

Email etiquette basics

There are many unwritten rules in the email world. As a business owner or online marketer, you need to know what they are to not risk breaking any of them. Here are the basic rules you need to follow:

Include a proper greeting and closing

Every email you send out should include a suitable greeting, and you should always close with your name. It doesn't have to be formal unless the situation calls for it – use your best judgment. It's always better to be slightly more formal than you think is needed, however. When you see how the other person responds you can adjust accordingly.

Check grammar and spelling

It should probably go without saying but you absolutely must make sure your grammar and spelling are impeccable if you want to be taken seriously. Most email clients include a spellchecker these days – use it! If you don't consider yourself a good writer, just keep it as simple as possible. If it's a particularly important email you can even ask a friend to read it over before you send it.

Simple formatting with minimal HTML

You should always keep HTML formatting tags to the absolute minimum. Don't use weird fonts, backgrounds or anything like that. First of all, it looks quite unprofessional. Second, it may not even look as you've intended when the recipient views it, as all email clients display HTML emails differently. Stay on the safe side and stick to the basics!

Keep attachments and images small

Whenever you attach files to an email, make sure you've compressed ("zipped") them so they're as small as they can be. Attachments should always be kept below 5 MB if possible, as some email hosts reject them otherwise. If you include images in your email, the same rules apply; resize them to take as little space as possible, and don't include too many of them in the same email.

Be as brief as you possibly can

Finally, understand that most emails should be kept as brief as possible. We're all rushing around trying to read all the emails that hit our inboxes every day, and getting a 5,000 word novel isn't exactly helping. This is especially true when you're making a first email contact with someone, or sending out cold emails. If you make it too long, chances are the person on the other side won't even bother with it unless it looks particularly interesting.