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How to write emails like a boss
(according to an award-winning
author):

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Kabir Sehgal is a bestselling author, US Navy Veteran, Fortune 500 leader, and Grammy Award winning producer.

It's fair to say he knows a thing or two about effective communication.

Here's his advice for writing emails with military precision that people respect you for:



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1. Subject Line

Everyone knows that the subject line makes or breaks the success of an email.

It applies to cold emails sent in bulk or military generals giving orders to troops on the ground.

By using keywords in their subject lines, the military excels:



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SIGN – Requires a signature

DECISION – Requires a decision

COORD – Coordination by or with the recipient

REQUEST – Asks for permission or approval

ACTION – A requirement for the recipient to take some action

INFO – For information only, and no response or action required



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Consider using these keywords in all caps in your next email.

Consider writing the following as the subject of your weekly report to your boss:

INFO - Weekly Report

Your email will stand out in their inbox, and the message will be clearly understood.



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2. Brevity

The military knows that shorter emails are better.

A message should use as few words as possible while conveying the message accurately.

They do this by trying to fit every email into one pane.

This prevents the recipient from scrolling.



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Furthermore, they write everything in an active voice rather than a passive one.

The Air Force manual says, “Besides lengthening and twisting sentences, passive verbs often muddy them.”

Passive:

The tank was shot by an A-10.

Active:

The A-10 shot the tank.



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To change the passive to active voice, follow these steps:

1. Determine who is acting in the sentence.
2. Restructure the sentence so that the performer is the focus, clearly performing the verb upon the sentence's direct object.

This will make your email clear and economical.



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3. BLUF

In the military, the bottom line is written right at the beginning of an email.

This is known as Bottom Line Up Front (BLUF).

This gives your readers a preview of the Reader's Digest version of your email before they open it.



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A BLUF distills vital information into one or two sentences, so there's no confusion about what's being said or requested.

Example:

BLUF: "I need you to approve the content of the attached mission plan by noon on August 10."



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For your purposes, people won't understand BLUF, and it's not worth explaining it.

Unless you're responsible for the company's email etiquette, you won't change how people communicate.

But you can start your emails with a "Bottom Line" summary to improve your communication.



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TL;DR —

Write in an active voice.

Use subject line keywords.

State your bottom line up front.

Your emails will be easier to read, understand, and respond to if you follow these steps.

Apply it today, and you'll reap the benefits of consistently clear communication.



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That's a wrap!

What else would you add? Let us know in the comments.

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