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10 TIPS FOR E-MAIL ETIQUETTE

By Tim North

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E-mail is frequently written quickly and often poorly. The tips that follow should help you to write e-mail that will be well received every time.

1. Pay attention to punctuation, spelling, grammar and capitals.

how ofen do yoo receive e-mail ritten like this!!!!

Many e-mail messages contain poor spelling and grammar, incorrect use of capital letters and/or poor punctuation. Such messages looks amateurish and inevitably produce a poor impression of the sender.

2. Read the previous tip again.

Seriously. I can't overstate just how important it is to write well. The standard of contemporary writing is quite poor — both on the Internet and in general use. It's easy to find errors in most written sources. Stand out from the crowd. Write well.

3. Your subject line should be descriptive.

Many people get dozens (or even hundreds) of e-mail messages per day, and with so much of it being spam (i.e. unsolicited sales messages), your message may be deleted unread if the subject line makes it look unimportant or spamish.

Another reason to make your subject clear is to help the

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recipient find it later. Many people archive months — or even years — worth of e-mail. A clear subject line will make your message easier to find.

4. Use short paragraphs and leave lines between them.

On-screen text is harder to read than printed text due to its lower resolution. You can make things easier for your readers by using short, clearly separated paragraphs.

You'll notice that all of the paragraphs in this article are fairly short (typically, four or five lines) and are

separated by blank lines for clarity. You might also care to indent the text on the first line of each paragraph.

5. Tidy up all those ">" characters.

When replying to a message (or forwarding it), most e-mail programs put a ">" character in front of each line of the original text, like so:

> This is the text of the original
> message that you are replying to.

Your reply goes here.

This happens each time the message is replied to (or forwarded). The result is that some messages end up with many ">" characters at the start of each line. This causes the line length to increase, and the text can wrap awkwardly and become difficult to read. For example:

>>>> This is the text of the
original
>>>> message that you are
replying to.
>>>>

If you receive a message like this, don't just forward it on. Do everyone a favour and spend a few minutes tidying it up.

6. Don't send unsolicited attachments.

That three megabyte movie file may be the funniest thing

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you've seen for a long time, but don't automatically send it to everyone to know. Ask them first if they want to receive it. Many folks still receive their e-mail via modem, and at three or four kilobytes per second, your three megabyte file is going to lock up their Internet connection for quarter of an hour or so. Be polite and ask first.

7. Ensure that your PC is virus free.

Unless you take suitable precautions (like regularly downloading the latest definition file for your antivirus software), you run the risk of your machine becoming virus infected. Far worse, you run the risk of unknowingly sending virus-infected e-mail messages to everyone in your address book. This is not a way to win friends.

8. Don't type in ALL CAPITALS

There are two reasons for this. First, text in all capitals is harder to read. Second, typing in all capitals is considered a faux pas by most Internet users, and doing so may see your message ignored.

9. Thou shalt not spam!

It doesn't matter how good a deal you've got. It doesn't matter that you're just going to do it once. It doesn't matter that everyone else is doing it. That doesn't make it right for you to do it. Don't send spam.

10. Wait a while before sending your message.

Proofreading your own work is a risky business. I'm a writer and proofreader by profession, but mistakes still manage to slip through in my own writing. The best defence I know is to put my writing aside for a while then look at it afresh. It's amazing what will often just leap out at you.

So if you have the time, wait an hour -- or even just ten minutes -- before you press the "send" button. This will let you read your message again and, hopefully, spot any typos or other weaknesses before it goes out.

Armed with these ten tips, your e-mail should be well received every time. Good luck!

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You'll find over 200 tips like this in Tim North's new e-book **BETTER WRITING SKILLS**. It's just \$19.95 and comes with a 90-day, money-back guarantee. Download a **FREE CHAPTER** now.
<http://www.betterwritingskills.com>

Business Etiquette

By Neil Payne

Business etiquette is in essence about building relationships with people. In the business world, it is people that influence your success or failure. Etiquette, and in particular business etiquette, is simply a means of maximising your business potential.

If you feel comfortable around someone and vice versa, better communication and mutual trust will develop. This comfort zone is realised through presenting yourself effectively. Business etiquette helps you achieve this.

Business etiquette revolves around two things. Firstly, thoughtful consideration of the interests and feelings of others and secondly, minimising misunderstandings. Both are dependent upon self conduct. Business etiquette polishes this conduct.

Business etiquette varies from region to region and country to country. For the international business person, focusing too deeply on international business etiquette would leave no time for business. However, there are some key pillars upon which good business etiquette is built.

Behaviour

Your manners and attitude will speak volumes about you. They will point to your inner character. If you come across selfish, undisciplined or uncouth your relationship is unlikely to prosper. Appropriate business etiquette promotes positive traits.

Honesty

A reputation for delivering what you say will deliver goes a long way in the business world. Remember, a reputation for integrity is slowly gained but quickly lost. Understanding a particular country's business etiquette provides a framework in which you can work without fear of crossing boundaries in terms of agreements, promises and contracts.

Character

Your character refers to what you as an individual bring to the business table. Proper business etiquette allows you to exhibit your positive qualities. For example, knowing when to be passionate and not emotional or self-confident without being arrogant. Just through learning another's business etiquette you demonstrate an open-mindedness which will earn respect.

Sensitivity

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Sensitivity and consideration underlie all good business etiquette. Being prepared for foreign ways and methods and responding thoughtfully is achieved through experience and business etiquette know-how. By avoiding misunderstandings and misinterpretations through business etiquette you lay

foundations for a strong business relationship.

Diplomacy

Avoiding thoughtless words and actions protects you from negative consequences. Impulse often leads a business person astray. Business etiquette encourages the careful thought of the interests of others and choosing acceptable forms of expression.

Appearance

Dressing appropriately, standing and sitting in the right place at the right time, good posture and looking physically presentable are all elements in making a good impression. Business etiquette teaches you how to suitably present yourself and what to avoid.

Analysing, understanding and implementing the above will help you recognise what business etiquette is and how it should be employed within the business world.

For the international business person business, etiquette acts as a key. It locks the doors of poor communication and misunderstandings and opens doors to successful business relationships.

Neil Payne is Director of

Business Etiquette

Business Card Etiquette

Business Meeting Etiquette

Email and Newsgroup Etiquette

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