

Business English

English for
business emails



English
language
services
for the
business
world

Tips for professional emails in English

Be polite

Don't forget your manners just because emails are a more informal means of communication. Remember to say "please" and "thank you". Use the correct form of address (Mr, Ms, Dr etc.) and reserve first names for people you actually know.

Watch your tone

Tone is difficult to judge in writing, especially in a language which is not your own. Try to make your email sound respectful and friendly. Do not be too brief or sound demanding.

Be professional

A business email is a document which represents both you and your company. Avoid using emoticons or smileys in business communications.

Plz don't abbrvt

Abbreviations should also be avoided in professional emails.

Keep it short

Keep your email short. Explain the purpose of your message as quickly as possible but include enough information to allow the recipient to answer. Try to keep your sentences to a maximum of 15-20 words.

Answer each point

Make sure you reply to each point raised in the original email in order to prevent unnecessary exchanges of emails.

Always anticipate any further details which may help your customer.

Answer quickly

Customers send emails to get a quick reply, so try to reply as quickly as possible, ideally the same working day. If it will take time to replying to the points raised by your client, send an email acknowledging receipt of their email and promising to get back to them as soon as possible with the information.

Clear structure

The structure and layout of your email is very important for easy reading. Keep paragraphs short and leave blank lines between paragraphs. Use bullet points or number separate points when appropriate to make them clear.

High priority

The email may be high priority for you, but not necessarily for your reader and could come across as aggressive. Use "high priority", "urgent" and "important" sparingly.

Capitals

WRITING IN CAPITALS is also aggressive and looks as if you are shouting at your reader. **WRITING IN BOLD CAPITALS** looks as if you

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are shouting and stamping your feet at the same time. Not recommended!

Subject line

Try to make your subject line as precise and meaningful as possible.

Reply

When replying to an email, use "reply" not "send". This will send the original message back to the sender complete with your reply, so that the recipient can read both the original query and the reply in the same message.

Use of cc

Only send copies of emails to people if they really need the information.

Attachments

Do not send files in attachments unless they are necessary.

Mailings

Use the "bcc" field to address an email being sent to a number of people at the same time. In this way, the recipients will not know that the same message has been sent to a number of people and you will also not show everyone's email address to the others on the mailing list.

Signing off

There are many ways of signing off an email. The best ones for professional emails are probably "best regards", "kind regards", "regards" or "sincerely". Avoid more personal greetings unless you actually know the recipient personally.

Check your spelling and grammar

An email may be short and sent quickly, but your spelling and grammar should still be correct. The style can be more informal, for example "don't" instead of "do not", but the grammar and spelling should still be correct.

Last but not least

Don't fill in the "To" field until you have finished your email and checked it. This will help prevent the email being sent unintentionally before you have had time to finish and check it.

Example of a good professional email

Dear Mr. Smith,

I am the new area representative for Business Books.

I will be visiting your area on Tuesday 10th January. I would appreciate the opportunity to meet you to present our products to you.

I look forward to hearing from you.

With best regards,
John Brown

Business Books
Tel: 123 4567

Example of too casual a style for business purposes

Hi there,

I'm the new area rep for Business Books.

I'll be in town on Tuesday and would love to meet you.

C u soon.

Cheers,
John Brown

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