

PLAYBOOK

# High-End Home Security & Automation

*Handshake Outreach email sequence, adapted.*

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Four messages, one sequence. Mail-merge ready.

## ADAPTATION 17

# Category notes

Home security and automation sits at the intersection of safety anxiety and technology confusion. The buyer is making a decision driven by fear — a break-in, a package theft, a family member's safety — and the industry exploits that fear with high-pressure sales tactics, long-term monitoring contracts, and proprietary hardware that locks customers into a single vendor. Door-to-door sales remain common and aggressive, especially after neighborhood incidents. The opportunity for a legitimate integrator is to slow the conversation down: explain what the buyer actually needs (which is often less than they think), be transparent about monitoring contract terms, and demonstrate that the system will work in five years, not just on install day. The costly signal is telling a prospect when they don't need a \$15,000 system — when a \$2,000 DIY setup would serve them just as well.

Insider terms: monitoring contract (typically 36–60 months, auto-renewing, with early termination fees that can reach thousands — the single biggest source of consumer complaints), professional monitoring vs. self-monitoring, proprietary vs. open-protocol hardware (proprietary means you can't switch providers without replacing equipment; open-protocol means Z-Wave, Zigbee, Matter/Thread devices that work with multiple platforms), central station (the monitoring facility that receives alarm signals), false alarm fees (many municipalities charge \$50–\$250 per false alarm dispatch), UL Listed (Underwriters Laboratories certification for monitoring stations — the gold standard), cellular backup (what happens when your internet goes down), integration protocol (how devices talk to each other — the difference between a "smart home" and a "connected home"), structured wiring (the physical infrastructure for a high-end system — almost impossible to add after construction).

MESSAGE 1 OF 4 / SEND WITHIN 4-24 HOURS

# Message 1: The Honest Hello

*Acknowledge the cold contact. Promise no door-knocking. Give one useful warning about contracts.*

**Subject:** A note from [First Name] at [Company] – not a door-knock

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Hi –

You stopped by [Company]'s website recently. If you're researching home security or smart home systems, you've probably noticed that the industry makes it hard to figure out what you actually need versus what somebody wants to sell you. I'm not going to add to that confusion.

I'm [Name], [role] at [Company]. We've been designing and installing systems in [region] since [year]. I'm writing because I want to tell you the one thing most security companies won't say: you might not need what you think you need.

One useful thing for someone in the research phase: before you talk to any security company – including us – find out whether they require a monitoring contract and, if so, what the term and cancellation terms are. Most national security companies lock you into 36- to 60-month contracts with auto-renewal clauses and early termination fees that can exceed \$1,000. The equipment they install is often proprietary, meaning if you cancel the contract, the hardware becomes useless. You can't take it to another provider. That's not security – that's a subscription you can't leave.

Ask any company: "If I cancel in month thirteen, what do I pay, and does my equipment still work?" The answer will tell you everything you need to know about their business model.

I'll send two more notes – short, focused on the things worth knowing whether you ever work with [Company] or not. Easy unsubscribe.

– [Name]

[License #, direct line, reply-to]

MESSAGE 2 OF 4 / SEND 3-4 DAYS LATER

# Message 2: The Inside Knowledge

*The costly signal: tell them when they don't need a system — and what protocol question saves the most money.*

**Subject:** The home security question that saves the most money (and it's not about cameras)

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[Name],

Following up. The question that saves homeowners the most money in home security isn't "which cameras should I buy?" It's "what protocol does this equipment use?"

Here's why. Home security and automation equipment comes in two categories: proprietary and open-protocol. Proprietary equipment — the kind most national alarm companies install — only works with that company's monitoring service and app. If you switch providers, the equipment is useless. You start over. Open-protocol equipment uses standards like Z-Wave, Zigbee, or the newer Matter/Thread protocol. These devices work with multiple platforms and can be migrated to a new provider, a new hub, or even a DIY setup without replacing hardware.

The financial difference over ten years is staggering. A proprietary system typically costs less upfront — sometimes even "free" with a monitoring contract — but locks you into \$30 to \$60 per month for three to five years, with equipment you can't reuse. An open-protocol system costs more at install but gives you the freedom to switch to self-monitoring, change providers, or upgrade individual components without replacing everything.

Here's the part most installers won't tell you. For a typical three-bedroom home with standard security needs — entry sensors, a couple of cameras, a video doorbell, and a smart lock — a well-chosen DIY system using open-protocol hardware costs \$500 to \$1,500 and can be self-monitored for free or professionally monitored on a month-to-month basis for \$10 to \$25. A professionally installed system with the same coverage runs \$3,000 to \$8,000. The professional install makes sense when you need structured wiring, complex integration, or a large property. For a standard home with Wi-Fi coverage, it often doesn't.

[Company]'s system comparison guide — showing what DIY, mid-range, and full-custom installations actually include, with real pricing from our last ten projects — is at [link]. No form.

— [Name]

MESSAGE 3 OF 4 / SEND 5-7 DAYS LATER

# Message 3: The Story

*One real customer told not to buy. A \$350 fix beat a \$6,000 system.*

**Subject:** The customer we told not to buy a system

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[Name],

Wanted to share a story.

About two years ago, a homeowner I'll call James contacted us after a package was stolen from his porch. He'd already gotten quotes from two national security companies – both proposing full-home systems with eight cameras, motion sensors on every window, smart locks, and 60-month monitoring contracts. The quotes were around \$4,500 and \$6,200 for equipment, plus \$45 to \$55 per month for monitoring. Total five-year cost: roughly \$7,200 to \$9,500.

I went to his house and spent an hour walking the property. Three-bedroom ranch, good neighborhood, low crime stats, one entry point visible from the street. His actual security concern was porch theft – a specific, solvable problem.

I told him he didn't need a system. He needed a \$200 video doorbell and a \$150 floodlight camera, both open-protocol, both self-monitored through his phone. Total cost: \$350 and no monthly fee. If he wanted professional monitoring later, he could add it month-to-month for \$10. I helped him install both in about an hour.

The porch thefts stopped. Not because of the technology – because the visible camera deterred the behavior. James has since referred three neighbors to us, two of whom did need full systems because of larger properties and more complex needs. Those were real projects we were glad to do. But James's referrals came because we told him the truth when the truth was "you don't need us."

If you want an honest assessment of what your home actually needs – not what a commission structure wants to sell you – reply or call [number]. One more note and I'll leave you alone.

– [Name]

MESSAGE 4 OF 4 / SEND 5-7 DAYS LATER

# Message 4: The Clean Close

Three options. The exit is graceful. The questions are theirs to use — with anyone.

**Subject:** Last note from me

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[Name],

Last email unless you want to stay in touch. Three options:

**If you want an assessment:** Reply or call [number]. We'll do a free walkthrough of your home — not a sales visit, but an honest evaluation of your actual security needs. If a \$300 DIY setup solves your problem, we'll tell you that. If you need a designed system, we'll spec it with open-protocol hardware and no long-term contract. Written proposal, itemized, no pressure.

**If you want to keep learning:** [Company] publishes a [monthly/quarterly] home security brief — not product marketing, but real content on topics like understanding your municipality's false alarm ordinance, how to evaluate monitoring contracts, what Matter/Thread means for your existing devices, and how to secure a home network. [link] to subscribe.

**If [Company] isn't the right fit:** Whoever you work with, five questions will protect you: (1) Is the equipment proprietary or open-protocol — and will it work if I switch providers? (2) What are the full terms of the monitoring contract — length, auto-renewal, and early termination fee? (3) What happens to my system when the internet goes down — is there cellular backup, and is it included? (4) Does your monitoring station carry UL certification? (5) What is my municipality's false alarm fee, and how does your system minimize false dispatches? If a company can't answer all five, they're selling a contract, not a security system.

Either way, stay safe.

— [Name]

# How to ship this

- **Replace the brackets.** [Company], [Name], [role], [number], [link], [region] — every placeholder filled, nothing left in template form.
- **Pick a real owner or system designer as the sender.** Not a door-to-door rep on commission. Use a real direct line and reply-to that reaches them.
- **Render the body as plain text.** HTML email part, slightly large font (~16-17px), warmer-than-white background. Looks typed. Reads typed. People scan plain text differently.
- **Mind the cadence.** Message 1 within 4-24 hours of the visit. Message 2 three to four days later. Message 3 five to seven days after that. Message 4 five to seven days after that. Then stop.
- **Honor the promise.** If you said “last email,” it's the last email. Reactance kills the relationship faster than silence.