

# The Essentials of Writing Business Emails

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## Abstract

*The present article addresses the relevance of business emails to a technology-driven world. With staggering numbers of professional emails, sent worldwide on a daily basis, this medium of communication remains a commonly used method in the workplace. Though fast and effective, business emails require a thorough training, with specific rules to be observed. Just as importantly, the guidelines for writing professional emails also refer to business email etiquette.*

**Keywords:** *business writing skills; email etiquette; clarity and brevity; typo-free emails; navigating the complexities of the business world*

## Rezumat

*Prezentul articol aduce în discuție relevanța e-mailurilor de afaceri, într-o lume tutelată de tehnologie. Date fiind numerele uluitoare ale e-mailurilor trimise în întreaga lume zilnic, acest mijloc de comunicare reprezintă, în continuare, o metodă frecventă la locul de muncă. Deși rapide și eficiente, e-mailurile de afaceri necesită o pregătire temeinică, care presupune respectarea anumitor reguli. În egală măsură, normele privind redactarea e-mailurilor profesionale le includ și pe cele de etichetă pentru e-mailurile de afaceri.*

**Cuvinte-cheie:** *competențe de scriere în afaceri; reguli de etichetă pentru e-mailuri; claritate și concizie; e-mailuri fără greșeli de scriere; gestionarea complexității mediului de afaceri*

## 1. Premises

With the internet on the rise worldwide, business writing has become one of the most prominent pillars of business communication. What does it take, though, to excel in writing professional emails? We think that, nowadays, business writers are more and more aware of the relevance of email etiquette, and therefore they realize that, if not followed properly, business email guidelines readily translate into ineffective

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writing. Additionally, ineffective writing can always trigger a host of consequences like: loss to competitors, arising complaints, and/or promotion prospects not coming to fruition.

We therefore consider that business writing skills are testimony to one's professional competence. Normally, convoluted messages are more of a deterrent rather than an invitation to read business emails. Thus, if we want our business emails to stand out from the rest, crafting them in a concise, accurate, and polite manner is most certainly the way forward.

What is more, despite our fast-paced world and the constantly changing workplace dynamics, we maintain that erring on the side of politeness may still be seen as a good rule of thumb.

## **2. Why a Business Email Address?**

It's widely acknowledged the fact that, when seeking to project a professional image for their business, people will most likely circulate information via a more credible business email address rather than using a personal one. Besides, we consider that by creating such a business email address, aspiring business writers are determined to assert themselves. If deciding to navigate the unpredictability of any business landscape and its ensuing complexities, then a professional email address should come first. In a nutshell, the ABC of writing professional emails begins with creating a business email address.

In the same vein, Shweta<sup>126</sup> identifies the following benefits for using a business email address: 'a) *establishes credibility*. b) *Brand consistency*. Imagine sharing a business website address with a potential customer and then sending a proposal or product details from a personal email account. This confuses the prospect and a confused prospect is less likely to buy. When you send an email from your business email account, it improves brand consistency and hence chances of conversion. c) *More memorable*. Unlike a personal email, a business email is directly associated with your business and website, making it easier to remember or recall. d) *Increases control*. With business email, you can set up an admin and manage all email accounts. e) *Enhanced security*. The best business email service providers offer enhanced security features to help you further safeguard your accounts.'

## **3. Emails at the Heart of Business Communication**

Professional writers acknowledge the fact that 'it takes real skill [...] if your writing is: for a start, to be read; to be understood correctly; to reflect your professionalism; to be seen to say what you mean it to say.' (Talbot, F. & Sudakshina Bhattacharjee, 2012: pp. 16-7)

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<sup>126</sup> www.forbes.com, Shweta. Edited by Kelly Main. Reviewed by Rob Watts. 'How to Create a Business Email: a Simple Guide', retrieved March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024.



We also learn that the authors advocate for an engaging writing which should be very much indicative of whether the email writer's view is in tune with the recipient's understanding: „If you manage to engage your readers to the extent they read your writing, then it's likely that 'what they see is what they think they'll get'. Unless you're physically with your audience, face to face or voice to voice to explain your message, everything depends on how you expressed yourself at the moment of writing.” (*Ibid.*)

Today as well as a decade ago, emails permeate the business landscape, prompting personnel to ascertain their pivotal role despite the lack of a properly formal training in business writing, at least as it used to be the norm for paper letters and reports: 'Billions of e-mails are sent worldwide each day: a staggering figure that underlines the importance of the medium. They are the major business communication today, written by all levels of staff, in all types of company. More often than not, staff deal with this written communication without formal training. It's strange really, as in the past companies routinely trained employees in paper letter or report writing, or offered secretarial support to maintain the right professional image.' (*Id.*: p. 78)

#### **4. Defining a Carefully Crafted Email**

When writing a business email, what criteria should we meet to successfully convey our message? What are the main aspects that any business writer is expected to fully assess in order to ensure the recipient won't dismiss it as ineffective writing? According to business communication experts, Fiona Talbot and Sudakshina Bhattacharjee, 'A good business e-mail achieves its business purpose and works as intended for you, your organization and your audience. A good e-mail is professional. It's addressed correctly, is sent to the right person, at the right time, in the right way – with the correct information and any necessary attachments, and the right people copied in, if need be. A good e-mail is also structured, so the recipient can see why he or she has received it and what action is required, if any.' (2012: pp. 80)

#### **5. Business Email Etiquette**

We firmly believe that if a business email is worth writing, then it's worth writing well. Thus, being in a hurry is no excuse for sending emails plagued by typos. What's more, grammar errors and all sorts of technical inaccuracies hamper any business writer's efforts to be successful. In addition, a well-crafted business email will, beyond a shadow of a doubt, serve its purpose by equally being as informative as intended, and by not lending support to any ambiguity.



With regard to the style of business emails, Fiona Talbot and Sudakshina Bhattacharjee maintain that: 'Time and time again, readers the world over complain about poor tone and lack of manners in business writing today. Most of the complaints are about electronic writing, which naturally includes *e-mail*. Complaints largely arise because writers tend to see most electronic writing as *chatting*. That may be fine for personal e-mail but not for business e-mail. Defining style for business e-mail is quite a tricky area. Even until fairly recently, the corporate consensus seems to have been that e-mail sits halfway between conversation and formal writing.' (*Id.*: pp. 80-1)

### 6. Business Email Components

Effective emails are fivefold. Firstly, we decide on *the subject line* which offers a few glimpses of the body of the email. Secondly, we include *the salutation*, typically containing greetings to the recipient. Thirdly, we construct *the body of the business email*. If we don't write, for the first time, to the recipient, introduction can be omitted altogether. When composing a business email, whether we ask questions, verify information, or show appreciation, its structure should be a well-thought-out one, consistent with the overall purpose of our writing. Having the items from the body of the business email numbered, or incorporated by a bullet-point list, definitely adds more clarity to our arguments. Fourthly, *the conclusion* we draw is customarily the last line of our email, the one preceding the signature. The closing part, therefore, is aimed at finishing the message of our email, and, at times, it's also seen as an opportunity to reinforce particular facts from the body of our email. Fifthly, *signature* is what follows after the closing part of a business email. Business writers typically identify themselves by name, title, and contact information.

Furthermore, we think that well-written business emails showcase strong communication skills. Thus, effective emails convey to the recipient a sense of clarity, brevity as well as a 'call-to-action'.

#### 6.1. Business Email Templates

a) 'Subject Line: Application Development Contract Opportunity'<sup>127</sup>

Dear Anna,

I hope this message finds you well. I am managing the development of an application for a research project here at Masterful Marketing.

<sup>127</sup> uk.indeed.com, Indeed Editorial Team. 'How to Write a Professional Email: a Complete Guide with Examples', retrieved March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2024.



Mr Peters recommended you as a suitable candidate to assist us in this project.

I am looking for a skilled researcher to analyse multiple sets of marketing data from June to December. We estimate it will require between 20 to 30 hours per week. You can work remotely, but you can also work at our offices if you need office facilities.

Please let me know if you are interested in working with us on this project. Then, we can set up a meeting to discuss the project and the expectations in further detail.

I look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,

Samantha Brown

Senior Marketing Manager

Masterful Marketing'

b) 'Template n<sup>o</sup> 1. *Requesting a Meeting*<sup>128</sup>

Hi [recipient's name],

I hope this email finds you well. I am interested in discussing [purpose of the meeting] and its importance for [your project or team].

Would you be available for a meeting sometime this [week or month]? Your expertise would be invaluable in shaping our approach moving forward.

Kind regards,

[Your name]'

c) 'Template n<sup>o</sup> 2. *Requesting Information*

Hi [recipient's name],

I hope this email finds you well. I am currently working on [your task or project] and I need some additional information related to [specific details].

Could you please provide me with the information or any relevant documents to help me complete this [task or project]?

Thank you in advance for your support.

Kind regards,

[Your name]'

<sup>128</sup> Englishonline.britishcouncil.org, \_\_\_\_\_. 'Email Etiquette: Helpful Business Email Writing Tips & Templates', retrieved March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2024.



d) 'Template n<sup>o</sup>3. *Delivering Work*

Hi [recipient's name],

I hope this email finds you well. I am pleased to share the [project or task]. Please find the [document, report or file] attached for your review.

If you have any feedback or need me to make any changes, please let me know!

Kind regards,

[Your name]'

e) 'Template. *A Follow – Up Email*<sup>129</sup>

Hello [Client],

I'm following up with you about your recent phone call with [company]. I just wanted to confirm your appointment for your [service] on [day] and [time].

Please let us know if this day and time still work for you!

Sincerely,

[Name]

[Phone number]

[Email address]'

f) 'Template. *An Introduction Email*

Good morning, [Client]

I would like to formally introduce myself. My name is [name] and I am from [company], a company focused on [industry].

We understand the importance of [topic that relates to the customer's needs]. If you're interested in our services, please contact me at [contact information].

I'm looking forward to hearing from you!

Best,

[Name]

[Phone number]

[Email address]'

<sup>129</sup> [www.indeed.com](http://www.indeed.com), Jennifer Herrity. '5 Common Business Email Templates (with Examples)', retrieved March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024.



g) *'Template. A Customer Appreciation Email*

Good evening, [Client],  
I'm reaching out on behalf of [company] to thank you for [action].  
We really appreciate your [action].  
We hope to see you again soon!  
Regards,  
[Name]  
[Phone number]  
[Email address]'

*7. Guidelines for Composing Effective Business Emails*

Whether there is a four-step guide (Fiona Talbot and Sudakshina Bhattacharjee. *Improve Your Global Business English*, 2012), or a five-step one (Scott Stein. '5 Tips for Writing Professional Emails'); whether the business communication experts call them 'guidelines', or 'tips' (a. 'Email Etiquette: Helpful Business Email Writing Tips & Templates'; b. Jeff Su. 'How to Write Better Emails at Work'; c. Indeed Editorial Team. 'How to Write a Professional Email: a Complete Guide with Examples'), when commenting upon the core characteristics of professional emails, we can readily identify many convergent ideas.

1) The business writer should be certain about the purpose of the email: 'be correct for purpose' (Talbot, F. & Sudakshina Bhattacharjee, 2012: pp. 114); 'identify what you want your email to convey'; „think of your words as the 'call to action' that you want your recipients to perform" (Scott Stein. '5 Tips for Writing Professional Emails'); „to have a 'call to action', when appropriate, in the email subject line" as well as to 'include exactly what you need the recipient to do and the estimated time it takes for them to do it' (Jeff Su. 'How to Write Better Emails at Work'); 'identify the purpose of your email'; 'identifying the purpose assists you with knowing what you need to include in your email to ensure your email achieves its goal.' (Indeed Editorial Team. 'How to Write a Professional Email: a Complete Guide with Examples').

2) Business communication experts consider the subject line to be of critical importance to a well-crafted email: 'tailor your subject line; you need a standout subject line to get your email noticed' (Scott Stein. '5 Tips for Writing Professional Emails'); „to have a 'call to action', when appropriate, in the email subject line" (Jeff Su. 'How to Write Better Emails at Work').



3) The prime attributes of professional emails are *clarity* and *brevity*: 'be clear and comprehensible; edit well so your main points are easy to see and understand; use accessible English and express facts simply;' (Talbot, F. & Sudakshina Bhattacharjee, 2012: pp. 115); '[...] keep the message short and to the point' (Scott Stein. '5 Tips for Writing Professional Emails'); 'focus on your main points'; 'make sure the emails you send are clear and concise'; 'this helps other people understand your message and respond effectively' ('Email Etiquette: Helpful Business Email Writing Tips & Templates'); 'everyone gets a lot of emails, so keep the messages you send focused and concise' (Alison Doyle. Reviewed by Amy Soricelli. 'Employee Letter and Email Examples'); 'always include your main point first, followed by the context' (Jeff Su. 'How to Write Better Emails at Work'); 'be concise'; 'Keep your email brief while making sure it contains critical information. Your email needs to focus on only one or two items at a time to avoid it being unfocused and lengthy'; 'It's easier for recipients to take action if the email is straightforward and easy to read.' (Indeed Editorial Team. 'How to Write a Professional Email: a Complete Guide with Examples'); 'Put your main point in the opening sentence. Most readers won't stick around for a surprise ending'; 'Be brief and polite. If your message runs longer than two or three short paragraphs, consider (a) reducing the message or (b) providing an attachment.' (Richard Nordquist. 'How to Write a Professional Email. What Everyone Should Know before Emailing Staff and Colleagues')

4) When coming up with a formula for well-structured business emails, writers should thoroughly consider their readers and the impact that emails exert on them: 'focus on your readers'; 'use plain English' (Talbot, F. & Sudakshina Bhattacharjee, 2012: pp. 115); 'craft your message'; 'to keep your reader's attention, your message must be as clear as your subject line' (Scott Stein. '5 Tips for Writing Professional Emails'); 'use positive language'; 'when writing effective business emails, positive language is a great way to communicate your message' ('Email Etiquette: Helpful Business Email Writing Tips & Templates'); 'keep it professional'; 'when you're writing business-related correspondence, always keep it professional, even if you know the recipient well' (Alison Doyle. Reviewed by Amy Soricelli. 'Employee Letter and Email Examples'); 'stick with one email thread for the same topic'; '[...] So the general rule of thumb here is to stick to the original email chain for any given topic so everyone can refer to the same information.' (Jeff Su. 'How to Write Better Emails at Work'); 'think about your audience'; 'when you write an email, your tone must match your audience' (Indeed Editorial Team. 'How to Write a Professional Email: a Complete Guide with Examples'); 'always fill in the subject line with a topic that means something to your reader' (Richard Nordquist.





‘How to Write a Professional Email. What Everyone Should Know before Emailing Staff and Colleagues’).

5) Composing error-free emails should be every business writer’s ultimate goal, a testimony to their workplace performance: ‘Make sure your writing does not contain mistakes.’ (Talbot, F. & Sudakshina Bhattacharjee, 2012: pp. 114); „Always check for errors before sending. Before hitting the ‘send’ button, make it a habit to review your email for any potential errors.” (‘Email Etiquette: Helpful Business Email Writing Tips & Templates’); „Proofread and spell-check. Carefully proofread and spell-check all [...] email messages before you click ‘send.’” (Alison Doyle. Reviewed by Amy Soricelli. ‘Employee Letter and Email Examples’); ‘Proofread your email. An effective email needs to be error-free as this shows professionalism and diligence. Before sending your email, take a few minutes to reread it to check for syntax, spelling or grammar errors. Also, make sure you have attached the documents you refer to in the email.’ (Indeed Editorial Team. ‘How to Write a Professional Email: a Complete Guide with Examples’); „Edit and proofread before hitting ‘send.’ „(Richard Nordquist. ‘How to Write a Professional Email. What Everyone Should Know before Emailing Staff and Colleagues’)

## 8. Conclusion

We are strongly of the opinion that great attention should be exercised in devising business emails, thus ensuring that they will be technically accurate and entirely consistent with spelling, punctuation, and typography. Just as importantly, we aren’t oblivious of the fact that business emails, though a product of electronic English, need to reflect more of the written mode formality.

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