

DOs AND DON'Ts OF PROFESSIONAL E-MAILS

The Dos

Do: Use proper salutation

Opening an email with "hi" or "hey" might be OK for colleagues you're friendly with, but for new contacts, Schweitzer advised beginning your email with a proper, respectful salutation, such as "good morning," "good afternoon," "good evening" or "hello."

"'Good day' or 'greetings' are other phrases used frequently in the international arena," she added.

Do: Proofread

Before you send, make sure to carefully proofread and edit your email. You should look for misspellings, homonyms, grammar and punctuation errors, Smith said. Careless email mistakes will only make you look bad to your recipients.

"These errors look unprofessional and reduce the likelihood that the email will be taken seriously," added Schweitzer. "Email software comes with many professional tools such as Spell Check. Use them."

Do: Stay concise

It's always best to keep your emails short and sweet. Emails are not meant to be as brief as text messages, Smith said, but they are meant to be a form of quick communication. If your email is too wordy, try editing it down to make it more concise.

"Recipients will only read the first line or two before deciding whether to keep or delete [an email]," Smith said. "Be sure you are saying what you need to say sufficiently."

Do: Keep Calm

Never send any email while you are angry or otherwise emotional, Smith advised. Instead, try to calm down and then speak to the person you need to address face to face or over the phone if an in-person meeting is not possible. Doing so could help you avoid an unnecessary altercation, Smith said.

The Don'ts

Don't: Use buzzwords

Acronyms and buzzwords can confuse recipients and make you look unprofessional, said Smith. Stick to writing out full words and use layman's terms to get your point across, although exceptions can be made depending on whom you're emailing. For example, acronyms may be acceptable in the occasional internal email, but any email you send – especially to clients – should be written in language that's easy to understand, Smith said.

Don't: Put anyone down

Emails can be shared quickly and easily, and there are consequences to disparaging others in lasting, digital communications. Avoid embarrassing yourself – or worse, losing your job – by making sure you don't badmouth any colleagues or business partners.

"You never want to say anything bad about someone in an email," Smith said. "It is simply too easy for it to be forwarded and have it end up being read by someone for whom it was not intended."

Don't: Punctuate poorly

When you're writing a professional email, keep the exclamation marks to a minimum. One exclamation mark is too many, Smith said. Keep your punctuation professional, and unless you're friendly with the intended recipient, Smith said you should avoid using emoticons in emails, too.

"Those little blinking icons are for text messages," said Schweitzer. "They are inappropriate and unprofessional in a business email. Emoticons may divert email to a spam filter or junk mailbox."

Don't: Forget the conversation closer

End your email with a closing such as "best," "best regards," "sincerely," "thank you," or another appropriate phrase.

"By letting the recipient know that a response isn't needed, the email cycle doesn't continue on in perpetuity," said Schweitzer.

Other closer options include "no reply necessary," "thank you again," "see you at the meeting" and "please let me know if I may be of further assistance."

For more business etiquette tips, visit this [Business News Daily](#) guide.