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**The Top Twelve E-mail Mistakes That Can Sabotage Your Career**

**By Lydia Ramsey**

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You return to your office from an afternoon meeting and decide to check e-mail. You wonder where your day went after spending hours downloading messages, reading some, deleting others, crafting replies and filing those that you want to work on later. Your e-mail box was full when you arrived at work this morning and tomorrow promises to be no different.

What is this e-mail explosion? Was there a point in time when the entire world decided to use the Internet as their business communication tool of choice? Are there rules for managing these messages and being a professional and polite user of electronic mail? There are, but not everyone has gotten the word.

Your e-mail is as much a part of your professional image as the clothes you wear, the postal letters you write (assuming you still do), the greeting on your voice mail and the handshake you offer. If you want to impress on every front and build positive business relationships, pay attention to your e-mail and steer clear of these top twelve e-mail mistakes:

1. **OMITTING THE SUBJECT LINE.** We are way past the time when we didn't realize the significance of the subject line. It makes no sense to send a message that reads "no subject" and seems to be about nothing. Given the huge volume of e-mail that each person receives, the subject header is essential if you want your message read any time soon. The subject line has become the hook.
2. **NOT MAKING YOUR SUBJECT LINE MEANINGFUL.** Your header should be pertinent to your message, not just "Hi" or "Hello." The recipient is going to decide the order in which he reads e-mail based on who sent it and what it is about. Your e-mail will have lots of competition.
3. **FAILING TO CHANGE THE HEADER TO CORRESPOND WITH THE SUBJECT.** For example, if you are writing your web publisher, your first header may be "Web site content." However, as your site develops and you send more information, label each message for what it is, "contact info," "graphics," or "home page." Don't just hit "reply" every time. Adding more details to the header will allow the

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recipient to find a specific document in his/her message folder without having to search every one you sent. Start a new message if you change the subject all together.

4. **NOT PERSONALIZING YOUR MESSAGE TO THE RECIPIENT.** E-mail is informal but it still needs a greeting. Begin with "Dear Mr. Broome," "Dear Jim," "Hello Jim," or just "Jim." Failure to put in the person's name can make you and your e-mail seem cold.

5. **NOT ACCOUNTING FOR TONE.** When you communicate with another person face to face, 93% of the message is non-verbal. E-mail has no body language. The reader cannot see your face or hear your tone of voice so chose your words carefully and thoughtfully. Put yourself in the other person's place and think how your words may come across in Cyberspace.

6. **FORGETTING TO CHECK FOR SPELLING AND GRAMMAR.** In the early days of e-mail, someone created the notion that this form of communication did not have to be letter perfect. Wrong. It does. It is a representation of you. If you don't check to be sure e-mail is correct, people will question the caliber of other work you do. Use proper capitalization and punctuation, and always check your spelling. Remember that your spellchecker will catch misspelled words, but not misused ones. It cannot tell whether you meant to say "from" or "form," "for" or "fro", "he" or "the."

7. **WRITING THE GREAT AMERICAN NOVEL.** E-mail is meant to be brief. Keep your message short. Use only a few paragraphs and a few sentences per paragraph. People skim their e-mail so a long missive is wasted. If you find yourself writing an overly long message, pick up the phone or call a meeting.

8. **FORWARDING E-MAIL WITHOUT PERMISSION.** Most everyone is guilty of this one, but think about it. If the message was sent to you and only you, why would you take responsibility for passing it on? Too often confidential information has gone global because of someone's lack of judgment. Unless you are asked or request permission, do not forward anything that was sent just to you.

9. **THINKING THAT NO ONE ELSE WILL EVER SEE YOUR E-MAIL.** Once it has left your mailbox, you have no idea where your e-mail will end up. Don't use the Internet to send anything that you couldn't stand to see on a billboard on your way to work the next day. Use other means to communicate personal or sensitive information.

10. **LEAVING OFF YOUR SIGNATURE.** Always close with your name, even though it is included at the top of the e-mail, and add contact information such as your phone, fax and street address. The recipient may want to call to talk further or send you documents that cannot be e-mailed. Creating a formal signature block with all that data is the most professional approach.

11. **EXPECTING AN INSTANT RESPONSE.** Not everyone is sitting in front of the computer with e-mail turned on. The beauty of Internet communication is that it is convenient. It is not an interruption. People can check their messages when it suits them, not you. If your communication is so important that you need to hear back right away, use the phone.

12. **COMPLETING THE "TO" LINE FIRST.** The name or address of the person to whom you are writing is actually the last piece of information you should enter. Check everything else over carefully first. Proof for grammar, punctuation, spelling and clarity. Did you say what needed to be said? How was your "tone of voice"? If you were the least bit emotional when you wrote the e-mail, did you let it sit for a period of time? Did you include the attachment you wanted to send? If you enter the recipient's name first, a mere slip of the finger can send a message before its' time. You can never take it back.

E-mail makes everything easier and faster including making a powerful business impression and establishing positive professional relationships. The businessperson who uses the technology effectively and appropriately will see the results of that effort reflected in the bottom line.

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Lydia Ramsey is a business etiquette expert, professional speaker, corporate trainer and author of **MANNERS THAT SELL – ADDING THE POLISH THAT BUILDS PROFITS**. She has been quoted or featured in The New York Times, Investors' Business Daily, Entrepreneur, Inc., Real Simple and

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## **MISTAKES**

**By R J Farey**

Don't worry about making mistakes.

Everyone makes mistakes.

Why should you be different.

The person who never made a mistake, never made anything.

Mistakes can be costly. They can also be educational.

Look upon your mistakes as an asset.

Life is a learning process. Learn from your mistakes.

Profit from them and you will not only make more money, you will also become a better person.

You must face the fact that from time to time make the odd mistake.

As long as they are not life threatening, pick yourself up, dust yourself down and get on with your life.

Just remember to not make the same mistake twice.

As I said before, "Learn from your mistakes."

Better still, learn from other people's mistakes.

There are people out there who have become millionaires working on the internet. Do you think they never made mistakes? They are only too willing to admit to their mistakes and to explain how they resolved them.

If you want to get to the top, and I presume that you do, study those who have already made it to the top. Study the way that they did it. Copy the methods of successful people. They will not be too proud

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to explain the problems they encountered on the way. Problems that you will surely meet as you progress and gain experience.

Disregard the `overnight gurus' trying to sell you the latest get rich scheme. If you listen to them you will be making the biggest mistake of all.

The old adage 'Learn to walk before you try to run.' Holds good in any type of business venture.

The main difference when setting up a business on the internet, as against setting up a conventional business, is that on the internet there is no shortage of genuine advice for the newcomer to take advantage of.

Good advice is there for the taking. Don't disregard it just because it is free. Some of the very best things in life are free.

Just make sure that you take full advantage of them.

Relax, nothing is so bad that it can't be fixed.

Here's to your great success. Bob....

R J Farey

Bob has been on line for over five years. He loves affiliate programs because all of the technical stuff is done by the owners of the programs. Leaving him free to concentrate on the promotion side of the business. If this article has set you thinking. Take a look at:

### MISTAKES

Direct Mailing: Is It Still Effective?

Learning From History: 5 Common Ebay Mistakes

LOOKING FOR A NEW JOB, A NEW CAREER OR BETTER PAY!

When Your Career Becomes Very Stressful

Gate Crash into the Interior Design Industry.

Mega-Wealth Audio Library

How to become a Chef!

Build Your Own Mail Order Empire

Stamp Collector Software



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