



EMAIL PROTOCOLS AND BEST PRACTICES

By Steve McClatchy

If you receive an email asking you a question, answer the question. If the email contains more than one question, answer each question. If an answer is unavailable or pending, or if you need more time to do research, provide that update. Don't just answer one of the questions and ignore the others.

Do not overuse Reply to All. In the spirit of reducing the amount of emails each person in the company receives on a daily basis, consider whether or not all of the recipients of the email need to view your reply.

When requesting a person's time, check their calendar first and then send a Meeting Request, not an email. Be sure to include in the Meeting Request all relevant information they may need to be an informed participant. This saves time as well as improves the quality of the meeting.



If you are copied on an email it is not necessary that you reply. If you wish a recipient to reply to your email, place their name in the To line.

Do not forward chain letters, jokes, unprofessional videos or inappropriate stories to or from a professional email address. If at all, this type of communication is better suited for personal email addresses.

Email and texting are not the same thing. Emails should have proper spelling, grammar & punctuation where as in texting and social networking updates it has become acceptable to use quick-text language and abbreviations when communicating with personal contacts. If texting a business contact, maintain proper spelling and grammar.

Use the Out of Office Assistant to communicate when you will not be available for periods longer than four hours or if you will not be able to respond until the next business day.

Email is not private and you are responsible for the content of every email you send and receive. Never email when you are tired, mad, upset or if your communication contains an emotional component. Moreover, there is a permanent record of every email you send and receive. Email sent to or from a company email address is owned by the company, not the employee.

Meeting Requests should be replied to immediately when possible and within 24 hours at the most. 48 hour and 72 hour responses should be the exception not the rule. Conference call lines and meeting rooms need to be reserved. Showing up on a conference call or for a meeting you have not replied to is not acceptable.

Emails and replies should contain a signature with your contact information. This will eliminate wasted time looking for this information if your recipient needs to contact you.

Consider how long it will take the recipient of your email to respond by email. If you don't need a response immediately communicate the amount of time the recipient has to respond. ("I need this by the end of the day" or "I need this by the end of Thursday at the latest.") If the response is information-related and a response will take longer than 15 minutes, consider making a phone call or scheduling a meeting.

When you communicate a problem to someone and you copy others, be sure to copy everyone in the original message when the problem is resolved.

Subject lines are important. Identify your objective or the content of your email in your subject line. If and/or when the content of your communication changes, change the subject line to reflect it.

The purpose of each email you send is either to request information, to share information, to request a decision that needs to be made, to request an appointment or to make a task request. If you need a decision or your recipient to do something, reflect that in your subject line. If you need an appointment, send a Meeting Request or if the information you need is lengthy, consider making a phone call instead.

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Before sending an email, decide if an email is the right way to communicate your message.

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You are more likely to get someone in person when you call their cell, however, reception can make it difficult to hear and calls are more likely to be dropped. If clarity is an issue, you can text someone a message to call you when they reach a land line so you can have a clear discussion.

Email - Does your message contain facts such as dates, statistics or other information that might need to be referenced later? This would be better in an email that your recipient can refer to as needed. When you consider how long it takes to address an email, type a subject line, think through and type your message, review your message, make changes and edit, most people are typing, on average, approximately 5 to 10 words per minute in email. Is this the best medium for your communication?

Most people text approximately 10 to 20 words per minute.

Voice mail- Does your message require a lengthy or complex explanation? This might be better or more clearly communicated through voice mail or a phone call as opposed to email in which tone and intention can sometimes be misunderstood. Most people speak approximately 150-250 words per minute. You are more likely to get voice mail when you call someone's land line. If you can wait for a reply leave a land line voice mail. If you are going to hang up and call their cell, don't leave a message on the land line, leave it on their cell.

Waiting to grab someone in the hallway leaves execution to chance.

Most people Instant Message approximately 30 to 40 words per minute.

HERE ARE SOME FACTS TO CONSIDER:

Following these protocols and best practices can help reduce the number of emails you receive and increase your speed and productivity. Feel free to share these ideas with your immediate work group. I hope this helps in your ongoing effort to receive outstanding results.

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