E-mail Etiquette Tips

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

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

3. **Answer swiftly.**

    Attempt to respond within at least 24 hours and preferably within the same working day. For complicated emails, send an email saying you will respond in detail as soon as possible.

4. **Include the message thread.**

    When you reply to an email, you should include the original mail in your reply; this will save the recipient time and frustration in looking for the related emails in their inbox.

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

    This is not only important because improper spelling, grammar and punctuation give a bad impression of you and your organization.

6. **Use proper structure & layout.**

    Since reading a screen is more difficult than reading paper, the structure and lay out is very important for e-mail messages. Use short paragraphs and blank lines between each paragraph.

    Sentences should also be short (max 15-20 words) Also take care not to send emails that are too long. If a person receives an email that looks like a dissertation, chances are they won't bother to read it!

7. **Do not write in CAPITALS.**

    IF YOU WRITE IN CAPITALS IT SEEMS AS IF YOU ARE SHOUTING. All caps can be difficult to read.

8. **Take care with abbreviations and emoticons.**

    Try to avoid using abbreviations such as BTW (by the way) and LOL (laugh out loud). The recipient might not be aware of the meanings of the abbreviations. The same goes for emoticons, such as the smiley :-). If you are unsure whether your recipient knows what it means, don't use it.

9. **Be careful with formatting.**

    Careful of "specialty" fonts that are not part of the standard package. Email program attempt to translate those to a font on the recipient's computer, the result often resembles Greek. When using colors, use a color that is easy to read on the background.

Adapted from: www.emailreplies.com

10. **Use active instead of passive.**

Try to use the active voice of a verb wherever possible. For instance, 'We will process your order today', sounds better than 'Your order will be processed today'.

11. **Keep your language gender neutral.**

In this day and age, avoid using sexist language such as: 'The user should add a signature by configuring his email program'. Apart from using he/she, you can also use the neutral gender: "The user should add a signature by configuring the email program'.

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

Reading your email before sending will help you catch spelling and grammar errors. As well if you read through the eyes of the recipient it will help you send a more effective message and avoid misunderstandings and inappropriate comments.

13. **Make it personal.**

Not only should the e-mail be personally addressed, it should also include personal i.e. customized content.

14. **Use templates for frequently used responses.**

Some questions you get over and over again save these texts as response templates and paste these into your message when you need them. You can save your templates as a Word document.

15. **Use a meaningful subject.**

Try to use a subject that is meaningful to the recipient as well as yourself.

16. **Do not attach unnecessary files.**

17. **Beware of the over using the high priority option.**

We all know the story of the boy who cried wolf. If you overuse the high priority option, it will lose its function when you really need it.

18. **Avoid using URGENT and IMPORTANT.**

Even more so than the high-priority option, try to avoid these types of words in an email or subject line.

19. **Do not overuse Reply to All.**

Only use Reply to All if you really need your message to be seen by each person who received the original message.

20. **Do not request delivery and read receipts.**

This may not work since the recipient can blocked this function, or his/her software might not support it. If you want to know whether an email was

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received it is better to ask the recipient to let you know.

21. **Use cc: field sparingly.**

   Using the cc: field can be confusing since the recipients might not know who is supposed to act on the message. Identify why the cc: is receiving the email.

22. **Do not copy a message or attachment without permission.**

   Do not copy a message or attachment belonging to another user without permission.

23. **Do not use email to discuss confidential information.**

   Sending an email is like sending a postcard. If you don't want your email to be displayed on a bulletin board, don't send it.

24. **Don't forward virus hoaxes and chain letters.**

   If you have a question regarding the authenticity of a virus announcement or other "warnings" forward it to support@apu.edu.

25. **Unsubscribe to spam? - Don't Bother!**

   By replying to spam or by unsubscribing, you are confirming that your email address is 'live'. Confirming this will only generate even more spam. Make sure your Outlook has the appropriate Spam rule configured.

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