

# E-Writing @ Work:

## Getting a Grip on the Dumb Stuff We Do with Email on the Job



### SPECIAL EXECUTIVE REPORT

#### *Four Reasons People Ignore Your Emails*

You are being ignored.

And no one likes being ignored.

But people are deleting your emails without even reading them.

It's true. You're writing these updates and memos, and you're attaching minutes and agendas for meetings, yet when everyone shows up, it's quickly evident that no one read the information. They received it, but they didn't read it.

That's a problem---and a huge time waster.

So, if you want your coworkers and prospects to continue to cast aside your e-messages without so much as a second glance, stick with these commonplace e-writing practices.

#### **One: Cram as much information as possible into one sentence.**

Amanda from the County Inspection bureau says every now & then she gets a call from a rep that she was calling to give a verbal that a release is received, she says she asked the rep if she could FAX the information to her and she was told that her supervisor told her to make the call only & she could not fax this, she says the rep did tell her she was from the Midwest, she said that the confirmation that we send to them they keep for a year because the builders get irate when they call and we tell them we don't have the release, and also she said most of the time the builder has given us the wrong address on new construction homes....

Yes, that really is one sentence.

#### **Two: Speaking of run-ons, be sure to sprinkle plenty of dot-dot-dots throughout your message.**

...I will be leaving for Biloxi.....I won't be in the office tomorrow....if I miss you today....maybe we can talk next week....

We would never type it that way in a formal letter printed on company stationery. Why do we go

"dot happy" in emails? Remember: Ellipses don't mean and so on and so on and so on. And they don't mean you're just letting your thoughts trail off into the wild blue yonder. Restrict your use of ellipses to indicating omitted sections from longer quotations.

### Three: Leave the subject line blank.

Of course, we need to write subject lines—and they need to be descriptive ones. Gone are the days of simply filling in the subject line with "hey" or "hey, girls" or "whaazzup?!"

And never leave it empty.

Blank subject lines can be analogized to newspapers with no headlines over the articles. Imagine grabbing the morning sports section to learn who won the big game, and where the headlines are supposed to be, it's blank space. We count on headlines to guide us through the newspaper and tell us the big news. Our email readers depend upon our subject lines to do the same.

### Four: TYPE IN ALL CAPS. That gets your reader's attention.

Of course, our readers love it when we scream at them. And we all know how easy it is to read lines of text off of our computer screens that look like this:

**ATTACHED IS THE MANAGEMENT PLAN CALENDAR. WOULD YOU PLEASE HAVE YOUR PEOPLE LOOK AT IT AND MAKE ANY ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS? IF THEY WOULD MAKE THE CORRECTIONS/ADDITIONS IN RED, IT WOULD BE VERY HELPFUL, OR YOU COULD JUST E-MAIL THE ADDITIONS/CORRECTIONS ONLY. THANKS FOR YOUR HELP AS ALWAYS. IF I COULD RECEIVE THE CORRECTIONS/ADDITIONS BY AUGUST 15, IT WOULD BE GREATLY APPRECIATED.**

Think about it. How many emails do you receive in your inbox every day? Some attract, and many repel. By following the four practices above, you are practically guaranteed to deter even the email skimmers.

Every email is a self-portrait of the sender; autograph yours with excellence!

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