Text and Email Etiquette

by Sophia

☰ **WHAT'S COVERED**

In this lesson, you will learn the best practices for using text messages and -mails as valuable tools to connect in a professional context. Specifically, this lesson will cover:

1. Texting Effectively

⚙ **THINK ABOUT IT**

Most jobs today require the use of some technology. Even in our personal lives, it is hard to escape the digital world. Either at work or at home, many communication tools may be available to you. Would you know how to choose the best one for any given task? Strong technology skills can help you understand how to utilize the tools at your disposal. Strong productivity skills can then help you select the best tool for any given job.

Whatever digital device you use, written communication in the form of brief messages, or texting, has become a common way to connect.

It is useful for short exchanges, and is a convenient way to stay connected with others when talking on the phone would be cumbersome. Texting is not useful for long or complicated messages, and careful consideration should be given to the audience.

Tips for effective business texting include:

- Know your recipient.
- Anticipate unintentional misinterpretation.
- Refrain from contacting someone too frequently.
- Unplug yourself once in awhile.
- Never text and drive.

2. Emailing Effectively

Electronic mail, usually called email, is quite familiar to most students and workers. It may be used like text, or synchronous chat, and it can be delivered to a cell phone.

In business, it has largely replaced print hard copy letters for external (outside the company) correspondence,

as well as taking the place of memos for internal (within the company) communication. Email can be very useful for messages that have slightly more content than a text message, but it is still best used for fairly brief messages.

> **② DID YOU KNOW**
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> Many businesses use automated emails to acknowledge communications from the public, or to remind associates that periodic reports or payments are due. You may also be assigned to "populate" a form email in which standard paragraphs are used, but you choose from a menu of sentences to make the wording suitable for a particular transaction.

Emails may be informal in personal contexts, but business communication requires attention to detail, awareness that your email reflects you and your company, and a professional tone so that it may be forwarded to any third party if needed. Email often serves to exchange information within organizations.

The following are some tips for effective business emailing:

- Proper salutations should demonstrate respect and avoid mix-ups in case a message is accidentally sent to the wrong recipient. For example, use a salutation like "Dear Ms. Smith" (external) or "Hi Barry" (internal).
- Subject lines should be clear, brief, and specific. This helps the recipient understand the essence of the message. For example, "Proposal attached" or "Your question of 10/25."
- Close with a signature. Identify yourself by creating a signature block that automatically contains your name and business contact information.
- Avoid abbreviations. An email is not a text message.
- Be brief. Omit unnecessary words.
- Use a good format. Include line breaks between sentences or divide your message into brief paragraphs for ease of reading. A good email should get to the point and conclude in three small paragraphs or less.
- Reread, revise, and review. Catch and correct spelling and grammar mistakes before you press "send." It will take more time and effort to undo the problems caused by a hasty, poorly written email than to get it right the first time.
- Reply promptly. Watch out for an emotional response - never reply in anger - but make a habit of replying to all emails within 24 hours, even if only to say that you will provide the requested information in 48-72 hours.
- Use "reply all" sparingly. Do not send your reply to everyone who received the initial email unless your message absolutely needs to be read by the entire group.
- Avoid using all caps. Capital letters are used on the Internet to communicate emphatic emotion or yelling and are considered rude.
- Test links. If you include a link, try clicking it yourself to make sure it works.
- Email ahead of time if you are going to attach large files (audio and visual files are often quite large) to prevent exceeding the recipient's mailbox limit or triggering the spam filter.
- Give feedback or follow up. If you don't get a response in 48 hours, email again or call. Spam filters may have intercepted your message, so your recipient may never have received it.

Let's look at two examples of business email. First, here is an example of an email form template:

Welcome to the {*Company Name*} Store

Dear {*Customer's Name*},

Thank you for registering with the {*Company Name*} store. You can manage your personal information from the "My Account" section of the site when you sign in to the {*Company Name*} store.

You can change your contact details and password, track recent orders, add alternate shipping addresses, and manage your preferences and customer profile all in this one convenient location.

Thank you for your interest in the {*Company Name*} store. We look forward to your next visit.

Now, here is a letter written specifically for a situation and audience:

To: Harriet Adamo, Physical Plant Manager, XYZ Corporation
From: Mel Vargas, Construction Site Manager, Maxim Construction Co.
Sent: Mon 10/25/20 8:14 AM
Subject: Construction Interruptions

Hi Harriet,

I know employees of XYZ Corp are looking forward to moving into the new ABC Street building in January, but recently groups of employees who do not have business here have been walking through the building. These visits create a safety hazard, interrupt the construction workers, and could put the occupancy date in jeopardy.

Would you please instruct your staff members who haven't already been moved to ABC Street to stay out of the building at this time? If they need to meet here with someone who has already moved, they should conduct their business and leave promptly via the nearest staircase.

We need to avoid further interruptions so our construction workers can get the building ready for occupancy on schedule. If you have any questions, feel free to give me a call.

Thanks,
Mel

Melvin R. Vargas
Construction Site Manager, Maxim Construction Co.
1234 Main Street, Big City, USA 98765-1111
(111) 123-4567, ext. 98

▶ WATCH

Now, review the video below to see what knowing your audience looks like in action, and how it is crucial to successful email communication in any role.

Although email may have an informal feel, remember that when used for business, it needs to convey professionalism and respect. Never write or send anything that you wouldn't want read in public or in front of your company president.

✓ SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned how to write texts and emails that are appropriate for a professional context. **Texting effectively** means reserving this mode of communication for brief exchanges with recipients who are familiar to you. **Emailing effectively**, on the other hand, involves maintaining a professional and respectful tone and conforming to stylistic conventions such as including a subject line, avoiding short-hand or abbreviations, and ensuring correct grammar and spelling.

Best of luck in your learning!

Source: This tutorial has been adapted from "Business Communication for Success" Version 1.0 by Scott McLean. Copyright 2010. ISBN 978-1-4533-2742-5 (Licensee Product: Workplace Communication), reprinted with permission from FlatWorld.