

E-mail Do's and Don'ts

Are you interested in thinking outside the inbox? The following special tips can help you begin the journey to cost-savings through better e-mail control and management.

DO'S	DON'TS
Use descriptive subject lines that clearly advise the recipient of the nature of the message. For example: Subject: Can we meet on Friday? vs. Subject: Meeting	Use emoticons, acronyms and short forms that are the common domain of instant and text messaging.
State the purpose of the e-mail in the first sentence to let the reader know what is expected of them. For example, information request, a decision, your approval, f.y.i., etc.	Waste time acknowledging receipt of e-mails. Send only one message. This also applies to phoning and e-mailing for the same item; choose only one method to communicate.
Structure e-mails using short paragraphs and bullet points to make them visually appealing and easy to read by scanning. Use the white spaces to your advantage.	Labor over composing an e-mail. This is usually a signal that a higher order of communication (i.e., telephone or face-to-face) is required.
Keep e-mails brief, covering only one key point. If the message doesn't fit on one screen, then consider using the e-mail to set up a telephone call or a meeting.	Respond to an e-mail by copying other parties who you think should be casually informed or to show what you are working on. Inform the appropriate people separately.
Feel free to ask individuals to stop sending non-relevant messages. The same applies to associations, vendors and suppliers who wish to continue to do business with you. Ask to be taken off mailing lists.	Send a potentially contentious (i.e., emotionally reactive) e-mail without sleeping on it. The 12 hours delayed in sending could save many more hours of lost productivity in managing the original intent of the message.
Reread your message before sending. Spell-checkers cannot discern mistyped words. For example, fell vs. feel, you vs. your, seat vs. sat or set, is vs. if, etc.	Insert the recipient's address first before composing the message. Doing this at the very last prevents you from accidentally launching an incomplete (or incorrect) message.

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