SEVEN E-MAIL HABITS YOU NEED TO BREAK

Your email habits might be conveying a message you didn't mean to send.

Opening our inbox has become as second nature as brushing our teeth in the morning. Many of us send emails without thinking about what we've written. But Peggy Duncan, productivity expert, author of Conquer Email Overload with Better Habits, Etiquette and Outlook and founder of The Digital Breakthroughs Institute says how you email says a lot about who you are and can negatively impact your reputation with your co-workers, bosses and clients.

Eliminate these seven common email gaffes:

1. **Over-copying people on E-mails**

We hit 'reply all' way too much. When sending an email, ask yourself who needs to receive the information you're sending and only send it to those individuals. If you're still unsure, Duncan recommends asking yourself whether you would pick up the phone and call that person to share the emailed info. If not, why are you emailing them about it?

2. **Vague subject lines**

A subject line reading "meeting" isn't specific enough.

Would you pick up the phone and call that person to share the emailed info? If not, why are you emailing them about it?
In a reply to an email, add to the subject line, include the word "e-mail." When we save this message or look at it in the sent folder and we have different messages from the same person on different topics, the subject line will tell me which email to open. Making your subject line as clear as possible not only helps the receiver understand what your message is about before even opening it, but is a great way to help you organize your inbox.

3. **Subject lines that do not match the message**

Pulling up an old email from a contact you haven't spoken to in a few months and hitting reply, only to send a message that is completely unrelated to the previous discussion and the original email title, is confusing to the receiver. Change the subject line as soon as the content of the email chain changes.

4. **Sending one-liner responses**

Replying to an email with "Thanks" or "OK" does not advance the conversation in any way. You don't have to answer every email.

Unnecessary emails clogs up someone's inbox and doesn't contribute anything to the conversation. To avoid being the victim of one-liner emails, feel free to add "no reply necessary" at the top of an email if you don't anticipate a response.

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5. **Immediately replying but without purpose**

People have the notion that no matter what they're doing, no matter how much they need to be focused on what they're working on, every time something beeps they need to stop what they're doing and deal with it. The result? Immediate responses of "Got it – I'll get back to you later."

But sending a quick answer just to satisfy yourself that you responded quickly is not enough, all you're doing is contributing to email overload.

Instead of getting a reputation as someone who replies fast, focus on a reputation of someone who sends well thought out replies that move the conversation forward. Turn off email notifications and only reply to emails when you have the time to craft a proper response.

6. **Overusing the high priority button**

Flagging your email as high priority should be done sparingly and only in real cases of urgency. Better than marking an email as a high priority? Using a descriptive subject line that emphasizes the urgency of the message.

7. **Not including a signature**

Your signature tells the receiver who you are. It's your introduction, your handshake. Your signature should include your name, title, the company you work for, your contact information and a website that the recipient of your email can click on to find out more about you and your company. Sending an email without a signature gives the impression to the receiver that you're unprofessional and even worse, that your email is not legitimate.

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