

Email Etiquette



Top Ten

1. SUBJECT: Field

This is a very important piece to your email. Make sure it clearly reflects the content of your mail message and never leave it blank. By having a good Subject Line, you insure your email will be opened.

2. Level of Formality\Structure\Accuracy

Keep your email relatively formal in your business environment. Always check spelling, punctuation, etc. by rereading each message before sending. Analyze for tone and pertinent information and correct grammar. Get to the point and keep it simple. And never use texting lingo in a business email. Texting is texting and email is email.

3. Reply\Reply All\Forward

Know the use of Reply versus Reply All. Use Reply All minimally. Only use it when All the original recipients need to know your response. Private conversations do not need to be publicized. I don't have to know why you aren't going to be at the meeting only the coordinator does. No one wants to get a message with a subject line of "FW:FW:FW:FW:" and a lengthy joke attached or the latest cure for the common cold. Keep these type emails to personal email only and even only then if you know the receiver is okay with such. They cause extra time for email users to delete and take up valuable space on email servers.

4. To:, Bcc, Cc fields can mean a successful communication or a major faux pas.

In the To: This is reserved for those folks that need to take action on your message or are directly affected.

Bcc: Use this for mail to those who may not want their email known by the whole group or any time privacy is a necessity. It is especially appropriate to use this any type of lengthy distribution list.

Cc: This is fine for those who just need and FYI to stay in the loop on a conversation. Also as long as they are all known by the other recipients, then privacy is not an issue as for the Bcc option.

5. Formatting

Limit formatting to a minimum. This includes ALL CAPS (no one needs to be screamed at), fluffy wallpaper, smiley faces, etc... Those are fine for personal email, but maybe not business. Bottom line, know your audience. Formatting can often give the wrong impression and tone. Plus the more formatting, you leave your message open to being blocked by other email servers.

6. Attachments

Add your attachment first to avoid the following Oops email because you forgot it. Also keep the attachments smaller. Some email servers have restrictions as to size and type. Ours is 20mb. Use zip files when sending large messages and of file formats that are often blocked (i.e. .mdb, .accdb, .exe, .com, .vbs, .scr and others). Only send attachments when necessary. We can often just refer to a file on a common server location, website, etc.

7. Using Previous E-mail for New Correspondence

Only use your previous emails for correspondence that is related to the same conversation. Otherwise you look lazy and potentially leave the recipient totally confused.

8. Know When to End the Conversation and When to Start a Conversation (by phone)

Avoid millions of one line Thank you's! and That's Great! Also, if your emails are going to take more than 3-4 exchanges you need to pick up the phone or visit the person. We still have phones and its okay to use them.

9. Common Courtesy

Always include a salutation and closing line, just as you would in a formal letter. By doing this you show a common courtesy to your recipient and limit possible misreads of tone and expression.

10. Signature files

Signatures should be no more than 5-6 lines. Use basic contact information, such as name, company, address, phone, and website link. Leave catchy favorite quotes for your personal email account.

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