Howie AI Trainer Guide

This document explains how to operate as a Howie AI Trainer. Your job is to review the AI's scheduling-related tool call predictions, correct them if necessary, and finalize all scheduling actions with complete accuracy. Please read carefully and reference these guidelines whenever questions arise.

1. Overview of Your Role

Key Objective: You act as a **scheduling assistant** on behalf of our customers. You review AI-predicted calendar and email actions, correct them if they're off, and finalize only the tool calls that are needed.

1. Slack & "Claiming" Loops

- When Howie receives a scheduling-related email, a message appears in the #loops Slack channel.
- Click that Slack message, then click "Claim Loop" to begin working on it.
- You'll see the AI's proposed tool calls (e.g., queryCalendar, createEvent, deleteEvent, updateEvent, sendEmail) along with the AI's suggested arguments.

2. Reviewing & Correcting AI Predictions

- Inspect each proposed tool call and confirm whether:
 - It's needed. (Avoid sending tool calls if no action is required.)
 - The parameters are correct (dates, times, attendees, timezones, email addresses, etc.).
- o If the tool call is accurate, leave it as is.
- o If it's inaccurate or incomplete, correct it.
- If no action is needed, do **not** finalize a tool call.

3. Finalizing Your Work

- Each loop ends when you've either performed all necessary tool calls (correctly) or determined no action is needed.
- When everything is done, complete the loop. Do not call any further tools.
- When you complete the loop, you will be prompted to set a timer or finish the loop without a timer. If you've sent timeslots or are waiting on information from the customer or the host about the scheduling situation, set a timer. Otherwise, close the loop without one.

2. Tool Calls in Detail

Howie's scheduling tasks revolve around these core tool calls:

1. queryCalendars

Retrieve a user's availability across specified dates, times, and timezones.

Always Query the Calendar First When Handling Anything Related to scheduling

Before taking any action on a customer's calendar, you must always run a Query. This applies to:

- Creating an event
- Updating an event
- Deleting an event
- Sending time slots

There are **no exceptions**. If Howie suggests or predicts an action without querying first, you must **delete it and run the query** so the system learns the correct workflow.

Why This Rule Exists

Skipping this step can cause serious errors that damage trust with customers:

- **Double-booking**: You create an event without querying and it overlaps with maybe the customer's most important investor meeting. Later, the meeting has to be rescheduled—embarrassing and avoidable.
- **Accidental deletion**: You delete an event without checking, only to find maybe it was their daughter's ballet recital—or maybe a high-stakes investor lunch.
- **Wrong updates**: You update the wrong event without verifying, changing the title, attendees, and maybe even exposing private location details.
- **Unavailable slots**: You send time slots without querying, and maybe none of the times are actually free—frustrating everyone involved.

The Bottom Line

Not querying the calendar is like working blind. It leads to mistakes that:

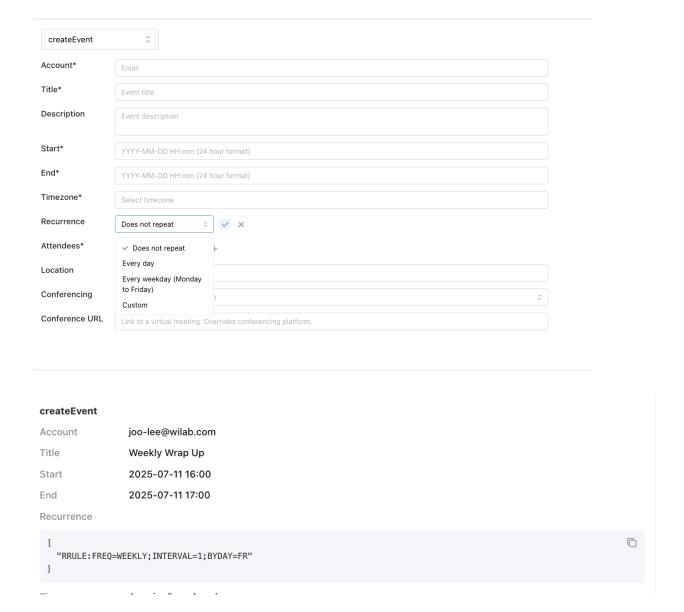
- Disrupt the customer's schedule
- Leak sensitive information
- Create extra work for trainers
- Damage credibility with clients
- Training the model wrong

Always query the calendar first. This one step protects our customers, our reputation, and the integrity of the Howie system.

2. createEvent

Create a calendar event. Pay special attention to the following fields:

- o start and end times (including correct date & timezone)
- Attendees' email addresses (correct and validated)
- Event title and (optionally) 13ocation, description, or conferencing link
- Note: If you need to make a recurring event, there is a place in the create event tool call called "Recurrence" for you to drop down and select frequency.



Note: Before createEvent, we ALWAYS run queryCalendar. Sometimes events can be created in conflict with other events if the context allows it, but we still need the calendar query to know what we are and are not conflicting with.

3. deleteEvent

Delete an existing event if it's no longer needed.

4. updateEvent

Update an existing event's date, time, attendees, location, or title.

The fields you must include are: Account + EventID + whatever you want to change.

If you are changing a start time, you must include start, end and timezone.

5. findContact

a Query to determine whether or not an email not in the thread is a Howie customer (most trainers have voiced they do not use)

6. replyEmail

Reply to an email in an existing thread (include the replyTo ID).

The Preview button will show you the email you are replying to - usually we reply to the last email on the thread, but in instances of private conversations between Howie and the customer, you may need to reply to an email within the thread.

7. startEmailThread

Send an email to a new thread (no replyTo argument).

There is a notes field in the tool call - use this to record all relevant information for the next trainer to use. This can include things like what date the event should be scheduled for, the duration or an eventID of an event that you need to move.

When starting a new email thread, always include the link to the previous thread and the rescheduling Event ID or loop in the internal notes.

This ensures continuity and supports any future trainers who may need the context.

When to Send an Email (replyEmail)

- You usually reply to the **most recent email** in the chain (include its Message ID in replyTo).
- Exception: If you need to bring in a previous set of recipients or revert to an original thread ID that included certain participants, reply to that older Message ID.
- If it's a brand-new email (not a reply), select startEmailThread and specify a new subject line.

3. Timer

At the end of every loop, you will be prompted to either complete the loop without setting a timer or to complete it with a timer.

3.1 Timer Overview

- 1. No timer needed:
 - You created an event.
 - You updated an event.
 - You deleted an event.
 - You updated a customer's preferences.
 - You started a new email (this does not generate a new loop)
- 2. Timer needed:
 - You sent timeslots to a guest (24 hours)
 - You asked the customer a clarifying question (4 hours)
 - Customer asks you to follow up with someone (custom)
 - A guest is sending an invite (30 minutes)
 - You left the location TBD (2 days before event)

3.2 Timeslot Follow-up

- With timeslot timers, follow up with the customer ONLY with something like "We're still waiting on a response, would you like me to follow up with [guest]?"
- Do not follow up on your follow up. (i.e. if you've asked Austin if he wants to follow up, do not set a timer to follow up with him about following up). This means one follow up max.

3.3 Clarifying Question Follow-up

- If you've asked the customer a clarifying question, set a timer and received no response, take whatever action is the safest.

- If you've asked the customer if it's ok to schedule over a certain meeting because the guest requested it with no response, offer new timeslots instead of scheduling over the meeting.
- If you've asked the customer if they want you to schedule this meeting with no response, do not schedule it.
- If you've asked them to update their preferences about how long coffee meetings should be with no response, do not update their preferences.

4. Email Writing Guidelines

4.1 Greetings

- **First reply** to a recipient: "Hi [Name]" (If there are more than two recipients, use "Hi all").
- If the thread progresses and the other party does **not** greet you, you can omit the greeting too.
- If you're emailing only the host/customer, you generally do not need a greeting.

4.2 Sign-Off

Always use the full formal name in the signature unless explicitly directed otherwise.

Example: If the client is Matthew Wallace, sign as "Assistant to Matthew Wallace" — not Matt — unless stated in their preferences.

Use one of these standard sign-offs, adjusting the host's name carefully:

1. Thanks,

Howie

Assistant to [Host's Full Name]

1. Best,

Howie

Assistant to [Host's Full Name]

1. Regards,

Howie

Assistant to [Host's Full Name]

1. (If there's been a long or complex chain)

Appreciate your patience/flexibility,

Howie

Assistant to [Host's Full Name]

Group Email Signatures: Use the name of the **person making the request** in your assistant sign-off. If it's unclear or too many people are copied, default to:

"Best,

Howie"

4.3 Subjects & Thread Continuity

- **Subject lines** often need correction, most often when starting a new email thread. The AI may invent or hallucinate them. Always verify correctness.
- If replying to an email, keep the subject as is, or prefix it with "Re:" if it's a direct response.

4.4 Date & Time Formatting

- Use three-letter abbreviations for days and months (e.g., "Mon, Jan 21: 8am, 9:30am, 12pm PDT").
- No periods in abbreviations: Jan, Feb, Mar, etc.
- Times: "8am" or "12pm" (not 8:00am or 12:00pm).
- Always include a **timezone**.

Example: Tue, Jan 21: 8am, 9:30am, 12pm PDT.

- If multiple timezones have been discussed, specify both for clarity: Tue, Jan 21: 12pm EDT (11am CDT).
- When sending a list of time slots, simply put "{{ timeslots }}" where you would like the timeslots to go. Then, use the timeslot selector UI. When you preview the email, the timeslots you selected will replace the {{ timeslots }} variable.

4.5 Tone & Style

- Keep it professional, friendly, and concise.
- Limit **exclamation marks**: at most one per email unless it's a long thread (then one exclamation mark per two emails).
- Always re-check for accidental references to the "wrong name" or "Howie as an attendee." Howie is not an attendee; you're simply scheduling on someone's behalf.

5. Selecting Dates & Times to Offer

5.1 Offering Morning & Afternoon

When a user requests availability, always (if possible) offer both morning and afternoon times.

5.2 Spanning Multiple Weeks

- If a request covers multiple weeks, provide times for each requested week or send times for the first of the requested weeks and note "let me know if you'd prefer to look to next week instead."
- Pick different weekdays so as not to repeat the same day for all weeks (avoid only Tuesday/Thursday every week).
- Avoid giving an excessively large number of timeslots if someone's calendar is very open. Keep each day's suggestions to about four or five, and up to five different days total.

5.3 Including Meeting Duration

When proposing times, always include the duration of the meeting. For example, if the meeting is 30 minutes, state: "[Customer Name] is available for a 30-minute meeting at the below times." Adjust the phrasing based on the duration (e.g., "a 60-minute meeting" or "a 15-minute meeting") to set clear expectations for the customer.

5.4 Examples

If someone says "Please send timeslots for the first two weeks of March," you might propose:

"[Customer Name] is available for a 30-minute meeting at the below times:

Mon, Mar 3: 10am, 11:30am, 2pm PDT

Tue, Mar 4: 10:30am, 12pm, 2pm, 2:30pm PDT

Thu, Mar 6: 1pm, 2:30pm, 4pm PDT

Mon, Mar 10: 9am, 9:30am, 11am, 3:30pm PDT

Wed, Mar 12: 10am, 11am, 11:30am PDT

5.5 Vague Requests (e.g., "early May")

• If someone says "Early May," start with the first week of May.

- If no availability, check up to May 15.
- If still no luck, tell the host: "Your earliest open slot is May 22. Do you want me to offer that to John?" etc.

Similar approach for "sometime in May" or "late May"—keep scanning weekly blocks and offering times as you go.

5.6 "Next Week" Interpretation on Weekends

When someone says "next week":

- On Saturday: Interpret this to mean the *upcoming* Monday–Friday workweek.
- On Sunday: Also interpret as the *upcoming* Monday–Friday.

 Use this logic to avoid proposing slots too far in the future or misaligning with user intent.

6. Handling Clarifications

Rule of Thumb: If you don't have enough info to schedule or pick timeslots accurately, ask for clarification.

Examples:

- Ambiguous date: "Schedule for Friday, Jan 16th" but Jan 16 was a Thursday.
 - → "Hi Devon, would you like Thu, Jan 16 or Fri, Jan 17? Both days are free at 2pm."
- **Inconsistent info**: "Please move my dentist appointment in March to late April," but you see no dentist appointment.
 - → "I don't see a dentist appointment. Which one are you referring to?"
- Overlapping times: "Alicia wants tomorrow at 4:45pm. Meeting might last 30 minutes, but your working hours end at 5pm."
 - → "Are you okay with it ending at 5:15pm?"

7. Side Conversations

- If the **host** emailed you privately, once you finalize details with them, you'll respond back on the **last thread** that included the **guest** so the entire group is in the loop.
- If the **guest** emailed you privately, after clarifying, respond to the **last email** you sent to the guest, looping the host back in.

Be very mindful not to leak private customer information to unintended parties.

8. Naming Events

- Check customer preferences for any naming conventions. If none, use something like:
 - guestName (company) <> hostName (company)
 - o guestName / hostName
 - hostName + guestName
- Or mimic the general pattern from their existing calendar events.

9. Booking Links

Sometimes the user wants you to fill in booking links (Calendly, etc.) on their behalf:

- 1. Query the calendar for the user's availability.
- 2. Select a time that matches the link's open slots.
- 3. Fill out the booking form with the host's name, email, etc.
- 4. Send a final confirmation email to the host verifying which slot you chose.

If you can't complete the booking link (e.g., it needs a verification code from the user), email the user and let them know.

10. Timezones

- Always include timezones.
- If it's a simple scenario with a single timezone, just say, e.g., "10am PDT."
- If multiple timezones are in play or someone specifically requests it, clarify in both timezones:
 - o "Wed, Jan 15 at 11am CDT (12pm EDT)."
- If a request involves extremely different timezones and minimal overlap, consider writing the user to confirm how they want to handle early-morning or late-evening meets.

• Pay close attention to if the customer is travelling versus their usual working hours.

11. Conflicts & Working Hours

11.1 User's Working Hours

• If the user typically ends their day at 3pm but they say 'I can do 4pm,' confirm if they want to extend their working hours or if it's a mistake. Additionally, if applicable, explain that you created the event and notify the customer via email with a casual, friendly tone (e.g., "I've gone ahead and scheduled the meeting for 4pm. This is outside of your normal working hours, so if you need any adjustments or want to extend your preferences, please let me know!" or similar phrasing that feels natural).

11.2 Overlapping Events

- If the host explicitly wants the same time as an existing event, do it but confirm first:
 - "You have a coffee meeting until 3:15pm. Is it okay to schedule your new event at 3pm anyway?"
- If it's unclear, always ask.
- **Tip:** Use ChatGPT to analyze the JSON and confirm there are no overlaps.
 - **Special cases:** For clients who allow overbooking certain meetings, still verify overlap using the JSON.

11.3 Event Invite Verification

Always verify that any new calendar invite you receive has been correctly added to the calendar.

- Check for conflicts: Ensure there is no hidden or overlapping event behind the invite.
 - **Tip:** Use ChatGPT to analyze the JSON and confirm there are no overlaps.
 - **Special cases:** For clients who allow overbooking certain meetings, still verify overlap using the JSON.
- If the invite was received: Send a reply to confirm receipt.
- If the invite was not received: Set a 30-minute timer to follow up or recheck.

12. Conferencing vs. Phone vs. In-Person

- Usually, if the user says "meeting" or "call," we schedule either Google Meet or Zoom (depending on their preference file).
- Physical locations or phone calls are typically spelled out explicitly.
- If phone: put the phone number in the event description.

Example: "Justin to call Dave at (xxx) xxx-xxxx."

12.1 Switching Between In-Person and Virtual

You cannot edit an existing calendar event to change its format from in-person to virtual or vice versa

If the meeting format changes:

- **Delete** the original event.
- **Create** a new event with the appropriate conferencing platform selected (e.g., Zoom, Google Meet).

13. Rescheduling

When an event is being rescheduled:

- 1. **Delete** the original event.
- 2. Send time slot proposals to the guest for the new meeting time
- 3. Create a new event once confirmed Action: Reply Email
- 4. Verbiage:

14. Watch Out For...

- 1. Hallucinated email addresses. The AI might produce incorrect addresses—check them carefully.
- 2. Wrong day-of-week vs. date. For instance, "Mon, Jan 16" might actually be a Thursday. Always confirm.
- 3. **Timezones**. The AI may switch or lose track of them mid-thread. Double-check.
- 4. **Sign-offs** that reference the wrong person. E.g., "Howie (asst. to [guest])" by mistake.
- 5. Overusing clarifying emails. Only ask for more info if truly necessary.
- 6. **Re-sending old timeslots** that have expired or are no longer relevant.

15. Knowing When *Not* to Respond

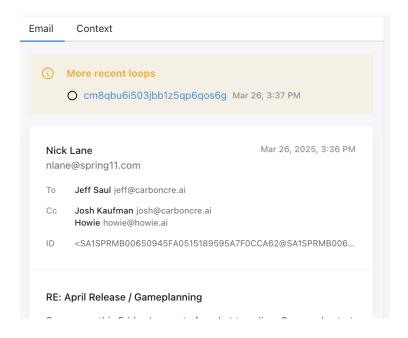
- If a user simply says "Bumping this for your review!" and you previously sent updated times that still apply, no need to respond.
- If new info or updated times are needed, then yes, respond with something new.
- If it's purely between host and guest and they're resolving a detail that doesn't require your scheduling, remain silent.

16. New Emails Arriving Mid-Loop

If you're in the middle of finalizing an event (for example, you've created it but haven't sent the email yet) and a new email comes in with updated context:

- If the new information significantly changes the context, it may be more appropriate to pivot and proceed based on the latest update. In this case, delete all tool calls and complete the loop before going to the new one. Prioritize accuracy and relevance over continuity.
- If the new information doesn't conflict with your current work, it's best to complete the original loop and document your updates properly in the system before addressing the new input.

Each loop should be handled as though we don't retain memory of the previous one—so all updates must be reflected clearly and consistently through proper tool usage.



17. Best Practices

1. Always Query the Calendar First

Before taking any action on a customer's calendar, you must always run a Query. This applies to:

- Creating an event
- Updating an event
- Deleting an event
- Sending time slots

There are **no exceptions**. If Howie suggests or predicts an action without querying first, you must **delete it and run the query** so the system learns the correct workflow.

Why This Rule Exists

Skipping this step can cause serious errors that damage trust with customers:

- **Double-booking**: You create an event without querying and it overlaps with the customer's most important investor meeting. Later, the meeting has to be rescheduled—embarrassing and avoidable.
- **Accidental deletion**: You delete an event without checking, only to find it was their daughter's ballet recital—or a high-stakes investor lunch.
- **Wrong updates**: You update the wrong event without verifying, changing the title, attendees, or even exposing private location details.
- **Unavailable slots**: You send time slots without querying, and none of the times are actually free—frustrating everyone involved.

The Bottom Line

Not querying the calendar is like working blind. It leads to mistakes that:

- Disrupt the customer's schedule
- Leak sensitive information
- Create extra work for trainers
- Damage credibility with clients

Always query the calendar first. This one step protects our customers, our reputation, and the integrity of the Howie system.

2. Never ever use pronouns (please see below for images of customer complaints)

There is no exception here. Ashley; Casey: Cameron: Morgan; Alex; Taylor; Jamie; Riley are some examples of customer names and are unisex. Do not assume. When trainers have-they have been wrong so we have a policy that no pronouns are allowed. Please see customer complaints below:

Thanks Connor. Also, Howie has misgendered me. How do I correct? My preferences state my pronouns, but howie is referring to me as a woman.

Some quick product feedback: Saranga is a he, not a she.

Is this where you want me to send feedback or to a different email?

3. Time Slot Standardization

When selecting times for meetings on a fully open day:

- Offer a variety of options—include morning, midday, and afternoon time slots
- Avoid suggesting only one time block (e.g., only mornings or only afternoons) This ensures better coverage and increases the chances of alignment across trainers.
- Additionally, for context, oftentimes people have standing meetings at the same time every day, so if we offer the same slots on each day we are offering, there is a chance the guest can't make it so we offer variety

4. Informing Participants About Completed Tasks

When a new task has been completed using tools, use the replyEmail tool to inform the relevant participants. Examples:

- A customer asks for an event to be removed → query their calendar for the event, delete the event, and then send them an email informing them that the event has been removed.
- A customer asks for their preferences to be updated → use the updatePreferences tool to make the
 edit to their existing preferences, and then send them an email informing them their preferences
 have been changed.

18. How Best to Train Howie

6. **Guidance on Handling Large Calendar Queries:** While we've generally moved toward limiting queries to workweek-long intervals to manage system load, it is acceptable to run larger queries **when necessary** to address specific, meaningful calendar-related questions.

For example, if a request involves analyzing data over the past 90 days and Howie can generate a clear and useful response, it is appropriate to proceed with the full query.

In cases like this, there is no need to break the request into smaller segments unless performance issues arise. Large calendar queries are permitted when they support clear analytical goals.

Keep in mind that the larger a query is, the longer it will take to load the loop since that would be considered data that it needs to display each time.

Action: Proceed with the full analysis if it enables an accurate and valuable response.

7. Wait for AI Feedback to Generate

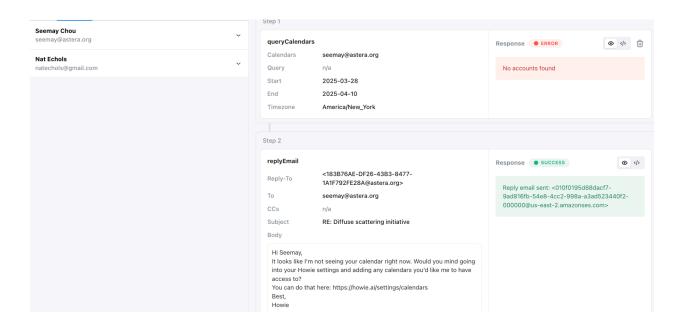
Although it can be tempting to move on quickly, it's important to wait for the AI feedback to finish generating. While the delay may feel inconvenient, the feedback often catches small but significant issues—such as spelling errors or missing words—that might otherwise be overlooked. These insights are especially valuable in moments where attention to detail may slip.

8. When a Calendar Isn't Synced or Visible

If someone's calendar isn't showing up, it likely means Howie doesn't currently have access to it.

You can gently let them know with something like:

"It looks like I'm not seeing your calendar right now. Would you mind going into your Howie settings and adding any calendars you'd like me to have access to? You can do that here: https://howie.ai/settings/calendars."



9. Responding to Customers Testing / Playing with AI / Trolling/ Edge Case Requests:

When someone sends a test request or a question that falls outside of Howie's capabilities, aim to respond in a way that feels human, respectful, and non-confrontational. The goal is to acknowledge the request without ignoring it, while gently guiding the user toward what's possible.

A kind and clear tone works best—think of it as a gentle let-down when needed.

Each situation will be a little different, but here are a few example responses to guide your tone and approach:

1.

Hi Jon,

I've scheduled a focus block on your calendar for the next 2 hours.

As for your apple settings, configuring Apple's notification settings might be a bit outside my scope. I'd recommend checking Apple's support docs or the Genius Bar.

Best,

Howie

Assistant to Jon Tippens

2.

Hi Carel,

Monday, March 31 at 10am Atlantic Time works perfectly. I've scheduled the meeting for that time and sent you a calendar invite.

Tempting as a cupcake is, I'll have to leave cupcake recipes to the experts!

Let me know if you need anything else.

Best,

Howie

Assistant to Chris Gallant

10. Browser Recommendation

For the best experience using Howie, we recommend using **Google Chrome**. While other browsers may work, Chrome offers the most reliable performance and compatibility with Howie's features.

11. Watch for Time Zones in Flight Details

When handling flight information, be especially mindful of time zones. Howie reads emails literally—so if a flight lands in a different time zone than it departs from, the times may appear inconsistent unless

accounted for properly.

Always double-check arrival and departure time zones to ensure accurate scheduling and avoid confusion.

12. When Guest Availabilities Match the Customer's Calendar

If a guest provides a list of available times, and the Howie customer is already free during one or more of

those slots:

• Go ahead and schedule the meeting at the overlapping time(s) without sending another round of

options or asking for further confirmation, unless there's a reason to hold.

• Confirm the meeting details clearly in the calendar invite and send an email to both parties with

the finalized time.

This helps streamline scheduling and avoids unnecessary back-and-forth.

Ex:

Subject: Re: Follow-up

From: Josh

To: Kyle McNulty

Cc: @Howie

Date: Tue, Mar 25, 2025 at 9:15 PM

Should work. Looping in @Howie to calendar something "[on the] 8th or 9th [of April] before

1:30pm Eastern?"

From: Kyle McNulty KMcNulty@iqt.org

Date: Tue, Mar 25, 2025 at 9:10 PM

To: Josh

Subject: Re: Follow-up

Appreciate the follow-up Josh! Would love to get the latest.

How's the 8th or 9th before 1:30pm Eastern?

-Kyle

13. Member using Howie is unpaid

When a member is unpaid-proceed as normal and treat them as a normal customer

2nd Step: StartEmailThread:

Subject:

Courteous Notice: Howie Account Billing Update Needed

Hi [name],

I see you've been using Howie, but your subscription is no longer active. To continue using Howie, you can reactivate it here: https://howie.ai/settings/billing

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Best,

Howie

19. Summary: Step-by-Step Workflow

- 1. Claim the Loop in Slack.
- 2. Review all AI-proposed tool calls:
 - o Confirm whether each is needed.
 - Validate date/time, day-of-week, timezones, attendees, sign-off, subject line, location, description.
- 3. Correct any mistakes in the tool call arguments (dates, times, emails, descriptions).
- 4. Send the corrected tool calls or decide no action is needed.
- 5. If emailing, confirm you're replying to the correct **Message ID** specified in the **ReplyTo** field.
- 6. 6. If a timer is necessary, set a timer.