



Tips for Perfecting Your E-mail Etiquette

In the age of the Internet, you might find yourself clicking "reply," typing up a quick response, and hitting "send" without giving so much as a thought about what you've just written. But experts agree that your e-mail behavior has the potential to sabotage your reputation both personally and professionally. Here are some tips from Inc.com on how to perfect your e-mail etiquette:

- **Respond in a timely fashion.** If you cannot respond to an email right away or it requires a more thoughtful response, let your sender know you've received the email and will get back with your reply soon.
- **Refrain from sending one-liners.** "Thanks," and "Oh, OK" do not advance the conversation in any way. Feel free to put "No Reply Necessary" at the top of the e-mail when you don't anticipate a response.
- **Avoid using shortcuts to real words, emoticons, jargon, or slang.** Words from grown, business people using shortcuts such as "4 u" (instead of "for you"), "Gr8" (for great) in business-related e-mail is not acceptable. Any of the above has the potential to make you look less than professional.
- **Keep it clean.** Nothing annoys recipients more than when people reply and leave the messages messy, for example, an e-mail chain that includes excessive carets (>>>), or pages and pages of e-mail addresses that weren't protected using Bcc. You can get rid of carets by selecting the text, Ctrl+F to use the Find and Replace command to find a caret and replace all of them with nothing. You can get rid of all the e-mail addresses just by deleting. Clean it up, then send it.
- **Send or copy others only on a need to know basis.** Before you click Reply All or put names on the Cc or Bcc lines, ask yourself if all the recipients need the information in your message. If they don't, why send it? Take time to send your messages to the right people.
- **Pick up the phone.** When a topic has lots of parameters that need to be explained or negotiated and will generate too many questions and confusion, don't handle it via e-mail. Also, e-mail should not be used for last minute cancellations of meetings, lunches, interviews, and never for devastating news.
- **Keep it short and get to the point.** The long e-mail is a thing of the past. Make sure when you look at what you're sending it doesn't look like a burden to read – feel free to use bullet points. You should state the purpose of the e-mail within the first two sentences
- **Know your audience.** Your e-mail greeting and sign-off should be consistent with the level of respect and formality of the person you're communicating with.
- **Always include a signature.** You never want someone to have to look up how to get in touch with you. If you're social media savvy, include all of your social media information in your signature as

well. Including a link to your LinkedIn account can also be acceptable, especially when corresponding with potential employers.

- **Your e-mail is a reflection of you.** Every e-mail you send adds to, or detracts from your reputation. If your e-mail is scattered, disorganized, and filled with mistakes, the recipient will be inclined to think of you as a scattered, careless, and disorganized businessperson.

Four rules for signing off on emails (from Forbes, 2013)

1. Don't include quotes.

2. Avoid oversized corporate logos. Sometimes we have no choice about this, because our companies insist we include these things, but if they are too big, they draw the eye away from the message.

3. Include your title and contact info, but keep it short. In most business emails, you're doing the person a favor by sharing your vital information. But make it minimal. Mine just says, "Susan Adams, Senior Editor, Forbes 212-206-5571." A short link to your website is fine, but avoid a laundry list of links promoting your projects and publications.

4. Do include some kind of sign-off. Mark Hurst, 40, author of *Bit Literacy: Productivity in the Age of Information and E-mail Overload*, says the function of a sign-off is to signal the end of a message, so the recipient knows it didn't get short-circuited. "To me the sign-off is not so much style as function in the service of clearly communicating your message," he says.

The email sign-off—more formally called a valediction—can be tricky. It should be consistent the overall tone of your email and reflect your relationship with the recipient. Choose your closing words carefully.

Here are phrases to try:

All the best

Keep in touch

Best regards

Best wishes

Cheers

Cordially

Fare thee well

Have a great day

In anticipation of your valued response

I thank you for your time

Looking forward to your reply

Many thanks

Regards

Sincerely

Take care

Thank you

Thanks for your help

Yours truly

Warmly

Warm regards

Wishing you continued success

With appreciation

With many thanks

With regards