



Back to basics.

It's simple: Communicating online is no different than communicating anywhere else. You always want to convey yourself in an appropriate and effective manner to get the response you want. Online communication has become so second nature to most of us that we often don't catch our mistakes in time.

As a job seeker, take into account the professionals and employers with whom you'll be communicating online. What kind of outcome do you want? What sort of impression do you aim to give? These guidelines will help you achieve what you want out of online communication.

Better safe than sorry.

Words, spelling, and grammar take the place of voice and body language in e-mail to express a professional attitude, message, and tone. Whether it's right or wrong, an impression of who you are will form in the recipient's mind and this could factor seriously into your potential candidacy or termination. E-mail etiquette may vary depending on the recipient, company, and industry, but it's always best to be safe rather than sorry.

Manners matter. Always be polite and respectful. E-mails should be formal, so use titles and last names.

Personalize e-mails to address the recipient. NEVER use slang or offensive language. Reply to e-mails punctually and close with a "thank you."

Show off what you learned in college. Always use complete sentences, proper grammar, and correct punctuation. Choose your words wisely – you don't want to convey the wrong tone or message. Check the spelling of all names and company information. As with everything, use spellcheck and **PROOFREAD!** Typos make you look careless and may make a potential employer think twice about hiring you.

Get to the point. People lead busy lives. Long e-mails may not get read. Keep sentences short and paragraphs brief, and put spaces in between for easy reading. Only include relevant information – don't ramble.

Looks matter. Keep it uncomplicated. Avoid using multiple colors, fancy fonts, or background patterns. Use standard fonts such as Arial, Times, or Helvetica; no Comic Sans or script. **DON'T USE ALL CAPS** – it's considered **SHOUTING** and rude. Likewise, avoid all lower case because you'll come across as lazy, careless, or uneducated. Avoid emoticons and acronyms because they're too casual and their meaning may be lost – remember, you're e-mailing, not texting. With critical e-mails, send yourself a "test" version to ensure everything displays the way it should and then e-mail the final.

E-mail for hire.

When sending job-related e-mails, have a clear Subject heading. Make sure your name displays correctly in the From field; no nicknames. Use an appropriate e-mail address, not "babyxo@..." or "beerlover@..."

E-mail Etiquette

Online communication guidelines for those seeking jobs.

Simply put:

You will always be judged on your communication skills, even in e-mail, so:

- Think before you type.
- Keep it simple, polite, and appropriate.
- **PROOFREAD** for spelling, grammar, punctuation, tone, and content.
- Reply to e-mails punctually.
- Less is more – keep sentences and paragraphs brief.
- Avoid crazy fonts and colors.
- Don't use emoticons or acronyms.
- Send yourself a "test" e-mail to make sure everything displays properly.
- Consider using a separate e-mail address for your professional correspondents.
- When attaching a résumé, use Word doc or PDF formats.

E-mails should have a concise intro, body, and conclusion. State clearly who you are and why you're applying for the position. Cutting and pasting your résumé into the e-mail may allow for easier viewing, but if you're attaching it, make sure to use Word doc or PDF formats. Avoid large attachments that increase download time. Include your contact info. Also, Bcc: yourself for a record of your job application and correspondence.

Always use e-mail effectively in order to showcase your qualifications as a serious job candidate. Once you enter the workforce, you'll be ready to brush up on proper business e-mail etiquette.

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