

Before You Click “Send” Email Checklist

October 13, 2008 by [Judith](#)

I get contacted most about e-mail misunderstandings. Always followed with the question “Do you have some tips so I can avoid this happening again?”

Most misunderstandings can be avoided by one side or the other not rushing through their e-mail activities and ensuring your e-mail will be received, read and perceived with the desired meaning by the intended recipient.

Here’s my checklist of the items I have found are the biggest trouble makers that need to be checked before clicking Send:

1. Make sure your e-mail includes a courteous greeting and closing. Helps to make your e-mail not seem demanding or terse.
2. Address your contact with the appropriate level of formality and make sure you spelled their name correctly.
3. Spell check so that you reflect your level of education. E-mails with typos are simply not taken as seriously.
4. Read your e-mail out loud to ensure the tone is that which you desire. Try to avoid relying on formatting for emphasis; rather choose the words that reflect your meaning instead. A few additions of the words “please” and “thank you” go a long way!
5. Be sure you are including all relevant details or information necessary to understand your request or point of view. Generalities can many times cause confusion and unnecessary back and forths.
6. Are you using proper sentence structure? First word capitalized with appropriate punctuation? Multiple instances of !!! or ??? are perceived as rude or condescending.
7. If your e-mail is emotionally charged, walk away from the computer and wait to reply. Review the Sender’s e-mail again so that you are sure you are not reading anything into the e-mail that simply isn’t there.
8. If sending attachments, did you ask first when would be the best time to send? Did you check file size to make sure you don’t fill the other side’s inbox causing all subsequent e-mail to bounce?
9. Refrain from using the Reply to All feature to CYA or give your opinion to those who may not be interested. In most cases replying to the sender alone is your best course of action.
10. Make one last check that the address or addresses in the To: field are those you wish to send your reply to.

If the above issues are considered in your e-mail activities, misunderstandings will be avoided and you will be known as a pleasure to communicate with. It’s a win-win!

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