THE TERROR OF BAD

EMAIL ETIQUETTE

FROM "RESPECTABLE SINS" (THE COMMS EDITION)

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My email etiquette battery is low

Let's not start with a glorious introduction - one that tells you how shocking you are with your email etiquette. I am going to assume that you are reading this because you are either shocking, yourself, or you have someone in mind that needs to read this. If it's the latter, send them this easy-to-read document right now. Right, let's get into it. Happy reading!

What is email etiquette, though? According to HubSpot, email etiquette is made up of guidelines that "dictate what's appropriate when you're sending a message to a prospective customer, business partner, coworker, manager, or acquaintance. These guidelines help you avoid miscommunications and mistakes which can reflect poorly on you and the organisation you represent."

Now that we know what it is, it's time to remind ourselves of the golden rules.

The Golden Rules

❌ Yo Ruth,

regarding the files I need for next week, you can chill a bit. I only need them for the 9th.

✅ Hi Ruth, I hope you're well.

Regarding the files I need for next week, please send them to me by COB on the 9th?

Address the recipient correctly

Check that you have spelled their name correctly. There is nothing worse than remembering where the capital letters go in a company name, but you forget to put a capital letter at the beginning of someone's name. If there is a title that is meant to precede one's name, ensure that you have it written correctly. Depending on the relationship you have with the person, try refrain from using colloquial language.

Format your email, please

Unlike text messages, emails have a specific format, similar to that of a letter. If you struggle with formatting your emails correctly (including getting the tone, salutations and subject right), then please make use of the following programmes: Flowrite, Grammarly

For more on how to format emails correctly, click here to read a useful article.

Refrain from using emojis

Using emojis in emails makes us feel more friendly with the people we are dealing with - as if three smiley faces tagged onto "Hi", will make a big difference. While emojis may be used to soften the blow or crack a joke, they should not be the go-to in our email communication.

The less paraphernalia, the better. Decorate your email with good grammar and clarity rather than emojis. You may have a relaxed relationship with some colleagues, and emoji use in your emails may be a 'thing', but please exercise caution. Emails should not be an extension of how to chat on WhatsApp or any other instant messaging app.

Always reply to emails

You may think your silence is interpreted as a task being complete, but that is not how it works with email communication. To acknowledge receipt of an email, it is necessary to respond. Do not respond to the previous sentence with: "People know that I am terrible with emails. That's why I prefer phone calls." Responding to an email shows that you respect a person and what they have emailed is important, even if they are writing about a future-dated event or task. Even if you respond to the email with a phone call, make sure you reiterate what was discussed in that phone call, in your email response. It is the professional and tactful thing to do as a young perofessional.

Know when to cc/bcc

Some of you are very spicy when it comes to 'cc/bcc'. I don't know why we have so many 'Petty LaBelle's' around, but maybe the following info may help you to learn or remember why these functions exist in the first place.

When you 'cc' (carbon copy) a person in an email, that person simply receives a carbon copy of the email that you addressed to someone else (the person you addressed in the 'to' field. When you 'bcc' (blind carbon copy), similar to the 'cc' function, that person receives a carbon copy of the email addressed to someone else, but the only difference here is that the person will not be able to see who else has been 'bcc'd'.

Now that we know what they are, when do you use them?

<u>Cc</u>

- When you are cc'd in an email, you are not required to act on it. You are merely being updated on a task or event and are included in that email for record purposes.

- Please take not of the sender's language as some tend to misuse the 'cc' function. An example of this when the sender addresses the email to someone else, cc's you in that email, but also requires you to take action (completing a task alongside the person the email was addressed to). This often happens when an entire team is meant to complete a task, but the team leader is the only one addressed (the 'to' field) and the sender emphasizes that everyone in the email including those cc'd have to complete the task.

- You would generally 'cc' people in an email when you are comfortable with their contact information being known to other parties that are also being addressed in the email. Since the aim of the 'cc' function is to inform without requiring action to be taken, this function would be best used on a group of people that have been involved in a task, whether it be from the planning or implementation phase.

<u>Bcc</u>

- When you are cc'd in an email, you are not required to act on it. You are merely being updated on a task or event

- Data protection – when sending to a large group of people, this is a good function to use. Protecting people's information is important, especially if an email is being sent to internal staff and external clients/service providers.

Email communication should not be a hassle in our lives. It should feel as simple as making a morning cup of coffee or calling a friend. The more we practise good and effective email communication, the easier it will be to manage. Thanks to various tools online, you can get your email formatted in a blink. Do not be lazy, though. Make a continuous conscious effort to improve in this area - who knows, emailing may be the only form of communication some individuals will ever have with you.