

The First-Message Pack

Who to message, what to say, and how to know what's broken. A free starter kit for getting clients from LinkedIn.



Before you send

This pack is the short version of the system we use at Reblues Media to get clients from LinkedIn: who to message, what to say, and how to tell what's broken. Steal all of it.

The Outreach Equation

Most people treat outreach as one activity: "sending messages". That is why it fails. Outreach is a chain of six moves. If any one move is weak, the whole chain breaks, and more volume will not fix it.

We use chess pieces to name each move, because chess rewards exactly what outreach rewards: position before attack, patience, and calculated moves instead of random ones. (Mētis is the old Greek word for that kind of practical, strategic cunning.)

Piece	Move	The question it answers
0 · The Board	Profile	When they check you out, do they trust you?
Pawn	Prospecting	Are you talking to the right people, at the right time?
Knight	Messaging	Does your message earn a reply?
Bishop	Booking	Do replies turn into meetings?
Rook	Follow-ups & infrastructure	Do you follow up well, and is your account safe?
Queen	Measurement	Do you know which move is broken?
King	Checkmate: the 30-day plan	Are you doing it every day?

The equation itself

Booked calls are not magic. They are multiplication:

$$\text{Calls held} = \text{People contacted} \times \text{Acceptance rate} \times \text{Reply rate} \times \text{Positive-reply rate} \times \text{Booking rate} \times \text{Show rate}$$

Each piece of the system moves one term in that equation:

- **The Board (profile)** lifts acceptance and reply rates, because people check your profile before they accept or reply.
- **Pawn (prospecting)** lifts every rate, because the right person with a real reason to talk is more likely to accept, reply and book.
- **Knight (messaging)** lifts reply and positive-reply rates.
- **Bishop (booking)** lifts booking and show rates.
- **Rook (follow-ups and infrastructure)** lifts reply rate over time, and protects "people contacted" by keeping your account safe.
- **Queen (measurement)** tells you which term is the weakest, so you fix the right thing.

Because the terms multiply, small gains compound. Lifting four terms by 20% each roughly doubles your calls ($1.2 \times 1.2 \times 1.2 \times 1.2 \approx 2.07$). That is the whole idea: **fix the weakest move, then the next weakest, every week.**

Signal mapping: who needs you now

A signal is a public event that suggests a company has a reason to talk to you right now. Messaging someone after a signal turns "random sales pitch" into "relevant, timely message".

Signals do two jobs:

1. **Prioritise:** out of 1,000 ICP companies, talk first to the 100 with a signal this month.
2. **Personalise:** the signal gives you a natural first line.

The signal library

Signal	What it suggests	Where to find it	Best for
Hiring for a role you can do (e.g. "Video Editor", "Performance Marketer")	They need the work done and have budget. An agency can be faster than a hire.	LinkedIn Jobs, company Careers page, Naukri, "We're hiring" posts	All ICPs
Funding announced	New budget, pressure to grow fast	LinkedIn posts, news sites, startup funding newsletters	SaaS, D2C
Product / feature launch	Needs launch assets, content, ads	Founder posts, Product Hunt, company page	SaaS, D2C, coaches
New leader joined (new CMO, Head of Growth)	New people make changes in their first 90 days	LinkedIn job-change notifications, Sales Navigator alerts	SaaS, D2C
Posting about the problem you solve	They feel the pain and are talking about it	LinkedIn search for posts with keywords	All ICPs
Engaged with a competitor's or peer's post	Interest in the topic	Comments on relevant posts	All ICPs
Website or brand refresh	Open to new vendors right now	Visiting their site, posts about rebrand	SaaS, D2C
Expansion (new city, new country, new channel like quick commerce)	New market = new assets and campaigns	Posts, news, company updates	D2C, SaaS
Event speaking or sponsoring	Needs content, has budget	Event pages, speaker lists	SaaS, consultants
Viewed your profile	Curiosity about you	"Who viewed your profile"	All ICPs
Commented on or liked your post	Warm: they know your name	Your post notifications	All ICPs
Coach launching a programme	Needs funnel, ads, content quickly	Posts, Instagram, waitlist pages	Coaches

Signal strength score

Not all signals are equal. Score each prospect to decide who to contact first.

Signal type	Points
Engaged with your content or viewed your profile	3
Hiring for a role you can replace or support	3
Posted about the exact problem you solve	3
Funding announced in the last 60 days	2
New leader in the last 90 days	2
Launch, rebrand or expansion in the last 60 days	2
Mutual connection or shared group	1
Fits ICP, no signal	0

5+ points: message this week, highest personalisation. **2-4:** message this month. **0-1:** add to a nurture list; engage with their posts first.

Connection notes

Rules

- **Under 200 characters** (so it works on any account).
- **No pitch, no link, no calendar.** You are asking to connect, not to buy.
- **One specific reason:** a post, a shared interest, a signal, a mutual connection.
- **Sound like a person.** Read it out loud. If you would not say it at a networking event, rewrite it.

Connection note templates (all under 200 characters)

1. **Post reference:** "Hi {first_name}, your post on {topic} was spot on, especially the bit about {detail}. I work with {ICP} on similar stuff. Would be good to connect."
2. **Signal reference:** "Hi {first_name}, saw {company} is {signal}. Congrats! I spend my days around {related topic} for {ICP}. Happy to connect."
3. **Shared context:** "Hi {first_name}, we're both in {group/event/community}. I work with {ICP} on {area}. Thought it'd be good to connect."
4. **Mutual connection:** "Hi {first_name}, noticed we both know {mutual name}. I work with {ICP} on {area}. Would love to connect."
5. **Peer-to-peer:** "Hi {first_name}, fellow {city/industry} founder here. I follow what {company} is building. Would be great to connect."

The first message

The KNIGHT framework

Every first message in this book follows the same four-beat structure. Think of it as the knight's L-move: a step sideways into their world, then a step forward toward a small ask.

1. **Context (why you, why now)**: the signal or detail that prompted the message. One line.
2. **Insight (the jump)**: a short, specific observation or idea that shows you understand their situation. This is the part most people skip.
3. **Proof (light)**: one line, only if it is relevant. Optional in the first message.
4. **Small ask**: a micro-offer or an easy question. Never a calendar link in the first message.

Length

Expandi tested message length across single-message campaigns: messages of **150–200 characters** had the highest reply rate (8.5%), but longer messages (301–500 characters) still did reasonably well (7.6%). Their conclusion: length is a weak lever; one clear ask matters more. Our rule: **2–4 short sentences, under about 400 characters, one ask.**

Writing rules

- Write at the level of a WhatsApp message to a business contact, not a formal letter. No "Dear Sir/Madam", no "I hope this message finds you well", no "Greetings of the day".
- Talk about them, not you. Count the words "I/we" vs "you/your". "You" should win.
- One idea per message.
- No links in the first message unless they asked. Put proof in your Featured section; they will check your profile.
- Ask questions that are easy to answer in one line.
- Never pretend you know them. Never fake a compliment.
- Use AI to draft if you like, then rewrite it in your own voice with real detail. Expandi found that unedited AI-personalised messages were accepted about 12% less often than the same senders' own human-written templates.

Reply-rate targets (not guarantees)

Our target for the Knight framework is an **18–25% reply rate**, measured as: people who replied ÷ people who received your first message, counted across your whole 3-message sequence.

For context: the platform average is about 10.4% message reply, and Belkins' own managed campaigns saw 17.6% of connected prospects reply. So 18–25% is a stretch target. You get there with a narrow ICP, a real signal, a human message and a sensible follow-up, not by sending more.

If you are below 10% after 100+ first messages, the problem is usually the **list or the offer**, not the wording (see the five numbers below for diagnosis).

Six first-message scripts (B2B SaaS example)

Swap the service details for yours. The structure works for any ICP.

Script 1 · SaaS · Hiring signal (video / design / content) Who: Head of Marketing at a SaaS company hiring a video editor, designer or content writer.

Note: Hi {first_name}, saw {company} is hiring a {role}. Growing the marketing team is a good sign! I work with SaaS teams on {area}. Happy to connect.

Message 1: Thanks for connecting, {first_name}. Saw the {role} opening. While you hire, is there a backlog of {videos/designs/posts} waiting? We often cover that gap for SaaS teams so launches don't slip. Want me to share how that usually works?

Script 2 · SaaS · Funding signal Who: Founder or Head of Growth after a funding announcement (last 60 days).

Note: Congrats on the {round}, {first_name}! Big milestone for {company}. I work with funded SaaS teams on {area}. Would be good to connect.

Message 1: {first_name}, after a raise most teams I talk to are asked to show growth fast, and {area} becomes urgent. What's the one marketing asset you wish you already had for the next 90 days? Happy to send a couple of ideas based on what I've seen work.

Script 3 · SaaS · Product launch / Product Hunt Who: Founder or PMM who just announced or is about to announce a launch.

Note: Hi {first_name}, saw the {feature/product} launch. The {specific detail} looks really useful. I help SaaS teams with launch {videos/pages}. Would love to connect.

Message 1: {first_name}, watched the {launch post/video}. One idea: the first 10 seconds explain {feature}, but the problem it solves ({problem}) only shows up later. Leading with the problem usually keeps people watching. Want me to send a 30-second storyboard showing what I mean?

Script 4 · SaaS · New marketing leader Who: New Head of Marketing / Growth (0–3 months in the role).

Note: Hi {first_name}, congrats on the new role at {company}! I work with SaaS marketing teams on {area}. Would be good to connect.

Message 1: {first_name}, the first 90 days in a new marketing role usually mean auditing everything at once. If {area} is on your list, I'm happy to do a free 10-minute audit of {company}'s {website/videos/ads} and send you notes. Useful, or too early?

Script 5 · SaaS · Posted about the problem Who: Anyone in your ICP who posted about a problem you solve (low demo bookings, weak content, hiring trouble, etc.).

Note: Hi {first_name}, your post on {problem} hit home. We see the same thing with SaaS teams a lot. Would love to connect.

Message 1: {first_name}, on your point about {problem}: the fix we've seen work most often is {one specific idea}. Curious, have you tried that yet? If useful, I can share an example from a {similar type of company}.

Script 6 · SaaS · Indian SaaS selling to the US Who: Founder/CMO of an India-based SaaS company expanding to the US.

Note: Hi {first_name}, saw {company} is going after the US market. Exciting move. I work with Indian SaaS teams on {area} for US buyers. Happy to connect.

Message 1: {first_name}, one pattern with Indian SaaS teams entering the US: the product is strong, but the {website/demo video/messaging} still speaks to Indian buyers. Small shifts in {specific element} make a big difference. Want me to point out 2-3 on {company}'s site?

Script 7 · D2C · New product launch Who: Founder or Brand/Growth lead who just launched a new product or range.

The five numbers

Track these five every week. They map directly onto the Outreach Equation.

#	Number	Formula	Tells you about	Piece to fix if low
1	Acceptance rate	Accepted ÷ invites sent	Profile + targeting + note	Board, Pawn
2	Reply rate	Replied ÷ received first message (across the sequence)	Message + relevance	Knight, Pawn
3	Positive-reply rate	Positive replies ÷ all replies	Offer + ICP fit	Knight (offer), Pawn
4	Booking rate	Calls booked ÷ positive replies	Booking SOP	Bishop
5	Show rate	Calls held ÷ calls booked	Reminders + call promise	Bishop

Then one outcome number: **calls held per week**. (And later, proposals sent and deals won.)

What counts as a "positive reply": any reply that moves toward a conversation: "sure, send it", "tell me more", "what do you charge?", "not now but check back in March". "No thanks" and "wrong person" (without a referral) are replies, but not positive.

Want the full system?

Join the free live workshop, or get the full LinkedIn Outreach Playbook (profile, prospecting, 18 scripts, follow-ups, booking SOP, 30-day plan) at themetisclub.com.