



# HOW TO AUTOMATE OUTREACH

FOR YOUR AGENCY

# OUTREACH ON AUTOPILOT



Ultimately, the goal of outreach for agencies is being able to scale outreach to match the needs of their clients whilst delivering the best ROI possible.

High results, low costs... that's the **goal**.

One of the best ways to optimize your process is to incorporate tools and processes that automate components of outreach.

In this guide, we're going to lay out some clever ways agencies can automate their outreach.

## We've broken it down to:

- **Link prospecting** - where we look at a tool that agencies can use to automate the gathering of link opportunities
- **Email scraping and verification** - once you've identified prospects, you need to be able to get the relevant contact data and verify it's accuracy
- **Automating and managing delivery** - where we've highlighted some of the most effective email tools to help you scale
- **Project management tools** - how we can use software to automate and streamline outreach processes
- **Automating Excel and/or Google sheets** - using the ultimate SEO tool to make outreach more efficient.



There's a lot to cover so **lets get started**.



# LINK PROSPECTING

Unless you are using a service like Authority Builders that does all the leg work for you, the most important component of guest post link building has to be link prospecting.

This is the process of finding potential websites to place guest posts on. You need to identify sites that are niche relevant, open to potential discussions, and most importantly, will deliver value as a link placement.

For us, that means they have traffic, high metrics, a good number of clean referring domains and relevancy to your niche.



## There is plenty to think about if you're prospecting yourself.



1. For a start, you need a list of sites that would make good locations to secure a link.
2. Then you need to acquire email addresses. You can use contact boxes to reach out to the website owners, but it's **much** easier to scale with email addresses.

Unfortunately, once you have the email addresses, a percentage will not be live nor active.



This means when you send out emails they'll bounce back. Email filters will quickly identify your IP as spam if you have a high bounce back rate, which means your prospecting emails will stop hitting inboxes.

We've hand-picked some platforms and software that can help you scale your link prospecting.



We've broken it down as tools that help you find prospects, tools that help you extract email addresses, and tools that will clean your email list so you don't have a high bounce rate.

## FAMEBIT

Most outreach is essentially one-sided.

We are “begging”, or at least trying to persuade site owner/editors that we can offer value (or pay a fee), if we were to have an article placed on their site.

Within that article, we’ll be placing a niche relevant, contextual link. 

However, FameBit has approached it differently. They have the influencers on standby in different niches.

Using FameBit, you post your requirements and they put together their proposals including platforms and fees.

A large part of the platform is social influencer related which is a great way to acquire links and do PR at the same time.

Because they’re sending you proposals, it’s not labor intensive. You can essentially spend 5 minutes putting your post together and you could end up with 10+ high-value links.

That’s a great use of time.



## Finding email addresses of prospects.

Once we have a list of prospecting, normally stored in an Excel or Google sheet, the next step is to collect email addresses. Otherwise, we are not in a position to make contact with those that run the site so we can't negotiate link placements.

Some websites have their email addresses somewhere on the site. Other's require you to use the contact form. Both options are not very scalable.

Doing it manually means copying and pasting emails into a Google sheets or filling in contact forms, which takes a lot of time. Ultimately, that translates to a drain on resources, which is a drain on cost.

It's an ideal task to find a tool that will do it for you. One of the best tools for automating finding emails on a domain is [Hunter.io](https://hunter.io)

You upload the URLs you want to find email addresses for and it will scrape any relevant emails connected with those domains.

You can download the list as a CSV file and upload them into your master Google sheet and email marketing service/platform to send out to.

Saves a lot of time and energy, therefore money. It also allows you to scale your outreach.



# EMAIL VERIFICATION

When you send an email, you're sending it from your email server to another email server that houses the email address you want to contact. However, if the email address is not "live", in other words, if it no longer (or has never) existed, the email bounces back.



This is not good for business. If your email account, or IP address (your IP address sends the email on your behalf), starts to have too many emails that bounce back, it looks as though you are spamming.



Once that happens, other mail servers will start to immediately label any email you send as spam meaning the email ends up in the trash or spam folder.

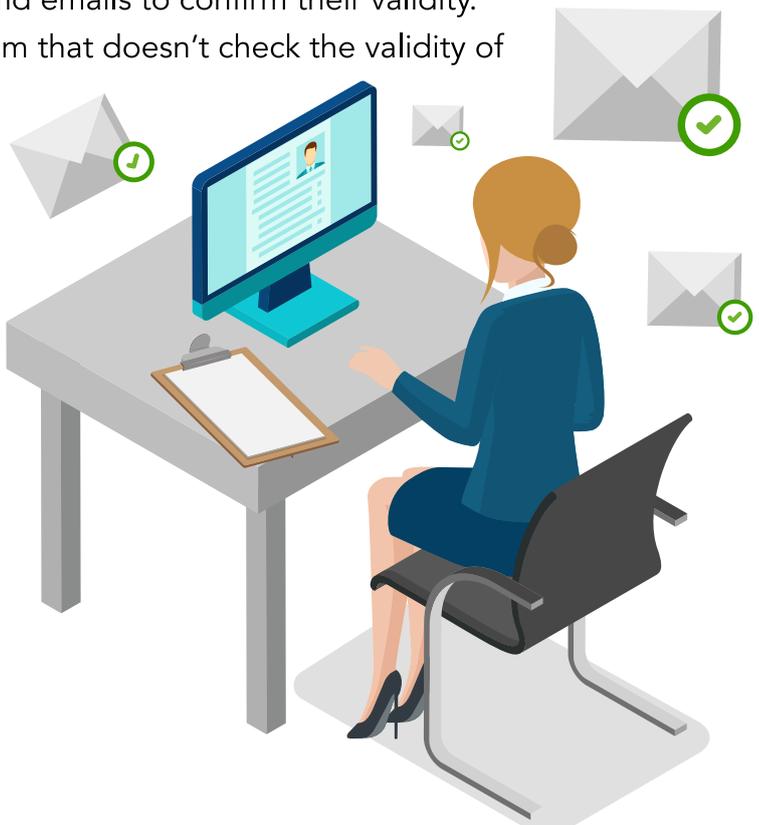


Or even worse, your email address can get blacklisted.

You have to protect your IP and the most important thing you can do is verify that the emails you are prospecting too are active.



Some agencies like *Mautic* will pre-send emails to confirm their validity. However, if you're using another system that doesn't check the validity of the emails you're sending out to, you'll need to do it manually.



We like like *Never Bounce*. It's a great tool for both verification cleaning up email lists.



If you're looking for a bulk email checker that is "pay-as-you-go" then *Bulk Mail Checker* fits the bill. It's accurate and offers flexibility.

# AUTOMATING AND MANAGING DELIVERY

If you're manually sending out 100 emails a day, it probably means you're spending a **minimum** of 2 hours, just on sending out the email.

It goes without saying that this is a huge time-sink.

More importantly, if you need to scale your outreach to send thousands of emails a day, rather than hundreds, it's just not tenable.

Having a solution that will automate sending out emails is the only solution if you plan to run large-scale prospecting. However, it's not just about sending emails en masse.

Optimized prospecting is about being able to have follow-up emails that are triggered by different behaviours.

For example, you would want to send a second "follow up" email to a prospect who opened the first email but didn't reply.

There are well-known tools on the market such as *Pitchbox* and *Ninja Outreach*. Most agencies have explored their usefulness.

As a rule of thumb, you'll find larger agencies (or agencies with larger clients) tend to opt for Pitchbox and smaller agencies will look at Ninja Outreach.

Two tools that can be really effective are Sendgrid and Mautic / Amazon SES. Both are superb and have different benefits.



pitchbox



## SendGrid

When you are prospecting, you are essentially cold calling. To protect themselves, most email service providers will require proof of opt-in or have very exacting bounce rate limits. They are liable for fines if they fall foul of GDPR or Can Spam.

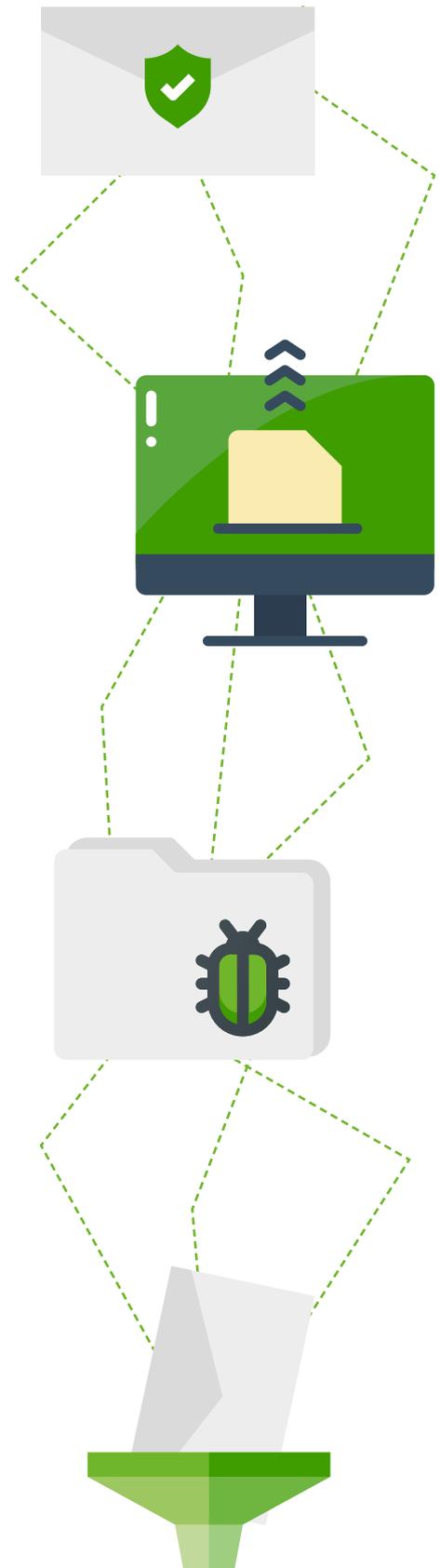
What Sendgrid does better than most competitors is that it ensures your emails hit the prospect's inbox. When you are sending in bulk, you need your email address, IP address and mail server to stand up to scrutiny to the filters of other email providers and mail servers. They have systems in place to stop spam hitting inboxes.

If half your emails end up in the spam folder, you'll be missing a lot of potential link placements which ultimately is time and money.

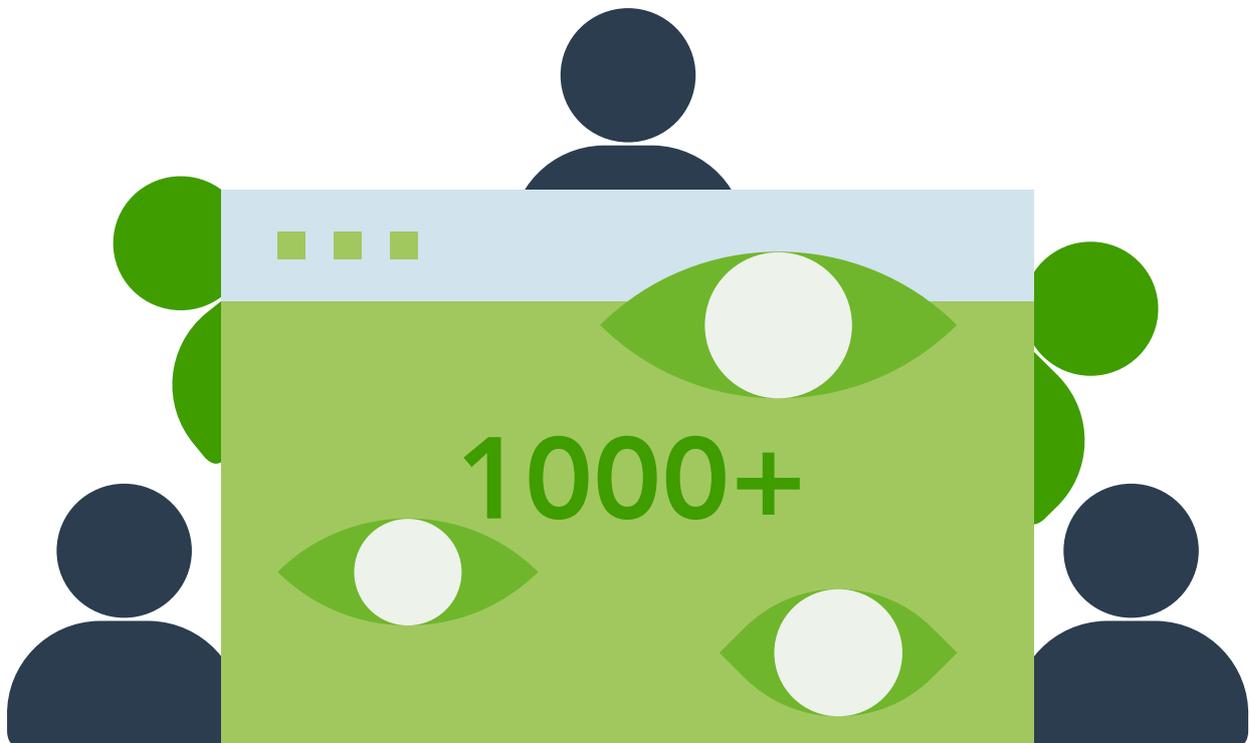
Sendgrid acts as a middle man. They ensure the metadata on your email is clean and passes through spam filters giving you a killer inbox rate. Which means more eyes are seeing your proposition.

If you're using your own mail server, and you want to scale your outreach, having Sendgrid is our recommendation.

Put it this way.



We have made it our motto at Authority Builders to send out to “every quality website on the internet with over 1000 visitors per month”.



We send a lot of emails. If it weren't for deliverability measures like Sendgrid, this would all be in vain.

Note: When talking about email addresses, it's important to consider branding. Not many business owners take gmail addresses seriously these days.. They did in the past, it was a good way to suggest familiarity and get emails opened but it was used as a spam strategy and quickly lost it's value.



These days, official email addresses, like business addresses have better open rates. This is the best way to go.



I also take the time to have *an attractive signature block* added for the same reason. It adds another element of trust.

## mautic

You don't have to use Mautic with Amazon SES, or visa versa, but they compliment each other **extremely** well.

Mautic is an open source automated marketing tool. It has limitations compared to the really premier marketing automation tools but one major advantage is that it doesn't limit the number of emails you can send out.

Hubspot charges subscription depending on the number of prospecting emails you want to use it for. It can get expensive quickly.

Once the Mautic is downloaded and set up on your own domain, you can use it to upload contacts and potential prospects.

It allows you to set up sequences and segment lists and it can handle very intricate triggers.

### For example:

One contact opens the email but doesn't reply or click the link you placed in the email. In this case you might want to follow up with an email 5 days later that offers something different.

However, a different contact might not even open the email. You might want the trigger to be to send the same email again but with a different subject/title.



What if they both opened the email and clicked to look at the content you offered them? Or a document you attached to the email? Then you might want the next email to follow a different tact.



That's what Mautic can offer.

They can score different actions, so you can weight prospect behaviour. Let's say, a prospect receives several emails over a couple of months. They tend to open them and click any links you add but they don't reply. 

By scoring that behaviour you can identify the historic behaviour and if the target site is worthwhile, it could be worth contacting them with a personalized email.



You can have limitless numbers of accounts with different levels of access and it's completely free. It's an open source.



It connects seamlessly with Amazon SES

## amazon SES

In case you are not up-to-speed with Amazon SES, it's a cloud-based email platform that was designed for digital marketers.

It has one huge benefit. Emails are being sent from Amazon servers and you get to ride on the back of their credibility. You get a higher rate of emails hitting the inbox. It's also extremely affordable.

For a start, they offer the first 62,000 emails each month for free. After that, you pay for what you use, it's not a subscription package.

It doesn't have any reporting to talk of, other than some data on when emails are sent out. It works on Cron jobs when connected to Mautic, which can be a headache on occasion. But once it's optimized, you get all the reporting and flexibility of Mautic and the reputation and scalability of Amazon SES. And you pay peanuts.



# USING PROJECT MANAGEMENT TOOLS TO SCALE OUTREACH MANAGEMENT

Project management tools are essential to outreach.

You can always use one of the myriad of project management tools.

They do a decent job but they are general tools and the best way to automate **outreach** is with an outreach project management tool.

The only one currently on the market (that we are aware of) is Pitchbox.

Pitchbox works so effectively because it allows you to section elements of outreach that might have different teams. It also integrates with almost every SEO tool that's worth integrating with. Ahrefs, MOZ, Majestic.

These don't connect with most other platforms, which is a massive advantage because you can screen prospects much more effectively. These are the kind of metrics you really want. Referring domains and traffic, not just PA/DA/DR.

Most importantly, you have superb reporting. You can see your pipeline, what prospects you have at each stage of your pipeline, who is doing what and how effectively your staff are operating, to perhaps see who needs rewarding or retraining.

Ultimately, it gives you control of your outreach whilst optimizing every set and integrating the stages of outreach to one tool.



# HOW TO USE SPREADSHEETS TO AUTOMATE OUTREACH PROCESSES

A lot of agencies use spreadsheets, especially Google sheets. It allows you to track data in a number of ways.

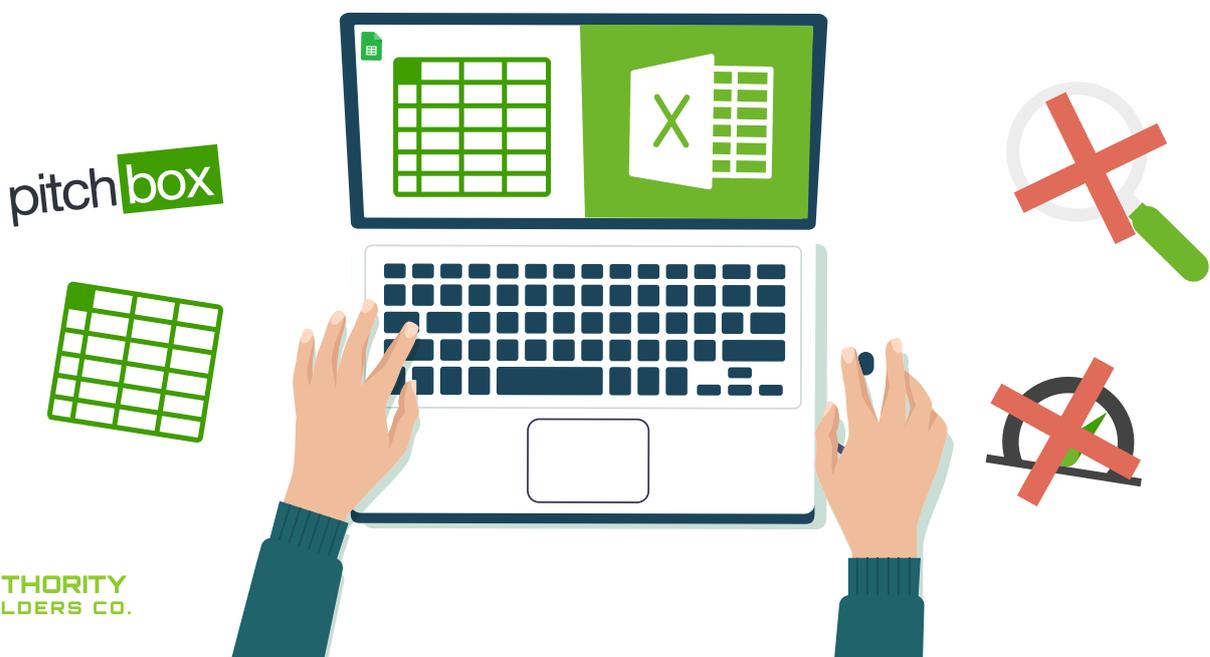
In terms of outreach, we can use spreadsheets to collect all the websites we plan to contact, track when we contacted them, what they replied, if content is written yet, and keep tracking it all through until a link is placed.

Note: If you're a PitchBox user, this is all built in.

Life becomes extremely difficult if you don't use Excel or Google sheets (unless you have your own platform or software). That means you keep different data in different places, which makes it extremely difficult to track and report on what's occurring in your outreach.

Likewise, it's also near impossible to analyse data and optimize your processes to deliver the best possible ROI.

And there are degrees of using a spreadsheet. It's a superb tool and not every agency really takes full advantage of the functionality spreadsheets can offer. Here are 2 functions that you could take advantage of when trying to automate your outreach process.





## Managing data - Taking it another step.

As an agency, you probably don't want your outreach writers to have access to your master Google sheets where all your sensitive data is available.

So in order to circumvent this security concern, it would normally require some manual input from someone trusted. A trusted team member with access to the master sheets would need to transfer the data of the guest post placement to either a project management tool or another spreadsheet.

No need. You can automate it.

You can have data fetched from the master sheet to other Google sheets that you can give access to your writers without having to give access to your master Google sheet.

Here is a step-by-step guide on how to get it set up. [here](#) 

Ultimately, you can input data into your master sheet, have it automatically populate another guest sheet that writers have access to, and then have that Google sheet automatically email your writers to notify them there is an article that needs to be written.

Magic.



# CONCLUSION

Scaling up an agency for massive outreach isn't an easy task.

But to get to the level where you're building tens-of-thousands of links per month for your clients, automation is absolutely key.

I've shared more of our favorite tools and processes for:

- Link processing
- Email verification
- Email delivery
- Project management

These techniques have allowed *Authority Builders* to significantly get closer to its goals of reaching out to "every quality website on the internet with over 1000 visitors per month".

It's a daunting task, but we're making at least three-thousand steps every day.

I hope this has helped you in reaching your goals as well.

