

TALENT NURTURE EMAIL FRAMEWORK

TOOLKIT

- ✓ Email Types & Nurture Sequences
 - ✓ Subject Line Formulas That Get Opened
 - ✓ Email Structure That Converts
 - ✓ Segmentation, Cadence & Metrics
-

Frameworks from

The Talent Brand by Jody Ordioni

Email builds the pipeline.

When they're ready to move, you'll be top of mind.

Let's talk · branding@brandemix.com · (212) 947-1001

brandemix.com

Email Isn't Dead. Generic Email Is.

"You're a great fit for this opportunity!" isn't personal. Anyone can tell it was sent to 500 people with their name swapped in.

The difference between messages candidates delete and messages they actually read: does this feel like it's for me, or for a database? This framework helps you build the kind of email program that builds real relationships.

- 1 Templates for every stage — First outreach, follow-up, scheduling, post-interview, offer delivery.

- 2 Subject lines that get opened — And why the best recruitment emails don't feel like recruitment at all.

- 3 The mindset shift — Stop thinking 'job blast.' Start thinking relationship — at scale.

Want us to audit your current nurture emails and tell you what's working?

We offer a free 30-minute TalentBrand Diagnostic. branding@brandemix.com

Signs Your Recruitment Email Is Already Broken

Any one of these is costing you candidates. Two or more and your pipeline is actively shrinking.

Open rates below 20%

Your subject lines aren't earning the open. If candidates won't open, the best copy in the world doesn't matter.

☐

Same email sent to your entire list

Engineers and marketers don't want the same content. Sending the same message to everyone signals you don't know who you're talking to.

☐

Emails sent from "Recruiting Team"

No one builds a relationship with a department. Candidates respond to people. Put a real name on it.

☐

Only emailing when you have a job to fill

If the only time they hear from you is when you need something, that's not a relationship. That's a cold call with memory.

☐

No re-engagement sequence for dormant subscribers

Letting your list go cold is expensive. A dead list drags your deliverability and your reputation down with it.

☐

Unsubscribe rate above 2%

You're sending too much, too irrelevant, or too often. Candidates are leaving loudly. Listen to them.

☐

If you checked two or more — your email program is working against your pipeline, not for it.

What's Inside

01 The Nurture Mindset + Email Types

Welcome series, value-building, engagement, and job alerts

02 Subject Line Formulas

Value-first, curiosity, specificity, and personalization patterns

03 Email Structure That Converts

Opening, body, CTA, and signature best practices

04 Segmentation Strategy

Five ways to stop sending the same email to everyone

05 Cadence & Frequency

How often to send — and what happens when you get it wrong

06 Testing & Optimization

What to test, what to track, and how to get better every send

07 Metrics + Re-Engagement

The numbers that matter and what to do when the list goes cold

Stop Sending Job Blasts. Start Building Relationships.

Build a community of people who want to hear from you. Provide value before asking for anything.

WELCOME SERIES · FIRST 3 EMAILS

Email 1 — Day 1

Thank you for joining + what to expect. Set the tone immediately. Tell them exactly what they signed up for.

☐

Email 2 — Day 3

Who we are + your story, mission, and values. Make it feel human, not corporate. Skip the boilerplate.

☐

Email 3 — Day 7

What it's like to work here. Employee stories, not job descriptions. Let your people do the talking.

☐

VALUE-BUILDING EMAILS · MONTHLY

Industry insights

Thought leadership that's actually useful. If they'd share it with a colleague, you got it right.

☐

Career development tips

Help them grow whether or not they ever apply. That generosity is remembered.

☐

Employee spotlights + culture highlights

Behind-the-scenes content that shows — not tells — what it's like to work here.

☐

Email Types — continued

ENGAGEMENT EMAILS · AS NEEDED

Event or webinar invite

Invite them into your world before asking them to join it. Virtual events lower the barrier significantly.

☐

Ask for feedback or input

Making them feel heard builds loyalty. “We’d love your take on this” is more engaging than any job alert.

☐

Company milestone or news

Funding, new offices, awards, product launches. The things employees mention when they explain why they’re proud to work here.

☐

JOB ALERTS · WHEN RELEVANT ONLY

Send only when aligned

Only send job alerts if the role matches their interests or skills. A misaligned job alert is an unsubscribe waiting to happen.

☐

Personalize what you know

Reference past behavior: “You clicked on our engineering content” or “You’re based in Chicago — this role is for you.”

☐

Make opting out easy

Let them opt out of job alerts while staying on your newsletter. Protecting your list quality protects your deliverability.

☐

The rule of thumb

80% of your emails should give value. 20% can ask for something. Flip that ratio and watch your list shrink.

Subject Lines That Get Opened

Your subject line is the only thing standing between your email and the trash. Four formulas that work.

VALUE-FIRST

Best for nurture — leads with what they gain

✗ 'Join our team!'

✓ '5 skills AI can't replace (and how to build them)'

CURIOSITY

Creates the open — promises something surprising

✗ 'New job opportunities'

✓ 'What our newest engineers wish they knew before joining'

SPECIFICITY

Drives relevance — narrows the audience intentionally

✗ 'We're hiring'

✓ 'Looking for a backend engineer who loves solving hard problems?'

PERSONALIZATION

When possible — highest open rates when done right

✗ 'Re: Job alert'

✓ '[Name], this role might be exactly what you're looking for'

The Anatomy of an Email That Gets Read

Every element has a job. When one fails, the whole email fails.

OPENING

First 2 sentences — earn the read

- Hook them immediately. The opening line determines whether the email gets read or closed.
- Personal and conversational tone — write like a person, not a brand.
- Make it about THEM, not you. “We’re excited to share” is about you. Don’t start there.

BODY

Keep it scannable — one idea per email

- Short paragraphs (2–3 sentences max). If it looks like a wall of text, it won’t get read.
- Bullet points for key info. Links to deeper content for those who want more.
- One main idea per email. Splitting focus splits attention — and loses both.

CALL TO ACTION

One clear next step

- One primary CTA only. Every additional CTA reduces click rate on all of them.
- Make it obvious — a button or a clear, standalone link. Not buried in a sentence.
- Tell them exactly what happens when they click. No surprises. Surprises kill trust.

SIGNATURE

From a real person

- From a real name and title — never “Recruiting Team” or “Talent Acquisition.”
- Consider a P.S. — the second-most-read part of any email after the subject line.
- A brief personal note in the P.S. drives significantly higher engagement.

Stop Sending the Same Email to Everyone

Segmentation is what separates a talent community from a mailing list. For each, mark your current status.

SEGMENT · WHAT IT MEANS IN PRACTICE	STATUS
Role / Function Engineers get different content than marketers, designers, or finance candidates. <i>Test: Is your content relevant to a software engineer AND a brand manager?</i>	☐ Doing this ☐ Partially ☐ Not yet
Engagement Level Active subscribers and dormant ones need completely different messaging. <i>Test: Do you have a separate track for people who haven't opened in 90 days?</i>	☐ Doing this ☐ Partially ☐ Not yet
Location Highlighting the Chicago office to someone in Austin is a missed opportunity — at best. <i>Test: Are you surfacing location-relevant roles and events?</i>	☐ Doing this ☐ Partially ☐ Not yet
Stage A new subscriber and a 2-year community member want different things from your emails. <i>Test: Does your welcome series differ from your ongoing nurture sequence?</i>	☐ Doing this ☐ Partially ☐ Not yet
Behavior Someone who clicked your engineering content three times is telling you what they want. <i>Test: Are you tracking clicks and using them to personalize future sends?</i>	☐ Doing this ☐ Partially ☐ Not yet

How Often to Email (And What Happens When You Get It Wrong)

TOO MUCH

Unsubscribes. Spam reports. Damaged deliverability. And a reputation for being annoying — which is very hard to undo.

TOO LITTLE

They forget about you. When they're ready to make a move, they're thinking about whoever stayed top of mind. That's not you.

RECOMMENDED CADENCE

Welcome series

Days 1, 3, and 7

First impressions are made here

Nurture emails

Every 2–4 weeks

Consistent without being overwhelming

Job alerts

When relevant only

Never weekly — frequency must match fit

Re-engagement

Quarterly for dormant

Clean the list before it drags metrics down

Is your email program building a pipeline — or just filling inboxes?

Most recruitment email programs were set up for the last hiring surge and never rebuilt. We audit your full nurture sequence — subject lines, segmentation, cadence, and copy — and tell you exactly what to fix and in what order.

Let's audit your nurture emails →

branding@brandemix.com · brandemix.com

Or continue to the [Testing & Optimization guide](#) →

Get Better With Every Send

The teams that consistently outperform aren't smarter — they test more systematically.

SUBJECT LINES

☐ A/B test every send

Even a 50/50 split on subject lines teaches you something about your audience.

☐ Track open rate, click rate, conversions

Open rate tells you if the subject line worked. Click rate tells you if the content did.

☐ Capture what resonates

Keep a living doc of your best and worst performers. Patterns emerge faster than you think.

CONTENT

☐ Which topics drive highest engagement?

Employee stories consistently outperform company news. Test it — then trust the data.

☐ Long vs short format

There's no universal answer. Your audience will tell you. Let behavior decide.

☐ One variable at a time

Testing two things at once gives you data you can't interpret. Isolate the variable.

TIMING

☐ Day of week

Tuesday–Thursday tends to outperform — but your audience may differ. Test before assuming.

☐ Time of day

Early morning (6–8am) or lunchtime (12–1pm) are typical peaks. Confirm with your data.

☐ Your audience may differ from best practices

Developer audiences often engage later. Marketers earlier. Know your segment.

The Numbers That Actually Tell You Something

Vanity metrics are easy to celebrate and useless to act on. Track these instead.

HEALTH METRICS	ENGAGEMENT METRICS	CONVERSION METRICS
List growth rate Trending up = program is working	Open rate Benchmark: 20–30% <i>Below 20% = subject line problem</i>	Applications from subscribers Track sourcing channel <i>The pipeline metric that matters most</i>
Unsubscribe rate Should be below 2% <i>Above 2% = content or frequency problem</i>	Click rate Benchmark: 2–5% <i>Below 2% = content or CTA problem</i>	Email-sourced hire quality Compare to other channels <i>Nurture hires often outperform cold</i>
Active vs dormant Track monthly <i>High dormancy = re-engagement needed</i>	Click-to-open rate Measures engagement quality <i>Low = openers aren't finding value</i>	Time to conversion Subscriber → applicant <i>Shortens as trust builds over time</i>

When the List Goes Cold

For subscribers who haven't opened in 90+ days. A smaller, engaged list outperforms a large, dormant one every time.

1

Email 1: "Are we still relevant to you?"

Acknowledge the silence directly— don't pretend it didn't happen. Ask whether they want to stay on your list. Offer to adjust frequency or content type.

Send trigger: 90 days of no opens

2

Email 2: "Last chance to stay connected"

One final attempt. If they don't respond, they're telling you something. Make unsubscribing easy— removing them is the respectful thing to do.

Send trigger: 7–14 days after Email 1, no response

3

Remove non-responders

A smaller, engaged list is more valuable than a large, dormant one. Removing unresponsive subscribers improves deliverability, opens rates, and the accuracy of your metrics.

Better metrics = better insights = better program

4

Rebuild with better segmentation

Before re-running the cycle, ask why they went dormant. Wrong cadence? Wrong content? Wrong segment? Fix the root cause, not just the symptom.

What will you do differently this time?

5

Track re-engagement rates quarterly

Re-engagement rate is a leading indicator of email health. If it's consistently low, your nurture content isn't delivering enough value to keep people connected.

Set a quarterly review date

BELOW 20%

If your open rate is below 20%, your subject lines aren't earning the click. And if they won't open, everything else — the copy, the CTA, the candidate relationship — never gets a chance.

The problem is almost never the email. It's what came before it.

This is diagnosable.

We audit recruitment email programs from the subject line down — segmentation, cadence, copy, and deliverability — and give you a prioritized fix list that actually moves your numbers.

[Book a free 30-min email audit →](#)

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Here's how we help.

We've spent 20+ years helping organizations build employer brands that candidates remember — and pipelines that don't run dry when hiring ramps up.

EVP Development

We research what's genuinely true about your organization — through employee interviews, focus groups, and competitive analysis — and build an EVP that's specific, defensible, and real.

Delivered 200+ EVPs across industries

Employer Brand Strategy

Once your EVP is validated, we build the brand architecture and messaging system that lets it show up everywhere — from job posts to onboarding to all-hands meetings.

From strategy through activation

Talent Nurture Programs

We design and build full nurture sequences — subject lines, segmentation strategy, copy, cadence, and metrics framework — so your pipeline is warm before you need it.

Pipelines that work while you sleep

When they're ready to make a move, you'll be the first call they make.

A 30-minute conversation. We'll look at your current email program, tell you what's working, and talk through where to start.

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