

Value-first outreach: follow-ups that earn a reply

For reps with an open proposal. Replace “just checking in” with something the prospect would value even if they never buy.

The rule

Every touch gives before it asks. Share something useful, tie it to what the prospect told you, ask one good question, then mention the next step without pushing.

Instead of

Try

“Just checking in on the proposal.”

“I was thinking about what you said about the weekend outage, and this seemed relevant.”

“Any update?”

“If you could fix one risk this quarter, which would it be?”

Four-part structure (use every time)

1

Value

An article, post, peer example or short insight.

2

Relevance

Link it to something the prospect said or is dealing with.

3

Gentle question

One thoughtful, low-pressure question.

4

Progress

Reference the proposal or next step, without nagging.

1. Flat network: open the segmentation conversation

RISK

WHEN TO USE

- One network for every department
- A single infected laptop could reach finance or utilities
- The risk of lateral movement is not yet understood

VALUE TO SHARE

A short peer post showing how a town split its network by department using switches it already owned.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

- If one account is compromised, where does it stop today?
- Which system worries you most: finance, utilities or emergency services?
- Is there any separation in place now, even informal?

EMAIL TEMPLATE

Subject: A thought on your network layout

Hi [Name],

After our call I came across this example of a town that contained an incident to one department instead of the whole network. It made me think of your setup.

If one workstation were compromised tomorrow, how far do you think it could spread?

Happy to adjust the proposal from [day] around whatever matters most. [Your name]

SOFT NEXT STEPS

- “If you protected one zone first, which would it be?”
- “Happy to sanity-check options using what you already have.”

2. "Too expensive": start small instead of starting over

COST

WHEN TO USE

- Budget pushback on the proposal
- Fear of a rip-and-replace project
- Worry about disruption to staff

VALUE TO SHARE

A practical example of a first step that uses existing equipment and takes an afternoon, not a quarter.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

- What is the smallest step you could take this quarter?
- Which equipment could support it today?
- How much downtime is acceptable, if any?

EMAIL TEMPLATE

Subject: A smaller first step

Hi [Name],

You mentioned the full scope felt like a lot for this budget cycle. This example shows a team starting with one area and no new hardware.

If you could tackle one piece this quarter with almost no disruption, which would you pick?

I can re-scope the proposal around a start-small option if that helps. [Your name]

SOFT NEXT STEPS

- "Would it help to see what is possible without buying anything?"
- "I can sketch a start-small option if useful."

3. Multiple sites: remote access and emergency readiness

RESILIENCE

WHEN TO USE

- Several buildings or yards, heavy VPN use
- An emergency operations role to plan for
- Staff who work from the field

VALUE TO SHARE

A plain-language explainer on keeping staff connected securely during an emergency, when the main office may be unavailable.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

- How do staff connect when they are away from the office?
- Which systems must stay reachable in an emergency?
- When was remote access last tested under pressure?

EMAIL TEMPLATE

Subject: Staying connected during an emergency

Hi [Name],

With storm season coming, this explainer on secure access during emergencies seemed timely, given the three sites you mentioned.

If the main office were offline for a day, how would staff reach the systems they need?

Glad to walk through how the proposal covers this. [Your name]

SOFT NEXT STEPS

- "Would a quick review of your remote access plan be useful?"
- "Happy to share what other towns have tested."

Reminders for reps

- ☐ Add one line of context every time you share something
- ☐ Ask one question, not three
- ☐ Never send the same asset twice
- ☐ Log what you sent and how they replied
- ☐ Value first, progress second

Where to find good assets

- Peer posts from other municipal IT leaders
- Plain-language summaries of recent security alerts
- Short case examples from similar-sized towns
- Your own team's explainers and checklists

The goal: every follow-up should be worth reading even if the prospect never buys. Trust is what moves the proposal forward.