

How To Be Email Effective

15 Strategies to Save Time and Stress.

- 1. Keep it Simple** – Emailing is meant to **speed you up**, not slow you down. Short sentences work best. Itemise your points using numbers 1.) 2.) 3.) etc, or bullet points to make them easier to understand.
- 2. Don't create work** – If you are sending the initial email then keep it **solution focused**. Tell the recipient what you want them to do, explain any actions you want them to take. If you leave it open ended you will begin a chain. Similarly when responding, give short replies to points raised and clarify if any further action is required.
- 3. Use the Subject Field** – Ensure that there is a **clear subject** in this field. This serves two purposes, to clarify the email content for the receiver and to make it easier for the receiver to find that email later on. If in a long email correspondence, change the subject field as appropriate.
- 4. High Importance** – Don't flag or mark anything **High Importance** or **Urgent** unless it is. Think of the boy who cried wolf before you next do this. Ditto when using **Request a Reply**, life is too short.
- 5. You Have Mail** – Turn this off if you can. Start using your time more efficiently. Decide on a time, for instance in the morning and/or afternoon to attend to your mail, and be disciplined. If you get into the habit of responding to each mail as it comes in you will be **wasting precious time**.
- 6. Attachments** – Be careful what you attach, only send necessary documents and if possible as a PDF (less likely to have a virus but can't be edited). If you download **OpenOffice** www.openoffice.org then you will be able to create PDFs for free. Similarly compress whatever you can. Photos take up a lot of bandwidth and can compress to 1/10th size using **Picasa** free from Google. Finally, title attachments correctly.
- 7. Message Trail** – When you **`Reply To`** a mail, your mail will have the original message in it. If this develops as a long correspondence then you may build up a **huge trail**. This can make life easy for both parties, or alternatively if the subject matter has changed it can become very confusing. So be aware of this and that more and more people are downloading emails to smaller hand held devices.
- 8. Group Emailing** – Please don't send a group email where all the addresses are visible (unless the group are in contact with each other). This is guaranteed to **annoy someone**. Email addresses are like telephone numbers so respect the privacy. Use BCC instead.
- 9. BCC** – The BCC (blind carbon copy) means that you include someone in a mail without the main recipient being aware of this. This is a handy

however a good idea is to put **one email address** in the `To` box, otherwise an empty box looks like spam.

- 10.Reply to All** – Please don't unless you have to. This is responsible for **more needless email** than anything else.
- 11.Emotional** – If you are writing a difficult or emotionally charged email, do a **first draft**, save it and leave it for a day. It is amazing how circumstances can change in 24 hours.
- 12.Be Polite** – Do use the person's name at the beginning, and don't include texting shortcuts like LOL (laugh out loud), they won't be a short cut if the other person doesn't understand them. And don't use Smileys (emoticons) if you are **over 9 years** of age.
- 13.Telephone** – Don't forget that there are other methods of communication. Decide if it is more effective to pick up the telephone or have **face-to-face** meeting.
- 14.Signature** – Include your **official signature**, with your name, company address and telephone number automatically. Can be very frustrating if the person wants to get in touch with you and can't. Also from a marketing point of view, you can use your email signature to carry details of your newest product/speech/Nobel prize nomination etc.
- 15.Reread** – There is a building expression `**measure twice and cut once`**. So spell check and reread your email before sending (there is a difference between their and there!!).

Sean Kennedy 2008 © If you would like to comment please email me on seankennedy@speakersbank.co.uk