

Competitor Intent Playbook

A practical guide to signal-driven outbound: where to find real buying intent, how to write messages that convert, and what it actually costs to run yourself.

20+

YEARS EXPERIENCE

\$20M+

REVENUE GENERATED

3X

ROI GUARANTEED

Beyond volume

This playbook cuts through the noise, showing you how Competitor Intent Outbound targets prospects actively seeking solutions, dramatically outperforming generic, volume-based approaches. We equip founders, sales leads, and revenue teams to build signal-driven campaigns that convert.

40%

CONNECTION ACCEPT BENCHMARK

30%

REPLY RATE FLOOR

15 min

REPLY RESPONSE WINDOW

90 days

SIGNAL FRESHNESS CEILING

Drawing directly from Interceptly's successful campaigns, you'll learn actionable strategies for signal identification, crafting compelling messages, multi-channel sequencing, and mastering reply handling, all while understanding the true operational costs. No fluff, just proven results.

What's inside

The frameworks below, plus the honest numbers most guides leave out.

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- 01 The evidence: what competitor-intent targeting did across 60 live campaigns
 - 02 Where signals actually live, and what they cost to monitor by hand
 - 03 Multi-channel sequencing: what happens when LinkedIn goes quiet
 - 04 The rules Interceptly enforces on every client campaign, without exception
 - 05 A campaign diagnostic to find exactly where a sequence is leaking
 - 06 An honest weekly effort audit before you decide to run this yourself
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A note before you start

Most advice about outbound is written by people who don't send anything.

We do. Interceptly runs signal-driven outbound every week, for our own pipeline and on behalf of our clients. Every framework here, every message structure, every rule about what kills reply rates comes from campaigns we have actually run.

Everything in this playbook works without us. You can take these frameworks and run the whole system yourself, and some readers will. But most teams that try discover the same thing: the hard part is not knowing what to do. It is doing it every single week, finding fresh signals, retiring stale ones, and answering replies in minutes rather than hours.

If you finish this playbook and recognise that problem, the last section is for you.

Andy Phipps

Managing Partner, Interceptly



Connect on LinkedIn

Most outbound fails before the first message lands

Standard outbound in our dataset averaged a 23% connection rate. That means around 770 out of every 1,000 prospects never connect, so the team never gets a real chance to start a conversation. The message quality is irrelevant if nobody accepts.

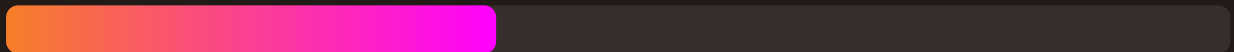
Standard outbound

23%



Competitor-intent targeting

40%



A 17 percentage-point lift, or roughly **1.7x more connections** from the same number of requests.

Connection rate by approach. Benchmark: standard connection-based campaigns in the same dataset, excluding Signilio™ data.

Every campaign in that dataset started with one specific signal: the prospect had recently connected with, or engaged around, a relevant competitor. Competitor engagement is the signal this playbook is built on, because it is the one that proves a live need rather than an assumed fit.

Relevance is the whole game

When outreach lands at the moment a prospect is showing intent, more people connect, more reply, and conversations start warmer. Targeting intent instead of a static list changes the arithmetic at every stage.

INTENT SIGNAL



RELEVANT MESSAGE



REPLY

The chain every campaign in the dataset follows.

Right person, right moment

Signals show us who has an active need now.

Warmer first contact

Relevance lifts both the connection rate and the tone of replies.

Compounding effect

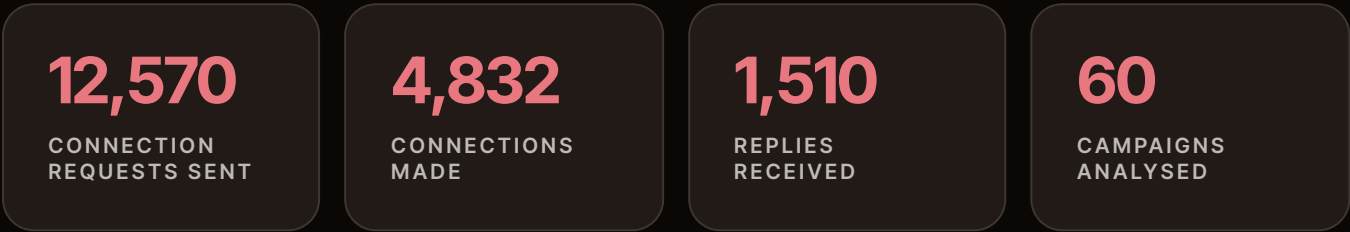
A higher connection rate flows through every later stage of the funnel.

Targeting intent, not lists

- **Signal-driven.** Prospects are identified from real competitor engagement, not assumed fit.
- **Better timing.** Outreach lands when the prospect has a clearer reason to pay attention.
- **Less wasted effort.** More of the same outreach volume goes towards people with current relevance.

Measured across 60 live client campaigns

This is not modelled. Every number below comes from Signilio™ and standard outbound campaigns that sent at least 100 connection requests each.



Same sending volume. More people reached.

PER 1,000 REQUESTS	SIGNILIO™	STANDARD	GAIN
Connections	400	230	+170
Replies	125	75	+50

40%

Less outreach to reach the same connections

1,000 Signilio™ requests equals approximately 1,740 standard outbound requests in connections made.

At scale, the gap compounds

The same connection-rate difference, projected across 10,000 connection requests. The lift at the top of the funnel is what everything downstream inherits.

10,000 REQUESTS	SIGNILIO™	STANDARD	YOUR GAIN
Connections	4,000	2,300	+1,700
Replies	1,250	750	+500
Positive replies	337	195	+142
Meetings (1 in 3 positive replies)	112	65	+47

Meeting rates are illustrative, applied equally to both approaches. Multiply by your average deal size and win rate to translate extra opportunities into revenue.

Forty-seven extra meetings from the same sending effort. That is the entire argument for targeting competitor engagement instead of a list.

Where signals actually live

A framework for evaluating signals is useless without an answer to the obvious question: where do you find them? Every signal category has a home, and every home has a monitoring cost. This is the part most guides skip, because it is the part that is genuinely hard.

SIGNAL CATEGORY	WHERE IT LIVES	MANUAL MONITORING COST
Hiring activity	Job boards, careers pages, LinkedIn jobs	Re-running structured searches across every target account, weekly
Technology adoption	Install-base data, job descriptions, site tech stacks	Cross-referencing tooling mentions across hundreds of companies
Funding events	Funding databases, press releases, Companies House filings	Watching announcement feeds daily and matching against your ICP
Leadership changes	LinkedIn, press releases	Tracking role changes person by person across your target list
Regulatory filings	Public registers, industry bodies	Knowing which filings imply spend, and checking on a schedule
Product launches	Company news pages, LinkedIn, trade press	Reading, constantly

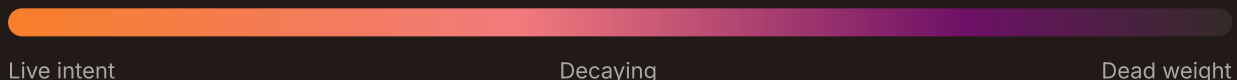
Three things that make this a system

01 Freshness decays daily

A 90-day ceiling applies to every signal, not as a one-off filter but as a continuous obligation. A signal source checked last month has already produced prospects you have missed and kept prospects you should have removed.

DAY 0 — SIGNAL DETECTED

DAY 90 — RETIRED



The 90-day freshness ceiling: signals are retired automatically once they age past it, even mid-sequence.

02 Signals need deduplication and scoring

The same company often fires three signals at once. Deciding which one anchors the message, and which persona owns it, is a judgement call that must be made consistently across hundreds of accounts.

03 The work never finishes

A volume-first list is built once. A signal-driven audience is rebuilt continuously, or it quietly becomes a volume-first list with better copy.



HOW INTERCEPTLY DOES THIS

Interceptly's signal data layer, Signilio™, monitors these sources continuously, deduplicating, scoring, and retiring signals past the freshness ceiling so a campaign only ever sends against live intent.

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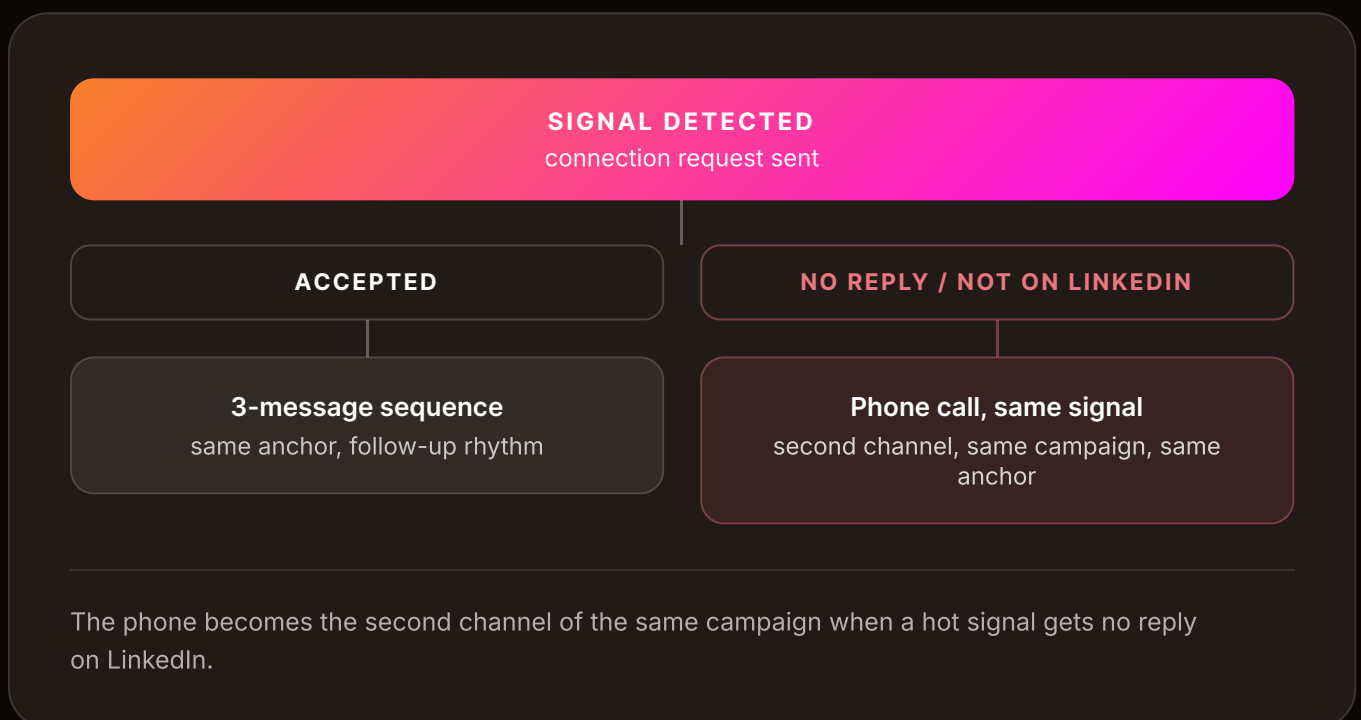
SIGNAL CATEGORIES TRACKED FOR
YOU

24/7

CONTINUOUS MONITORING, ZERO
MANUAL CHECKS

When the signal is hot but LinkedIn goes quiet

A three-message LinkedIn sequence has a structural weakness: a meaningful share of prospects never accept the connection request, not because the signal was wrong, but because they simply were not on LinkedIn that week. Meanwhile the signal ages toward its 90-day ceiling. A live signal with no conversation attached to it is wasted targeting.



The answer is the phone, not as a separate cold-calling motion, but as the second channel of the same campaign.

Not cold calling

A cold call opens with an interruption and an apology. A signal-triggered call opens with the same anchor as the connection request, something specific and recent that the prospect recognises as their own situation.

COLD CALL REACTION

"How can I help you?"

SIGNAL-TRIGGERED REACTION

"Yes, how did you know that?"

The reaction is different in kind.

What changes

Two things LinkedIn never asks of you: objections arrive live, and timing matters. Calls need pre-written objection responses and a consistent daily calling block in the windows the persona actually answers. This is the discipline most teams cannot sustain.

Sample opener, mirroring the connection request

[First name], the reason for the call: I noticed [signal anchor in their language, e.g. 'three compliance analyst roles go up at Acme in the last month']. We work with [peer role]s dealing with exactly that. Have I read that right, or is it something else driving those hires?

A live opener, ready to adapt: swap the bracketed anchor for whatever signal triggered the call.

Why this works

- Mirrors the connection request anchor, so the call feels continuous with what the prospect already saw.
 - Ends with one low-pressure question, never a pitch.
 - Names the signal in the prospect's own language, not generic targeting-speak.
-

Rules we enforce on every client campaign

These are not suggestions. Each rule below is enforced without exception across every campaign Interceptly manages. They exist because the most common campaign failures are not strategic, they are execution gaps that compound over time.

1 ICP Definition

Never reference your targeting filters in the copy. If the audience was filtered to a headcount range, a geography, or an industry, the message must not say so, the search already did that work.

2 Tone of Voice

If the first line could be sent to any company on the list, it gets rewritten. The test is deletion: remove the company name, and if it still makes sense, the anchor was never real.

3 Connection Request

Every connection request must pass the out-loud test. If the sender would not say the sentence to the prospect's face at an industry event, it does not get sent.

4 Follow-Up Anatomy

Signals are retired at 90 days even mid-sequence. Sending message three against a dead signal converts a warm thread into list-blast noise.

5 Reply Handling

Every positive reply gets a human response within 15 minutes during business hours. It is the highest-leverage service level in outbound, and the one a part-time inbox cannot deliver.

A fast reply only works if your system is ready

Getting a reply is only half the job. What happens next decides whether it turns into a meeting or gets lost. This is where your CRM earns its keep: if replies do not land somewhere clear, with the right person watching, they go cold within an hour.

REPLY ARRIVES

ONE CRM
RECORD
instantly

REP ASSIGNED
by rule

15-MIN TIMER
escalates if missed

MEETING
BOOKED

What has to happen automatically, every time a reply comes in.

Every reply lands in one place

Wherever the reply comes from, LinkedIn, email, a phone call, it should end up on the same record for that lead, with everything the prospect has said so far attached. No hunting through inboxes.

The right person is assigned straight away

The lead is handed to a specific salesperson the moment it comes in, based on a simple rule set once: by territory, by industry, or just next-in-line.

A timer starts ticking

The system starts a 15-minute countdown the second a reply arrives. If nobody responds in time, it flags the manager. This is the difference between a booked meeting and a missed one.

Let the system handle the busywork

There is a lot of small, repetitive work that surrounds every reply. Doing all of it by hand is what burns out small teams. Simple, automatic steps handle the busywork so your people focus on the conversations.

Automatic follow-up emails

If a prospect replies but does not book within a day, the system sends a friendly follow-up with the meeting link.

Instant calendar invites

If a prospect wants to meet, they get a calendar link right away, no back-and-forth.

Reminders for salespeople

Every new lead gets a to-do on the right person's list. Nothing gets forgotten.

Old leads move to a different list

If a prospect goes quiet too long, they move to a longer-term list rather than being spammed.

ONE THING TO NEVER AUTOMATE

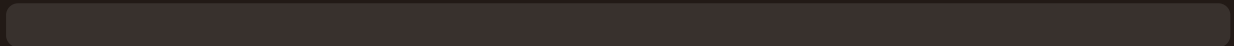
The first reply to a real prospect has to be a real person, writing a real message. Bots and AI auto-replies feel fake within one message, and prospects stop replying. We have tried it on our own leads and it did not work.

Where is your campaign leaking?

Every underperforming campaign leaks in a specific place, and the numbers tell you where. Diagnose before rewriting anything, teams that skip this step usually fix the message that was already working.

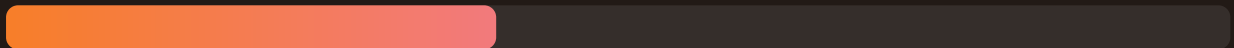
Connections sent

100%



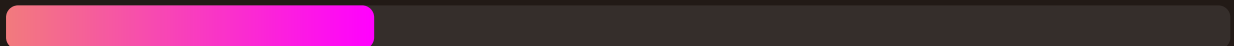
Accepted — benchmark

40%



Replies, full sequence — benchmark / floor

30%



Diagnose in this order. Low accept = a generic anchor. Accepts fine but no replies = the message asks too much. Everything low = stale signals.

Interceptly's healthy-campaign benchmarks at each stage of the funnel.

Find your symptom, then look in one place

Tick the symptom you recognise.

SYMPTOM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHERE TO LOOK
☐ Accept rate low	Anchor is generic, or the connection request contains a pitch	Connection request copy
☐ Accepts fine, no replies to Follow-Up 1	Message is not standalone, asks an open question, or asks more than one	Follow-up message structure
☐ Replies arriving, no meetings booking	Reply handling is too slow or improvised	Reply handling speed
☐ Meetings booking with the wrong people	Signal ownership is mismatched to the persona	Signal-to-persona matching
☐ Everything low across the board	Signals are stale, or the ICP has no behavioural layer	Signal freshness

Interceptly benchmarks: healthy campaigns on this framework achieve a 40% connection accept rate and a 30% reply rate across the full sequence. 90% of Interceptly-managed campaigns are built to, and hold above, a 30% reply floor.

What running this takes, every week

The frameworks in this playbook are free and complete. Before deciding to run them in-house, price the operating cost honestly. This is what a signal-driven campaign consumes in a normal week.



The weekly operating cost, task by task

Tick the ones you already have someone doing.

TASK	CADENCE	REALISTIC WEEKLY COST
☐ Signal monitoring and list refresh	Daily	3–5 hours
☐ Stale-signal audit (90-day ceiling)	Weekly	1–2 hours
☐ Copy regeneration as signals shift	Per campaign change (3–4 weeks)	3–5 hours
☐ Sending, connection management, sequencing	Daily	3–4 hours
☐ Calling block on non-accepts	Daily, in persona-appropriate windows	4–6 hours
☐ Reporting against reply and meeting rates	Weekly	1–2 hours
☐ Reply handling	Continuous	3–4 hours

None of this is complicated. All of it is relentless. The campaigns that die do not die from bad frameworks, they die in week three, when the founder doing all of the above goes back to running the business.

What done-for-you looks like

Signal-driven outbound is one engine with two layers, and both have to run every week or neither is worth much.

SIGNAL LAYER

Signilio™

Monitors, dedupes, scores, retires past 90 days

CONVERSATION LAYER

A team on the signals

Writes, sends, calls, replies in minutes



Pipeline Builder

Runs both layers on your behalf, reporting weekly against reply and meeting rates.

Pipeline Builder is the Interceptly programme that runs both layers on your behalf. You see every message, every reply, and every number.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Both layers run from week one of a Pipeline Builder engagement, reported weekly against reply and meeting rates, and backed by the 3X guarantee on the next page.

Get your customised playbook

Before any Pipeline Builder engagement begins, we build a customised version of this playbook for your company: signal identification for your specific market and ICP, competitor-aware positioning built around your actual landscape, full sequence copy written for your buyer personas, and reply handling templates calibrated to your outbound context.

It is the fastest way to judge whether we know your market well enough to work in it, and we back it completely. If the strategy, content, or playbook we build does not convince you, you get your money back in full. No questions asked.

Signal identification

Your specific market and ICP, mapped to the categories that matter most for your buyers.

Competitor positioning

Aware of your actual competitive landscape, not a generic framework.

Full sequence copy

Written for your buyer personas and trigger signals, ready to send.

Reply templates

Calibrated to your outbound context and the objections your persona actually raises.

Our 3X Pipeline Guarantee

If we don't fill your pipeline with 3 times your investment, we work the following month for free, and keep going until we do. No caveats. No small print.

3X

GUARANTEED ROI

90

DAYS TO RESULTS

0

RISK TO YOU

Interceptly ⇒

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