TRY IT THIS WEEK · WORKBOOK

Your first-line test

Open version B on what they'd do without you, change nothing else, and read the replies.

1. Write down, in one line, what your buyer would do if you didn't exist.
2. Keep your current email as version A. Write version B with one change only: a first line that opens on that status quo.
3. Send each version to about 20 people from the same list (a rule of thumb, not a significance test).
4. For each version, count people contacted, replied and replied positively, each person once, however many emails they got.
5. Keep the better version, change the next single thing, and repeat. Revisit positioning only after several rounds.

What they'd do if you didn't exist: .....

VERSION	FIRST LINE	CONTACTED	REPLIED	POSITIVE	REPLY RATE	POSITIVE RATE
A						
B						

One change only: .....

The counts: .....

What the replies said: .....

The next single thing to change: .....

Send log: the version next to each reply

VERSION	WHAT THEY SAID	POSITIVE?

At about 20 each, read the replies, not the rates.

WORKED EXAMPLE

Tallybird (made up), filled in

A made-up 12-person startup selling month-end close software to small in-house finance teams. Every line and number here is made up.

Status quo	**A shared close checklist in a spreadsheet, plus a controller chasing people on Slack until about day 12.** What they'd do without Tallybird.
Value proposition	**"Close the month in days, not weeks, without the spreadsheet chase."**
First line A	**"Tallybird is the all-in-one close management platform for modern finance teams."** Product first: the reader has to work out why it matters.
First line B	**"Most three-person finance teams I talk to are still closing the month off a shared spreadsheet and a week of Slack chasing."** Status quo first: they recognise their own week.
Send log, A	**20 people contacted, 1 reply ("not now").** 1 ÷ 20 = 5% replied, 0 positive.
Send log, B	**20 people contacted, 4 replies: 2 positive ("that's us"), 1 "we've already sorted this", 1 "please remove me".** 4 ÷ 20 = 20% replied, 2 ÷ 20 = 10% positive.
The read	**20 sends is too few to call a reply rate, but B's replies talk about the close itself.**

One change (the first line), the same list, people counted once each, and positive replies counted apart from "please remove me". At 20 per version, the useful signal is how the replies read, not the rate.

THE GLOSSARY

Positioning
Where you sit in the buyer's head: what you are, who it's for, what you're better than.

Messaging
The actual words you use to say it, in an email or on a call.

Value proposition
The one line in the middle: what changes for them.

Status quo
What they'd do if you didn't exist. Usually the real competitor.

Sequence
The planned run of messages you send one person.

Reply rate
People who replied ÷ people actually contacted, each person counted once, not every email in a sequence.

YOUR TURN

> **What would your buyers honestly do if you didn't exist? Is it a competitor, or is it a spreadsheet?**