

Cold Email Personalization

Feed Claude a block about who you are plus a list of scraped leads, and get one true thing you have in common with each person written into a short casual email.

01 When to use this

Use this when you have a validated lead list and a cold email that already gets replies. It is the same fuzzy variable machine as the newsletter build with a different intake, so run the newsletter version first if you want to learn the technique on lower stakes.

02 The prompt

I have a scraped lead list at `<SHEET_URL_OR_PATH>`. I want you to enrich every row with fuzzy variables for a cold email.

Here is who I am. Use this to find genuine overlap with each lead:

`<BACKGROUND: where you grew up, cities you have lived in, schools, sports, hobbies, past jobs, current business, the kind of people you like working with>`

Here is the email these variables go into:

`yo {{first_name}},`

`saw {{thingInCommon}}. i'm {{myMatchingThing}} too and wanted to say hi.`

`<ONE LINE OF CREDIBILITY WITH A REAL SUBSTANTIATED NUMBER>`

`<THE ASK, WITH THE RISK ON ME NOT THEM>`

`<THE SPECIFIC OUTCOME, QUANTIFIED>`

`are you open to this?`

Add these columns, in this order, to a new sheet:

- thingInCommon - about 8 words, completes "saw ___". Something true from their row: their city, their industry, their company stage, their background.
- myMatchingThing - about 6 words, completes "i'm ___ too". Must be true of me based on my background above.
- paraphrasedCompanyName - short, natural spoken version of their company name.
- prospectsTheyWant - about 6 words, describing who they sell to in their own terminology, not mine.

Style rules:

1. Lowercase. Casual. Slightly imperfect. Do not clean up the grammar.
2. No em dashes. No marketing language. No exclamation marks.
3. Read every row. Vary the phrasing row to row. Do not reuse a handful of stock overlaps.
4. If there is no honest overlap for a row, say so in the column rather than inventing one.
5. Flag any claim in my credibility line that you think I cannot substantiate.

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Output 5 fully rendered examples before you process the whole list.
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03 What it is actually doing

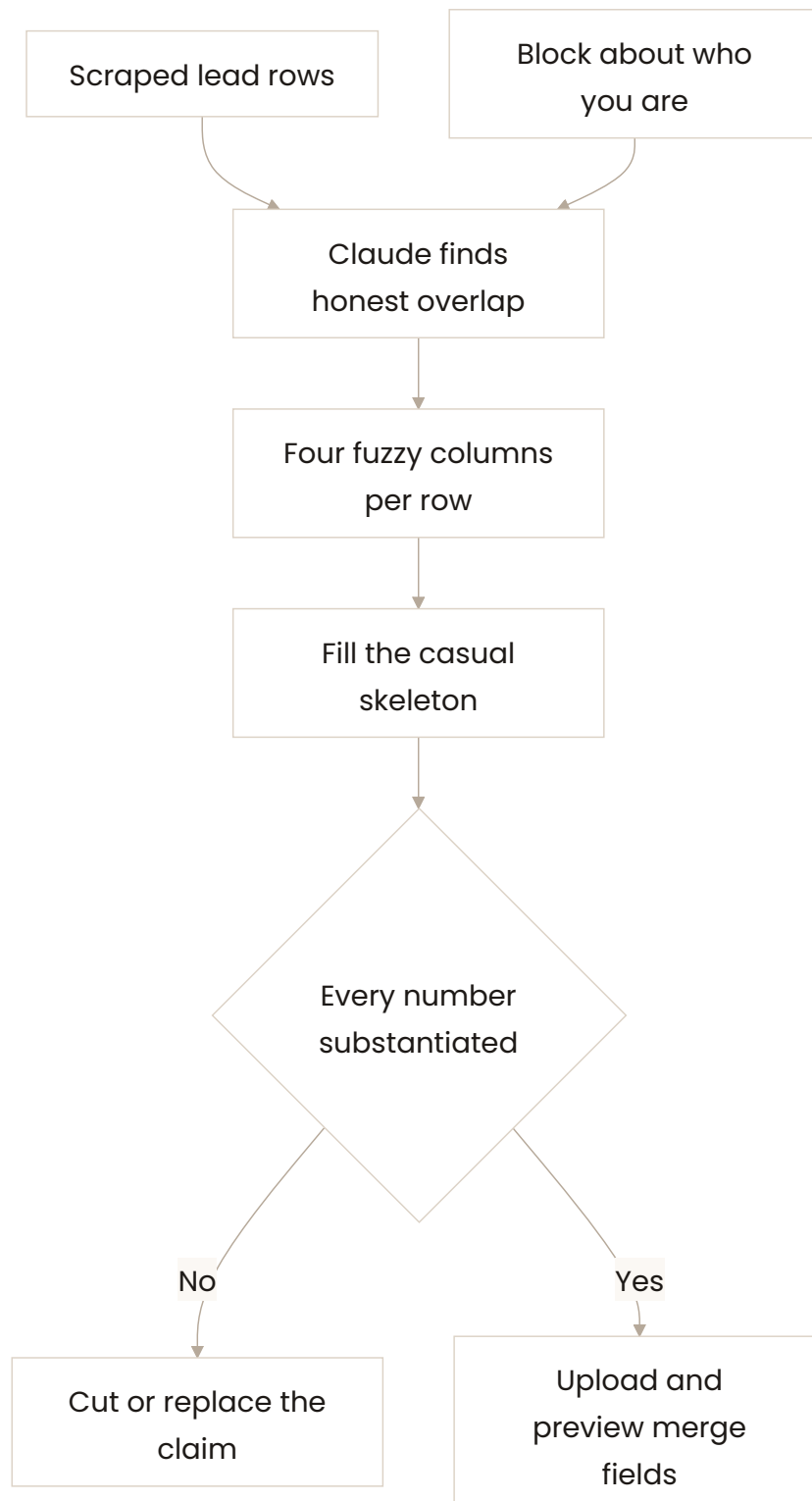
Cold outreach and newsletter enrichment are the same machine. The only thing that changes is where the rows come from. A newsletter row is someone who opted in and told you about themselves. A cold row is someone a scraper found.

The part that makes cold work is the block about you. You paste in your own background, where you have lived, what you played, what you have built, and Claude looks for the overlap between that and each lead's row. Two people from the same city. Two people who both ran agencies. That overlap is the only thing that makes the first line feel like a person wrote it.

The style rules do a lot of the work. Right now, lowercase and slightly imperfect reads human, and polished reads like a bot. That is a reversal from a few years ago, and it exists because everyone has been trained by a flood of AI spam with perfect grammar and em dashes in it. Do not let Claude tidy the email up.

The numbers are worth knowing. Untemplated cold outreach gets about a 1 to 2 percent reply rate. With this personalization, about 5 percent. For a business whose income is fully outreach driven, that is 250 percent of revenue. Nick's best campaign, conference leads plus this enrichment, hit about a 20 percent positive reply rate.

04 How it flows



05 Step by step

01 Start from an email that already works

Personalization multiplies a good offer. It does not rescue a bad one. Use a skeleton whose credibility line and ask you have already tested.

02 Write your background block

Dictate it rather than type it. Cover cities, schools, sports, hobbies, past jobs, current business. The more surface area you give, the more overlaps Claude can find.

03 Name the slots as instructions

thingInCommon, myMatchingThing, paraphrasedCompanyName, prospectsTheyWant. Each name states its own job, so you do not need a separate instruction block per slot.

04 Use their words for their buyers

prospectsTheyWant should describe who they sell to in their terminology, not yours. A roofer does not call them mid-market accounts.

05 Lock the casual style in writing

Lowercase, no exclamation marks, no em dashes, do not fix the grammar. Say it explicitly or the model reverts to polished business English.

06 Let it flag your claims

The model will correctly push back on numbers it thinks you cannot support. Take that seriously. Replace the claim or cut it.

07 Preview five rendered emails

Read five complete emails before processing the list. It is much easier to catch a broken overlap in a full email than in a column.

08

Trim and upload

Cut the sheet to what the send actually needs, then push to your sending platform and preview merge fields against real rows before launching.

06 Words explained

Cold outreach

Emailing people who have never heard of you and never asked to hear from you.

Reply rate

The share of people who write back. The number that decides whether a campaign is worth running at all.

Skeleton

The fixed frame of the email that you wrote and never change. Only the marked slots differ from person to person.

Substantiated claim

A number you can prove with real records if someone asks. Anything else is a made up performance claim.

Sending platform

The tool that actually delivers the campaign and handles merge fields, warmup, and inbox rotation.

07 Watch out for

- Never ship a figure you cannot substantiate. Fabricated performance claims get sending accounts suspended and cross into deceptive claims territory.
 - The model will correctly flag invented numbers. Do not argue it into keeping them.
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- If Claude cleans up the grammar, the email starts reading like every other AI blast in the inbox.
- An invented overlap is worse than no overlap. Tell it to say none found rather than guess.
- Personalization on a bad list still fails. Validate the list against your ICP first.

08 How it connects

ICP Self-Validating Scrape

That prompt produces the list this one enriches. Personalizing a list full of wrong-fit leads just wastes better copy.

Newsletter Fuzzy Variable Enrichment

Same machine, different intake. Learn the technique on your own opt-in list where a bad send costs you far less.

Fuzzy Variable Tightening

The length and socket-fit rules matter more here, because a clumsy cold email burns a domain rather than just reading awkwardly.

Cold Outreach Enrichment Pipeline

The framework note holding the full chain from scrape through trim to send, with the reply rate numbers.

Credit. Framework and approach by Nick Saraev, from the cold outreach enrichment build in his Zero to One course on Claude Code for marketing. Written up for the Kape vault by BrewedOps.