

## **Email Netiquette**

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### **Be concise and to the point.**

Do not make an email longer than it needs to be. Remember that reading an email is harder than reading printed communications and a long email can be discouraging to read.

Include addresses in the To: field for those who you would like a response from. Include addresses in the Cc: field for those who you are just FYI'ing.

### **Be nice.**

Make sure your email includes a courteous greeting and closing. Be friendly. Use the person's name in the greeting. Say thank you, how are you? or I appreciate your help! Emails can be forwarded. Don't put something in the email that you wouldn't want someone else to read.

If you write an email that is emotionally charged, walk away from the computer and wait to reply. Save the email as a draft and look at it the next day and make changes before sending it. Think of your email as though it was on your business letterhead and you'll never go wrong.

### **Answer all questions, and pre-empt further questions.**

An email reply must answer all questions, and pre-empt further questions - If you do not answer all the questions in the original email, you will receive further emails regarding the unanswered questions, which will not only waste your time and your co-worker's time but also cause considerable frustration.

### **Use proper spelling, grammar & punctuation.**

This is not only important because improper spelling, grammar and punctuation give a bad impression of your company, it is also important for conveying the message properly. Emails with no full sentences or commas are difficult to read and can sometimes even change the meaning of the text. And, spell check.

### **Answer swiftly.**

People send an email because they wish to receive a response. Therefore, each email should be replied to within at least 24 hours, and preferably within the same working day. *If the email is complicated, just send an email back saying that you have received it and that you will get back to them.* This will put the person's mind at rest and usually people will be more patient.

### **Do not write in CAPITALS.**

IF YOU WRITE IN CAPITALS IT SEEMS AS IF YOU ARE SHOUTING. This can be highly annoying and might trigger an unwanted response in the form of a flame mail.

Therefore, try not to send any email text in capitals.

### **Use the subject field.**

Be sure the subject field accurately reflects the content of your email. Feel free to modify the Subject: field to more accurately reflect a conversation's direction. Not including a subject can get your email flagged as spam.

### **Don't leave out the message thread.**

When you reply to an email, you must include the original mail in your reply, in other words click 'Reply', instead of 'New Mail'. Some remove the previous message since this has already been sent and is therefore unnecessary. However, if you receive many emails you obviously cannot remember each individual email. This means that a 'threadless email' will not provide enough information and you will have to spend a frustratingly long time to find out the context of the email in order to deal with it. Leaving the thread might take a fraction longer in download time, but it will save the recipient much more time and frustration in looking for the related emails in their inbox!

### **Read the email before you send it.**

A lot of people don't bother to read an email before they send it out, as can be seen from the many spelling and grammar mistakes contained in emails. Apart from this, reading your email through the eyes of the recipient will help you send a more effective message and avoid misunderstandings and inappropriate comments.

### **Use active instead of passive.**

Try to use the active voice of a verb wherever possible. For instance, 'I will take a look at your report today', sounds better than 'Your report will be reviewed today'. The first sounds more personal, whereas the latter, especially when used frequently, sounds unnecessarily formal.

Avoid using "Perhaps you should consider...." as a way to point out something that is obvious to you. When it is read it can be interpreted as "Hey you idiot, didn't you know this is how it is?"

### **Don't reply to spam.**

By replying to spam or by unsubscribing, you are confirming that your email address is 'live'. Confirming this will only generate even more spam. Therefore, just hit the delete button or use email software to remove spam automatically.