company's size. Large enterprises, on average, generate fewer leads per email sent than midsize companies. One thing that is very important to note here: When you sign up for services, you get two options - a shared email relay server or an extra $80-$120 per month for a dedicated email relay server.

Please do not make the same mistake I made using a shared email server relay. My email campaign completely broke at some point - the open rate went from 16.8% down to 2%, and I could not figure out why to save my life. I repeatedly tested our domain reputation, templates, and contacts for a week, and nothing seemed out of the ordinary. It was the first day I saw a gray hair on my head... Then, I looked up the server's IP reputation, which appeared in RED. Another person from China was sending phishing emails to steal recipients' Amazon account login info. That person ruined the server's IP and reputation, and because I shared the sameSMTP server with him, I was also penalized.

These are big players in the space with their subsequent pricing, services, and results I generated running campaigns for my clients:

SMTP Relay + Blasting Tool: This setup requires two products - SMTP Relay and the tool enabling servers to send mass emails via an API connection.

Sendgrid.com

Price	:	$140-$190 per month
Delivery	:	A
Ease of use	:	D
Customizations	:	B
Open Rate	:	12-18%

Lead Generation Rate: 1 out of 3,100 cold emails Sendgrid was the backbone of many of my digital marketing efforts. I would use the Sendblaster tool, a one-time purchase, and connect Sendgrid through API keys. My average open rate here was around 16%, and I generated one lead out of 3,100 cold outbound emails sent. On average, I would send 2.2-2.7mil emails annually, generating about 800 leads with companies with 1,000+ employees. Unfortunately, Sendgrid, over the last few years, has limited its API connections and installed the most annoying two-factor authentication ever created. By itself, two factors are not a problem, but when you constantly work with people who need to log into their account remotely to either view statistics, set up campaigns, or set all the tech settings(DKIM, DMARC, DNS records), this becomes a big issue. Sendrid used to be my #1 source for a great platform with solid delivery and easy API connections. Unfortunately, it is my last resort now.

SMTP.com

Price	:	$120-$210 per month
Delivery	:	A
Ease of use	:	B
Customizations	:	A+
Open Rate	:	12-18%

Lead Generation Rate: 1 out of 3,100 cold emails SMTP.com is Sendgrid's easygoing sister... I would have two platforms compete simultaneously, and both were very close; I am talking about under a 5% difference in performance, which would vary from month to month. One month, SMTP would pull ahead another - Sendgrid. I like SMTP.com. This platform is one of the most stable, reliable, and non-complaining platforms, enabling you to send thousands of emails daily at scale. This relay is usually my go-to place to start bulk email marketing for customers on a budget.

Amazon AWS

Price	:	$170-250 per month
Delivery	:	A+
Ease of us	:	D
Customizations	:	A+
Open Rate	:	17-25%

Lead Generation Rate: 1 out of 2,600 cold emails I have a love-hate relationship with Amazon AWS. It is like that ex that keeps appearin and disappearing. Amazon AWS, when it comes to technical setup - I do not even bother; I hire automation tech teams. This platform is not user-friendly for tech-challenged folks like me, and it takes more technical expertise to set it up. On top of that, this platform will fire you instantly if you get many spam reports or bounces. However, this platform also delivered the best. It generated around 15% more leads and was very stable.

We covered Sendgrid, AWS, and SMTP.com; remember that those are just SMTP relay servers you rent. They provide you with IP protection and mass email capabilities; however, you still need a tool that sends emails. Let's review three tools I used quickly:

Sendblaster

Price	:	$120-$450 one time
Ease of Use	:	A
Customizations	:	B

Sendblaster is the most user-friendly tool I have tried. All you need is to provide this tool with login credentials, port, and API key. It is effortless to set up, creates unique plain text emails (we will cover plain text vs HTML later), and is inexpensive. Setting up the unsubscribe link here was as easy as 1,2,3. I would create a hyperlink that would prompt customers to reply with "unsubscribe" and then run unsubscribe exceptions manually. It was a lot of manual work managing unsubscribes, but it was easy and affordable, and lead generation was great! This tool works well with any of the three mentioned SMTP relays. Please do not forget you will need to build a separate unsubscribe page with the recent Google update in February requiring a one-click unsubscribe.

Mautic

Price	:	FREE
Ease of Use	:	F
Customizations	:	A+

This open-source software is terrific. It is a high-end email platform that is free for everyone. You can build any custom email formats and templates and create an absolute marvel of automation. However, this platform will either take considerable hours to learn or require a tech person to set it up, which would make this software on par with everyone else regarding pricing.

Go High Level(GHL)

|		
Price	:	$100-$300 per month
Ease of Use	:	B
Customizations	:	A+

GHL is a more expensive and easier-going sister of Mautic with one significant addition - CRM, and you can fully automate lead journeys here. You can set up a pathflow from GoHighLevel to Hubspot, Salesforce, or most other CRMs that do API connections. It is a great product but is expensive compared to the other two options.

All-In-One-SMATP+Tool:

These tools provide an SMTP relay and a tool for mass outbound emails. We just covered a manual setup and different tools you can use. Why would anyone bother doing all that manual work setting these relays and email blasting tools when you can easily set up quick campaigns in built-in-one services such as MailChimp, Madmimi, ActiveCampaign, or Constant Contact? There are two significant reasons I decided to go more of a manual route:

1. Plain text vs. HTML format -

HTML email format is that fancy email that includes graphics with the text. Have you ever gotten an email with banners and pictures that sometimes resembled a simple web page? That's HTML format.
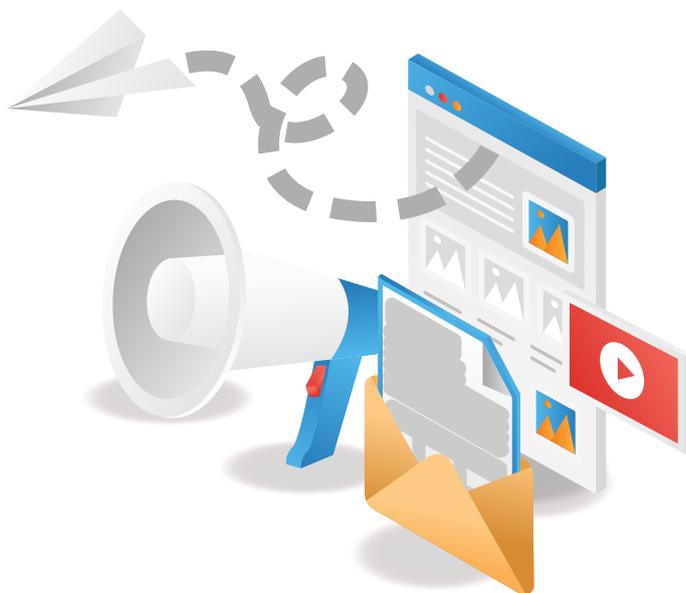
A plain text email is an email with nothing else but plain text.The more links, pictures, and graphics the email contains, the more chances that the email will be stopped by the company's internal filters and spam blockers. That is why it is advantageous to send plain text emails, and the difference in lead generation for me was staggering (1 lead of 4200 direct text emails or 1 lead out of 8600 HTML emails sent). HTML emails have their purpose, especially when the client white-listed your domain and wants to work with you. HTML emails are a great way to build relationships with your clients. For example, we sent out an AI-generated and designed Grinch sitting on a cactus in Arizona and having a great time - to all the customers asking to attend a Christmas party. The conversion rate on that email was great:). Unfortunately, HTML emails are not the best for prospecting due to all the fancy graphics they contain. That's why there is such a thing as plain text emails. Plain text emails pass filters much better, but boy, they look awkward. There is no signature, no links, just plain text.

It seems like someone is typing reverse-colored MS-DOS commands. Blasting tools such as Sendblaster give more customizations for plain text, making your emails look more organic.

All-In-One-Tool:

I will not rank any of these platforms individually because they all have brought similar results. All of these performed under about 10% variance for me, except for Active Campaign. Active Campaign was able to keep up with SMTP.com and Sendgrid regarding lead generation rate; however, I noticed that it would also fall off more often in terms of effectiveness. Here are some of the built-in one-email companies I used:

MailChimp Madmimi, Constant Contact, and Active Campaign

Instead, the main advantage of platforms such as these is user friendliness and scale from the get-go. You can easily send 30k emails your first day after the setup and not worry about server warmup.

Step 4: Setting up your Email Campaign:

This section is probably drier than the hottest day in Arizona during summer, but it is necessary. Please take everything you read here to heart and take the proper steps; you will eliminate dozens and dozens of hours torturing yourself on why your email marketing campaign stopped generating leads suddenly or never produced results in the first place. The second part of the free consultation email subject is: **"lead generation."**

Protecting your domain

The most common mistake a new aspiring digital marketer (myself included) can make - is burning their main domain. When people are eager to set up their first email marketing campaign, they use the company's domain and email box specifically. This strategy works well initially but will hurt you in the long run. Knowingly or not, you built an excellent reputation for your domain by simply conversing and helping your customers, getting quotes from logistics third parties, and communicating with your partners. So when an aspiring digital market usestheir company's main domain for prospecting, they get excellent results due to their reputation of being a credible domain over the years. However, keep in mind that it is inevitable not to be blacklisted and be reported for spam. Every time your prospect reports, it slowly chips away at your domain reputation. These damages will not be noticeable immediately, but at some point, they can accumulate to a total email shutdown where none of your existing customers even receive your emails.

I strongly recommend these two steps to protect the main domain:

1. Create different domains and email addresses. They can be similar to your primary domain or can be completely different. This step is not openly discussed but is used by nearly everyone. Have you gotten emails from CDW? Their outbound domain is not https://www.cdw.com/.

Do not use .net, .us, .org, and anything besides .com. We recently found out, using a collection of over 234 different domain endings (.com, .net, .us, etc.), that, on average, .com performed better. Domain iterations can be youdomainrecycling.com, yourdomainitad.com, or yourdomain-dod.com; make sure you redirect all those domains to your main website upon setup. You can also create domains outside your company's domain, for example, Securerecycling2024.com.
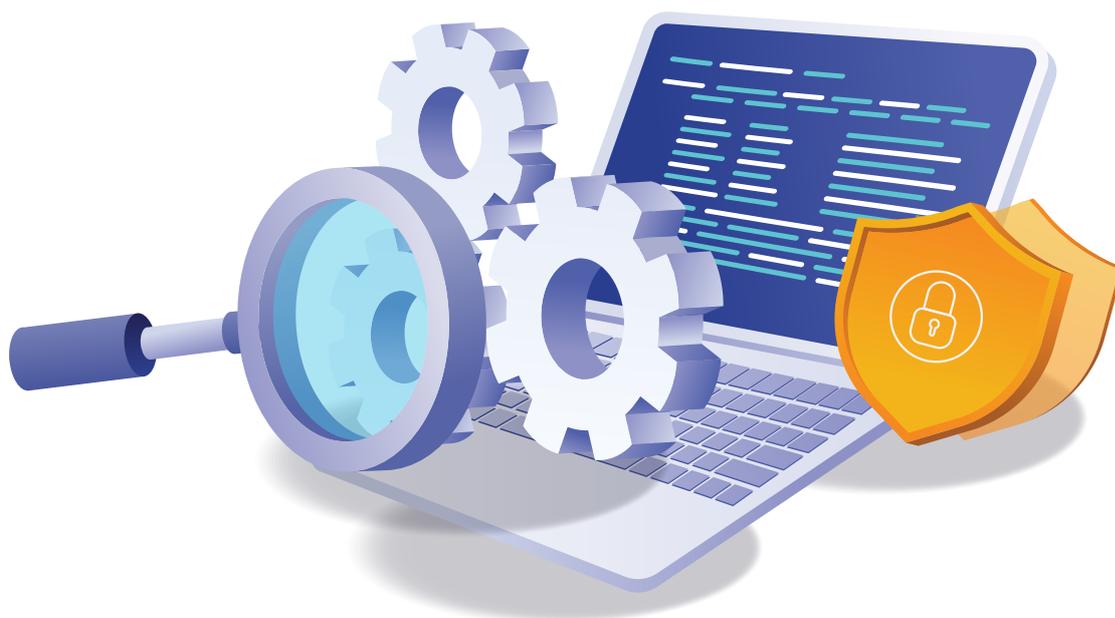
2. Warming up your new domains. Your new domain has 0 reputation, and your emails will most likely land in spam immediately or when someone reports you. You need time to warm up your newly acquired domains to combat this. Warming up the domain is easy and can be a tedious process. It simply consists of sending and having recipients reply, marking the email as necessary, and whitelisting the domain. This process takes two weeks, just like warming up your email relay server, and I found two methods that have worked well when it comes to warming up new domains:

a. Automated -

you can use third-party software such as Litmus, In stantly, or Mailwarm. These platforms have automation that will warm up your domain constantly over the first two weeks.

b. Manual -

I worked with a few overseas contacts, offering a complete manual solution utilizing over 1,300 email addresses. They would respond and converse with each other and also mark all emails as necessary. Imagine 2,000+ replies and whitelists over two weeks. Needless to say, this method is very effective.

Honorable mention - if you are going with SMTP, Sendgrid, or other email relays with a dedicated server, you will also need two weeks to warm up that server.

Setting up SMTP Email Relay Service:

You should have the following checklist:
1. Get Clean Contacts (minimum 10k) - Done
2. Create an alternative domain - Done
3. Signup for SMTP Email Relay - Done
4. Warmup domain, server, and email inboxes - Done
5. Records Setup and Domain Authentication - In Progress

Setting up records and Domain Authentication is not difficult but tedious. I do not have any desire nor need to go highly granular in this section because every SMTP relay has its in-depth guide on authenticating your domain. When you choose your SMTP relay, go through their FAQ or Google search "SMTP Relay's name and domain authentication" and find an in-depth guide by tech people on setting everything up. Each relay has a slightly different layout. Therefore, each has a somewhat different method. I will try my best to simplify some of the technical terms. (trust me, it is not as scary as it looks; I never did anything remotely this technical and could figure out the settings within a day.)

Let's review these settings/records quickly:

DNS (Domain Name System) is essentially the internet's biggest address book that matches domains to the actual computer addresses they represent. Just like your house that has the county, zip code, and address, there are also **different sections of DNS records:**

* CNAME records are essentially wires that link one domain to another
* TXT records store the information about the domain
* A records that point directly to the computer's address You manage those records through hosting providers such as GoDaddy or Google Domains.

These are your home address, county, zip code, and address.

Then there are also three email security settings:

* DKIM, which essentially adds a signature to your outbound emails for verification
* SPF provider's emails with approved IP addresses for your outbound efforts
* DMARC is the last security setting that verifies the authenticity of email senders

Last but not least when you sign up for any SMTP relay service, you must update DNS records. These records must be updated in the new domain you just created. You need to update **three specific records:**

* CNAME records, which automatically update your SPF, and DKIM
* MX records to handle incoming emails
* TXT records to store all the email settings.

Honorable mention that if you do not set up automatic updates, you must manage all these settings manually. My dear reader, this is not scary. It is tedious; numerous people on Upwork, Fiverr, and other labor marketplaces can do all the settings for $200-$600.

If you got this far, then congratulations! Think about it this way: all the tedious steps we just did were equivalent to walking up the hill; the second half of this portion is a fun downhill jog.

So now, dear reader - let's have some real marketing fun. Let's talk about actual marketing that everyone gets excited about.

Step 5 Contact Segmentation:
Out of the tech and into the strategy... Let the fun begin! For contacts segmentation, we need to discuss a few types of contacts that will be useful to us for upstream efforts.
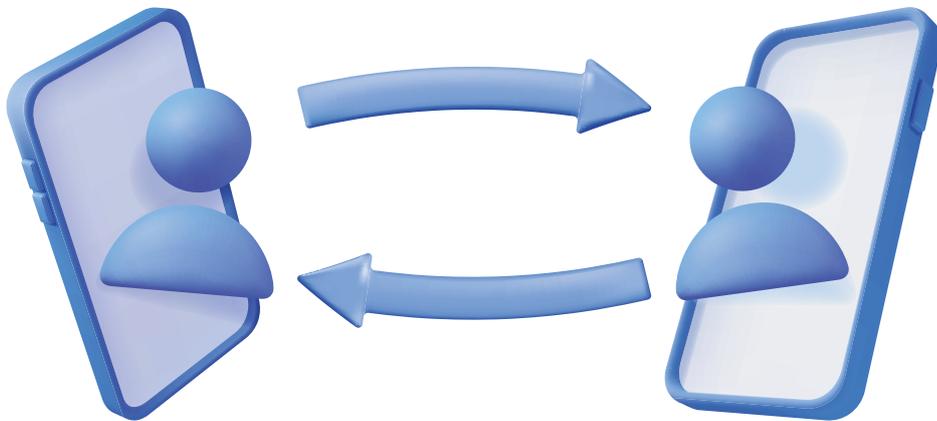
Client Contacts:
The contacts can be segmented by titles, company sizes, departments, etc. I had to manage marketing campaigns for multiple sales reps to provide each sales rep with 30 leads/opportunities per month. My first segment was company sizes because they delivered different amounts of leads based on their employee size. Give me a moment to explain, and it would make sense:
**Low Midsize 1,000–2,000 employee** companies generated, on average, 1 lead out of 1,200–1,800 emails sent.
Mid to High Midsize 2,000–5,000 employee companies could generate one lead out of 3,400 emails sent.
Enterprise companies of 5,000+ employees generated one lead out of 4,000–6,000 emails sent.

It is worth mentioning that batch email marketing usually has about a 33% higher conversion rate.

Yes, the mid-size company is universally considered 50-250 employees, but we all know those are not profitable customers unless they are partners. **Most companies below 1,000 employees** will struggle to bring you equipment above the cost on contractual obligation consistently (exceptions always apply depending on what kind of tech stack they have). Therefore, I moved the bar slightly higher on midsize and enterprise. I had a goal to deliver 30 leads per sales rep per month, and the way I segmented companies was based on the number of expected leads a sales rep would receive monthly. This way, everyone has smaller and bigger leads to work on. It also worked well for morale; as we all know, large enterprises tend to drag their feet; therefore, you always need project-based leads or fresh ones to keep the motivation flowing.
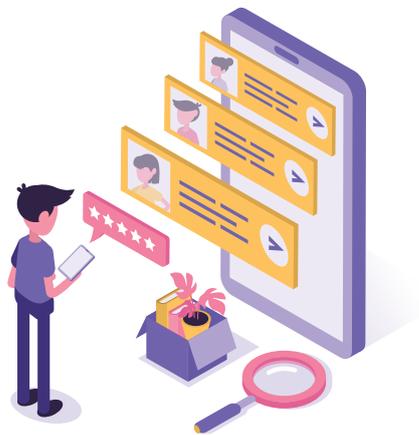
The titles I was hunting for are IT Department (everything but software, applications, and training): Manager, Director, VP, CIO, CTO

Procurement Department: All unless the contact specifically works for different procurement departments.(example of exceptions Construction Procurement)

Various: Project Managers, Engineers (occasionally), Facilities, Infrastructure, IT Asset Managers, EPA, Sustainability.

In my first year, I sent over 2.2 million cold emails to nearly everyone that made sense. These were the titles that I found consistently generated my leads.

Partner Contacts:

Before reviewing the partner contacts, discuss potential partners and what makes a good potential partner. I will also share here a few tricks that worked for me when it came to solidifying partnerships. These are potential partners that I found out worked great in the ITAD space and brought our company a ton of revenue:

VAR (Value Added Reseller), Managed IT Service Provider - VARs provide large corporations with hardware and services that are specifically tailored towards their needs. VARs sell hardware from manufacturers such as Dell, HP, etc, to enterprises with added value such as custom software, engraving, imaging, etc. They are responsible for preparing hardware for corporate use. These guys are perfect! They do 90% of the heavy lifting - selling, relationship development, and follow-ups, and all your organization has to do is be at the right time and pace with the right message. I usually portray a message regarding partnership with direct hints about making money.

"Let us be your trade-in program for all your new hardware sales."

In the body of the cold prospecting email - I would explain to the VARs' sales reps the "trade-in program" where we can increase their bottom line on gross profit or make their offer more competitive by simply offering a return on the hardware the client is looking to renew.

"We can be a full white-label solution for you and jump into the calls to explain our process and certifications to the customer. We never discuss returns, costs, or other financials with the client. This way, it will give you room to add anywhere from **$4,000 to $120,000 of gross profit** to your offer depending on the size of the project."

This is a more sales pitch than a "strategic growth overview by collaborating" pitch. Trust me, I tried the other, and this message resonates with sales reps more for one simple reason -commissions! Average VAR sales rep makes between 20%-50% in commission off gross profit,so when you tell them you can increase their gross profit from $ 4,000 to $120,000, their ears will perk up!

For contacts, you should aim for the following departments:

Sales → **Business Development** → **C-Suite**

Titles - Director or above, seek for C-VP first. This one is a bit weird; smaller VARs usually try to overcompensate by coming up with fancier titles. For example, an Account Executive in one var could be a Director or a partner for a smaller VAR. I have never closed a VAR partnership without talking to a VP or C level before. Bigger VARs have a person dedicated explicitly to solidifying partnerships, and they would be a great first contact.
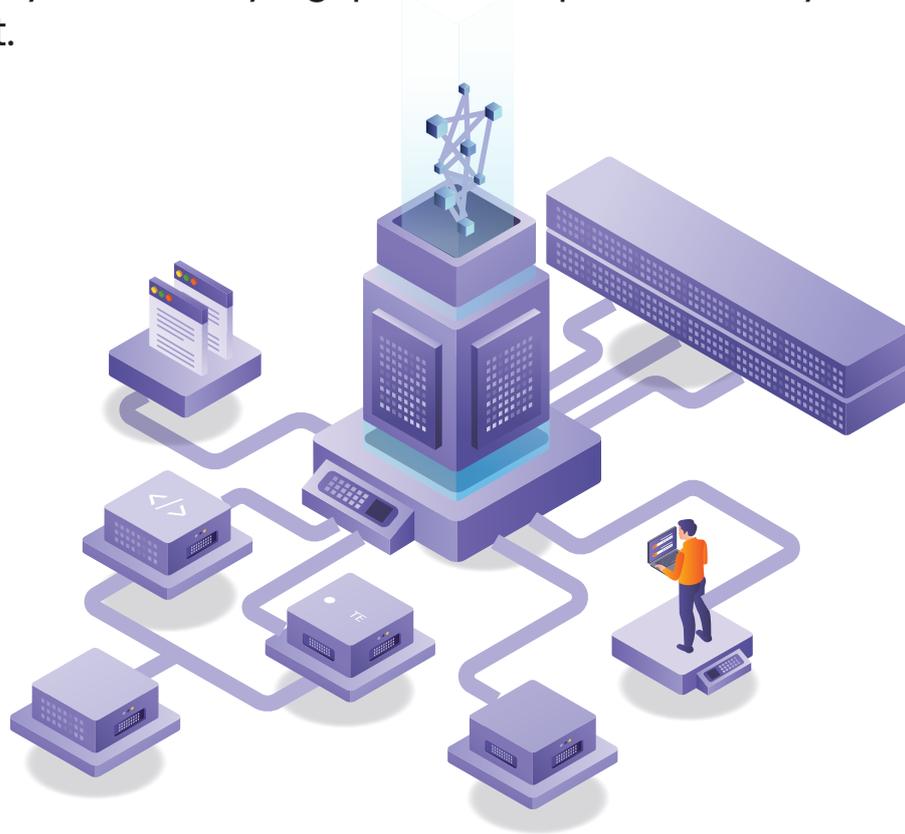
Data Centers - This one is self-explanatory, and every single recycler tries to get into Data Centers. The hardware is valuable, services are needed, and we can even charge the customer most of the time. This section will be long, and I am also including one of my real-life examples, so please feel free to glance and skip.

Cold email marketing here works well; however, you need to remember that there is a bit of stiff competition for an inbox here. Since Data Centers are one of the best partners for ITAD, everyone is trying to get on their good side. As the sales rep, I worked with three local and two out-of-state data centers. I was able to get my foot in the door with Data Centers through cold email marketing about one-third of the time; most of the time, I was able to get my foot in the door by simply servicing my corporate clients who had their hardware stationed at the Data Center and then building relationships with internal Data Center folks.

My best-selling tool here was … PIZZA! Keep in mind, my dear reader, that there are a few things to consider here:

1. The data center does not own the equipment you are picking up, and therefore, employees of data centers do not usually deal with value recovery;
2. Employees here are looking for a fast, reliable solution that is also easygoing (de-racking, de-installation, and removal).

I had a rule always to bring pizza during pickup; I wanted to be known as a pizza guy.

Here is what I did:
Two days before the pickup, I would try to call a data center employee or send them an email saying that we will be picking up equipment on (Date) and I will be bringing pizza as a thanks from XYZ pizza places (give customer a few options for medium to high upscale pizza restaurants, do not be cheap here). I would ask how many employees they have and their favorite toppings preferences. I would appear during pickup, exchange business cards, summarize our services, and thank the data center employees for the business. This is the time when you set expectations. Here, I would say that we communicate with our clients and partners very frequently and update them every step of the way. I would also tell him that I would bring pizza from their favorite upscale place next time.

Now, we all know one pickup and one pizza is not enough to build a relationship or to be on the customer's mind. At this point, you need to be in the Data Center's employee's mind. In marketing right now, it takes (depending on a source) 11-17 touches for the products or services to stick in the customer's mind. Luckily, you have a perfect reason to reach out to data center employees proactively - you need to service your common customer and update them! Using that information, I would set up the following follow-up system(this was local):

Day 1:   Send customers a receipt for pickup and CC key data center employees. Praise employees' professionalism, diligence, and service to customers and inform them that pick-up has been completed.

Day 5:   Email(optional): Thank the DC employee for his service and ask if more clients can use your service, hint pizza. (usally no answer)

Day 11:   Email customer copy DC employee stating that his equipment is being processed and we expect it to be finished within X number of days.

Day 20: (Optional! Depending on rapport): Email the technician and ask if they could use other services. Mobile shred, wipe, de-installation, de-racking, and other services outside ITAD you offer.

Day 30: Email customer Certificate of Destruction and CC data center techs.

By now, you should be able to show to data center employees that you are diligent, everything is on time, and you take great care of customers. You had plenty of time to showcase that you genuinely care about your customers and will put their minds at ease. You stood out from other ITAD companies by simply looping in employees on your updates and letting them know you are on top.

Sending your first email praising the data center's employees is a MUST because that's how you will minimize aversion towards being CCed in your emails.

Day 35: Call - I would call a Data Center employee, telling them the whole process is finished, and then use humor and pizza to build a report. I would try something like this:

Oh, by the way, Wade, Grimaldi's just called."
 (I would use a relaxed and funny tone and pause for 6 seconds.)

"Oh yeah, and what did they want?"

"They said their best "Anchovies"(Insert Favorite Topping)

pizza is getting cold, man! When am I doing the next pickup for you?"

"Hahaha…(pause) You don't stop, do you?"

"Hey Wade, we are a small business that tries to overcompensate with customer interaction and great, diligent service. I would love to win your business." (I said in a semi-serious tone)

"Tell you what - my next customer will be removing three arrays next week, I can ask them if they have a solution or if they can use you guys."

"I would appreciate that, Wade. Thank you."

Unfortunately, the customer already had a solution; instead of feeling disappointed, I still ordered his favorite pizza, thanking him. Six months in, I knew everyone by their first name and pizza preferences. I think I was a better pizza salesman than ITAD. I would have frequent pickups with these guys for clients who did not have a solution, as well as occasional deinstall, de-rack, and hard drive shred projects.

Most importantly, I got ITAD referrals from these folks. Sometimes, jokingly, I would say - "hey, if you guys are hungry and in the mood for good pizza, just send me for another pickup. We will get it done." All it took was extra attention to detail, humor, and genuine honesty.

Afterward, I would follow up every 2-3 weeks with usually light-hearted emails such as:

Wade, Pizza is getting cold

Have you tried "Insert Local Pizza's name"?

Data Center Contacts - Anyone in IT. Engineers are sound here; they usually deal directly with customers and products. I tried reaching out to the C and VP levels here; however, I had more success working with data center engineers and other employees.

Heart to heart: Dear reader, do not treat sales as black and white. Do not be a robot (que robotic voice).

"I provide the best services; therefore, I deserve your business." Unfortunately, in business, it's not the guy with the best service; the guy with the loudest microphone gets the sale.

Be proactive and consistent in your follow-ups. Standout! Hang out with your clients, have fun with them, treat them as buddies, and you will be surprised to see how many doors will be open for you. People do not like sleazy sales guys but appreciate genuine interest and persistence.

Last but not least, I knew a gal out of California. She was one of those very feminine, bubbly types of gals. She had no idea what sales or sales process was. We all know when to position our product's price and when to try to build value for our company. She did not care about any of that. She was all over the place with her price, product placement, etc. If she had a presentation for every sales call, the slides would have different orders every single time.

She crushed it! And the reason why is that she was over-enthusiastic about her company and servicing clients.

Her follow-ups (calls, emails, etc.) had a certain vibe: "What are we waiting for? We are a better solution. The faster we sign this, the faster we can help you." She laughed and joked with the customers; they genuinely wanted to speak with her. She was unstoppable.

Hard Drive Shredding Companies - First, persuading a shredding company to sell you hard drives is equivalent to asking a lion to share his prey. It simply won't happen; believe me, I tried. However, these guys would frequently have other access to equipment such as laptops, server arrays, and valuable components that we can get our hands on. Cold emails here worked great. I would usually send prospecting emails inquiring about their service, asking for rates, and proposing ITAD as an extra value add to every project they do.

What worked better for me was getting a request from one of my customers, calling shredding companies directly, inquiring about their service first, and then switching the conversation towards partnership and ITAD. Remember that in 2,024. One conversation is never enough; ask for email addresses and create strong follow-up/drip campaigns. For contacts, I would focus on titles of Director and above in business development, sales, and C-Suite.

More types of partners can be applicable here, such as ITAM or IT warranty services; however, for me, those were hit or miss, and I was able to generate consistent revenue utilizing the top 3 mentioned partners consistently.

Guys, partnerships take time to develop. They are easy to get into and get the micro commitment. However, they take months to develop into t proactive, but most importantly - follow up as frequently as needed. Marketing here is great to be on a partner's mind constantly.

Even when I had to follow up 15-20 times without any answer, staying determined paid off, and people eventually responded when they needed service. In the end, it is also all about the timing. Decision-makers deeply value perseverance. They want their teams to be persistent. The decision-makers will gain much respect if you demonstrate more grit and follow-through than their sales staff.

Step 6: Templates:

Welcome to my Wild West...

Everyone wants to know what the secret sauce is?! Which templates work? Everyone puts a lot of emphasis on the wording and usually tries to mimic each other rather than looking at the whole picture. I will go over this in more detail in the next section of this chapter; however, I need you to understand that it's not just the template.

I have seen horrifically long emails describing the entire company's history work, a small and humble email saying your local small famly-owned business works. These templates were narrowing a specific Service of ITAD, such as recycling data destruction work, templates that focus on purchasing equipment or value recovery also worked really really well, and even... philanthropic emails converted. From my experience, the email's timing is more important than the template. If a customer has his back office fully clogged up with old equipment, he will answer even a lousy email because of an immediate need. ITAD Email marketing is more about being at the right time and place. Delivery here is more important because, without it, you would not be there in the first place.

The point I'm trying to make here is that I started with the most boring section of digital marketing for a reason - **the priority and your focus should always be on the proper setup rather than templates later.**

responsible for the lead conversion rate(how many emails it takes to generate one lead). You will get leads regardless of whether you can get them delivered. However, there is a general direction on some of the templates that works better than the others. There are also specific guidelines or rules of what to use and not to use in your templates, so please don't think the templates can be random and chaotic and will work. You will still need to spend a lot of time creating compelling templates that convert. Let's go over different marketing campaigns and some template examples. The third part of the free consultation email subject is: **"that works"**

Enterprise ITAD:

Generally, genuine short emails asking for service converted better than longer and more drawn-out emails detailing services by a factor of 2-7. However, drawn-out emails attracted higher-on-the-ladder folks, and negotiations were more contract-based than project-based. Rather than providing you with exact templates that I change weekly, I will try my best to show how I create templates.

First, we need to figure out the direction you want to focus on. It can be general (3 services longer email), promoting multiple services with one service at a time within the sequence or focusing on one service or one main advantage in ITAD over and over in the same sequence.

Here are some directions and subject lines I used in the past:

Subjects:	Description:
Secure ITAD	General template all services
Zero Landfill IT Asset Disposal	Focus on R2, zero landfill, sustainability
NAID(DOD) Certified data erasure and IT Asset Removal	Focus on data erasure and security
Retire IT Asset Procurement	Focus on value recovery

Your Philanthropic contributions from recycling your old hardware | Focus on PR Most of the time I would keep word count under 100 and in a lot of cases under 72. I try to sound as human as possible in my email, letting my email receivers know that another human is on the other end of the email, waiting for their response. My general ITAD templates would look something like this:
(| - variation, {} - custom field insertion)
Hi|Hello|Greetings {First Name}

We are a NAID | R2 | DOD certified recycling company that focuses on Data Destruction | Zero Landfill Recycling | Value Recovery.
(either or all 3)

We have a rigorous process to ensure a secure disposal of your retired IT assets, data destruction, and zero landfill recycling. The best part about our services is that we use the equipment's resale value to offset our costs and even pay our customers back.
{First Name}, do you have any old decommissioned IT assets I can look at? (project-based
CTA) |

{First Name}, are you responsible for IT Asset Removal for {Company Name}? If not, please point me in the right direction. (this is half project half contract-based template)

{First Name}, I am curious about your current ITAD process/needs. Do you have 15 minutes to discuss this or next week? (contract-based CTA)

Remember that you can move any service lines and change them however you want. You can also add your flavor, philanthropic side, or focus on getting good at sending emails regarding 1 particular part of ITAD. Once delivery is figured out - this is a fun part - experimenting with templates.

The average that you need to aim for is one lead out of 3,000-5,000 outbound emails sent if you use massive email relays and blasting tools, allowing you to send 5-10k emails per mailbox per day(bulk marketing). Or one lead out of 800-1,500 emails sent using fairly new tech that incorporates multiple inboxes (batch marketing).

Partner Templates:
I already touched on a general direction for partner campaigns under Partner Contacts with some examples. Here, I would like to focus on strict templates to give you a general idea of
what worked for me:

VARS:

Both short and long emails worked for me. However, please feel free to carve it into multiple bits and pieces.

Subject: Trade-in program for your Sales Executives

Body: Hi|Hello|Greetings {First Name}

We are a NAID | R2 | DOD certified recycling company that offers trade-in/buyback options to your sales executives for all the used IT hardware that is being refreshed. We buy old equipment when your customers refresh their IT hardware. We offer

1. Cash for retired IT equipment to increase your bottom line GP or make your offer more competitive.
2. Full white label and white glove services when decommissioning your client's old retired IT assets.
3. 100% confidentiality on pricing and financials.

{First Name}, do you have a few minutes for a quick meet and greet this week?

Data Centers:

A General ITAD template can work here with more focus on data destruction and full data center services if applicable (de-racking, de-installation, shredding, etc). Focus on providing easy and seamless service and not value recovery. Value recovery is important for data centers but those are usually corporate owned.

Hi|Hello|Greetings {First Name}
We are a NAID | DOD certified recycling company that specializes in servicing Data Centers. (either or all 3)

We have a rigorous process to ensure a secure disposal of your retired IT assets, data destruction, and zero landfill recycling. In addition to disposal, we offer seamless de-racking, de-installation, mobile shredding, and drive wiping. The best part about our services is that we use the equipment's resale value to offset our costs fully.

{First Name}, do you have any old decommissioned IT assets I can look at? |

{First Name}, are there any pending IT asset removal projects I can take a look at?|

{First Name}, I am curious about the ITAD process you or your clients utilize. Do you have 15 minutes to discuss this or next week?

Shredding Companies:

This one is probably one of the easier ones. The biggest variation here is if you have a shredding project and are looking for a solution or a general partner inquiry.

Scenario 1: Your client needs 5,409 hard drives shredded in LV, Nevada (actual project)

Subject: Hard drive shred and potential partnership
Body:
Hi|Hello|Greetings {First Name}

We are a NAID | DOD certified recycling company that specializes in data destruction and value recovery. We have a client located at (city, state| do not give a whole address because people are poachers, and you do not have a rapport with these people.) that needs 5,409 hard drives shredded.

I'd like to discuss:
1. This project, cost, and your services
2. Potential partnership around value recovery.
Please let me know your availability,
Thanks,
Your Name
Your FANCY TITLE(yes, the fancy title is part of the template as this looks like a partner inquiry that your boss would send)

Scenario 2: You are looking for a partnership with a local shredding company, and you do not have any pending projects.

Subject: Value recovery for non-data bearing parts/devices.
Body:
Hi|Hello|Greetings {First Name}

We are a NAID | DOD certified recycling company specializing in data destruction and value recovery. We frequently get requests for your services and provide our shredding partners with a very streamlined buyback program, increasing their bottom line. We utilize a network of over 1,000 different downstream buyers to provide our partners with the best resale value possible.

{First Name}, are you available for a quick 15-minute call this or next week to discuss a potential
partnership?
Thanks,
Name

FANCY TITLE(yes, the fancy title is part of the template as this looks like a partner inquiry that your boss would send)
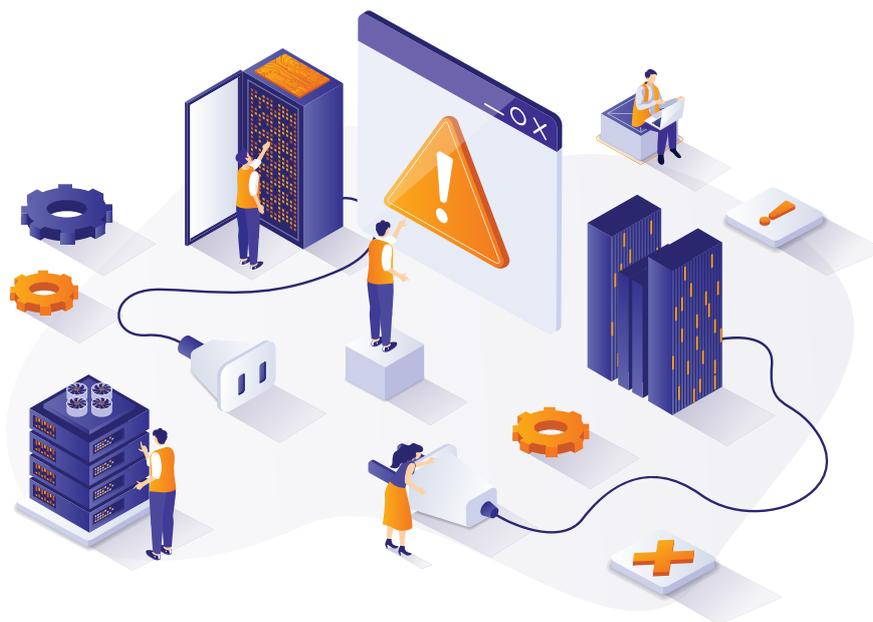
Step 7: Reporting, Troubleshooting, Improvement, and Maintenance
Dear reader, please keep in mind that b2b cold email marketing is not the most stable prospecting tool. Google and Microsoft are constantly trying new ways to stop cold prospecting. Spam filters and spam traps are getting more vicious. The 20+ year war for inbox is never going to stop. On average, I would have one month of downtime out of the year because a random email campaign or a setup would break. Lead generation would stop, the open rate would go down to 3%, and there would be high open rates - no responses or leads - we have seen it all.

While the constant shifts in spam filters and the ongoing battle for the inbox can lead to downtime and challenges, this ever-evolving landscape presents an opportunity. As email marketing gets more complex, those willing to adapt and overcome the hurdles will have less competition and a bigger piece of the pie. Marketers who stay disciplined, maintain their systems, and navigate through periodic breakdowns will find themselves increasingly rarified. You can ride out the disruptions and reap the benefits of dwindling competition by mastering reporting, troubleshooting, improvement, and maintenance practices. Those who treat setbacks as minor obstacles rather than permanent roadblocks will be able to consistently generate leads and revenue through cold email, even as others fall by the wayside. The path forward requires persistence, but the rewards are much sweeter when you can succeed where most cannot.This section will show the best practices for maintaining your email campaign.

Reporting and Troubleshooting:
This is one of the easiest ways to improve your email campaigns. Repeat these two until they are permanently stuck in your head:
*Tech Setup+Subject Line is responsible for open rates
*Template + website and other links are accountable for reply/lead
  generation rate.

If you are not getting reasonable open rates, you need to look at

1.   Contacts: are you 100% certain that the data is current and clean

2.   Tech Setup - ensure all DNS, DKIM, and DMARC records are set up; run a few tests to see if you received a test email.

3.   Lands in Spam - You must use third-party websites to check your domain, IP, and SMTP relay's IP reputation. Chances are you might need to use another domain.

If you get reasonable open rates but no leads, your template needs a rework repositioning your services. Do not be too greedy, asking for contracts in the cold email.

Use the average lead generation rate as your benchmark for fine-tuning templates. These are statistics you would like to see:

Open Rate:
12-25% for bulk emails 5,000 or more per email box
30-55% for smaller batch emails 250 or less per email box.

Bounce Rate:
Aim for under 1% bounce rate, raise the massive alarm if it is above 3%. Clean the contacts and remove all invalids/catch-alls.

Delivery Rate:
Aim for a minimum of 91% and aspire to get a 99% delivery rate (its possible).

Reply Rate:
0.5%-1.2% for Bulk Email
2%-5% for Batch Emails

Lead Generation Rate:
1/3000 for Bulk Email
1/1500 for Batch Emails

*Bulk vs batch What is it?

We have been hinting at Bulk vs Batch. What is it?
One of the spam filters that was developed monitors the volume of outbound emails sent out of an email box, and if it reaches a certain threshold, the entire email box is marked as spam. This limit is 250 emails per mailbox per day.

I am encountering these types of filters more and more frequently; however, only some companies have these filters installed. The batch setup limits the number of outbound emails to 240, which is much more expensive but delivers emails better. A good service example that does that is Reply.io, and I was able to hold a steady open rate of 45% there. There is also Zoominfo Engaged and Apollo's email marketing - but while they do limit the number of outbound emails sent per email box, the emails would still go "catch-all" email boxes as these contacts are part of the platform, and this can hurt you in the long run. Batch email marketing is great; I have seen some of the best delivery from batch emails.
However, keep in mind that if you want to scale with batch marketing, you will need to either dedicate someone to set and monitor everything up or hire somebody knowledgeable in automation.

I hope this helps. Do not get discouraged - email campaign crashes happen often, and I remember how stressed I was when it first occurred; now, it is a regular Tuesday. Always have a contingency plan, extra alternative domains, or SMTP servers.

Chapter 3: Contracts and Sales Process

The purpose of this chapter is to show a step by step sales process that eventually leads to annual contracts. This process focuses on getting your foot in with a small project, but then working up the chain to pursue contractual obligations with your client.

Hooray! We have survived a marketing chapter. Initially, I was going to write a book of up to 40 pages, but when I started writing the marketing section, I quickly understood that it would not be possible.
We covered partner hunting relatively well in the marketing chapter with some templates and how to position your partnerships. The sales process for partners is simple, and you just need to be consistent and proactive.

Sales Training Manual
Stages:

1. Digital Responses
2. Phone Call / Zoom Meeting
   - **A** Customer's Compass
   - **B** Proof of Competence
3. Customer's Compass
4. Proof of Competence
5. Project Handling / Follow-up
6. Contract Introduction

Detailed breakdown:
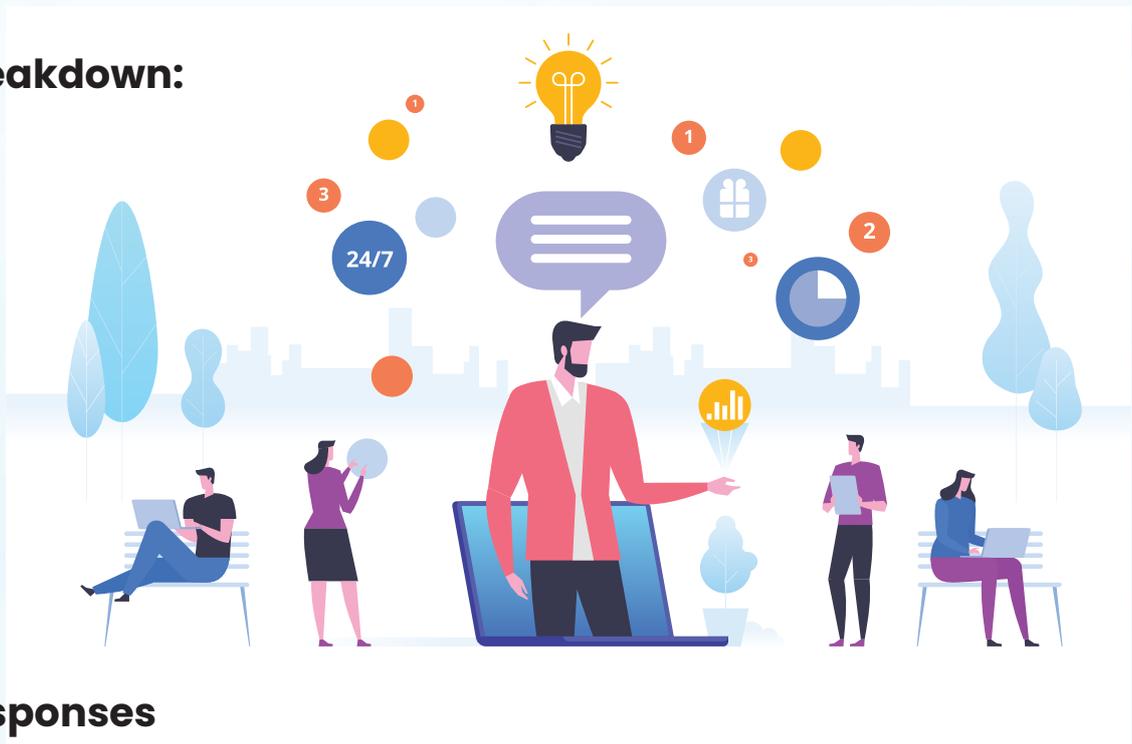
1. Digital Responses

In the early stage of lead development, 70%-90% of your communication will be digital. The sole purpose of digital communication is to get the customer on the phone or in the meeting so you could ask detailed questions and have a clearer picture of how you can service the customer better over the next few years.

Possible interactions:
1. Information Inquiry - customers might have a need and want to know more. Usually, responses included: How do your services work? We are interested. Please tell me more about your company. Does your service include XYZ?

Salesperson: This is your time to shine. Whenever there is even the slightest interest, I respond with a long-form email that breaks down certifications and services. Please attach all the current certifications your company possesses. This is the time to impress your client with your certifications and process. However, do not go super granular; only include minor details that make you unique and special, and use generalizations. First of all, it will look like you need to try harder or overload customers with more information. Second, you still need to keep some information to impress them even more on the first call. Keep a few aces up your sleeve for the first call.

2. Do you buy this? - Customers send some kind of equipment directly.
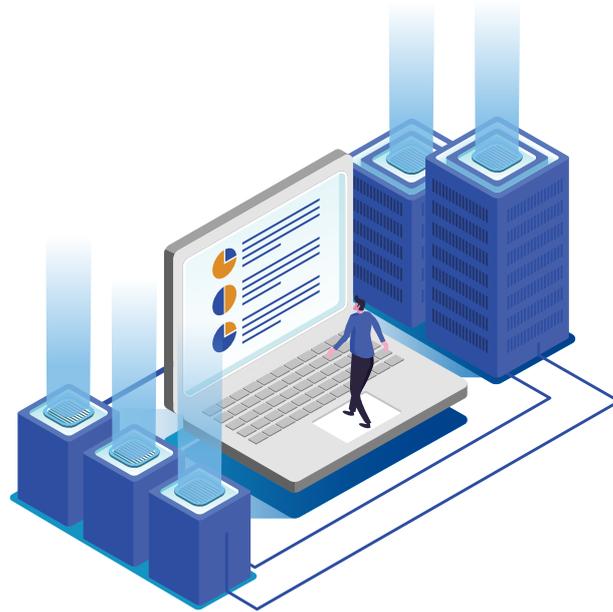
*95% of the time, customers won't send you an equipment list with all the details you need to price it out.

Salesperson: I saw numerous ITAD companies mess this one up. Instead of thinking it's lead for MSA (master service agreement), ITAD sales reps treat these leads as a bidding opportunity. Instead, take a step back. Write all the questions you have regarding the equipment. Remember, eyes are on the prize, which is an MSA contract. Here is my simple and

Name,

We can absolutely buy these. I have a few equipment-specific questions. Can I give you a quick call sometime this week? If yes, what time and day works best for you?

If the customer rejects, which happens very rarely, copy and paste those questions in your next email; most likely, they are already familiar with the process, and it is a bidding war. In rare cases, potential clients simply do not have time. Either way, if the client does not want to talk and there is little resale value, it is a dead lead.

Luckily, most of the time, customers are fine talking to you. When you get them on the phone, there are two scenarios:

a) Customer has no details. This scenario is a good sign; it means the customer is usuallyunfamiliar with the process.

The golden rule:

Eyes on the prize, my dear reader. We are after a contract, and we have a client who is new to ITAD; this creates a perfect opportunity to probe around contracts and MSA. I would say something along the lines of Name since we have a few minutes, and while I have you on the phone - can I ask you a few ITAD-related questions?

Proceed to section II of this chapter, Phone / Zoom.

To summarize, you will get 20-30% of the leads that are literally pictures or spreadsheets of items. Yes, we want to win the bids; however, we are after the MSA contracts. I use "us purchasing / bidding" on equipment as an excuse to probe around their ITAD process to see if there are any gap holes our company could fit.

b) Customer has all the details. Very rarely do you get an excellent, diligent customer who comes with all the answers and is unfamiliar with the ITAD process. The law of average for me here was that the more a customer knows about the equipment he sells, the higher the odds it is a bid. If the customer answers all the questions, I would ask him questions to find out if he is bidding or inquiring about selling. If they are bidding out, then the chances of converting this account to MSA are very slim, and if offers are hyper-competitive, I would mark this as a dead lead.

3. Do you service xyz? Do your services include xyz? – most of the time, the customer has a direct need for the project, so they ask for a specific service or a location.

Salesperson: Reassure the customer that you can handle their project. Attach your business's R2, NAID, and w.e certifications as proof of competence.

This is a straightforward question to answer. Make sure you loop all the certifications around the specific service the customer requested and mention a couple of other serviceshat you provide in support.

For example:
Do you handle data destruction?

Absolutely Name,
Every piece of data-bearing equipment undergoes a stringent audit and data destruction process. We utilize (XYZ software, method, technology, etc.) compliant with DOD, PCA, HIPAA, and other requirements for data erasure. We will also send you a full Certificate of Destruction with a serialized capture of every hard drive.

I am attaching our certifications and a sample for the Certificate of Destruction.

Name, I am very interested in finding out more about your project. When is a good time for us to connect?

II. Phone Call /Zoom meeting –
The first thing we need to understand is the Customer's Compass before we actually get into the call with the customer. I promise that if you master Customer's Compass, you will master a good chunk of ITAD enterprise sales.

What is a customer's compass?

After speaking with hundreds and hundreds of different corporate professionals ranging from ITManagers and procurement to C-level executives, I realized that there are customers who know nothing about ITAD and are ready to pay and customers who are price and process savvy and would bid out all of their equipment.

Depending on internal knowledge of the customer about the process, you can position and even price your services differently. Customer's Compass looks like this:

NEW

If the customer is "**New**,"

They will likely not mind paying for the service. They are open to new processes and suggestions.

They will need reassurance that you can thoroughly do the job. You also need to remember that they are not sure what you need to schedule a pickup. Ensure you get all the information regarding the project from the customer, especially logistics information such as loading dock, access, location, etc.

If the customer is an "**Expert**,"

it will most likely be a price or service war (larger enterprise organizations tend to have more ITAD-knowledgeable staff). They already have a refined process, and most of the time, they just want a service upgrade but not a process change - find out their process and what they like/do not like about it. Show them how you will be a seamless value add to their process.

The most powerful question I found to ask your customers to find out where they are is:

How did you handle ITAD in the past?

Seriously, remember this question as if your parents will wake you up at night and quiz you on it. This very powerful question lets you simultaneously figure out the customer's compass and the old process. If they know the process from here, ask in-depth questions about it and find gaps where your company can fit. If they do not, ask them about their general ITAD knowledge.

The first call is probably the most important one. During the call, you must determine:

1. Customer expectations -Do they expect to pay for the service or money back for their equipment?
2. What did not work with the previous solution
3. What is his tech environment (how good equipment is)
4. Does the customer handle all of the ITAD?
5. How often do they engage with your services?
6. How do they purchase the equipment? Do they work with a VAR (po tential partnership)

*I would also hint at a master service agreement from day 1 with the customer. I would set out an expectation that we would take care of their current project; however, we are looking at a bigger picture of becoming their only most reliable ITAD provider.

Call to Action - Proof of Competence

If a customer's compass is the most vital piece of information you need to learn, then Proof of Competence is the most critical action you need to take out of the meeting. No matter what, it is **very rare** that you can close the contract before showcasing your proof of competence. This happened once for a large contract where the company was looking for ongoing services immediately and when my customer referred another customer to me a few times.

Proof of competence - is a validation that you are a better service provider than a previous ITAD. To do that, you will need to get a list of items.

So the purpose of the first call is to
1. find out about your **customer's compass**
2. REQUEST a **list of items.**

Any list will do. Current project, current list of items they are looking to retire. Previous asset report by your competitor with their rates. The only consistent way I found out how to sign the contract is when you show direct proof that you are better; you need a list of items.

III. Proof of Competence

You got the list! Now what?

Current project - do not be too greedy; ensure you can provide excellent service and payment for the first project. This is how you will reel them in. Build an exceptional case for the first project and use it as a green light to sign a contract.

Previous Vendor's List - you got their latest asset report. Excellent - ensure you also find out how much their vendor paid them. Come up with marginally or significantly better proposals and ask for a meeting(based on their current rates/services).

Important: Treat customers as your friends here. Give customers space before the first call(do not spam their phone); however, please feel free to call customers whenever you get the list of items and have a better offer.

I usually do not overload customers with calls and follow-ups until I get proof of concept; however, I reach out to customers frequently after-ward(once or twice a week).

IV. Project Handling / Followup

Here, you need to assume the role of an impeccable customer service rep, not a sales rep, as you are showcasing your services here. Put on your customer service hat for this stagespecifically.

Three main components make customers commit to the purchase based on how powerful the
emotions are:
1. Fear of Loss
2. Ease of Service
3. Hope of Gain

Fear of Loss can be handled dur ing the first phone call when you talk about data destruction. During project handling/follow-ups, you need to focus on.

2. Ease of Service

3. Hope of Gain.

Use your humor to your advantage, treat customers as a local buddy/-friend, show how easy it is to work with you with minimum directions, and how reliable you are. Please do not take it as a green light to be unprofessional - no cussing, slang, etc. Treat the customer as a friend, but speak to him as a professional.

V. Contract introduction

Back to assuming the role of a sales rep... Back to the old hat...

By now you should have provided customers with impeccable customer service on their project and show your proof of competence. Your stages 2,3,4 were hopefully spent showcasing your services, competence, reliability and ease of work. During those stages you need to build a significant value of your services in front of customers' eyes.

They would not want to leave your services because you were the best, so introducing an annual contract would seem like a logical next step.

Be honest, be genuine. Here, you can set up a meeting to discuss ongoing services or can just call the customer.

"Mr. Customer, I hope you enjoyed our services. We enjoyed working with you and want to work with you more. With your permission, I would like to send our master service agreement showcasing all the services we provided and will provide in the future and schedule a call to discuss it."

Please feel free to change my goofy immigrant script however you like, but please understand the main direction.

At this point, the customer does not have their whole ITAD process down; you know there is a need. Do not hesitate… Go for the jugular!

VI. Contract Negotiation and Contract Execution

These two go hand in hand together. I usually did not face an enormous backlash during the contract negotiation stage (sometimes we had to update insurance, sometimes put a time limit on services, and discounted fees a little bit, but usually it was just minor annoying back-and- forth changes.

After I started focusing on the Customer's Compass and Proof of Competency, contract negotiation and execution became significantly more straightforward. From stages 1-5, I do my best to win the customer as my friend so they can go to battle with the legal and try to push the contract on our behalf. In B2C marketing, we always discuss how your customers are your best ambassadors and referrals. It is precisely the same thing here; your customers can be your best soldiers when pushing contracts through legal channels and giving you other services or referrals.

Word of advice - have patience; this takes time. One of my most significant contracts took 14+ months to finalize. During negotiation, try to build a stronger relationship with the client. Ask them if any projects are coming up within the next couple of months (this will help you with a sense of urgency when pushing for a contract). This process worked for me because most of my competitors usually focused on contracts. Their email marketing templates were filled with contract lingo; they usually boasted about how awesome they were without any proof, and they were interested in contracts only and not one or two small projects that customers needed help with. When competing for contracts, we already had a project finished or proof of concept established further. This gave us a significant advantage. We did not win all the contracts but consistently executed 1-3 contracts with 10k+ employees per sales rep every quarter. Our quota was one contract per sales rep per quarter.

Chapter 4: Downstream

This Chapter aims to showcase the different types of buyers you will be competing against and the strategies we used.

Downstream is a bizarre beast. Some of the readers of this book will be business owners who do both downstream and upstream sales simultaneously, and some will be professionals who only did downstream for years. Initially, I wanted to write something other than this chapter as my six months of downstream research were insignificant, and in no way could it compete with people who had done downstream for years.

However, after revising and going back and forth a few times, I realized that I needed to put in the downstream chapter from an outsider and upstream sales guy perspective. I will paint an overall downstream picture to help your upstream sales team understand who they are competing against on a bigger picture. I will also bring a real-life example of a difference in pricing that different types of buyers pay. Those results absolutely shocked me. Retired IT Assets can change many hands before they get to the end user; these are the companies I found out I was competing against, sold my equipment to, and even bought equipment from. ITAD is a truly small world.

Types of Buyers	Pricing Strength	Margin Profits	Example T450
Recyclers	*	30-50%	$90.00
Brokers	**	10-15%	$120.00
Online / Retail / B2C	***	15-30%	$150.00
Specialized Buyers	****	50-200%	$200.00
VARs (End user sales)	****	50-100%	$350.00
End User	*****		$550.00

Let's go over all of these buyers and in detail list potential partnerships, collaboration and competition.

*Please keep in mind that I have seen recyclers getting end-user pricing and brokers selling their equipment even below recyclers. We all know downstream pricing can be everywhere; this is a general rule that I found out worked for me. This data is about three years old, but I still got confirmation from a few clients I consult and work with on digital marketing that the chart is reasonably accurate. As I stated, I am no expert on downstream, but these are the numbers I found while researching. I would love to hear from you if you would like to help or participate in the next ITAD book for downstream specifically. Please email me at vladimir@nextus.ai.

This section might also be updated after the book's release.
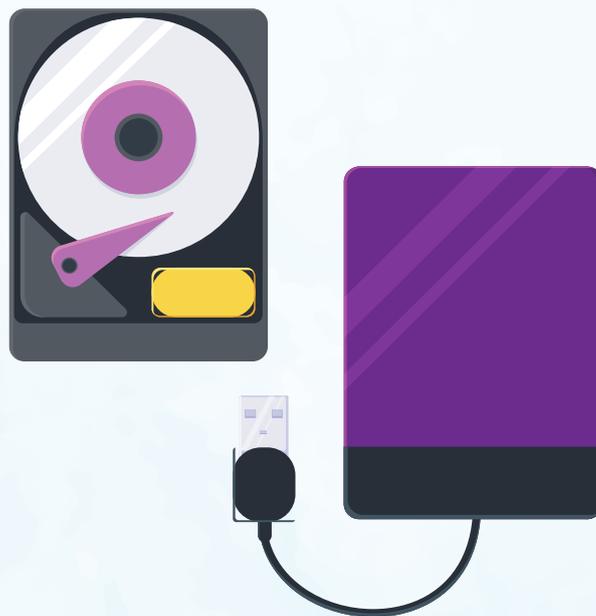
Recyclers:

Our first downstream players that we need to analyze are other recycling companies. These guys are your primary competition but also could be your best partners.

After working with 15+ recyclers, I can unequivocally say that no two recyclers are the same. While the upstream process is more or less similar between recyclers, the downstream and operations vary tremendously.

Competition: On average, recyclers are least competitive on the pricing compared to other buyers, but they offer certified (NAID, R2, estewards, etc) services that most other buyers do not. While competing with other recyclers, I was focusing on contract(fees), equipment resale value, and services. I would always try to find any weak spot in our competition, whether its pricing, additional services, or certifications.

If your competition has back-end fees transportation markup, and you do not, let the customer know. No recycler got it perfect - there is always a weak spot, and it is our job as ITAD upstream sales reps to find and capitalize on those. Hence, I would always request a previous asset report from potential clients. If you are participating in a completely blind RFP, especially for large corporations, then you must go with your best foot forward. I saw people offer upwards of 80% revenue share with large enterprises. Please do not be encouraged when competing against massive multi-billion dollar recyclingcompanies.

You would be surprised how often a small $5m recycler can run circles around large multi-billion dollar ITAD enterprises when offering value back. More prominent companies have higher cost structures, a bloated labor force, and cannot be as nimble.

I remember talking to a tenured sales rep(Let's call him Richard) who worked for one of the biggest ITAD providers and was looking to switch companies during massive layoffs in January 2019. What he told me completely flabbergasted me! Richard told me that one of his enterprise clients brought over $1.3m worth of equipment value in 2018, and the company still charged his client over $300k worth of fees. He told me he was on the verge of losing three key accounts because they simply could not compete on pricing.

Brokers:

These guys are tricky. They can be some of your easiest and toughest competitors simultaneously. They can be your great buyers and even sometimes decent partners. These buyers are simple with a few complexity twists; first, let's try to understand brokers.

First of all, who are brokers? From my experience, not all, but many of them initially started in sales with a focus on downstream for another broker or recycler. Still, they decided to become solopreneurs after they acquired the necessary knowledge and established good connections and contacts.

Who are the first customers of aspiring solopreneur brokers? It is you, my dear recyclers. Brokers usually start by working with other recyclers. They usually have a great downstream source for selling 1 or 2 of these techs(servers, PCs, laptops, Apple, networking, etc.) well, and they use that to get into working with other recyclers.

Over time, as these aspiring brokers grow, they either continue to specialize in 1 equipment and become "specialized buyers," or they try to get into corporations or become a full-service recycler provider, thus acquiring R2 and other certifications.

Usually, brokers do not provide any service, and most want to keep it that way. Thus, they are more interested in flipping the equipment and pushing it down the line to eventually an end user than being a value-added service provider. Therefore, they operate on razor-thin margins of 10-25%.

Competition: On average, brokers provide stronger pricing than recyclers. Brokers are not yourcompetition when securing annual contracts with large enterprises because they simply do not offer services or have the necessary certifications to compete. However, these guys would go on a full-out bid war against you if the corporate enterprise bids out the equipment. My average chance of winning bids against brokers was around 8-25%. In the beginning, I was losing most of the bids; however, over time, I learned to pick my battles. Here are a few things that helpedme compete against brokers:

There are usually two types of equipment lists/bids that corporate clients put out:

1. All services are required - the client requires data destruction, recycling, and other services. These can be open, inviting everyone with services to participate, or hidden, where they work with only a select few. If a bid is available for everyone to participate, not local, and you see many bidders - RUN. If it is hidden and there are only a few participants, it is about your purchase price and relationship building. Leverage your services here and ask your client to request proof of certifications from every single participant. I always followed up my bid offers with phone call testing where we were in terms of pricing and always tried to adjust to the winning bid.

When a corporate enterprise bids out equipment needing services such as data destruction, recycling, etc., this is one of the few ways you can get ahead of brokers. One of my customers who bid out the equipment was one of many BCBS organizations (BlueCross BlueShield). The organization itself is pretty random when it comes to ITAD.

I worked with a total of FOUR BCBS organizations, and all four were different! Two had separate recycling agreements; one just called in local help, and the last was bidding out the equipment with a request for data destruction services. The IT Director bidding out the equipment retired, and a new director outside BCBS took his place. The fresh hire was new to ITAD, creating a perfect opportunity for me to pounce! During one of those bids, I called a new IT Director, introduced myself as a consistent bidder/service provider, and referenced the other two BCBS organizations we are currently working with. I gave him a rundown on ITAD as the whole process and focused most of my efforts on data destruction, HIPAA, and NAID. I told him that we usually won every third to fourth bid; however, we also had processes in place to ensure we had data erasure by HIPAAcompliance and NAID certification. During our first conversation, I hinted that since he was new to the organization, it would be perfect to audit the entire process to ensure it is HIPAA compliant. It turned out that nobody else participating in bids had NAID certification. A few months later, we were working on signing an exclusive agreement. HIPAA is scary...

2. None of the services are required – A good portion of bids that I participated in were bids where all equipment was wiped and stationed on the pallets. These types of bids do not require any services. This is the battlefield where Brokers would LOVE to jump to, similar to vultures who just smelled rotting carcass. It is solely a price war competition; this is a broker's world, not ours. Brokers in ITAD are top-tier hunters; they are like piranhas, and you do not want to get in their way if they smell blood.

My dear reader understands that it would be difficult to win a "flip" bid against the guys who do this for a living 24/7. Here, I would try to probe around signing agreements for a straightforward reason - giving us **100% of the equipment** and having **us pay less** than auctioning the equipment would still be **financially advantageous** for the organization as it would also save them $XXXXX amount in labor and salaries when it comes to preparing equipment.

This pitch only worked for me once when I got to sit down and fully position our continuous services. But also, please keep in mind that I tried avoiding these bids with a 6-foot pole. Our time is limited and valuable, and I would rather hunt difficult contracts that will pay more over time than hunt difficult bids.

Online / Retail / B2C:

Online marketplaces such as eBay, Walmart, Amazon, Backmarket, and others are great channels to sell your processed equipment, especially for smaller quantities of (laptops, PCs, switches., etc.) or odd (projectors, speakers, etc.) equipment.

Usually, 14-25 % of your sales can come from these online portals. I have seen some ITAD organizations that sell about 85% of their equipment using these channels. I have also seen a few organizations that built their online portal and sold 95% of their equipment to END USER.The possibilities here are endless.

My dear reader, please do not confuse this model with the end user model. Those two are vastly different. Selling online through these marketplaces is more of a B2C model, but not B2End User; I have seen one online organization do this successfully where they invited IT folks in school districts, smaller IT firms / Vars, and smaller organizations to their website where they sold their equipment, building a loyal end user and not consumer base that way. This was truly an awe-inspiring model to see. Imagine getting traffic in thousands and tens of thousands of B2B end users on your website.

Most of what we will be discussing here is B2C.

On average, the B2C model paid about 10-25% higher than brokers; however, when youaccount for labor and marketplace fees, selling through marketplaces in many cases was a wash, except Amazon.

This knowledge comes from my SAAS eCommerce experience and not ITAD. One of the founders of a SaaS company - Hammoq, had a $1.4-$2mil annual revenue business where he would buy items from recyclers on eBay and sell them on Amazon with an average of 30% markup. Yup. Amazon pays more than eBay, and the best part is that you can use $80-$200/mo software like SellerChamp (decent software for the price, occasionally very buggy) and move all your listings from ERP or eBay to Amazon.

One thing to keep in mind is that getting ungated by Amazon is a whole other story. What is gating Amazon will not let you sell anything that is not owned by your brand specifically unless you provide proof of authenticity for each item category. It is tough, but it is worth it.

Specialized Buyers:

Man, I love these guys. I stumbled across them accidentally and am still looking for a proper way to name these entities. I know "specialized buyers" - very creative. Let's dive deeper into why these guys are great to work with:

One of my big leads was a financial company based out of California with over 5,000 employees. I was overjoyed when I saw that lead. It took about three months of follow-ups for their Senior Director to finally send me a list of networking hardware they were looking to dispose of. I received the list, sent it to my downstream guy, and got the number of $24,600. I wanted to not be greedy and show the customer that we provide an amazing resale value; therefore, I called the customer and offered him $19,800. However, my conversation went in an opposite direction; rather than being impressed, I got the gut feeling that my customer felt insulted. I apologized and asked my customer to give us a few more days to reach out to more buyers and create a different offer. We had a subscription to a third party that had a list of 278 different switches and networking equipment buyers. I know email marketing; I am sure you know where this is going.

I emailed everyone introducing ourselves and attaching the list asking people to see if they would be interested in purchasing equipment. After going back and forth a few times with about 30-40 people - I received numerous offers that were close to what I offered to customer. However, two offers blew me away - one was for $72,000, and another was for $86,000. I was baffled - how could these relatively small companies offer such an amazing buyback price? I had to call them and verify that the offer was legitimate.

What I found out pleasantly surprised me… These two switch/networking buyers only specialized in networking equipment. They never purchased anything else and worked directly with end users, such as school districts, to fulfill their needs for networking hardware. They did not have a steady demand. However, when they had, they would reach out to other recyclers with specific equipment requests that they paid **2x higher** than anyone. These guys were professionals - they knew how to refurbish old switches and troubleshoot and configure them for the customer's use. You probably know a few of these "specialized buyers"; the ones I have noticed that are more or less common are the ones that specialize in Apple products. I don't think I ever won a single Apple bid when I competed against specialized Apple buyers.

These guys offer some of the best pricing for equipment I have ever seen. They have strong downstream channels for selling the equipment they specialize in.

I offered the client $72,000 and discovered that the winning bid was just a bit over $83,000. This is where I learned that if brokers seemed hard to beat regarding pricing, these guys were next to impossible. Think about how many bids you lost to "apple-only guys." Do not get discouraged because you can always get your hands on other equipment the entity offers. This is also where you can leverage your certifications, as most specialized buyers would have none.

VARs(Value-Added Resellers) and end users:
These two go hand in hand together. First, let's dive into end users and what makes them so lucrative for our downstream efforts.

A lot of people in ITAD mix things up quite a bit and think that consumers who purchase equipment online count as end users. Technically, they are right; consumers are the last people to use tech; however, the price a consumer and an end-user pay vastly differs. I would define End Users as corporate employees with specific software and hardware requirements for their technology. For example, if you sell laptops to end users, you should expect the laptop to be fully operational and loaded with Windows. More often than not, you willalso need to image the laptop and load it with corporate-specific software before selling it. One of the successful ways of finding end users during my six-month research was going after companies with a refresh cycle longer than six years. These companies are perfect as they do not have the IT budget to upgrade frequently, and equipment does tend to break down after 3-4 years of continuous use, needing refurbished replacement.

I was able to find most of my end-user sales within school districts. However, there are some in manufacturing, construction, and logistics.

I have seen some successful strategies implemented where ITAD organizations would pursue large organizations that refresh their hardware every 3-4 years for upstream and organizations that refresh their hardware every 6+ years for downstream. Essentially, creating a kind of equipment funnel from one organization to another.

VARs come in here perfectly because they deal with clients and end users 99% of the time. Another thing about VARs is that they usually image and prep equipment themselves before sending it to the end user. I believe VARs can also make a great downstream partner because they pay really well for refurbished equipment while their company takes care of etching,imaging, software installation, etc.

The only additional service ITAD company needs to worry about is the installation of iOS/Windows.

Earlier in this chapter, I presented examples of around 200 Lenovo T450 laptops in great condition and their pricing based on what different downstream vendors would pay. I was very interested in how big of a difference we can make with pricing. Therefore, I challenged myself to see what best value we could bring to those laptops.

Types of Buyers	Pricing Strength	Margin Profits	Example T450
Recyclers	*	30–50%	$90.00
Brokers	**	10–15%	$120.00
Online / Retail / B2C	***	15–30%	$150.00
Specialized Buyers	****	50–200%	$200.00
VARs (End user sales)	****	50–100%	$350.00
End User	*****		$550.00

after reaching out to all of our laptop buyers, end users, vars, etc. The pricing I got at the end completely blew me away.

While getting some great offers, even from specialized buyers, I saw an email from VAR asking for more details about laptops. After a quick conversation, VAR sales rep contacted a customer with specs and processes and got the green light. We decided that our company would load Windows software on all laptops, and their organization would take care of imaging.

After we got Windows loaded and shipped laptops - VAR paid us $350 per laptop, and the sales rep told me that he sold it to a client for $550 after imaging them. The pricing went from **$90 to $550** for the same product, isn't it something...

Most ITAD organizations focus their downstream efforts on the top 3 categories, and rightfully so, those have a steady demand for their equipment. Specialized Buyers and End Users pay significantly more, but with them, it is all about timing and special requirements.

Downstream Audit:

The last thing I want to mention is the importance of auditing your downstream occasionally.

The problem with the downstream market is that it is ever-changing, and prices fluctuate quite a bit. ITAD companies tend to resell equipment well in 2-3 categories and are usually on par or behind with the other categories of equipment. The problem here is that most of the time, people do not know what their blind spots are when it comes to downstream. Even on the equipment, they think they sell well. Other organizations usually try to capitalize on that. Consider how many brokers and other buyers constantly reach out to you with specific requests, trying to buy your equipment.

To further assist the clients I consult, we decided to do a full downstream audit for 2 of my clients a few years ago. It was a complete double blind/anonymous audit where I was checking pricing strength for two of my clients. It turned out that they both had their strengths and weaknesses in different categories and had blind spots in their pricing that they were unaware of.

If you have a trusted partner or two, I recommend doing a full downstream audit to understand your blind spots better. Knowing that you are a downstream price leader in certain categories can open many doors to many bids and contracts. Upstream and Downstream are two ends of the same coin; one cannot function without the other.

Logistics:

This Chapter aims to show you a basic formula that white glove companies use and how you can break and manipulate it.

Logistics... is a necessary evil; there is no going around it. Or is it?
Dear reader, I understand. Nothing is more disheartening than pursuing 1 of Fortune 100 accounts for months on end only to get a test pickup ten states apart that's worth $2,500 only. You know the saying time kills all deals; quite frankly, I do not think ITAD has an issue with that (some contracts took over 14 months to finalize). I believe in ITAD, it's logistics that kills all deals.

As a sales rep trying to secure large contracts and working out of the only facility in Arizona, I understand your pain. I had to work mental gymnastics to make some projects and contracts cost-neutral or to see any return. The only reliable way to consistently come out ahead or neutral when dealing with logistics was through a. Local movers, b. Other ITAD partners.

However, I believe I need to dive a bit deeper before we can review those two options. Let me paint a big picture of logistics and their little dirty secrets before we jump into improving it. I had three separate occurrences that changed my thinking completely when it came to logistics.

1. Using multiple vendors to send RFQs.

My first occurrence was when we asked for a quote from one trusted vendor and received a number that was ultimately outside their normal pickup range. The quote was $4,800, $2,000above their average quotes for a similar distance. What got me very curious was why thisparticular project that was located in a major city with no special restrictions cost an extra $2,000. I called their team and heard the usual "request is too urgent," "the team is fully booked and has to make extra hours", etc. none of the reasons for the extra charge made sense to me, and I was able to find out the reasons why some of the quotes by these "white glove logistics companies" vary so much only about a year later. We sent out a request for a quote to another four logistics vendors, and one of the quotes was $3,200, which we accepted. I was inquisitive at this point.

A year later, one of my good acquaintances quit working for one of these logistics companies and created his own. His business model was nothing special - find reliable local companies, get a quote from them, mark it up, and add LTL freight cost to the final quote. However, he used his former employer and competitors on the projects where he did not have any local presence and was pressed for time.

This makes sense. When we do not have a local presence, and the project is not very valuable, we usually try to find a local partner to take care of it. Well, logistics companies do the same! Not all the time, and not all companies do that, but this was a bit of an eye-opener for me.


2. The Flip Flops…

How do I put this…

I helped one of my ITAD customers I consulted to close the annual contract with one of the biggest manufacturers in the United States. I was overjoyed; the company size, IT Budget, and financials looked amazing. The joy did not last very long because we had an agitated customer calling our sales rep on their second pickup and telling him that the guys who showed up for the second pickup had a small pickup truck and were in flip-flops. He told us that he could not send the equipment to them and asked for another pickup service. Our "white glove" logistics vendor was baffled and kept repeating sorry over and over. The excuse this time was that they never used that vendor before and they would discontinue using him in the future. This got me curious again. The company that charges an arm and a leg for their logistics services had to find a local mover and arrange a pickup at the last minute. The question was why we paid such high markups for the companies only to find someone local at the last minute.

3. Hiring a moving company.
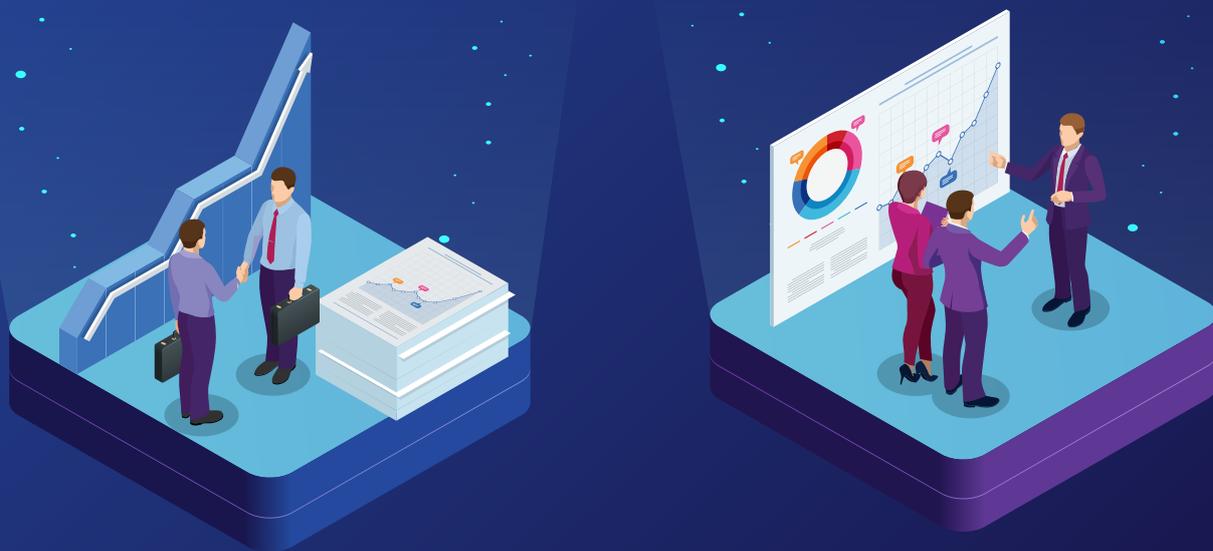
My client was overjoyed he finally got a lead with a massive publisher who needed his services in one of their offices on the East Coast. Problem - my client was located in good old Texas; the equipment value was estimated to be $6,500, while the white glove pickup cost was close to $5,600. The problem was that after all auditing and data destruction fees, there would not be any value left for the customer, making my client look like just any other ITAD provider (the client was very interested in the possibility of resale value or at least a net zero cost solution). We emailed multiple white glove vendors, called in a few favors, and could not lower the transportation cost below $4,500. The deadline for the pickup was getting close, and we started getting desperate. At that time, we looked up every moving company, their websites, and their trucks and narrowed it down to the top 3 solutions providers who also served businesses. The one we liked was in the middle of the road between the two and cost us $1,440 to come in, wrap and palletize the equipment, and station 4 pallets for two days at their warehouse. The LTL for four pallets from NJ to TX cost us just a bit over $1,600, just a bit under $3,100. Almost half of the initial quote. Guys, we were desperate and spent a day and a half vetting vendors, but the end quote surprised me.

So basically, we have a straightforward formula for transportation here:

$$(\text{Local company} + \text{LTL Freight}) + \text{white glove}$$

$$= \quad \text{WhiteGlove pickup}$$

In our case it "white glove" pickup quotes looked like

($1,440 + $1,600) + ($2500) = $5,600
($1,440 + $1,600) + ($1400) = $4,500

What we did is simplify formula a little bit:

Local Company + LTL Freight = WhiteGlove pickup
$1,440 +$1,600 = $3,100

I certainly would not recommend using moving companies as a means of your 100% transportation, but that is literally what other companies that we hire to use in a crutch. With proper vetting and insurance, this can alleviate some of the bloated logistics costs. As a thank you for taking such good care of my customers, I would like to include this:

If you are looking for some of the most reliable local white glove pickup services in CA, I would certainly recommend John Holland john@fastforwardlax.com (951)249-5523 he handled my top customers and my client's customers for over five years servicing from LA to San Diego.

One thing to keep in mind is that getting ungated by Amazon is a whole other story. What is gating Amazon will not let you sell anything that is not owned by your brand specifically unless you provide proof of authenticity for each item category. It is tough, but it is worth it.

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Final Thoughts and About us:

My dear reader, I hope you enjoyed this book and hope you found some excellent tips and tricks helpful. It was an absolute joy writing it. Please stay tuned for our next book, ITAD: Advanced Digital Marketing and Sales Tactics, that we are considering releasing next year. We are running a few tests this year, including ads and PR, and we are revisiting the entire B2B model. I would be thrilled to report my findings in the next book.

To give you a quick look into what we are experimenting with this year AI for lead and content generation, Paid Media Ads, PR, spinning templates, AI for performance enhancement and template testing, CRM automation, and customer journey. Stay tuned because the next book will cover a lot of advanced tactics and strategies we are testing this year.

I would like to take a moment and talk about how we created a digital agency that is dedicated explicitly to scaling ITAD businesses.

There are two main challenges when scaling your first ITAD facility:
1. Lack of leads
2. Logistics:

After doing ITAD upstream sales for years, I understand your pain, especially when the times get lean. We are looking to onboard 7 more US and 12 EU based companies to set up an accelerator program to combat that. Our accelerator program is designed with a s traightforward goal - to deliver at least 20-40 exclusive enterprise/ partner leads per month to our clients and build strong logistical support for everybody.

I believe you are already familiar with the lead generation process that we are going to set up for our customers by reading Chapter 2. However, as a complimentary service, we will also add AI lead generation and spinning templates, as they yielded excellent test results for us so far this year.

For logistical support, we will be setting up agreements with local moving/transportation companies that can handle ITAD in all major cities and sharing their contact information with the accelerator group. We plan to cover 20-50% of US-based logistical support by end-Q3 and 100% for all major cities by the end of Q4 2024. Then, replicate a similar process in Europe and work on accelerator partnerships in 2025.

We worked with smaller ITAD companies under $10m in revenue and a few midsize companies with $30m+. We are a performance-based ITAD Digital Agency where we charge per meeting (targeted account showed up). Therefore it makes us pretty agnostic on working with larger or smaller companies.

Since we can generate a finite amount of leads, we can only work with a limited number of companies across the US and EU.

I am sorry, dear reader, this is not a sales tactic; please understand that we can't possibly provide the same level of service to all 768 R2 ITAD organizations in the US. There are simply not enough leads that we can generate to service all 768 organizations. Therefore, we have to be selective. That's why we are looking for only seven more companies that service US ITAD and 12 more for Europe this year, and then we are looking to move to Asia and South America. We had to turn down a very lucrative offer from one of the top ITAD providers in the US because they wanted us to sign a non-compete and kick our existing customers to the curb.

We do not operate that way and will not fire our loyal customers in favor of new, shiny things. That'swhy we are not focusing on working with the biggest ITAD companies. Believe it or not, we focus on the people we work for. We want to work with open-minded, fast decision-makers, flexible and punctual clients. From our experience, the feedback, testing, templates, and the entire setup need to be operated on quickly for the first 1-2 months.

We are a small but mighty digital marketing agency that does not have time to waste. If you are in an ITAD organization that can use services like ours, you have clear goals and vision, and you can dedicate the necessary time and energy - then we would like to hear from you.

Email me with the subject: Looking for ITAD Digital Marketing consultation to vladimir@nextus.ai.

This will be an actual consultation call to see if we are a good fit for each other. I promise I will try to sell you or torture you with "What keeps you up at night?" questions; this will be a simple   call discussing different strategies for your ITAD business that worked in the digital marketing.

My dear reader, thank you for reading this book. From the bottom of our hearts, we wish you wealth, health, and a bit of luck this year.

From Russia with love