

A FEW EMAIL ETIQUETTE TIPS

- **BE CONCISE AND TO THE POINT.** Do not make an e-mail longer than it needs to be. Remember that reading an e-mail is harder than reading printed communications and a long e-mail can be very discouraging to read.
- **ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS AND PRE-EMPT FURTHER QUESTIONS.** An email reply should answer all questions and pre-empt further questions. If you do not answer all the questions in the original email, you will receive further e-mails regarding the unanswered questions, which is a waste of time and can cause considerable frustration.
- **BE CAUTIOUS WITH HUMOR AND TONE.** Without verbal or facial cues, it can be very easy for a joke or a funny line to get lost in translation and could result in offending the recipient(s). Also be cautious with your tone...short, rough sentences can come off as angry, negative words can be harsh and possibly offensive. Keep a polite tone, and always include a please and thank you.
- **DO NOT WRITE IN CAPITALS. IF YOU WRITE IN CAPITALS IT SEEMS AS IF YOU ARE SHOUTING.** This can be highly annoying and might trigger an angry response.
- **TAKE CARE WITH ABBREVIATIONS, EMOTICONS AND ACRONYMS.** With online communication, try not to use abbreviations such as BTW (by the way) and LOL (laugh out loud). The reader might not be aware of the meanings of the abbreviations and in online communication these are generally not appropriate. The same goes for emoticons, such as the smiley ☺ face. If you are not sure whether your reader knows what it means, it is better not to use it. And avoid using acronyms as not everyone will know their significance.
- **DO NOT 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.
- **KEEP YOUR LANGUAGE GENDER NEUTRAL.** Apart from using him/her, you can also use the gender neutral terms like: students, learners, users, professionals, writers, etc.
- **DON'T LEAVE OUT THE MESSAGE THREAD.** When you reply to an email, you should include the original mail in your reply, in other words click 'Reply', instead of 'New Mail'. Leaving the thread will save the recipient much more time and frustration in looking for the related emails in their inbox!
- **INCLUDE A SIGNATURE BLOCK.** This helps people have your contact information immediately at hand, especially if they decide they need to contact you via phone, as well as help identify who you are and your organization.
- **PROOFREAD AND EDIT THE EMAIL BEFORE YOU SEND IT.** A lot of people don't bother to read an email before they send it out. Apart from this, reading your email through the eyes of the recipient will help you send a more effective message and avoid misunderstandings and inappropriate comments.
- **USE EMAIL IN A PROFESSIONAL MANNER.** You cannot control where your email might be sent and don't send messages when you are upset or angry.
- **ADD THE EMAIL ADDRESS LAST, THEN CHECK TO ENSURE IT'S BEING SENT TO THE RIGHT RECIPIENT.** To avoid sending the email before it's finished and proofed, add the recipient when you are ready. In addition, this will help make sure it's being sent to the appropriate recipient(s).