



tipsheet

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Effective Emailing in the Mobile Device World

This Tipsheet expands on the concepts presented in the September Tipsheet, Effective Emailing. With the increasing use of non-traditional email devices (e.g. Blackberry, Palm Treo), you'll want to get your message across as efficiently as possible. To achieve this goal, your email messages need to be brief and direct.

1. Understand your audience

- If you want to use a salutation, address the recipient the way you would in person. That is, if you call someone by his or her first name in person, do the same in your email salutation.
- Consider the position and functional area of your recipient. Is this person familiar with abbreviations or acronyms that you might place into your message to aid brevity? If not, be sure to explain all concepts clearly.
- Recognize the time constraints and the amount of emails your recipient receives daily. As the seniority level increases, shorter, more direct messages are better (this isn't the time to impress an executive with cumbersome grammar). The most senior people will have the least amount of time to read, understand, and respond to your message.

2. Develop a useful subject line

- Keep your subject lines short. Research shows that subject lines longer than 50 characters aren't as effective as shorter ones.
- Place pertinent information in the subject line (e.g. Developer's Meeting, Tues., 9/7 – 7:30pm, Bldg. A).
- Grab the reader's attention with modifiers, nouns, and verbs (e.g. Free Blackberries Offered to All Managers).

3. Develop the message

- Use a direct approach. Place the most important information at the beginning of the message.
- Keep messages brief and to-the-point. Research indicates that people don't like to scroll to the end of a message.
- Use bullets and numbered lists. Usability studies reveal that people like to read messages that are broken up.
- Make sure you "highlight" a needed response or call to action. But be careful -- not all devices support bolded characters and italics.

4. Include an appropriate closing/signature

- Avoid using graphics in your signature file. This unnecessary data increases the size of your message and slows the download process – kind of like pushing a pig through a python.
- Avoid using quotations in your signature (e.g. "One who asks..."). They lengthen your message unnecessarily.
- Include your relevant contact information in your signature line. As your recipient could be traveling, be sure he or she knows how to reach you.

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