EMAIL ETIQUETTE

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Overview:

After completing this self-guided course: participant will understand the role of email in the workplace.

Desired Outcomes: Participants will feel confident: creating professional emails for various business needs

What is email etiquette?

Email etiquette refers to the code of conduct that guides behavior when writing or responding to emails. These principles of behavior can be modified to suit the intended audience and purpose and are meant to project professionalism and respect. You may have heard, "Don't sweat the small stuff." That might be true in some aspects of life -- but over email, sweating the small stuff is exactly what you should be doing when writing an email.

Why do we need email etiquette?

Research shows making errors seriously impacts how people see you. In one study, participants who read an email with grammatical errors thought the writer was less conscientious, intelligent, and trustworthy than those who read the same email without errors.

Why is email etiquette important?

Email etiquette makes the world go 'round. As an emerging professional, you need to figure out how to manage your email. Because it's not just for sharing internal memos.

About 28% of your day will be spent reading, thinking about, or replying to emails. While there are lots of other popular tools for internal and external collaboration, email is still

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the gold standard, and will no doubt be irreplaceable for your boss, clients, team mates, vendors, and other professional contacts.

So, let's get started, email etiquette 101.

It's sink or swim.

Rise or fall.

Make or break…you need to get this right!

The way you communicate reflects the type of employee you are, including your work ethic and attention to detail. Companies may benefit from implementing best practices for email etiquette for the following reasons:

- **Professionalism:** Using proper email etiquette conveys a professional image of your employees and overall organization.

- **Efficiency:** Emails that adhere to etiquette are direct and concise, and they convey their message quickly.

Email Guidelines:

Email etiquette guidelines dictate what's appropriate and what's not when you're sending a message to a prospect, business partner, coworker, manager, or acquaintance. They help you avoid miscommunications and mistakes.

- Draft a clear, simple subject line.
- Use a standard font.
- Address your recipient formally.
- Use carbon copy and blind carbon copy appropriately.
- Structure your message clearly.
- Provide a call to action at the end.
- Include a professional closing.
- Proofread your email carefully.

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Use standard formatting

Standard fonts, such as Times New Roman or Arial, as well as standard colors and sizes are appropriate for business emails. If you use bold or italics, never use them on more than one word or a string of words in a single email.

If you're copying and pasting text, make sure you clear the formatting before sending the email, as it could appear different than the rest of your text. To clear formatting, you can use "Command + \" on a Mac or "Ctrl + Shift + N" on a PC.

Include a clear subject line

Title your email in a way that the recipient immediately knows what the message is about. For example, if you're emailing to follow up on a presentation, you might write, "*Quick question about your presentation.*"

Email from a professional email address

Use your company email address if possible. However, if you are self-employed or using a personal email address for work-related correspondence, make sure that your email address doesn't contain any words that would be considered unprofessional. If so, then consider setting up a work-only email address.

Use professional greetings

Choose a salutation that is appropriate for the relationship you have with the recipient. If you are sending an email to a co-worker, a casual greeting such as "Hello" may be appropriate. If you're contacting someone for the first time or if they are a professional acquaintance, use a more formal greeting like "*Dear Sarah Atkins.*" It's recommended to use the person's name exactly as it's shown in their email signature line. In other words, don't assume that Jennifer goes by Jen unless you've seen them sign their emails that way.

Use an introduction

Depending on who you are emailing, it's best to introduce yourself by your first and last name, as well as the company you are representing, in the first few lines. This is especially important when emailing new contacts, clients, potential customers, or employers. Let them know how you received their contact information.

Example: *"My name is Angela Whitney and I'm with White Label Agency. David Groves gave me your name and suggested I reach out to you regarding your amazing printing services."*

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Be cautious with "Reply All"

The benefit of using "Reply all" is that you can respond to everyone at once to let them know an issue has been addressed. However, when in doubt, use "Reply" to avoid inundating a list of people with unnecessary emails.

Avoid using all caps

Use sentence case as you would for any formal communication and avoid using all caps as it can read like you're screaming your intentions.

Example: *"Sarah, it was great seeing you at the meeting. I look forward to connecting again soon."*

Double-check attachments

If you can copy and paste information into an email rather than attaching a document, do that. If not, let the recipient know in the body of your email that you have attached a document. It's also good etiquette to compress the documents or attach them in a zip file so it takes up less space in their inbox. In addition, you may want to consider uploading documents to a shared location and giving the recipient a link to access them.

And finally, pasting a lengthy URL into your email can look messy and take up valuable space. Use a link shortener to shorten the link or hyperlink text within the email.

Proofread Proofread Proofread!

Video Clip from Modern Family https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lN-WMu10myQ

Proper spelling and grammar are important when sending business correspondence so always proofread your work before you hit send. Likewise, double-check the spelling of the recipient's name and email address. Sometimes autocorrect will alter names.

Do not use emojis

Unless the recipient has used emojis when communicating with you in the past, resist the temptation to use them yourself. They can come across as unprofessional in certain company cultures.

Reply within 24 hours

When someone emails you, replying within 24 hours, is common courtesy. If you have unintentionally passed this timeframe, express your apologies, and politely explain the delay.

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Keep your tone professional

Think carefully about your word choices in an email and how your intention may be interpreted. Use positive words, such as "opportunities" and "challenges" instead of "obstacles" and "limitations." Avoid negativity, sarcasm and adjectives that can cause you to sound overly emotional. Be careful when using humor too, as it can be misinterpreted.

Be Careful with Humor

Not everyone sees humor the same way. What you think may be funny may not be funny to someone else. In a professional email, avoid humor unless you are sure the recipient will appreciate it. A good rule of thumb: When in doubt, leave it out.

Know the difference between:

- There/they're/their

- Its/it's

- Effect/affect

- Your/you're

- Too/two/to

- Loose/lose

- I/me/myself

Pro tip: Do you ever wish you could have an editor reading over your shoulder? You can -- kind of. **Grammarly** is a free tool that scans everything you write for grammar and spelling mistakes. Not only will it catch issues in real time, but it'll also send you a weekly report highlighting common trends.

Resist emojis in email

I understand the urge to add a smiley face to a potentially harsh sentence or cap off a joke with a laughing emoji.

Leave the right impression with your email sign-off

The right sign-off will complement the tone and content of your email. Since it's the last thing your recipient reads, this line influences their lasting impression.

If your tone is lighthearted, end with a warm sign-off.

Informal signoffs:

- Thanks

- Thanks again

- Best

- Cheers

- Happy [day of the week]

- Enjoy the weekend

- Talk soon

- Talk to you [tomorrow, on Wednesday, when you get back]

- Looking forward to working together

- Looking forward to our next conversation

- Excited to hear your thoughts

If your tone is more reserved, your sign-off should be as well.

Formal signoffs:

- Thank you

- Thank you for your time

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- Have a wonderful [day, weekend]

And here are the closing lines to avoid:

- **Sincerely:** Too outdated

- **Regards:** Too unfriendly

- **Kind regards:** Too unnatural

- **Warmly:** Too relaxed

- **Respectfully:** Too random

- **Xoxo:** Too intimate

- **Cordially:** Too stilted

- **- [Your name]:** Too abrupt

Perfect your email signature

Less is generally more where email signatures are concerned. Your signature should typically include only your name, job title, company website and a phone number where you can be reached.

[logo]Jane Richards
Graphic Designer
Janet Designs, LLC
p: (717)-777-7777
w: janetdesigns.com

Call to action

Your call to action may be a single line of text with a clickable link or a graphic element below your contact information.

[photo]Janet Daniels
Graphic Designer
Janet Designs, LLC
p: (717)-777-7777
w: janetdesigns.com
50% off business card designs click here

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Standard with linked social media

The social media icons can appear in any location. Some choose the end of the contact information; others choose to place them under their name and job title.

Janet Daniels
Graphic Designer
Janet Designs, LLC
p: (717)-777-7777
w: janetdesigns.com
[social icon] [social icon] [social icon]

Sent from a mobile device

While you're away from your desk, answering emails on your phone may become necessary. Emails sent on mobile devices usually contain more brevity and typos. Sending an email signature is possible but using an auto-generated 'sent from my mobile phone' helps maintain your professional credibility.

Mobile phone signature example:

Sent from my mobile device

M: (212) 222-3232

Use Bcc appropriately

> Bcc stands for blind carbon copy, which is like Cc except that the email recipients specified in the Bcc field do not appear in the header or to the recipients in the To or Cc fields. Using Bcc is good etiquette if you want to protect someone's email address from being exposed to others. For example, if you are emailing a group of subcontractors about a change in policy or procedure, it's considerate to Bcc everyone on the list. It's also a good idea to use if you're sending a weekly newsletter to clients who don't know each other and who would wish to keep their addresses private.

Think before forwarding

A best practice for forwarding is to summarize what's being discussed so the recipient quickly knows what you need from them. It's also important to keep in mind that some emails are not intended to be forwarded and may contain private or sensitive information. Use caution when forwarding.

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Set informative out-of-office replies

If you plan to be out of the office for an extended period of time, set up an automated out-of-office reply to let people know you won't be able to respond to their emails until a specific date. Include a contact name if there is an urgent matter. Include "Out of Office" and the date in the subject line so recipients can quickly recognize that they've received an automated response. It's also helpful to include the first line in the message as: "*This is an automated message while I am out of the office.*"

Why is an out of office message important?

Out of office messages are significant if you know you will not be able to respond to emails for a period of time. They tell your contacts why your response will be delayed and how to get the information or services they need while you are away.

Coworkers, clients, and subscribers typically expect fast responses and solutions to their problems, particularly from people working in customer service, marketing, and communications jobs. Out of office messages provide them with a polite, concise, and professional explanation as to why you cannot respond right away. You can provide an OOO message if you are gone for one day, one week or several months. Reasons you might set up an out of office message include:

- Going on vacation
- Going to a conference, workshop, or professional meeting
- Being on maternity or sick leave or a sabbatical
- Taking a personal day
- Going to an appointment

Out of office messages might include information like:

- Why you are gone
- How long you will be gone
- The date you will return
- Who to contact in an emergency or for immediate help

You might provide more details depending on your job duties and the information you think your contacts need while you are away. Most professional email programs allow you to set two OOO messages at once—one for internal colleagues and one for external business contacts.

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Email greeting examples

Here are several examples of greetings you can choose from to start your email. As discussed in the tips above, be sure to select a greeting that applies to your audience and reason for writing:

When writing to one or two recipients:

- Dear [Name],
- Dear [Name] and [Name],
- Hello [Name],
- Hi [Name],
- [Name],

When writing to three or more recipients:

- Hello everyone,
- [Group or team name],
- Hi team,
- Hello all,
- Hi there,
- Good morning,
- Good afternoon,
- Good evening,

When you are unsure of the recipient's name:

- Dear Sir,
- Dear Madam,
- Dear Sir or Madam,
- Hi,
- Hello,
- Dear Hiring Manager,
- Greetings,

How to begin an email

Spell any names you use correctly. Misspelling the name of your recipient can make them feel disrespected—if you haven't taken the time to learn their name, they are unlikely to trust you've paid attention to other important details. To ensure your entire email is read with care and to build relationships with your recipients, be sure to spell their name correctly. If you have been emailing back and forth with them, their name is likely already in their email and/or signature. If not, do a bit of research to ensure you've got their name right.

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Keep it professional. It might be tempting to seem friendly or excited in an email greeting by using a fun greeting, smiley face or exclamation points. Keep in mind that it's always best to err on the side of professional and minimal.

Know your audience. You should tailor your greeting to your audience. If you know the recipient(s) well, it can be appropriate to use a more laid-back greeting. Your greeting can also change if you are addressing a single person, a few people, or many people. Make sure your greeting matches the people you're writing to.

Ways to start an email with examples

Here are examples of ways you might start an email in various scenarios applying the tips and methods above.

When applying for a job:

"Dear Jeanine,

I hope this finds you well. I'm writing in response to your job posting for the Reception Associate position…"

After completing an interview:

"Hello Javier,

Thank you again for taking the time to meet with me about the Accounting Manager position today. I'm following up with the additional information you requested regarding my portfolio…"

When setting up a meeting:

"Greetings team,

I'm reaching out to set up a meeting about the upcoming project…"

When introducing new team members:

"Kelley,

Hello! I'm writing to introduce you to the newest member of our HR team, Helen Farber…"

When accepting a job offer:

"Hi there Kiran,

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Thank you so much for getting back to me. I'm excited to learn about the offer…"

Writing emails is an important part of any job. Be sure to take some time to consider your audience and exactly why you are writing. Doing so can help you construct a clear communication that builds relationships and moves projects forward. Starting your email in a professional manner can create a positive first impression.

What is the golden rule of email etiquette?

This example further illustrates why the golden rule is the golden rule – never send an email that you're not completely comfortable with because you never know where that email might surface or how it might be received.

*Some of the sources used: Indeed, Nancy Schnoebelen Imbs is an empowering professional development consultant, dynamic motivational speaker, and author, "23 Rules of Email Etiquette to Make a Perfect Impression on Anyone" Written by Aja Frost @ajavuu.

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