

Email – Use it wisely

Like it or not, email is a part of daily life. Most people use it at work as well as at home.

Email can be convenient and a great way to share information. But it has downsides, too. When you are reading someone's words on a screen instead of talking to them, it's hard to know what they really mean.

Communication skills like tone of voice, facial expression, and body language, don't come across in emails. As a result, you might misunderstand what someone is trying to say in an email. For example, someone might get angry about an email you wrote when you intended it to be friendly. Also, unnecessary emails can be an annoyance.

MANY OF THESE PROBLEMS CAN BE AVOIDED IF YOU KNOW HOW TO USE EMAIL WISELY. THESE TIPS CAN HELP:



Call or talk face-to-face when you can. If you don't need to share files or other things in writing, consider skipping the email. Go and talk to the person. Your conversation may be more productive and can help build better relationships at work.



Use the “cc” line correctly. If you expect a reply from someone, put them in the “to” line. People who need to know the information but don't need to reply usually go in the “cc” line.



Be careful with “reply all.” The “reply all” button is useful for group conversations where everyone needs to be in the loop. But, simple responses like, “thanks” probably don't need to be copied to everyone.



Don't include people on an email unless it's needed. Many people get dozens — if not hundreds — of emails a day. Before you include someone on an email, ask yourself whether they need to be copied. Will the information in the email help them? Are they involved in the discussion? Did they specifically ask to be included in the conversation? If the answer is no, consider leaving them off. The person will probably appreciate it.



Don't fire off a response when you're upset or angry. Before you email a response in anger or frustration, wait a while. Go back and read the email again later once you've calmed down. Even better, call the person on the phone or ask to have a meeting with them in person. This often clears up any misunderstanding. It also helps you avoid sending a response that you may regret in the near future.

