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## Is your email habit hurting your business?

**Being 'good at' email is a skill that requires focus, practice and normal good manners. If you are 'bad at email', it could be harmful for your business in many ways.**

The first golden rule of email is 'don't spam' anyone. Spamming can be many things including:

- 1: Sending emails the person isn't interested in.*
- 2: Sending more than one or two emails to clients or colleagues each day.*
- 3: Doing most of your 'work' by email, either with your team or your clients.*

### **Keyboard warrior**

It's easy to be a keyboard warrior, hammering out orders and requests to all and sundry, but if this is your 'management style' it will backfire. You will simply push people away, your team and your clients.

The second golden rule of using email is use it *sparingly*. Less is more. Good etiquette is crucial.

Even the length of the email counts. Guy Kawasaki, who worked for Apple and Motorola, once said that “less than five sentences is often abrupt and rude, more than five sentences wastes time.”

### **First impressions count**

Consider the way you receive emails. When you open your inbox, you receive only two pieces of information: the sender’s name and the subject line.

If you see an unfamiliar name it is easy to ignore it to get to those other ones you need to read first. But a subject line that grabs your attention can often stimulate enough interest for you to open the email.

The best way for you to grab the attention of a recipient in a subject line is to be relevant. Also be brief, but don’t confuse the recipient.

Don't write  
Question  
Visit

Write  
Quick question about Cork project  
Your visit to Galway shop

### **Take a deep breath**

Be careful not to get into an argument on email. If you receive a rude or angry email, do not reply straight away. Rather, take a few minutes to reflect on why the sender is reacting this way, and reply in as measured and courteous a manner as possible. You will regret any row that develops over email.

A good way to ensure a stress-free email existence is to assume that every email you send is public. No matter how secure the server, if some people want to read your emails and share them with the rest of the Web, they will.

## Set up a strong, visible signature

A signature is a useful way of sharing information about your business and should be included in every email. It can also save you time in the main part of the email.

Your signature should include:

- Your name and your business name
- Your job title
- Your telephone number
- Your website
- Your business social media accounts
- A one-sentence description of your business, or tagline

## More etiquette tips

- Use a professional email address. No one wants to get a professional email from 'weekend01@...' and, if they do, they won't be customers for long. Be sure that your email address is professional, and as short and easy to type as possible.
- Keep your text short and to the point. Avoid waffle and jargon, and cut down on exclamation points. Too many of these will give an impression of amateurism and immaturity.
- Know the difference between 'reply', 'reply to all', 'cc' and 'bcc'. Certain emails are for certain eyes only. Know that 'reply to all' will send your response to every person addressed on the sender's email. Similarly, your response will be sent to any person cc'd. If you want to reply to someone without other recipients being aware, use the 'bcc' (blind cc).
- Know your audience. Don't joke around in an email meant for a serious audience and, likewise, keep your language simple if you are writing to someone whose first language is not English. Remember to adhere to cultural rules of greeting where applicable.
- Double-check email addresses. Ensure the text is correct, that there are no glaring spelling mistakes and that all email addresses are correct. The last thing you want is to hit 'send' on an email that will lose you customers because you were reluctant to double-check your facts.
- Always reply. This can be difficult, particularly when you are receiving hundreds of emails per day. However, a reply will foster goodwill among potential customers.