

Building a system for prospecting success:

Jim Edholm, Founder
Business, Benefits, Inc.



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Jim Edholm, Founder of Business, Benefits, Inc., is what we consider to be the ideal customer -- and the ideal salesperson. Not because we think he's more successful than our other customers or salespeople. We have many successful members.

It's because Jim is always willing to try new ideas, have them critiqued, and jump back in to test more new ideas again.



Jim's goal

Jim is about to retire and wants to leave his partner (who will carry on) with a:

- solid foundation of clients;
- simple, process-driven outreach strategy;
- way to hand-off a pre-existing outreach 'machine' to his partner when he exits.

Jim is an active member of the private Spark Selling Academy Community Forum where he's continually getting and giving feedback to colleagues. He's constantly working with other members to improve his outreach messaging. His efforts are paying off.

The interview

We sat down with Jim to learn about his most recent outreach efforts, new ideas and results he's creating for himself.

CE: Jim, how are you applying Spark Selling tactics lately -- to get conversations started from cold with potential BBI clients?

I sent out a (targeted) email that I referred to a couple of weeks ago [on the Community Forum]. It went to 247 CEOs of companies with 50-100 employees.

Tested two subjects: 'on the horizon?' and 'different approach?'

'Different approach'

- got 47 opens (19.2% open rate)
- 0 responses

'on the horizon?'

- 32 opens (13.1% open rate)
- 2 responses.

“I’m not terribly upset by the low response rate because these are CEOs...”

One of the responses said, “Sure, send me your stuff.”

CE: How did you respond to “send me your info” and why?

I responded that all our solutions were custom-designed and asked for information about what is important to him... so I could respond with specifics. One of the (effective) tactics I've learned from the Spark Selling Academy community is to slow down the pitch.

CE: I see. So you challenged the client back rather than simply handing over general 'information' that may or may not suit him. Did he respond to your request?

He didn't reply, so in about a week I sent a 'sorry' email... where I follow up my email very briefly. This has worked splendidly for me in past.

He didn't respond, so the following Monday, MLK Day I sent him a 'have you given up' challenge email. This message approach has also worked consistently for me.

In 11 minutes flat he responded and copied his Controller on the email introducing me.

The controller has been very responsive – although we're now getting a bit of radio silence from her - and we now have the full data we need. She has already shown herself to be open to the idea we would have pushed toward in the end, they actually have 127 on their plan (209 total), so the 84 shown on the original database was WAY off. They spend \$1,500,000 on health insurance (about a \$40,000 annual compensation – and there's dental, too, which ought to add another \$4,000).

So we're not home yet, but we're on a positive path. I'll let you know how it goes.

The other chap replied that they spend about \$24,000 per family per year (probably about 40% of that for singles), but I don't know how many people are on the plan. Supposedly he has 64 employees which would translate to about 35 on the plan and a \$15,000 annual compensation. But he's a bit flaky and seems to respond to initial messages (he's actually answered twice – I accidentally sent him another prospecting email – to initial emails, but nothing yet to follow up. 'Sorry' will be going out to him today and 'have you given up' if he doesn't respond by Monday.

I plan to work the same 400 remaining names over the next few weeks with a variety of subject lines and body copy.

In the meantime, I have 175 CFOs to send to. More than any other officer of the company, they are tuned into savings. Health care is probably their #2 cost stack (practicing my CFO-speak), and friends of mine who are CFOs say that the CEO and the Board REGULARLY quizzed them in depth about health care costs and what is being done to get control. I'm hoping they're more responsive. I'll let you and the online group know how those all work out."

Your turn

Let us show you the handful of effective tactics Jim is referring to in this story. [Get in touch](#) with us or [join our private Spark Selling Academy community](#) right now!