



Email Etiquette

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For many people email is now the standard way of communicating within an organization. However, day-to-day email messages can cause communication problems with their unguarded comments, thoughtless turns of phrase and careless wording. Care must be taken both when sending an email message and, perhaps more importantly, when reading it. The following tips should help you avoid some of the most common email pitfalls:

Good Email Etiquette

Do check to see what your organization's email policy is. Many organizations have rules about the types of message that can be sent and also if your email is monitored or screened.

Do try to think about the message content before you send it out.

Do make sure that the content is relevant to the recipients. Nobody likes to receive junk email.

Do be polite. Terseness can be misinterpreted.

Do try to use humor and irony sparingly. You can use smileys such as :) or :(to indicate facial expressions, but make sure that the recipient understands what they mean.

Do ensure that you have a relevant "subject" line.

Do try to quote from the original message where relevant. You can break the quoted message down into paragraphs and comment on them individually to make it clearer.

Do include a brief signature on your email messages to help the recipient understand who it is from, especially if you are dealing with someone you do not know very well.

Do be careful when replying to mailing list messages, or to messages sent to many recipients. Are you sure you want to reply to the whole list?

Do remember to delete anything that isn't needed or is trivial.

Do remember to tell people the format of any attachments you send if they're anything other than basic Microsoft Office file types.

Do tell your correspondent if you forward a message to somebody else to deal with, so they know who to expect a reply from.

Do use emphasis where its useful to do so. If your email system doesn't allow bold or italics then a common convention is to use a *star* either side of the word you want to stress.

Bad Email Etiquette

Don't reply to an email message when angry; you may regret it later. Once the message has been sent, you will not be able to recover it.

Don't keep mail on your server longer than necessary, especially large attachments.

Don't copy out an entire, long message just to add a line or two of text such as "I agree".

Don't type in CAPITALS as this is considered to be SHOUTING. This is one of the rudest things you can do.

Don't over-use punctuation such as exclamation marks ("!") as these are meant to be for emphasis. In particular avoid more than one exclamation mark ("!!!"), especially if your email is quite formal. Also, over-use of the full-stop (e.g. "...") can make a message difficult to read.

Don't send large attachments without checking with the recipient first.

Don't send excessive multiple postings to people who have no interest. This is known as "spamming" and is considered to be ignorant, and may lead to serious trouble with your Internet Service Provider (ISP) or IT department.

Don't conduct arguments in public, for example on a mailing list.

Don't make personal remarks about third parties. Email messages can come back to haunt you.

Don't send unsuitable email or attachments, especially anything of a sexual nature as they may well be found by a third party later.

Don't use an over-elaborate signature on your email message. Never, ever, use scanned images in a signature as these tend to be very large.

Don't mark things as urgent if they aren't, because then when you really do have an urgent message it may not be treated in the way it deserves.

Don't post your email address on web sites and other public parts of the Internet unless you want to be deluged with spam.

Remember, email is surprisingly permanent!

Source: <http://www.dynamoo.com>

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