Email Strategies and Advice

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Business Administration 3033: Business Communication

- Make your subject line informative and appropriate. Change the subject line when replying to a message that someone else has sent you.

- Have a purpose statement in the opening. Let the reader know the purpose for the email upfront.

- If you want the reader to do something, include a clear request for action in the opening. Clearly state what you want.

- Use short paragraphs. Readers do not like big chunks of text, especially on a computer screen.

- Don't forget to use structuring whenever it will make reading easier. Use headings for longer emails and bullets, lists, typography to make your message easier to skim. But remember, your formatting (especially bullets and typography) may be lost when converted to other email platforms.

- Consider length carefully. Although concision is a goal, a short message may not always be the most effective. People may need to know who, what, where, when, why, and how. They may also need to have proof to be persuaded to act. They may need good-will statements like: "Given your background in sales, we need your input..."

- Be careful of tone. Don't write when you are angry or upset. Beware of sending a message without a careful check for possible misreading of satire, anger, or disrespectfulness. Be aware of nuances and subtleties. For example, instead of "fine" as a reply, write, "Fine, I'll be happy to help you."

- Remember that email is not private. Do not send anything out that you would not be comfortable sharing with the entire company or the rest of the world.

- Proofread your writing. Sending out emails with errors in them makes you look sloppy and unprofessional. Remember, your email might be forwarded to other audiences compounding your errors. For especially important emails, print them out and proofread them on paper before sending.

- Avoid all caps (they are hard to read and can be interpreted as anger in email).

- Avoid emoticons like :-) L J ;-):-o with most business audiences.
• Avoid email abbreviations like btw, jk, jic, etc. for most business audiences.

• Use "to" for receivers who need to take action or respond to you. Use "cc" for receivers who just need to be kept informed.

• Be careful with cc; don't overcrowd your colleagues' mailboxes by cc'ing everyone when the information only matters to a few people.

• If you are sending an email to a group of people, avoid requesting actions from specific individuals; send them a separate, individual email.

• Remember to include a greeting (like Hi or Hello) and a closing (like Thanks, Regards, Best, or even just your name) especially for longer emails.

• Make sure that your name is part of your closing—don't rely on the "to" line to provide it.