

Email Etiquette

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A lot of people who work from home do a lot of business over the Internet, using web pages and emails to get clients, communicate with clients, and to retain other products and services. If you have ever spent a lot of time on the net, then you know that although something you type may be plain enough in meaning to you, it is not necessarily so to the person on the other monitor. A lot of care is needed when your communication is mainly by writing, so here are some tips to put forward as professional an image as possible when communicating online.

Do A Spell Check

One of the sadder truths about the Internet is that people just do not seem to care about their spelling and grammar. Often, this will spill over into their formal communications. Remember that spelling on a message board or in an email is just as important as spelling a formal letter to your boss; if you are not careful, you will slip up and rest assured people will be under the impression that you are stupid. This is totally unnecessary when the spell check option is available to all of us. Always proofread what you write. Even careful proofreading will sometimes miss errors, but at least you will catch most of them. Above all, be very careful that you do not use the incorrect versions of some homophones like their, there, and they're. This is a dead giveaway that you do not know the English language.

Don't Be Inappropriate

I am always amazed by how much "junk" I am sent by my acquaintances over the Internet. Rude jokes, crude pictures, and joke links are a constant source of irritation. Don't respond in kind or God Forbid be the originator of this nonsense. Professional will still be offended by this behavior, and if someone saves the stupid email you sent them it could mean a lot of trouble later on down the road, including missed opportunities.

Don't Indulge Your Personal Sense Of Humor

I am a guy who loves to kid around, and more than once have found that I have accidentally offended someone on the Internet, even my very close friends on instant messengers. Remember that in email and on the Internet you are stripped of the important nuances of tone, body language, and inflection, and thus the meaning of your words can be totally altered. I once had contact with a lady who was offended by too many exclamation marks!!! If you accidentally offend someone, the best you can do is to try and clarify and apologize. If someone offends you, then be the bigger person and move on. Best of all, avoid any potential misunderstandings by keeping humor toned right down. The people you talk to may think you are boring, but unless you are trying to sell comedic products, your professional reputation won't suffer.

Observe Internet Etiquette

The Internet is a culture unto itself, complete with a language with varied meanings. If you have come across an abbreviation in a chat room or elsewhere, make sure that you know what it means before you use it in professional correspondence. Message typed in capital letters are often considered to be the equivalent of shouting, so try not to have your caps lock on when typing. Finally, treat email correspondence with the same dignity as you would any other correspondence. Sign off with a nice phrase like "Your Truly", "Regards", or "Sincerely".