

Survey on E-Mail Writing Principles

If you're interested in developing an e-mail communication policy for your organization, or simply understanding your colleagues' e-mail "values," distribute this Survey on E-Mail Writing Principles and tally the results. Your colleagues' ratings on these principles will give you insight into your company's e-mail communications problems, help you identify training needs, and start you on the process of developing a communication policy.

Respondents should rate the importance of each principle using this five-point scale:

- 5 – Critical
- 4 – Very Important
- 3 – Important
- 2 – Slightly Important
- 1 – Unimportant

Email Writing Principle	Rating
1. Use conventional spelling and upper/lower case letters.	
2. Omit jokes and sarcasm.	
3. Use a clear, complete subject line that announces the point of the e-mail.	
4. Omit emoticons.	
5. Only "CC" people who really need to know about the content of the e-mail but who don't need to respond.	
6. Only use "BCC" to protect the e-mail addresses of willing recipients of your e-mail.	
7. Ask permission to forward messages.	
8. Avoid using e-mail to deliver bad news.	
9. Request a receipt only when the message is about time-sensitive enrollment or attendance.	
10. Use a greeting and a closing.	
11. Use conventional, correct punctuation instead of impassioned, extraneous, or creative punctuation.	
12. Change the subject line when the topic of the e-mail exchange changes.	
13. Whenever possible, incorporate content into the message instead of using attachments.	
14. If sending an attachment, refer to the attachment in the message and explain why you attached it.	
15. Respond promptly, within 24 hours.	
16. Integrate relevant Intranet or web content into e-mail.	
17. Use formatting carefully and sparingly.	
18. Use acronyms when the reader will understand them. Write out acronyms only if the reader needs the written-out version.	
19. Eliminate unnecessary graphics. All graphics should support or enhance what you've written in the e-mail.	
20. <i>Add your own "Critical" or "Very Important" e-mail writing principle.</i>	