⟲ ChatGPT

Writing in Soham Parekh's Cold-Email Style: A Replication Playbook

Executive summary

Soham Parekh's cold email works because it is built like a startup "demo" in text: a fast personal hook ("tldr;" + obsessive builder identity), followed by proof (years + credible logos + one concrete metric), followed by scope (dense but skimmable full-stack stack list), and closed with a clear intent (early team, culture, "looking forward"). The defining traits are **velocity, candor, and builder-first specificity**—even when the grammar is imperfect.

To replicate this style across contexts (email, LinkedIn, cover letters, bios), you'll want to preserve the **same sequence of moves** while tightening mechanics: keep the "tldr;" hook, show obsession without sounding unstable, convert the long "stack blast" into **2–4 scannable impact bullets** when needed, and end with a **low-friction ask** shaped to the channel.

Data-backed outreach guidance often argues for shorter messages (e.g., some cold-email analyses recommend ~100 words and ~3–4 sentences for highest reply rates, depending on the dataset and context). [1] Soham's email is longer than those recommendations, so the practical takeaway is: **keep his voice, but adapt his payload density**—especially for busy early-stage founders and hiring leads.

Structural blueprint of the provided email

Macro structure and order

The email is arranged as six functional blocks (in this order):

1. **Subject line**: Uses a reply-style subject ("RE: Engineering at …").
2. **"tldr;" hook block** (high-emotion, identity-first): short, punchy "I…" sentences + one "0 → 1 / 1 → 100" ambition line.
3. **Greeting**: "Hi," (minimal).
4. **Intent + credibility paragraph**: "Really loved…" + asks about openings + "I have 5 years…" + list of companies (with links) + one scaling metric ("thousands…").
5. **Scope paragraph ("stack blast")**: single dense paragraph listing layers (UI / backend / infra) and specific technologies.
6. **Close + sign-off**: desire to join early team + cultural contribution + polite close + "Best," + name.

This matches a widely recommended cold outreach backbone—**why them → why you → what you want**—which appears in job-search guidance and templates from major career sites. [2]

Sentence types, length profile, and pacing

Key measurable patterns (from the provided email text):

- **Total length**: ~280 words (long for "cold," but deliberately front-loaded with a skimmable hook).
- **Sentence count**: 12 sentences total.
- **Sentence length distribution**: several very short sentences early (identity hook), then a few long "resume sentences" in the middle (credibility + stack).
- **Paragraph rhythm**: one short label line ("tldr;"), then one medium paragraph (hook), then two long paragraphs (credibility + scope), then a short close.

The **pacing trick** is that the first 6–8 lines tell the reader exactly who he is *before* the reader invests effort in the technical density. That is the same principle behind "make it easy to take action / reduce cognitive load" advice commonly cited in cold-email research. [1]

Concise structural breakdown you can reuse

Use this as a copyable "skeleton" (keep the order):

- **Label**: `tldr;`
- **Hook (2–6 short sentences)**: identity + obsession + what game you want to play (0→1 / 1→100)
- **Intent (1 sentence)**: why you're writing + what role/team you're targeting
- **Proof (1–2 sentences)**: years + 2–5 credibility anchors + 1 metric
- **Scope (1 paragraph)**: "across the stack" + 3 layers + 6–10 keywords (tools/architectures)
- **Close (1–2 sentences)**: early team + culture + reply prompt
- **Sign-off**: "Best," + name

Tone, voice, and linguistic fingerprint

Formality, confidence, and humility

The voice is **informal-professional**: minimal pleasantries, conversational phrasing, and direct statements ("Really loved… wanted to reach out…"). It is confident but not polished—confidence comes from *content* (logos, systems, tech) more than adjectives.

Humility shows up as **self-deprecating constraint** ("I'm not athletic… can't dance"), but it's strategically used: it frames "building" as the *only* core identity trait. That turns the email into a cultural fit signal for early-stage teams where intensity is valued.

Pronouns and point of view

The email is heavily first-person:

- Many "I …" sentences in the hook and body.
- Very limited "you …" language, except when referencing what the recipient is building.

This is important: the personalization is **not** wordy praise—it's a single anchored line ("what you were building at [Company]") that gives permission for the rest of the email to be about capability.

Verb choices and energy

Common verbs imply motion and building:

- "love," "want," "reach out," "building," "helped scale," "work across," "architecting," "define."

These are **active** and **ownership-oriented** (architecting, scale, define), aligning with resume advice to lead with action verbs and quantify impact when possible. [3]

Rhetorical devices and signature moves

- **"tldr;" as a deliberate preface**: signals speed, engineering culture, and respect for time.
- **List-of-negatives → single-positive**: "I'm not X / not Y / can't Z → Building is the only thing…"
- **0 → 1 / 1 → 100 shorthand**: startup operator vocabulary; compresses ambition without a long speech.
- **Stack compression**: parentheses and "+" signs emulate technical notes rather than marketing copy.
- **No hard sell**: he doesn't oversell "passion"; he performs it through specificity.

Persuasion mechanics: how the email signals impact, credibility, and fit

Impact signaling

He uses one "load-bearing" metric: **scale to thousands of workflows and users**. That single quantitative claim makes the experience feel real, and it aligns with widely repeated job-search advice: quantify outcomes where possible (engagement, cost savings, systems scale, latency, reliability). [3]

Replication rule: use *one* metric that is easy to believe and easy to parse: - "~X DAU," "p95 latency ↓ Y%," "cost ↓ $Z/mo," "throughput ↑," "on-call pages ↓," "pipeline runtime ↓."

Credibility anchoring

He stacks credibility in three ways:

- **Time**: "5 years…"
- **Logos**: multiple recognizable (or at least verifiable) companies, each with a link.
- **Systems language**: "micro-services," "data ingestion pipelines," "production grade," "architecting."

This mirrors a common job cold-email template pattern: quick background → evidence → ask, seen across job-search template libraries. [4]

Cultural fit signaling

He explicitly signals:

- **Early team preference** ("early team," "super lean teams").
- **Agency** ("work across the stack," "architecting the entire platform").
- **Identity alignment** ("Building is the only thing...").
- **Culture contribution** ("define its work and culture").

That last line matters: it reframes him from "candidate asking for a job" into "operator offering founding-team leverage."

The ask and friction level

Notice what he does *not* do:

- No calendar link.
- No explicit "15-minute chat?" question.
- No attached resume mention (in the screenshot).

Instead, the ask is implicit: "any openings... looking forward to hearing from you."

This can work when the reader already has hiring intent, but many job templates recommend a **specific, small request** (e.g., a short call) to reduce ambiguity. ⁵

Best replication: keep Soham's assertive close, but add a **light, concrete next step** when appropriate (especially in follow-ups or LinkedIn).

Formatting, grammar, and visual cues

Layout choices that create "scanability"

- **Very short lead label**: `tldr;` on its own line (acts like a section header).
- **Short paragraph first** (hook), **long paragraphs later** (proof).
- **Inline links** on company names (credibility, but potentially adds clutter).
- **Sign-off minimalism**: "Best," + first name.

This aligns with the idea that cold outreach should be easy to skim and actionable; several public templates emphasize conversational structure and clarity. ⁶

Grammar and punctuation patterns to imitate

Distinctive mechanics in the provided email:

- **Lowercase "tldr;"** (not "TL;DR:")
- **Arrow notation**: `0 -> 1`
- **Dense comma chaining** for lists

- **Parenthetical layer labeling**: `UI (Next.js), Backend (...), ... (AWS + GCP over K8s)`
- **Hyphenated compounds**: "full-stack," "data-driven," "micro-services," "end-to-end"
- **Minimal exclamation**: one close exclamation ("soon!"), not energetic throughout.

Where polishing helps without losing the voice

The original includes a few mechanical issues (e.g., "strongest suites," "I have build," some run-on density). You can preserve the same vibe while improving trust.

A practical rule: **keep the rawness in the hook; keep precision in the proof.** For mid-level engineers, proof precision is what prevents the email from sounding like hype.

Reusable templates in Soham's voice

Below are **six fill-in-the-blank templates** that preserve the style (tldr hook → proof → stack → early-team close), but with cleaner mechanics. Copy/paste and replace bracket fields.

Cold email template

```
Subject: Engineering at [COMPANY] — early team

tldr;

I'm obsessed with building.
I don't really have "hobbies" outside shipping.
I'm happiest when there's a real system to own, break, fix, and scale.
I want to be part of taking something from 0 -> 1 or 1 -> 100.
That's the whole thing.

Hi [NAME/TEAM],

Really loved what you're building at [COMPANY] — especially [SPECIFIC PRODUCT/
TECH DETAIL].
Are you hiring any [ROLE]s for the early engineering team?

I have [X] years building [TYPE OF SYSTEMS] at [COMPANY/PROJECT 1], [COMPANY/
PROJECT 2], and [COMPANY/PROJECT 3].
Most recently, I [IMPACT VERB] [SYSTEM/FEATURE] and took it from [BEFORE STATE]
to [AFTER STATE / METRIC].

I'm strongest on lean teams where I can work across the stack:
UI ([FRONTEND STACK]), backend ([LANGS/FRAMEWORKS]), infra ([CLOUD/DB/QUEUES]).
I've built [2-3 CONCRETE THINGS RELEVANT TO THEM] end-to-end.

If it's useful, I can send a 2-3 bullet outline of how I'd approach [THEIR
PROBLEM] in week one.
```

```
Would love to help define the early engineering bar + culture at [COMPANY].

Best,
[Y_NAME]
[LINKEDIN/GITHUB] | [PHONE optional]
```

LinkedIn message template

```
tldr; I'm a builder looking for early-stage problems.

Hey [NAME] — I've been following [COMPANY/PRODUCT]. The way you're tackling
[SPECIFIC THING] is exactly my kind of work.

I'm a [ROLE] with [X] years across [STACK]. I've shipped [1 IMPACT EXAMPLE +
METRIC] and built [1 RELEVANT SYSTEM] end-to-end.

Are you hiring for [ROLE/TEAM] right now, or is there someone I should speak to?
```

Cover letter paragraph template

```
I'm reaching out because [COMPANY] is clearly building in a direction I care
about: [SPECIFIC MISSION/PRODUCT DETAIL]. I don't have a complicated story here
— I like shipping, owning systems, and scaling them until they're boring and
reliable. Over the last [X] years, I've built across the stack ([FRONTEND],
[BACKEND], [INFRA]) on lean teams, including [PROOF 1] and [PROOF 2]. Most
recently, I [DID THING] that moved [METRIC] from [BEFORE] to [AFTER]. I'd love
to bring that same "heads down, ship, repeat" energy to an early team at
[COMPANY].
```

Short bio template

```
I build full-stack systems on lean teams.

Over [X] years, I've shipped [CATEGORY: data platforms / developer tools /
product surfaces] across UI ([FRONTEND]), backend ([BACKEND]), and infra
([INFRA]).
I like early-stage chaos: 0 -> 1, then 1 -> 100.

Currently: [CURRENT FOCUS]. Previously: [2-3 CREDIBILITY ANCHORS].
```

Follow-up email template

```
Subject: Re: Engineering at [COMPANY]

Hi [NAME] — quick follow-up.

tldr; still very interested in helping build [COMPANY] with an early team.

One relevant datapoint: I recently [DID THING] and got [METRIC], which maps
closely to [THEIR PROBLEM].

If you're hiring, I'd love to chat.
If not, totally fine — who on the team would be the right person for me to
reach?

Best,
[Y_NAME]
```

Job application opener template

```
tldr;

I'm applying because [COMPANY] is building [SPECIFIC THING] and I want to ship
that kind of product.
I'm a [ROLE] with [X] years on lean teams, strongest across the stack.
I've built [SYSTEM 1] and [SYSTEM 2], and I've shipped impact like [METRIC] at
[CONTEXT].
I want a 0 -> 1 / 1 -> 100 problem with real ownership.

[ONE SENTENCE: what role you're applying for + team fit]
```

Practice system and reference library

Micro-exercises with model answers

Each exercise is designed to train one "Soham move." Do them quickly; speed matters.

1) **Write a 4-sentence** `tldr;` **hook that doesn't sound generic.**
Model answer:
"tldr;
I'm at my best when I'm shipping.
I don't want a 'nice' role — I want ownership and real production constraints.
I want to take something from 0 -> 1 or 1 -> 100.
That's the job I'm looking for."

2) **Replace "I'm passionate about technology" with a concrete obsession sentence.**
Model answer:
"I get weirdly happy debugging a production issue at 2am, fixing the root cause, and watching the graphs go flat."

3) **Turn a resume bullet into a Soham-style impact line.**
Input bullet: "Built a data pipeline in Python."
Model answer:
"I built a high-throughput ingestion pipeline in Python that turned messy event streams into reliable tables the product could actually trust."

4) **Compress your stack into a 3-layer parenthetical.**
Model answer:
"UI (Next.js/React), backend (Python/Go, GraphQL/gRPC), infra (AWS, Postgres, K8s)."

5) **Add one believable metric (not vanity).**
Model answer:
"I took p95 latency from ~900ms to ~250ms by fixing caching + query plans."

6) **Write the "Really loved what you were building..." sentence with a real detail.**
Model answer:
"Really loved what you're building at [Company] — the way you're handling [specific workflow / architecture choice] is clean and unusually practical."

7) **Write a low-friction ask that isn't needy.**
Model answer:
"Are you hiring for the early engineering team, or should I reach out to someone else on the product side?"

8) **Rewrite a braggy line into confident-but-grounded.**
Braggy: "I'm an expert and can do anything."
Model answer:
"I'm strongest when I can own a system end-to-end and make it boringly reliable."

9) **Draft a follow-up that adds new value in one sentence.**
Model answer:
"One more relevant thing: I've built [X], and I'd be happy to send a quick 3-bullet plan for how I'd approach [their problem]."

10) **Convert the email into a 280-character LinkedIn note without losing the vibe.**
Model answer:
"tldr; I'm a builder looking for early-stage problems. Loved what you're doing at [Company] with [specific]. I've shipped [thing + metric] across UI/backend/infra on lean teams. Are you hiring for [role], or who's best to speak to?"

Checklist and scoring rubric

Score your draft from **10 to 100** (add each category). Use this to self-edit.

Hook and identity (0–15)
Does the first block communicate a real builder identity in 2–6 short sentences?

Specificity to company (0–15)
Do you reference one concrete thing they built/shipped/said (not generic praise)?

Credibility anchors (0–20)
Do you include years + 1–3 proof points + 1 metric that is believable?

Scope clarity (0–15)
Can a reader skim and understand your stack + what you actually built?

Tone integrity (0–10)
Does it feel candid and confident, not overly formal, not "salesy"?

Ask quality (0–15)
Is the ask clear, low-friction, and appropriate to the channel?

Mechanics and trust (0–10)
No confusing run-ons, typos in core claims, or vague "worked on" language?

Interpretation: - **90–100**: distinctive, skimmable, founder-readable.
- **75–89**: strong; could tighten proof or the ask.
- **60–74**: generic or too long; hook/proof not sharp enough.
- **<60**: reads like a standard cover letter; restart from the `tldr;` block.

Common mistakes to avoid with suggested edits

Mistake: "tldr;" becomes edgy-but-empty.
Suggested edit: keep edge, add one specific: "I'm happiest owning production systems that users depend on."

Mistake: Self-deprecation signals insecurity, not focus.
Suggested edit: limit it to 1–2 lines, then pivot to competence + proof.

Mistake: The "stack blast" is unreadable.
Suggested edit: collapse to three layers + 2 projects + 1 metric.

Mistake: No clear next step (recipient doesn't know how to respond).
Suggested edit: add a small ask: "Are you hiring / who should I speak to / open to 10 minutes?"

Mistake: Overclaiming or vague bragging ("architected everything").
Suggested edit: name the system boundary: "owned the ingestion service + schema layer," then quantify.

Original vs improved lines

Original line (from the provided email)	Improved / alternative line (same voice, clearer)
"tldr;"	"tldr; (I'll keep this tight.)"
"I love everything about what [Company] is doing."	"I love what you're building at [Company], especially [specific feature / decision]."
"I don't have many hobbies outside coding."	"Outside work, I mostly build. That's genuinely how I recharge."
"Building is the only thing I am good at."	"Building is what I'm consistently good at: shipping systems that survive real usage."
"I want to be a part of taking something from 0 -> 1 or 1 -> 100."	"I'm looking for a 0 -> 1 (or 1 -> 100) problem with real ownership."
"wanted to reach out to see if there were any openings..."	"Are you hiring for [role] on the early engineering team?"
"I helped scale internal micro-services to thousands of workflows and users."	"I scaled [system] to support [metric] (workflows/ users), while keeping [reliability/latency] sane."
"one of my strongest suites has been ability to work across the stack"	"My strongest trait: I can work across the stack and still be accountable for outcomes."
"Looking forward to hearing from you soon!"	"If you're hiring, I'd love to talk. If not, who's the right person to reach?"

Writing process flowchart

```
flowchart TD
  A[Pick target company + team] --> B[Find one specific hook]
  B --> C[Write tldr; identity block (2–6 short sentences)]
  C --> D[Write intent line: role + early team]
  D --> E[Add proof: years + 1 metric + 2–3 anchors]
  E --> F[Add scope: 3-layer stack + 2 concrete builds]
  F --> G[Choose ask: hiring? 10 min? right person?]
  G --> H[Trim for scanability + fix trust-breaking typos]
  H --> I[Send + schedule follow-ups]
```

Sample "layout mockups" you can imitate

Soham-classic email layout

```
Subject: Engineering at [Company]

tldr;
```

```
[Short identity burst. 2-6 sentences.]
[0 -> 1 / 1 -> 100 line.]

Hi [Name],

[Intent + why them + role ask. 1-2 sentences.]
[Proof paragraph: years + credibility + 1 metric.]

[Scope paragraph: across-stack + 3 layers + 2 concrete builds.]

[Close: early team + culture + next step.]

Best,
[Name]
```

Soham-style LinkedIn layout

```
tldr; I build and I want early-stage problems.

[1 line: specific hook about their product]
[1 line: proof + metric]
[1 line: ask]
```

Five public cold-email examples to study alongside Soham's

These are useful as "contrast classes" to keep Soham's voice but adjust structure per context:

- Nick Singh [7] shares multiple cold email templates (including follow-up sequences) that he reports helped generate interviews. [8]
- Business Insider [9] published a cold reach-out template used by a software engineer to network into roles, emphasizing brevity and quantified impact. [3]
- Resume Worded [10] provides "word-for-word" templates for reaching hiring managers after applying, with clear scheduling language. [11]
- The Muse [12] offers recruiter email templates designed to be strategic and conversational, including a cold "no specific job" outreach template. [13]
- Colin Keeley [14] compiles real cold emails that led to startup opportunities, including a long-form example email to Foursquare [15] founders. [16]

Links (URLs in plain text):

```
https://www.nicksingh.com/posts/cold-email-tips-to-land-your-dream-job-with-
examples
https://www.businessinsider.com/google-software-engineer-resume-cold-reach-out-
template-networking-2025-2
```

```
https://resumeworded.com/networking-email-templates/follow-up-email-templates/
sample-email-to-hiring-manager-after-applying
https://www.themuse.com/advice/how-to-email-a-recruiter
https://www.colinkeeley.com/blog/cold-email-your-way-into-an-internshipjob-at-
any-startup
```

A practical note on length when adapting Soham's style

Cold-email datasets and tools sometimes recommend shorter messages (e.g., some analyses claim the highest reply rates happen around ≤100 words and ~3–4 sentences, while others argue for "concise, not necessarily short"). [17]

So, for mid-level software engineers targeting early-stage roles: keep Soham's **hook** and **builder voice**, but consider producing **two versions**: - **Founder skim version** (≈90–140 words): hook + 1 metric + 1 project + ask. - **Full detail version** (≈180–280 words): only if you truly need the stack depth to be legible.

If you do nothing else: make your first 6 lines slam-dunk readable on a phone screen. [18]

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[1] [9] [15] [17] Does cold email even work any more? Here's what the data says - Gong
https://www.gong.io/blog/does-cold-email-even-work-any-more-heres-what-the-data-says

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[3] Google Software Engineer Shares His Résumé, Reach-Out Template - Business Insider
https://www.businessinsider.com/google-software-engineer-resume-cold-reach-out-template-networking-2025-2

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[16] Cold Email Your Way Into an Internship/Job at Any Startup · Colin Keeley
https://www.colinkeeley.com/blog/cold-email-your-way-into-an-internshipjob-at-any-startup