

Are You Making This Embarrassing E-Mail Mistake?

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By Nick Nichols

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About a month ago I got a cold call from a guy selling Web servers. He apparently got my name from the WhoIs directory of Internet domain names.

As an Internet marketing consultant with several Web sites, I'm always interested in knowing what the current market pricing is for hosting, so I let the guy give me his pitch.

He asked me what kind of server configuration I needed, then told me he would send me a quote and some information about his company.

He made no attempt to qualify me at all --- other than knowing I had some Web sites. He eagerly offered to "send me something" without any idea of whether I was interested in changing hosts, what my budget was, or how soon I could make a decision, etc.

Then I received the following email message from him about a month after he had called me:
(Name changed to protect the guilty.)

RE: company overview

Hi Nick,

I just wanted to touch base with you. I haven't spoken to you in awhile, and I just wanted to see if you had any questions.

Please let me know, my contact information is below.

Best Regards,

Albert De Salvo

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Enterprise Solutions Manager

Since I get email like this just about every day, and since this particular time I had a charitable urge to make a point with this person, I composed the following reply:

Dear Albert,

Thanks so much for writing!

Yes, I do distinctly remember the last time we spoke. I don't get many calls so yours is indelibly etched in my mind.

In fact, your call was so important, I made a note of our conversation and put it in my tickler file as follows:

"Albert from toasterhoster.com called. He had no idea about my needs but that's okay. He works for a big company so I guess that should be enough to impress me.

"If he hasn't called or tried to contact me by June 20th, I should call him to see if there's anything else I don't need from his company."

In the meantime, I've been anxiously waiting for you to "touch base" with me.

You see, I really have nothing better to do than to read pointless follow-up email messages from people who have no idea whether or not I really need what they have to offer.

By the way, your company overview was fascinating reading. I can't tell you how glad I was to get it. I printed it out and put it up on my bulletin board just in case I ever need to refer to it.

When friends visit my office, I always make sure they see it.

No, I don't have any questions. I'm terribly sorry about that. I tell you what, why don't I take a few hours and think of some for you — so you can send me more pointless email messages in response.

Once again, thanks so much for wasting my time. I really appreciate it.

Nick

P.S. What's an "Enterprise Solution?" Are you related to Captain Kirk?

Harsh? Maybe. Amusing? Possibly. Instructional? I hope so! Email follow-up is no different than telephone follow-up in that it must be relevant, it must provide some kind of new information, and it must have a strong call to action! This is crucial!

One final rant: Aren't you getting tired of hearing about "enterprise solutions?" The concept is so

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broadly applied and overused it really has no meaning anymore.

I urge you to review your email messages and other marketing communications and be mercilessly brutal in excising any and all meaningless jargon.

Replace it with customer-focused, benefit-oriented statements, and I'll bet your sales get an immediate bump upward.

Nick Nichols helps you create email campaigns that get results. Get his free book, "Explode Your Profits Using Digital Marketing" here:

Text is for E-mail

By Bob Osgoodby

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Text is for E-mail and HTML coding is for Web Pages. I can't begin to tell you the number of E-mails I get formatted for HTML. These are basically not readable in a text mode and get quickly deleted. While some mail readers will display HTML coding, many will not. If you use E-mail to send information to potential clients, always make sure that you send it in a format they can read.

AOL has some pretty nifty tools and allows you to put script in colors, use italic print or to bold parts of your note. That's fine if you are writing to someone at AOL. but did you know that these tools may not be readable by the email client software that many people use? They may, in point of fact, block the message from being read? I get at least 2 or 3 E-mails every day with nothing in the body of the note. What a waste of your time and mine. When you do send something like that, you are begging for people to block all future E-mail from your address.

Many E-mail readers have filters which easily allow offending E-mails to be automatically "trashed". If someone sends 4 or 5 spams, examine the return address. The odds are they are forged and will all be different. Blocking their E-mail address is useless here as they use a different one every time. Better yet, pick a sentence in their E-mail, and block any message with that sentence.

E-mails with no text, and the message they wish read is an

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attachment to the E-mail, is another common mistake. If it's not from someone I know, it is immediately deleted. Why should I waste my time opening an attachment in an unsolicited E-mail? If the note is in "Doc" format it never gets opened, even if I know the person. They could unwittingly be sending me a virus.

One way that works, is to include the message in the body of the E-mail, and attach your HTML message to the note. That way the recipient has a choice. Remember – text can be read by all E-mail readers and that is your best bet. Otherwise, you might be simply wasting your time.

Bob publishes the free weekly "Your Business" Newsletter Visit his Web Site at

<http://adv-marketing.com/business> to subscribe and place a Free Ad for your business.



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