**Email Etiquette**

Don't write in capitals. IF YOU WRITE IN CAPITALS, IT SEEMS AS IF YOU ARE SHOUTING. This can be highly annoying and might trigger an unwanted response in the form of a flame email.

Don't overuse the "High Priority" option. It will lose its function when you really need it.

Don't 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.

Don't leave out the message thread. When you reply to an email, you must include the original mail in your reply; in other words, click "REPLY" instead of "New Mail."

Use proper spelling and grammar.

Use the active voice instead of the passive. For instance, "We will process your order today" sounds better than "Your order will be processed today." The first sounds more personal, whereas the latter, especially when used frequently, sounds unnecessarily formal.

Avoid using "urgent" and "important" in an email, saying that you have received it and that you will get back to them.

Be concise and to the point.

Be careful with abbreviations and emoticons. In business emails, try not to use abbreviations such as "BTW" (by the way) and "LOL" (laugh out loud). The recipient might not be aware of the meanings of the abbreviations, and in business emails these are generally not appropriate. The same goes for emoticons, such as the smiley :-)!

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**Don't use email to discuss confidential information.**

If you receive an email message warning you of a new unstoppable virus that will immediately delete everything from your computer, this is most probably a hoax. Many virus hoaxes contain viruses themselves; the same goes for chain letters that promise incredible riches or ask your help for a charitable cause.

Try not to use the "CC" field unless the recipient knows why they are receiving a copy of the message.

When responding to a CC message, do not include the person in the CC field unless you have a particular reason for wanting this person to see your response.

Never make any libelous, sexist or racially discriminating comments in emails, even if they are meant to be a joke.

**Try to make your message length to the type of conversation taking place.** For example, if you're only making a quick query, then keep it short and to the point.

If your email program supports fancy formatting (bold, italic and so on) in the mail messages it generates, make sure that the recipient has an email program that can display such messages.

Be very careful about including credit card numbers in email messages. Email can be intercepted in transit.

Always use a signature if you can. Make sure it identifies who you are and includes alternative means of contacting you (phone and fax are usual).

Keep your signature short—four to seven lines is a handy guideline for maximum signature length.

If somebody sends you information or ideas by email, you should not assume that you have their permission to reproduce that information in a public forum (discussion group, USENET newsgroup, chat site, etc.).

Don't pretend you are someone else if you're only making a quick query, then keep it short and to the point.

Be polite. Terseness can be misinterpreted.

Don't pretend you are someone else when sending email, e.g. by using someone else's account to send it.
### Don’t just rely on email; follow-ups can often be done via the telephone or regular mail.

- Avoid unprofessional sounding email names like “studmuffin” or “partygirl.”
- Read your message carefully before you click the “Send” button. The tone of an email can often be misinterpreted.
- Have someone else proofread your message before you send it.
- It may be easier to find errors if you print and review your email.
- Name your résumé document “YOUR NAME, RéSUMé” so that, when you follow-up with employment recruiters by asking them if they received your email, they won’t have to look through 300 attachments called “résumé.”
- If you are attaching your résumé, ask the receiver if they would prefer that you send it in a different format, such as Word Perfect, Rich Text Format, or Portable Document Format (PDF).
- Be cautious when using sarcasm and humor. Because they lack the clues offered by facial expressions and tone of voice in “live” conversation, these do not translate easily through email.
- Your colleagues may use commonly accepted abbreviations in email, but when communicating with external customers, everyone should follow standard writing protocol.

### Concentrate on one subject per message whenever possible.

- Use asterisks or bold formatting to emphasize important words.
- Don’t use “bcc” to keep others from seeing who you copied; it shows confidence when you directly cc anyone receiving a copy. Do use bcc, however, when sending to a large distribution list, so recipients won’t have to see a huge list of names.
- Email communication isn’t appropriate when sending confusing or emotional messages.
- Don’t use email to avoid an uncomfortable situation or to cover up a mistake.
- Check your email regularly. Ignoring a mail message is discourteous and confusing to the sender.
- Reply promptly.
- Develop an orderly filing system for those email messages you wish to keep.
- Delete unwanted emails to conserve disk space.
- When you use the Reply option, ensure that the subject field (automatically filled in for you) still accurately reflects the content of your message. Be sure to change or expand upon the subject if necessary.
- Try to restrict yourself to one subject per message; send multiple messages if you have multiple subjects.
- Don’t reproduce an email message in full when responding to it, especially if you are posting to a bulletin board.
- Be tolerant of others’ mistakes.
- Remember that people other than the person to whom it’s addressed may see your message.
- Don’t make changes to someone else’s message and pass it on without making it clear where you have made the changes.

## Always reply to emails, even if a brief acknowledgment is all you can manage.

- Don’t send attachments which the recipient does not expect, especially large files that take a long time to download.
- Use separate accounts for personal and business email.
- Clean up the document when replying to or forwarding an email.
- Delete headers when appropriate for privacy.
- Learn your colleagues’ email habits and preferences, such as how often they check mail and how long it takes them to reply.
- If you’re asking for something, don’t forget to say “please.” Similarly, if someone does something for you, it never hurts to say “thank you.”