

E-Mail Etiquette

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Do certain emails make you cringe? As with all forms of human communication, there are rules of etiquette. Here are the 5 most common blunders and the 11 gold-stars of email etiquette.

Don't Use the CC Line for Mass Mailings: CC broadcasts all recipients' addresses to everyone... and any crook who is trolling the Internet. Most people want their e-address isolated to family, friends, and relevant businesses. Using BCC hides these addresses.

Avoid Hitting "Reply All" instead of "Reply": Useful when you want all recipients to receive your reply, but when unintentionally activated, it may cause you trouble.

Don't Assume Privacy and Confidentiality in Email: Anything that you write in email can be shared with anyone and may be admissible in a court of law. Use care when writing messages.

Don't Send an Email When You Are Angry: Take time to calm down, think about your reaction, and reply in a more objective manner. This patience will reward you in the end!

Avoid Writing Around the Point: Be as precise in your text as you can. Verbose writing can confuse recipients and may fail to get your point across.

Write a Descriptive Subject: Inboxes may overflow. Use your Subject line to describe its purpose, then the recipient will know why your email should be a priority.

Avoid All CAPS: Universally, this typeface translates to shouting. It also may cause a spam filter to isolate your message.

Watch the Exclamation Points: These marks are another spam filter trigger. Use them judiciously and avoid using more than one to end a sentence. Overkill!!!

Keep It Simple: Ideally email is brief and quick to get to the point. With complex content, consider creating a separate document and attaching it to the email.

Ask Before Sending Attachments: Notorious for hiding malicious software, attachments induce fear in recipients. Give the recipient a "heads up" before sending an attachment.

Use Auto-Responder Infrequently: The content is pointless, except in the working world. The trouble begins when such notices let crooks know that they've reached a valid e-address.

Use Professional-Sounding Greetings and Sign-Offs: Don't begin and end professional emails with casual remarks like "Hey" or "Yo" or "See ya." "Hello" or "Hi" and "Best" are usually fine. For formal business, "Dear" and "Sincerely" are proper. Keep it classy.

Don't Pester with Follow-Ups: Avoid sending lots of follow-up emails. Instead consider making a phone call. After a few tries for a response, assume the recipient isn't interested.

Be Careful What You Forward: Don't forward sensitive or confidential emails. If you have any doubt about sharing, ask permission before forwarding the email.

Proofread: A Grammarly.com poll showed that 67% of responders indicated that typos in work emails are a no-no. Proofread thoroughly before you hit Send. No one ever regretted spending a little extra time polishing their writing.

Use Humor with Caution: A bit of humor can liven up email. However, your wit could be lost in translation. Save the humor for people you know well.

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