

## **Email – The Great Communicator?**

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Email is a fast and efficient way for business people to communicate. Used properly, email can save you time, money and clients – used incorrectly, it can cost you the same. Here are some tips for more efficient email communications.

STOP SCREAMING – Receiving an email typed in ALL CAPITALS is difficult to read, especially if it's more than three lines long. It's also considered YELLING – so tone it down and type it like a letter — upper and lower case letters.

Email is more casual than traditional written business communication. But don't forget the niceties. Use a salutation, if only the person's name, and a signature or sign-off. Writing in point form is acceptable only for lists, otherwise use real sentences.

Use a "spell-checker" program, proofread your message carefully, or do both. Typos, incomplete sentences, and bad grammar can make email a poor form of communication. When composing your email correspondence – slow down. Don't let an important message look as if it wasn't given five minutes thought. Email is fast communication but the speed is in the delivery.

Don't write when mad. It's easy to dash off a quick and angry response to an irritating email. Stop. Cool down for at least an hour before responding or simply wait a day. Without the visual cues or tone of voice cues we can receive on the telephone or with personal communication, it is easy to misinterpret an email.

File your email. Save it in folders by client or subject – incoming and outgoing.

Use a spam filter. If not, spam, such as Your Mortgage is Approved, See Me on My Web Cam, Free Vacation, Lonely Housewives, and Prescription Drugs Now! crams your inbox and is a waste of time to weed through. And, never respond to spam mail – even to tell them off.

Don't type the recipient's address until you've finished the message, proofed it, and re-read the correspondence for clarity. This will save you the untold embarrassment of sending a half-finished email or one in which you call your best client "a donkey."

Turn off the audio that lets you know you have email. It is annoying and turns your email mailbox into a glorified telephone that you answer each time it rings. Check your mail at intervals during the day. Some people do it three times during the day: first thing in the morning, at lunch, and then about an hour before leaving the office. A respectable turn-around time for email response is two days. Some business sectors move faster than this, some slower.