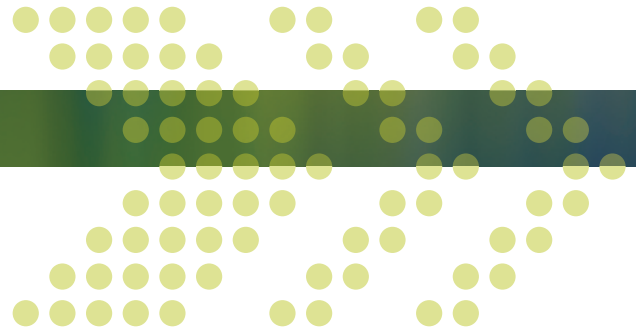


AN INTRODUCTION TO

EMAIL BASICS "HOW TO" Part 3 'NETIQUETTE'



SMALL BUSINESS INFORMATION SERIES



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How this guide can help you run your building business

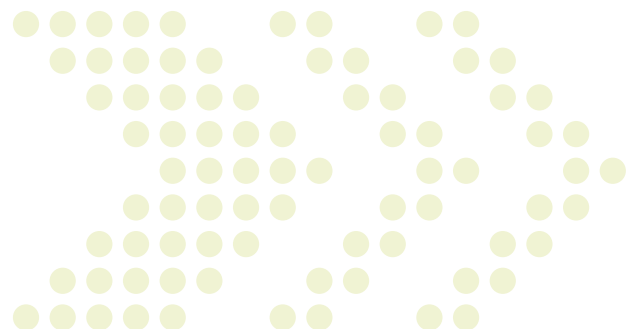
As requested by you, our members, we have written a guide about email etiquette (also known as ‘netiquette’).

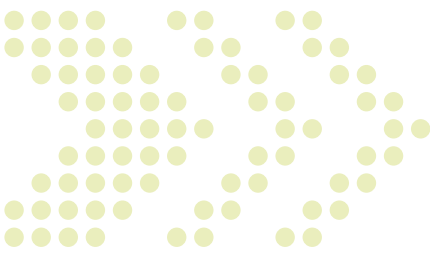
This guide contains 3 sections each of which explains some of the more common principles of **business email etiquette** in relation to:

- writing;
 - sending; and
 - handling,
- business emails.



After having read this guide, if you haven’t already done so, you may wish to create an email policy for your workplace.



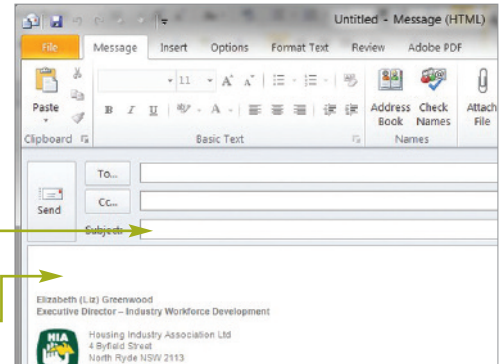


1 Writing emails

What is an “email signature”?

This guide explains how to write an email by going through each section of a blank email message, which typically consists of:

- > The subject heading.
- > The body of the email.



The subject heading

This is the section in which you need to describe (in as few words as possible) what your email is about.

For example, if you have been asked to send someone a quote via email, your subject heading could be *‘Quote for 21 Brown Street’*.



There is no need for your name

You don’t need to include your name in the subject heading, because this will automatically appear on the recipient’s screen.

Keep it short

If you have a long subject matter heading, it won’t all show up in the recipient’s inbox ‘view’ of unopened messages.

Part of the challenge of keeping the subject heading as short as possible is the ability to convey the importance of your message without being too long-winded about it.

If the description of the email is too long or vague, it may get deleted or left unopened until it is too late.

Don’t use terms such as “Urgent” or “Important information”

Once an email containing a virus has been opened, chances are, your computer will be infected with the virus.

As a rule of thumb, emails (deliberately) containing viruses are designed to make as many people as possible open them by having subject headings such as *‘Open immediately’*, *‘Important information’* or *‘Urgent’*.

If you use subject headings such as these, chances are the recipient’s anti-virus software and spam filters will automatically delete the message before the recipient gets to see it.

The content



This is the section where you write your message.

Always use a greeting

You must always greet the person you are sending the email to. Never launch straight into the message.

> If in doubt, be formal

When greeting the person in your email, you follow the same protocol as for when you are introduced to someone in person.

So, if you meet someone for the first time, and the person who is introducing you uses the person's full name, then you refer to him or her as Mr/Mrs/Ms (surname).

For example, you are introduced to Jenny Brown. You should call her Mrs/Ms Brown until she asks you to call her Jenny. If you are using the formal greeting, you should also use the word 'Dear' in front of the name.

> Informal greetings

The accepted way to greet someone in an informal way is by writing 'Hi (first name),'

Keep it simple

Some people get inundated with hundreds of emails per day, so if the importance of your email isn't apparent or if it is too hard to read, it will probably get deleted.

> One topic per email

Keep to one topic per email, as it is easier to track issues that way.

If you must address a number of issues with one person, either send a series of emails (one per issue) or, if you must only have one email, use headings (to show where one issue ends and another begins).

> Keep it short & sweet

Don't write large emails, because no-one will read them.

Try to keep them to 2 to 4 short paragraphs.

If you must send a detailed message via email, write it in a word processing program (preferably in the form of a signed business letter) and attach that document as a file to accompany the email.

That way, you would simply write in the content section of the email 'please find enclosed a copy of my written quote'.

The content

Formatting

It is easier to read text that is written on paper than it is to read it on a screen.

Formatting the content into paragraphs, headings and lists are even more important for emails than they on paper.

Lists (set out as bullet points) are useful for asking questions or making a list of matters that you need the recipient to take action on.

Spelling, Grammar & Punctuation

Remember that we are talking about business emails, so it's important to check your:

- > Spelling;
- > Grammar; and
- > Punctuation.

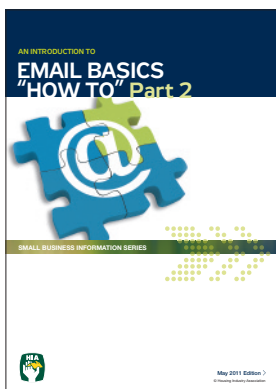
This isn't difficult to do, as your email program will have a spelling tool and a grammar tool as well.

You can even have settings put into place that indicate where you've made a spelling or grammatical mistake by highlighting the error with squiggly coloured underlining.

You can find out how to:

- > create a signature;
- > attach a document; and
- > check for spelling mistakes,

by downloading the guide called 'An Introduction to Email Basics 'How to' – Part 2'.



Using capital letters

When it comes to emails, using capitals is the same as shouting at someone.

Not saying hello and/or good-bye

A common mistake is for people to type the message without a hello or goodbye. This is offensive. You wouldn't do it over the phone, so why do it in an email?

Right spelling, wrong word

It is easy to assume that the spell-check will fix everything, but it won't. You may have the correct spelling, but the wrong word (such as 'two' and 'too' or 'hear' and 'here').

The content

It is not a text message

Remember we are talking about business emails, so if you want to be treated seriously, don't use 'emoticons' (i.e. smiley faces) or acronyms, such as LOL (Laugh out Loud).

Unintended misunderstandings

Getting your message across in the way you intended is always a challenge, regardless of how you communicate with others.

Unfortunately, it is easy for an email to be misinterpreted by the recipient, especially if you haven't been careful with the way you express yourself in the email.

For example, if you tend to write in short sentences, your message may come across as being terse and, especially if the person doesn't know you very well, s/he may take offence at the tone of your email.

Wait before you send a reply

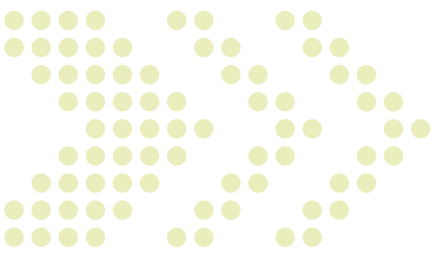
Most people would agree that email is a fast and efficient way to conduct your business communications.

However, don't forget that it can be a two-edged sword.

If you get an email that angers or upsets you, you need to resist the urge to write and send a scathing response in a matter of minutes.

A better way to handle this situation would be to:

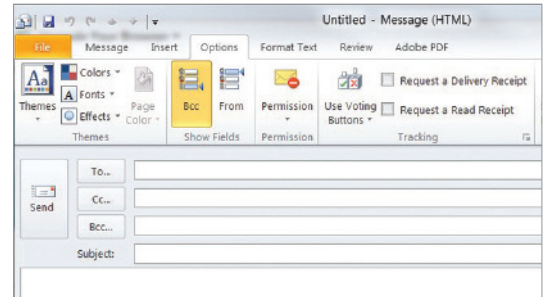
- > pick up the phone and talk to the person (so you can gauge whether or not you did misinterpret the tone of the email); or
- > write your reply, save it in your 'drafts' folder and wait (at least until you have calmed down) before re-reading (and hopefully editing) and sending it.



2 Sending emails

When sending emails, you need to be aware of possible issues in relation to the:

- > 'To';
- > 'Cc'; and
- > 'Bcc' sections.



The 'To' section

This is where you insert the email address of the person you are sending the email to.



Privacy issues

If you're sending an email to more than one person, make sure you don't put each person's address in the "to" section, for privacy reasons.

Instead, send it to yourself and put all of the addresses in the 'Bcc' section (see below)

Saving email addresses in 'contacts'

If you are sending an email to someone who you have emailed before, and you think you will probably be sending a number of emails in the immediate future, it will save you time if you save the email address and other contact details in the email program's 'contacts' section.

For example, the clients who have just signed a new building contract with your business.

'Autofill'

Sometimes, your email program will try to be a bit too clever by guessing who you're sending your email to after you've only typed in a couple of letters of the email address.

Make sure you double-check the addresses in the 'To' section, just in case your program has assumed that you intend to send the message to someone else with a similar name.

The 'Cc' section

'Cc' is short for 'carbon copy'. It comes from the days of typewriters, where copies of letters could only be made by placing a thin sheet of carbon between one piece of paper and another before typing.

The force of the 'hammers' is such that a copy of the original letter (the top layer) is created through the carbon layer onto the other piece of paper.

The 'Cc' section



Only 'cc' people on a 'need to know' basis

The last thing people need is more email.

By cc'ing your messages 'to every man and his dog', you're running the risk of your email recipients falling into the habit of disregarding important messages (or worse, deleting them without reading them) because they're used to receiving unimportant messages from you.



'Reply All' vs 'Reply'

People have lost their jobs over this.

Unfortunately, it is very easy to do and can have serious consequences, because it means that you have sent everyone who was cc'd the original message a response that was only meant for a select few.

The 'Bcc' section



'Bcc' stands for 'blind carbon copy'.

You use it when you don't want people to know who got a copy of your message.

Privacy issues

A person's email address is like a phone number. You'd only hand it out to an acquaintance after you'd obtained that person's consent.

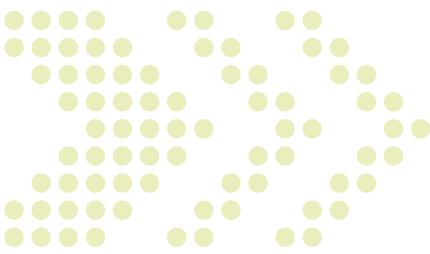
Just as you wouldn't publish all of your friends' phone numbers, you shouldn't publish their email addresses either.

If you need to send the same message to a number of people, by putting everyone's address in the 'To' section, you are in effect publishing their email addresses to the other recipients.

This is where the 'Bcc' feature comes in handy.

What you can do is put your own email address in the 'To' section and put the email addresses of everyone else in the 'Bcc' section.

That way, everyone gets the message but no-one's email address has been made public.



3 Handling emails

Attachments

The most important thing to remember about handling emails concern:

- > attachments; and
- > forwarding messages.

'Attachments' are files that are 'attached' to the email.

The accepted practice is to ask someone if it's okay to send an attachment because:

- > their spam filter may automatically delete attachments (in case of viruses);
- > they may not want to receive attachments, in case they (unintentionally) contain viruses;
- > they may not have a program that recognises the attachment; and
- > they may have a size limit on their inbox.



Reducing the file size

You can reduce the size of an attachment by 'compressing' it.



Computer crashes

Sending large attachments can have serious consequences on the recipient's ability to receive emails in that an overly large attachment may crash the server of the recipient's internet service provider (which would then affect everyone else who uses that internet service provider to get their emails).

There are a couple of important things to note about forwarding messages.

They are:

- > Don't forward a string of emails to someone who hasn't been involved in the original communications (especially where the original messages are between work colleagues who are probably less guarded in what they are saying because they assume they're the only ones who will be reading the emails).
- > Delete any addresses that are shown in the string of emails.
- > Forwarding a message will also include any attachments to that email (compared with replying to a message, which doesn't include any attachments).

Forwarding messages

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AN INTRODUCTION TO EMAIL BASICS – “HOW TO” Part 3



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For more information, you can
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or by email: enquiries@hia.com.au