

The Do's and Don'ts of E-mail Etiquette

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In today's business world we take for granted the tools we have become accustomed to using. In recent years, as technology has changed, PDAs (Personal Digital Assistants) have become the norm in the business world while brands such as Palm and Blackberry have become popular words in our language. As this technology emerges - and our usage of e-mail changes and challenges us - some professionals may be losing the ability to communicate effectively.

As professional communicators, how we write or correspond says a lot about us. From the way we do business to the way we treat each other, e-mail etiquette - or more commonly referred to as *netiquette* - is important and there are few dos and don'ts of netiquette that might come in handy when you are drafting your next e-mail from your computer or PDA.

Do be polite and courteous. When asking for something always write "Please" and "Thank you".

Do be careful of your tone. The way you come across in an e-mail and how you word your sentences is very important and in haste we can come across as terse or demanding. By re-wording your sentences and paragraphs you can convey respect and consideration for the recipient.

Do get to the point quickly. Stick to the point and keep the message short. If a backgrounder is important, advise the recipient at the beginning of the e-mail that a backgrounder has been included.

Do use a spell checker. Spelling is important in any business environment, and it only takes a few minutes to check your spelling.

Do use good grammar. Good grammar is essential and can ultimately be the best way to convey a good impression

Do re-read your e-mail before pressing the send button. You will not get another chance to fix your e-mail or, in some cases, a chance to recall it.

Don't use ALL CAPS. This tells the recipient that you are yelling at them.

Don't send huge attachments without notifying the recipient first. Large attachments can be considered spam and could be withheld by your Internet service provider. If sending a number of large documents at the same time break them up into smaller e-mails.

Don't send an e-mail if you are angry with the recipient. Sleep on it. Your anger will subside and you will think more clearly in the morning.

Don't use your PDA when you are in a meeting or out to dinner. This can be considered rude. If it is an issue that cannot wait, tell everyone at the beginning of the meeting or dinner you will need to take the call or address an e-mail. When the call or e-mail comes through, excuse yourself, leave the table and take the call in private.

Don't drink and e-mail. Like drinking and driving this could lead to death by e-mail. If you have the urge to send out an e-mail to a co-worker, boss or customer, wait until you are sober. Your grammar, tone, speech and personality will be much better when you are.

Don't CC everyone and their mothers. Remember who it is you are communicating to and if they really need to know what you are saying. People do not like to get useless e-mails, especially when it isn't directed to them.



Time Capsule

- Origin of the press release, or news release

The press release was first introduced in 1906 by Ivy Lee, who is often referred to as the first real public relations practitioner. At that time, Mr. Lee's agency was working with the Pennsylvania Railroad, which had just fallen victim to a tragic accident. Ivy Lee convinced the company to issue the first press release to journalists, before other versions of the story, or suppositions, could be spread among them and reported. He used a press release, in addition to inviting journalists and photographers to the scene and providing their transportation there, as a means of fostering open communication with the media.

Source: Wikipedia.org