

Do You Make These Mistakes When Sending E-mail?

A Quick Lesson In E-mail Etiquette

In this day and age, it is amazing how many businesses and professionals still violate basic e-mail etiquette rules. Almost everyone uses e-mail to communicate with their clients and friends yet very few give any thought to the importance of those communications.

If you want to make sure you are not offending your clients and friends when sending e-mail, here are 6 basic rules to live by:

Never send e-mails to people who have not requested to receive them. This is also known as spamming and federal laws are getting much tougher in the rules and penalties for sending unwanted e-mail messages. Many businesses make the mistake of thinking that they are free and clear to send e-mail promotions to their clients, even if the client has not specifically requested to get those promotions. When in doubt, it's always smarter to err on the side of caution and NOT include them in your broadcast; doing so could cause you to lose favor with your clients, or worse yet, lose their business altogether.

Don't attach files unless you've gotten permission to from the recipient. With the looming threat of viruses, it's considered bad net-etiquette to send file attachments.

DO NOT USE ALL CAPS. Using all caps in an e-mail is the online equivalent of screaming at the top of your lungs. Unless that is what you intended to do, make sure you use lowercase letters.

When sending to a large list of people, use the BCC (blind carbon copy) feature. Otherwise, you are exposing every recipient's e-mail address to everyone else on the list. Since most people like to keep their personal e-mail addresses private, exposing your entire list will cause you to lose quite a few brownie points.

Here's another point to consider: I wish I had a nickel for every sales person that sent out a broadcast e-mail to all their clients and prospects and accidentally copied everyone on the list. This is an EASY way for your competition to get their hands on one of your most precious assets.

Never send information you wouldn't want the entire world to know about.

E-mails can quickly spread around the Internet. Never send confidential information, off-color jokes, political opinions, pictures, or gossip that you wouldn't want made public. This goes double if you are using a business e-mail address. And if you are a business owner, you want to make sure your employees know that it is against company policy to send this type of information through your company e-mail. Even a well-meaning joke can land you in a lot of hot water if taken the wrong way. Always take a minute to think before you hit the "send" button.

Avoid fancy formatting, background graphics, and other "cute" pictures and fonts. What looks great on your monitor may be impossible to read on someone else's; it also may annoy the reader who has to weed through the fluff to find the content.