

Bracken Business Communications Clinic

STYLE

COMPETENT E-MAIL COMMUNICATION

Choose e-mail as a communication medium when:

- You need to communicate a written message immediately.
- You desire convenience or you are away from your office.
- You need a permanent record.
- You need to disburse your message to a wide audience.
- You have a message that does not exceed one screen.

To maintain professionalism and to communicate accurately and clearly, follow these guidelines when you compose your e-mail.

- Use a clear, detailed, and descriptive subject heading.
- Keep your e-mail content geared to the subject heading. Cover only one topic.
- Use appropriate, professional greetings and sign-offs.
- Set up e-mail to insert automatically a signature block with your full name, your title, and your full contact information.
- Copy the original e-mail into the reply when replying to an e-mail.
- Keep the e-mail brief, but cover the topic. Aim for no longer than one screen length.
- Use clearly labeled attachments to share supplemental information of more detailed information.
- Use business language and correct grammar, punctuation, and capitalization.
- Use single space, but double-space between paragraphs.
- Use straightforward language; avoid sarcasm or humor, which do not translate clearly without a nonverbal cue like a wink or a vocal cue like tone of voice or inflection. Avoid smiley faces and emoticons to attempt to convey sarcasm or humor.
- Edit and proofread your e-mail before sending.

Drawbacks of electronic communication are largely due to:

- Lack of nonverbal, which help communicate meaning.
- Lack of privacy.
- Broken topic threads.
- Lack of immediate feedback.
- Time delays in the send/receive process, which add layers of confusion.

Example:

Marketing costs (subject line)

Hello Conner,

I am glad you brought up concerns about the growing costs of multinational marketing in an increasingly competitive global market. Marketing costs are 15% higher than last year, so your attention to the company's finances is on target, as usual. We have temporarily offset the cost by reducing the R&D budget, and ramped up marketing in an initial two-month run to promote the new widgets ahead of competitors.

Do you have a sense of the length of time increased marketing efforts should be sustained to maximize sales? We are also seeking innovative low-cost ways to reach young consumers. Your input on these items will be appreciated.

Kind Regards,

Louisa

(Full name and title)

(Contact information)