



OUTREACH WORKBOOK

The Example InMail Workbook — Boosting Response Rates

The industry is happy with a 25% InMail response rate. We think anything below 40% is poor performance, and we regularly hit 70% — here's exactly how we write them.

If you're hiring marketers, you're using LinkedIn Recruiter — because you're not really a marketer if you're not on LinkedIn. That means you're sending a lot of InMails. Most recruiters treat a 10–25% response rate as normal, and consider 25% to be good going. We don't. We think anything below 40% is poor performance, and we target response rates of around 70% — because we achieve it regularly.

Where we set the bar

InMail response rates

What most recruiters call good going

25%

Our minimum acceptable performance

40%

What we target — and regularly achieve

70%

Most recruiters treat a 10–25% response rate as normal. Our target is around 70%.

There are two elements to getting there: target smaller groups of people who share similar traits, rather than mass-blasting one message at everyone who fits a job title, and write like a marketer, not like a recruiter filling in a template.

THE APPROACH

The Perfect InMail: Basically a Personalised Job Ad

There are so-called experts who'll tell you an InMail has to be short to convert well. There is nothing further from the truth. You get 1,900 characters — use as many of them as you possibly can, and build a template for each role and each candidate segment. The longer the InMail, the better.

1,900

characters are yours in every InMail. **Use as many of them as you possibly can.**

There's no single right approach — the best outreach is just being yourself. We're humble at first, high on detail, and we throw in a joke using the {firstname} variable that often gets a reply purely because we made someone laugh. Think of outreach this way: it's your chance to send a personalised job ad to candidates you actually WANT to apply. Seen like that, an InMail is very close to a job ad, and borrows a lot of the same structure.

SIX BUILDING BLOCKS

InMail Structure

- 1** Title — get them to read it: InMails appear when candidates are online, then vanish into a sub-folder of their inbox, so the title matters. We go with job role + salary + hybrid/remote/etc. + location.
- 2** First paragraph — personalised & humble: use the {firstname} variable, apologise for interrupting or intruding, keep it human and informal.
- 3** Why are you writing — why me, why you: candidates get a ton of recruiter outreach, so be quick, clear and concise about why you're writing, what it's about, and why them specifically.
- 4** What the role entails — it's job ad time: a list of bullet points on what the successful candidate will actually be doing, because that's foremost in their mind — what is the role, and can I do it.
- 5** The perfect candidate — what you're really looking for: more bullet points on the ideal candidate you're trying to attract, aligned to the segment you've selected. Bonus points for ending the list with the joke: "Must be someone called {firstname}."
- 6** Closer — nuts & bolts and a CTA: this is where you sell and close — salary, benefits, work situation, dog-friendly office, whatever applies — plus a calendar link, which implies you've already selected them and puts them in control.

WORKED EXAMPLE

A Good InMail in Full

Here's a worked example from the workbook, for a Digital Marketing Manager role in Manchester. The subject line uses job details and salary to entice a click; the opener mixes informal and humble because you're one of many messages in the inbox and need to make an impression; a full JD is attached so the role bullets can replicate a real job ad; the candidate bullets are pulled from the JD too, with a joke at the end that — while not for everyone — reliably gets a response; the offer section lists everything that will genuinely attract a candidate (skip anything that's only the legal minimum); and it closes with a calendar link as the call to action.



Subject: Digital Marketing Manager role in Manchester, up to 60k, Hybrid Hey {firstname}, I hope you don't mind me approaching you directly! I'm writing because we're looking to hire a digital marketing manager here at MegaDigital, and I hoped you'd be interested in a quick chat about the role. I've attached a JD for you, but in a nutshell, we're looking for someone to build out our proposition and lead on delivery for the agency. Which looks a bit like this: developing our digital proposition, leading the marketing team to deliver for clients, liaising with senior stakeholders to achieve our vision, building out the digital team, assisting with pitches & proposals, and developing a new reporting framework for our clients & our internal senior leadership team. Our ideal candidate looks like this: someone who has at least 5 years' agency experience, a thorough understanding of SEO and PPC, is a great communicator, is great with numbers and a whizz with data, is a lifelong learner, and someone called {firstname}. Lol. That last one was a joke. Or was it..... And here's what we're offering: a salary of between £50,000 and £60,000, an annual performance-based bonus, 25 days' holiday plus bank holidays, an extra day's leave per year's service, hybrid work (3 days in our fantastic Manchester office), perks such as gym membership discounts, private health insurance, and 5% pension contributions. I'd love the chance to have a chat with you about the role. If you're up for that, here's a link to my calendar: <link>. All the best, Me

COPY TO BORROW

InMail Content: Openers

- Hey {firstname} — I wondered if you might be interested in a role that we're hiring for at MegaDigital. I saw your profile and thought you might be an excellent fit for our team here!

- Hey {firstname} — Apologies for being the 100th recruiter to hit your inbox. Today. But I was looking at your profile and wondered whether you'd be open to a conversation about a role we're hiring for here at MegaDigital.
- Hey {firstname} — Thanks for opening my message ;) I'm writing because I wondered if you'd be open to a conversation about our Digital Marketing Manager role here at MegaDigital.
- Hey {firstname} — I do apologise for the inbox intrusion! I was hoping to have a conversation with you about a role we're hiring for here at MegaDigital. If you have a spare ten minutes for a quick chat, that would be amazing.
- Hey {firstname} — I hope you don't mind me writing to you directly. My name's Gareth, and I'm the hiring manager here at MegaDigital - I was wondering if you'd be open to a quick chat about our Digital Marketing Manager role.

COPY TO BORROW

InMail Content: Closers

- I'd really appreciate the chance to discuss the role in depth with you. Here's my calendar, feel free to choose a time that works for you & hopefully we can catch up soon!
- We're looking to schedule some interviews this week and next, and I'd love for you to be part of that. Here's my calendar link - and please do reach out if you have any questions!
- Your experience seems to be a great fit for what we need here, and it would be amazing if we could catch up and discuss the role! Here's my calendar link, and I hope we can talk soon.
- So - what do you think? Worth a quick chat? Here's my calendar link - feel free to schedule something that works for you & hopefully we can talk soon.

TACTICS

InMail Tactics: Segmentation

What we've described is a templated approach to InMailing — you can't sit and write the same message 100 times. Recruiter Lite and Recruiter Pro both let you build these

templates. We suggest creating several similar templates per role, so you can mass-InMail candidates in small batches of similar profiles.

Say you're advertising a PPC Manager role and you've got 100 candidates worth a conversation. Some will have direct industry experience — write an InMail that speaks to that specific experience and you'll likely see an uplift in response rate. Others will be less experienced but potential superstars — write an InMail that downplays the experience required, so you don't put them off before they've even read the role.

TACTICS

InMail Tactics: Prioritisation

Assuming you're on one of the LinkedIn Recruiter products, Recruiter Pro lets you template and mass-InMail up to 25 candidates at a time. LinkedIn also gives you ways to identify candidates who are more likely to respond.

- Open To Work — some candidates use the green banner publicly, others keep it visible only to recruiters. That recruiter-only view is a Recruiter Pro feature, but it's very useful when you can see it.
- In Your Network — these candidates are free to InMail, and more likely to respond simply because you're a first connection.
- Active candidates — LinkedIn will flag if candidates are actively posting, or if their companies are going through redundancy phases.
- Long-tenure candidates — refine targeting to those who've been in a role for 2+ years without a title change. Either they're up for promotion, or they're frustrated they haven't had one.

“It's not about the length of the message or the cleverness of the subject line — it's about targeting the right small group of people, and writing to them like a marketer, not a recruiter.”



Example Recruitment — marketing-led headhunters for SaaS and FinTech startups and scaleups in New York and London.

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