

E-MAIL ETIQUETTE: HOW TO CC AND BCC PROPERLY

The carbon copy (CC) and blind carbon copy (BCC) tools are tricky. Sometimes they're useful, but if used improperly, they can be problematic.

When you're using the CC feature keep in mind that less is more. You also need to think about what it is that you're sending and how important it is to others.

Truly consider who needs to be in the loop on this communication. Do they need this information, or is there something they can add to the conversation?

Sometimes people are so proud of their work product that they add a dozen recipients in the CC line and then bask in the limelight of afterglow when everyone comments about how much or how well they are doing. This may be interpreted as slick boasting, a cry for attention or self-centeredness, so keep CCs to only those with a need to know.

The BCC feature allows you to add someone to an email conversation without others knowing, so it can be a little harder to determine when or if it's right to use it. Smith said that there are times when BCC-ing others is a good idea.

If you're planning something but not everyone in the conversation knows one another yet, using BCC keeps everyone's emails private until they're ready to share them with the group. If you have been asked to complete a task, when you include the requester via BCC, it lets that person know that the task is in progress.

If you are corresponding with a client who is unsatisfied, BCC-ing your boss will ensure that he or she won't be caught by surprise, should the client call.

It's best to leave those who don't fall into the "need to know" category off an email and reduce the clutter in their inbox. And if you're not sure, the best approach to take is to ask the person you want to CC or BCC if they'd like to be included.

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