

10 Guidelines for Writing Effective E-Mail

1. Apply the ABC Formula to Promote Success.

Assess the Situation. **B**uild Your Case. **C**onvey Your Message.

2. Relate to Your Readers.

Think of your readers as customers who have limited time to read.

Create reader-friendly documents to help them understand and respond appropriately.

3. Make Sure Your Document is Complete.

Provide accurate facts, references, deadlines, and specific follow-up instructions.

4. Be Concise.

Get to the point in as few words as possible. Eliminate unnecessary expressions.

5. Aim for Clarity.

Use simple sentence structure. Carefully choose words to ensure understanding. Avoid excessive use of jargon and acronyms. Define terms if necessary.

6. Organize Your Content for Impact.

Relate the most important information up front. Take advantage of the “first screen mindset” of readers. With your objective in mind, logically sequence the content.

7. Use Appropriate Tone.

Maintain a positive, courteous tone. Remember that your writing is a reflection of you and your organization. Your e-mail may be saved, printed, or forwarded to others.

8. Energize Your Writing.

Focus your reader’s attention with dynamic, concrete words. Vary sentence length and style. Prefer active voice expressions.

9. Consider the Visual Impact.

Document formatting influences readers. Use ample white space, headings, lists, and graphic features to help readers easily progress through your content.

10. Edit for Accuracy.

Ruthlessly review your important messages. Edit for total effect. Proofread to check spelling, punctuation, and grammar.