

# WRITING EFFECTIVE EMAILS

Last year an average of 47 billion non-spam emails were sent each day. On average people spend less than a minute reading an email. In a world where more information is being shared faster than ever before, how can you make sure your email message is not only read but also responded to quickly and effectively? Here are some tips on how to present your information clearly, professionally and effectively:

1. **Subject lines:** People often don't read their emails in chronological order so make sure your subject line invites the reader to click through. It should be clear and concise. Try to use four to six words that give your recipient an idea of the email's content at a glance.
2. **Personality:** Always try to use the recipient's name, even if you are doing a mail merge. The more personalised it is, the more your recipient is likely to be engaged by the content. Include a call to action at the end of your email to encourage a direct response.
3. **Length:** The more readers have to scroll down through the content of your email, the less likely they are to read to the end. Three paragraphs should be enough. Consider writing more than one email to the same recipient when you need to cover off different topics. This will encourage more timely responses on each separate topic and allows your recipient to file their emails accordingly.
4. **Lists:** Include lists or bullet points where possible, as they are quick and easy to read.
5. **Presentation:** Poorly written emails distract from the content and give the impression that the subject and the recipient are not important to you. Make your email content count by checking that your spelling, grammar and punctuation are correct before you hit send. Never write everything in capital letters as this is the written equivalent of shouting. Although not as attractive, use plaintext not HTML when emailing large groups to ensure that the email will display clearly for everyone.
6. **Reply etiquette:** If an email requires a response, try to reply within 24 hours of receipt. Carefully consider whether the 'reply all' option is necessary and think about using the 'bcc' option to keep contacts' details private. Keep the thread of the email below your email for reference. Do not type your responses next to the corresponding parts of the original email as this can seem perfunctory and impersonal to the reader.

7. **Signature:** Use a clear, simple signature with landline, mobile and website details. Set your email program to always display your signature so that your recipients will have all your contact details at their fingertips.
8. **Privacy:** Apply the 'front page test' to your email content. If you would not be happy to see your email published on the front page of the newspaper, don't send it. Remember emails can easily be forwarded on, so exercise caution.

Sources:  
[www.mindtools.com/CommSkill/EmailCommunication.htm](http://www.mindtools.com/CommSkill/EmailCommunication.htm)  
[www.computerhope.com](http://www.computerhope.com)  
<http://royal.pingdom.com/2010/01/22/internet-2009-in-numbers/>

## To write meaningful subject lines and avoid your messages getting caught in spam filters.

\$	Free	Lowest insurance rates
Act now	Free access	Now
Amazing	Free gift	Now only
Apply now	Free info	Off
As seen	Free offer	Offer
As seen on TV	Free stop	Open now
Attention	Friend	Opportunity
Avoid	Help	Please help me
Buy now	Hi	Promised you
Check this out	Hidden	Read now
Click here	Hot	Refinance
Collect	Information you requested	Satisfaction
Compare	Instant	Search engine listings
Consolidate	Life insurance	Take a look
Credit	Limited time	Teen
Dear Friend	Loans	This is not spam
Debt	Lose	Urgently
Discount	Lose weight	Winner
Don't delete	Lower your mortgage rate	Your family
Financial freedom		You're a winner
For you		

Add to this list of words and phrases everything else that has to do with pharmacy and pornography and words spelled in ALL CAPS, e.x.t.r.a. punctuation, g r a p y text, followed by \$ or 100%, 50% etc. Word preceded by dollar amounts or words ending in numerical digits.