

The Secrets to Optimizing Your Outreach

LinkedIn recruiters share
their tips to live by



Introduction

First impressions are everything

In the battle for a candidate's attention, you've got to stand out.

You've searched high and low and have finally found the perfect candidate. Great, but chances are, you're not alone. If you think generic, templated outreach is going to catch their eye, think again.

Between emails, InMails (LinkedIn's messaging platform for reaching job seekers), calls, and texts, quality candidates are inundated with communication from recruiters. In the pages that follow, you'll learn how to craft outreach messages that will get opened – and answered.

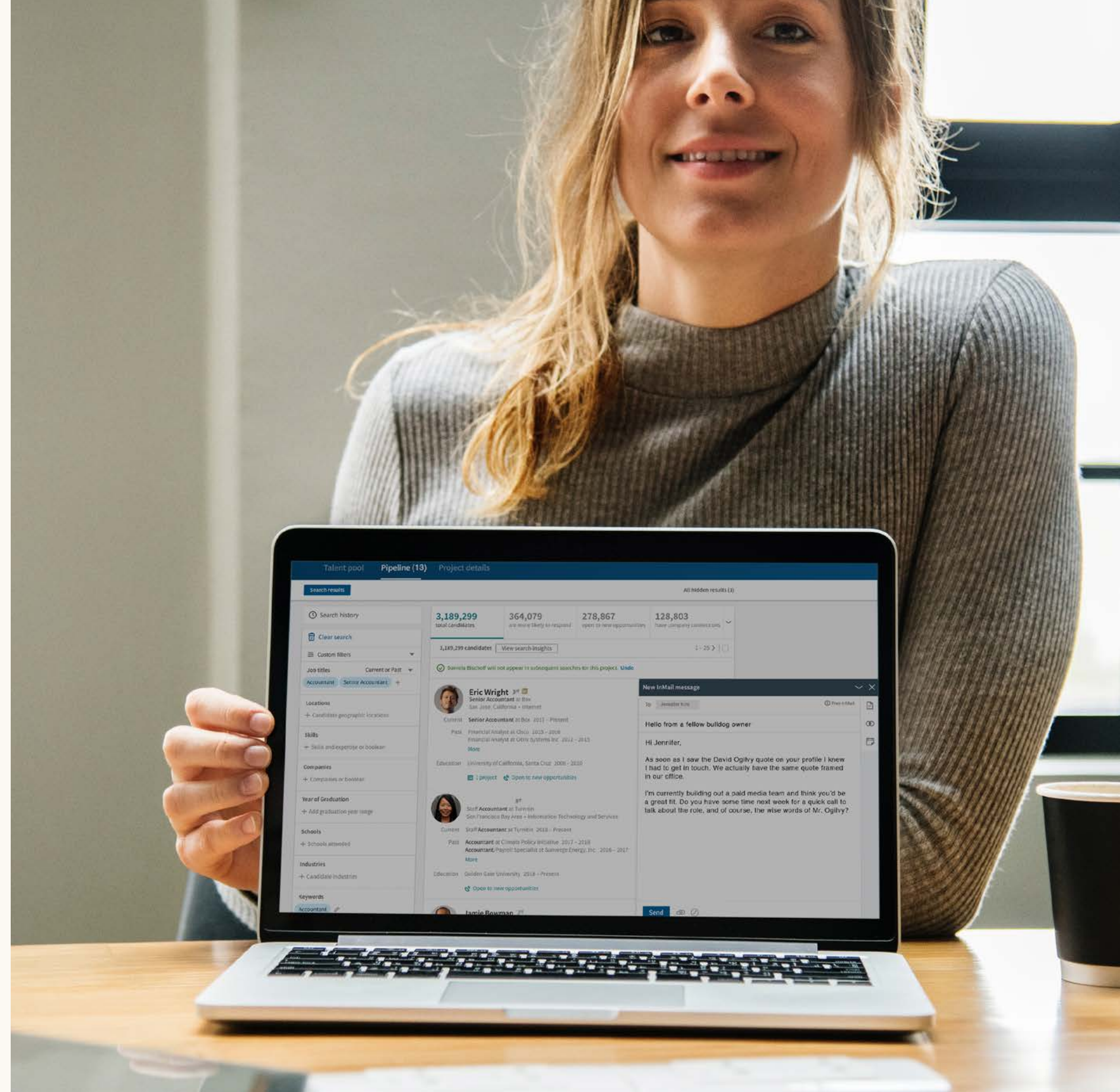


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Meet the recruiters

We dug through our data to find LinkedIn recruiters with the best outreach response rates. And, drumroll please – here they are. This talented group spans industries, continents, and experience levels.



Global Sales Talent Acquisition

Maria brings nearly 7 years of recruiting experience to LinkedIn, where she focuses on nontechnical, quota-carrying roles. She's based in San Francisco, California, and has a knack for identifying winning candidates who can thrive as relationship managers and customer success managers.



Senior Technical Recruiter

Since 2016, Shriram has hired software engineers who focus on scaling LinkedIn's infrastructure and increasing its resiliency and reliability. If you catch him outside of work, he can typically be found spending time in his garden or listening to audiobooks.



Senior Campus Technical Recruiter

Cam has been with LinkedIn for almost 5 years. During that time, he's helped connect countless students with new jobs as they start their careers. He's based in Seattle, Washington, and when he's not recruiting, he can be found scrolling through Twitter for sports updates and pursuing his sportswriting passion.



Senior Technical Recruiter

Originally from China, Calvin specializes in recruiting software engineers. He's been with LinkedIn since 2017, and is currently based out of the Sunnyvale, California office. In his free time he enjoys taking trips with his husband and their dog Coco.



Sourcer

Based in Ireland, Maire has spent the past 3 years sourcing and recruiting manager-level sales professionals. In her free time she enjoys spending time with her niece and nephew, swimming, and pilates.



The 5 can't-miss email and InMail outreach tactics



Tactic #1: Open strong

Hook them with a catchy subject line

When it comes to emails and InMails, you can't make your case if they don't open your message. Like email, InMail follows a similar format. A recipient will see a subject line in their inbox and then decide if they want to open it.

Make no mistake about it – often times, the subject line is the most important part of your message. If it doesn't engage candidates right away, they'll never hear about your amazing new job opportunity. Subject lines need to be concise, motivating, and if possible, personal. Give your candidate a reason to read on.

“The best advice I ever received was to keep the subject line short and punchy. I like to put on my candidate hat and ask myself what would make me want to open a message.”



Maire O'Connor
Sourcer, LinkedIn

Tactic #1: Open strong

Set the tone

Good subject lines make a quick, personal connection and bad subject lines look like every other recruiters'. To get some tips on how to catch a reader's eye, keep on reading.

Example 1

Hello from a fellow bulldog owner



✓ Why it works

Most people list outside interests on their LinkedIn profile and resume. By mentioning one in your subject line, you tap into a personal passion and stand out from email cold calls.

Example 2

Want to come back to Flexis, Yvette?



✓ Why it works

Like the first one, this taps into a common interest, which makes you less of a stranger.

Example 3

You're probably happy at FixDex, but...



✗ Why it doesn't work

It's been used a thousand times, and it rarely gets read.

Example 4

Looking for a dynamic Director of Marketing with a broad marketing background for a great company!



✗ Why it doesn't work

Too long, too generic, and easily ignored.

Tactic #2: Make a connection

Embrace personalization

Finding qualified candidates has never been easier. But being able to cut through the noise and have a dialogue might be harder than ever. This is particularly true for people who are great at their job and constantly get bombarded by recruiters.

With this increased competition for attention, it's time to embrace personalization. For candidate outreach, personalization can be defined as researching your prospective candidate and then tailoring your messaging using the insights you've gathered.



Did you know?

LinkedIn recruiters who acknowledged something specific about a candidate's background saw over a **10% increase in response rate**.¹

“You never want someone to think they're getting spammed. A few personalized touches really help make your message feel tailored to them.”



Maria Mencias

Global Sales Talent Acquisition, LinkedIn

Tactic #2: Make a connection

How to personalize the candidate experience

Now that you know how to get a candidate's attention with a catchy subject line, it's time to give them a reason to respond. Here are some examples of opening lines that use personalization to hook candidates.

Example 1

My company is currently looking for a front end developer and I think you'd be a great fit.

I really loved your recent post about _____ on _____. [ex: agile workflow methodology, Twitter]

Any chance you'd be interested in stopping by our office and

✓ Why it works

People love talking about themselves, and especially their extracurricular activities like blog posts.

Example 2

You've built quite a resume, and I think you'd really enjoy this role I'm hiring for.

I noticed that you used to work for Flexis in Boston, and that's the training model that we're trying to emulate.

Take a look at the attached job description and let me know if

✓ Why it works

This acknowledges that you've done your research on their background while also building them up.

Tactic #3: Recognize their skills

Don't be afraid to flatter

Studies show that people are more motivated to help others when they're recognized for their skills and efforts. Since you've already identified them as a worthy candidate, let them know what makes them special.



Did you know?

Over half of all candidates expect that a recruiter's outreach message will contain specifics about how their accomplishments make them a good fit at the organization.²

“Make sure that whatever skill or accomplishment you recognize aligns with why you're reaching out, otherwise it may cause confusion and drive a candidate not to respond.”



Cam Pezet

Senior Campus Technical Recruiter, LinkedIn

Tactic #3: Recognize their skills

Making your flattery sincere

When it comes to flattery, be as specific as possible. Always try to get at the “why” behind what caught your eye. Here are a few examples to guide your outreach practices.

Example 1

I'm a recruiter for Red Spike, and we're searching for a front end developer to join our team.

I spent some time this morning checking out your GitHub profile and your Ruby skills are off the charts!

You would be working out of either our Sunnyvale or San Francisco office.

✓ Why it works

The specificity shows that you sought out this person, and aren't sending out a mass email.

Example 2

As Venafi continues to thrive, it never hurts to know more about people in our industry.

I've got to say, I'm pretty blown away. I just chatted with some of my marketer friends in Vancouver and they're all singing your praises.

If you're interested, I'd love to tell you more about some of the things we're doing.

✓ Why it works

Plain and simple, flattery works. This approach feels authentic through its everyday language and social proof.

Tactic #4: Be succinct

Remember that less is more

LinkedIn research tells us that candidates want some details about a new opportunity in a recruiter's first message. But they are actually less likely to respond if you tell them everything. Give them your best pitch, but leave them wanting to learn more. This is especially true when reaching out to a prospect who isn't actively searching.



Did you know?

InMail and email messages over 200 words tend to get lower response rates, and messages with less than 100 words tend to get higher response rates³

“Keep your message short, and be sure to include clear next steps or a call to action.”



Shriram Gharpure

Senior Technical Recruiter, LinkedIn

Tactic #4: Be succinct

How to keep it short and sweet

Candidate outreach is a perfect example of less is more. Even though there might be tons of details about your open role, take a step back and ask yourself what information is essential for this stage of the process. Here are a couple thought starters that focus on brevity.

Example 1

Hi Jocelyn,

As soon as I saw the David Ogilvy quote on your profile, I knew I had to get in touch. We actually have the same quote framed in our office.

I'm currently building out a paid media team and think you'd be a great fit. Do you have some time next week for a quick call to talk about the role, and of course, the wise words of Mr. Ogilvy?

✓ Why it works

We start with a hook to build relatability, and then pay it off at the end in a playful way. Clocking in at 70 words, this message is short, sweet, and has a clear call to action.

Example 2

Hi Pat,

I'm blown away by your sales skills at T-Mobix. Coincidentally, that's where I started working after college, too.

I am always looking to network with bright sales individuals, and I'd love to learn more about your career goals.

Let me know of 2-3 times when you are available to talk, as well as a good number to call. Cheers!

✓ Why it works

As in the first example, this outreach email is a quick read at 77 words and establishes something that the recruiter and candidate have in common early on.

Tactic #5: Use your network

Strength in numbers

Your current employees are a great source for recommendations – and a valuable connection when reaching out to prospects. When someone you know has insight into a candidate, always be sure to use it.



Did you know?

Referencing a former common employer in your message **increases your chances of getting a response by 27%.**¹

“Make sure to use your network first by checking if you have a connection in common. Another way I get responses is by sharing videos I make with hiring managers. People love them.”



Calvin Liu-Navarro

Senior Technical Recruiter, LinkedIn

Tactic #5: Use your network

Finding your 6 degrees of separation

The power of your network should never be underestimated. If you regularly recruit candidates in the same industry in the same region, it wouldn't be unusual for someone you know to know that candidate. Browse these tips for how to let networking take the work out of "working."

Example 1

heading, and I knew I had to reach out.

Even if you're not planning a career move, I'm wondering – would you consider an outstanding new opportunity? Your former colleague Van Reyes mentioned you're an amazing programmer.

Do you have time to hop on a call this Thursday?



Why it works

This approach is doubly effective because it highlights a mutual connection while also being complimentary.

Example 2

Plus, our whole team works from home every Wednesday.

Our employees really appreciate the great work-life balance here, and since you already know Leslie, you may know what I'm talking about.

Anyway, I'm looking forward to connecting next week. Talk soon!



Why it works

This option uses a mutual connection and subtly implies that since that connection loves it, you probably will too.

Outreach pitfalls

There was a time when the spray and pray method of sending unpersonalized outreach en masse worked. But those days are long over. Here are some things to avoid as you're crafting your outreach.

1. Just say no to jargon

No one likes buzzword bingo. Most jobs come with a set of corporate terminology, but always write how you speak.

2. Asking a prospect to do your job

Sometimes it's OK to ask if someone knows someone who'd be interested in a role. But other times, not so much. Countless recruiters ask someone else to do the heavy lifting.

3. InMails/emails that should've been status updates

Avoid things like "Please feel free to pass along the great news that we have a management opportunity at our location in Council Bluffs."

4. Don't provide distraction links

Too many embedded links cause readers to get distracted. When sending outreach messages, keep your call to action clear.

5. Avoid spam triggers

To protect users from scams, certain words or phrases will cause an email to go directly into the spam folder. Here's a list of some of those terms:

Potential earnings	Earn per week	Income from home
Extra income	Money making	Online degree
Work from home	Expect to earn	As seen on

The “before you hit send” checklist

Here are a few rules of thumb for outreach that are designed to make the recipient open it up, take notice, and respond.



- ☐ Keep subject lines short, catchy, specific, and enticing. Yes, that’s a lot to do in a few words.



- ☐ Show that you’ve done your research by making it personal. Find something in common with each candidate and use that in your message: interests, hobbies, LinkedIn Groups, employers, etc.



- ☐ Don’t give too much information, but make sure to give enough. According to LinkedIn research, candidates want job details, salary range, and a company overview in a recruiter’s first message.



- ☐ Send your messages when they’ll be acted upon. Between 9:00 am and 10:00 am on a weekday receives higher response rates, while messages sent on Saturdays are 16% less likely to get a response.¹

Uplevel your outreach with LinkedIn Recruiter

[LinkedIn Recruiter](#) lets you customize InMail messages with valuable personal insights. With just a few clicks, you'll be able to see if you share connections or have LinkedIn Groups, former employers, and companies you follow in common. The personal touch is proven to increase response rates.

- Use the Relationship filter to target 2nd-degree connections, ensuring you have people in common
- Use the My Groups filter to find people who are members of the same groups
- Use the Company Followers filter to find companies they admire





Bonus: Calling and texting



Dialing it in

The amount of time we spend actually talking on the phone pales in comparison to the time we spend using all other phone features. But sometimes you just need to pick up the phone and make a call. Here are a few pointers to help you ace phone outreach.

1. Be direct

Clearly state that you're calling them about a job. Small talk can come later.

2. Remember that they're in the driver's seat

Like it or not, it's a candidate's market out there. For now, it's your job to sell the candidate on the role.

3. Find out what it would take for them to change jobs

This is the most important information you can get out of a call. Find out what they're looking for and speak to how your role checks those boxes.

4. Build them up

Try something like "Ariana, I'm calling because you've impressed a lot of people in the industry and my hiring manager loves your experience."

5. Don't forget to connect

After the call has ended, follow up with them on LinkedIn. This will help keep you front of mind as they think over the job opportunity.

R U txting candidates?

In a world where everyone is glued to their phone, texting is proving to be an efficient outreach method. While emails and phone calls can be time consuming or get lost in the shuffle, texting removes a barrier to entry in getting a response. Plus, there's a lot of value in someone being able to respond to your message while waiting in line at the grocery store. Here are a few texting tips built for getting responses.

1. Ask for permission, not forgiveness

Not every employer views texting as appropriate (yet). Before you shoot a candidate a text, make sure that it's not a no-no with your company's recruiting practices.

2. Keep it short

Nobody likes reading essay-length texts. By keeping things short, you'll get their attention and start a conversation. "Hi. I'm _____ with _____ and I think you'd be a great fit for a role I'm hiring for" is a great place to start.

3. Hook them then schedule a call

While texting has its benefits, it's not the place to be having drawn out conversations about something as important as a new job. Once you can tell they're interested, schedule a call to give them more details.

4. Keep it professional

By nature, texting is casual. But be sure to keep things buttoned up. Avoid using slang and "text speak" like "LOL" or abbreviated spellings.

5. Don't leave them hanging

If you're engaged in a conversation with a candidate, they'll expect quick responses. Don't put the phone down and take the dog for a walk. Always remember that the channel you're using comes with a set of responsibilities.

Bottom line? Outreach is crucial.

Regardless of which outreach channel you're using, the first point of contact with a candidate sets the tone for what's to follow. A staggering 83% of candidates say that their impression of a company and a job are shaped during the outreach phase.³

The average person receives over 121 emails a day and less than 4% of them get answered.⁴ But if done correctly, you're ready to reach today's most sought-after talent.

³ "7 Stats That Highlight the Importance of Candidate Experience," Lever, 2017

22 ⁴ "The Shocking Truth About How Many Emails Are Sent," CampaignMonitor, 2017



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