5 Essential Elements of Every Email

With every email you have the opportunity to communicate with clarity. The responsibility is on you, the author, to ensure that the intent and tone you wish to relay is what comes across to those you email. In every email you run the risk of being misunderstood because with emails you lose the benefit of eye contact, body language and smile. Every email you write should have these 5 essential elements covered:

1. The From Field: Your name needs to be displayed properly. Proper capitalization is important.

2. The Subject Line: Keep your subject to 5-7 words that accurately identify the topic and context of your email.

3. The Greeting: Without a greeting you run the risk of being bossy or terse, take time to include a “Hello” or “Dear” and the recipient’s name.

4. The Body: Be clear. Complete, correctly structured and capitalized sentences that reflect proper grammar and punctuation. Review and spell check every message before clicking send. Avoid acronyms, texting abbreviations or emoticons.

5. The Closing: Give a proper salutation such as “Thank you” or “Sincerely” staying consistent with the tone and objective of your message.

Adapted from Ruth Mayhew, Demand Media
Professional Email Etiquette

It is important that whether for business or personal use that you follow the basics of email etiquette. This checklist provides tips for proper email etiquette that everyone needs to be aware of and follow, specifically, in a professional setting.

- Make sure your email includes a courteous greeting and closing. Helps to make your email not seem demanding or terse.
- Address your contact with the appropriate level of formality and make sure you spell names correctly.
- Spell check so that you reflect your level of education. Emails with typos are not taken as seriously.
- Be sure the Subject: field accurately reflects the contents of your email.
- Read your email out loud to ensure the tone is that which you desire. Always use “please” and “thank you”.
- Be sure you include all relevant details and information to understand your request or point of view. Generalities can many times cause confusion and unnecessary back and forth correspondence.
- Use proper sentence structure. First word capitalized with appropriate punctuation? Multiple instances of !!! or ??? can be perceived as rude or condescending.
- Do not use abbreviations that are often used in text messaging and online groups. Abbreviations such as “lol” “ty” and smiley faces should never be used in business emails.
- If your email is emotionally charged, walk away from the computer and wait to reply. Review the senders email again so that you are sure you are not reading anything into the email that is simply not there.
- Keep emails brief and to the point. Save long conversations for the telephone.
- Never ignore an email. If someone doesn’t ask for a response doesn’t mean you ignore them. Always acknowledge emails in a timely manner.
- Refrain from using email backgrounds, multiple fonts and font colors in an email. These make your emails harder to view and read.
- Do not use the Return Receipt (RR) on every single email. Doing so is viewed as intrusive, annoying, and can be declined by the recipient.

Adapted from NetManners, 2014