

10 Guidelines for Sending Better Emails

Written by: Drew Koch, CM | March 3, 2020



E-mail, texting and other forms of electronic written communication are now ubiquitous, allowing managers and supervisors to transmit near-instantaneous messages around the world. While many recipients read their e-mails and texts right away, an increasing number feel overwhelmed by the sheer volume they receive daily. Others feel that e-mail and texting lengthens the workday, encroaching on family time because workers never feel truly “away” from work.

E-mails can be an especially rich form of communication if they are timely and carefully tailored to their recipients. **Here are 10 guidelines for using email effectively and wisely.**

- 1. Check your e-mail regularly and respond promptly whenever possible. Many experts recommend you set aside specific portions of your day to attend to email. Just make sure to keep a keen eye out for urgent messages.**
- 2. Keep your e-mail folder clean and up to date. I know people who keep hundreds of messages in their inbox. It can quickly become overwhelming. Do yourself a favor by using folders to store messages and only keeping the ones you need.**
- 3. Keep your sentences brief and messages short. Email is not the appropriate**

format for submitting a massive report to your boss. Send a short message with an attachment instead.

4. Draw the recipient's attention to important topics with descriptive subjects for your messages.

5. Pay attention to grammar, punctuation, spelling, and sentence structure. Note that every communication you send is constantly being evaluated, telling the receiver much about you and your employer. At the same time, remember that we work in a global economy full of different languages. Many of the people with whom you communicate with may not have the same primary language as you, so don't be critical of others.

6. Do not send emotional or highly personal messages! A good rule of thumb is to take a few deep breaths before sending an emotional message to a coworker - and then do not send it. Remember that your work emails are likely considered company property and may be read by others. Use a different email address for your personal business.

7. Take yourself off distribution lists that you do not need to be on. They can quickly become an annoying distraction and a time-waster.

8. Beware the "reply all" button. Just about everyone has an embarrassing story about a private reply sent accidentally to multiple people. The best advice is to pay careful attention and check twice before sending any private messages.

9. Limit the use of emoticons, emojis, abbreviations and acronyms. While it is tough to go wrong with a smiley face, emojis can be especially problematic. They could have hidden meanings that may be inappropriate for professional communications, so use with caution or not at all.

10. Know your employer's policies on e-mail. Respect everyone's privacy and time away from work, avoid conveying sensitive or confidential information, and do not send any materials that someone might perceive as creating an offensive atmosphere.

In closing, do not let e-mail or texting be a substitute for face-to-face communications. If you keep these suggestions in mind and combine them with a healthy portion of common sense, you will go a long way toward making sure your emails and texts are both professional and appropriate.

About the Author



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ICPM Senior Director Drew Koch joined the staff in May 1998, after earning Master of Arts and Educational Specialist degrees from James Madison University. Drew is responsible for new business development, financial operations, staffing and leadership of the Institute. He also supervises ICPM's day-to-day operations and is responsible for exam development, question writing and review, exam security, and statistical analysis.

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