

Emails

Email is one of the most commonly-used forms of communication in the international business world. It is used extensively within companies to circulate information, requests, results, instructions, recommendations, minutes of meetings, etc. Email is an effective, rapid and relatively cheap means of communicating with customers and suppliers, both nationally and internationally. Because of the brevity, rapidity and relative informality of emails, it is important to check that all information has been given and that the tone is appropriate.

Layout

The emails opposite show where the following different components appear (though a-g may be in a different order depending on the system being used).

- a name of the person sending the email
- b name of the person / people the email is addressed to
- c person / people who will also receive the mail though it is not addressed directly to them
- d person / people who will receive a copy without other people knowing
- e date (and time)
- f information about the content of the email
- g files, documents, etc. sent separately rather than included in the actual message or body of the email
- h opening
- i body of the email
- j closing
- k name and job title

Language styles

Emails are usually shorter than other forms of communication and the language is simple and concise.

The tone for emails to superiors or people outside the company should be formal. But

'in-house' emails between colleagues can be semi-formal.

When replying to mails, it is important not to reply simply 'yes' or 'no' to questions without referring back to the question and not to use pronouns out of context. However, if returning the sender's email with your reply, by using 'Reply', the sender will have their original to refer to.

Useful phrases and notations

Opening and closing

For semi-formal emails, *Hello* and *Hi* are common openings and *Best wishes* or *All the best* are often used to close.

When writing to several people, you can address the group, e.g. *Dear Project Managers*

Formal emails, like letters, start with *Dear Sir / Madam* or *Dear Mr / Ms X* and close with *Yours sincerely* or *Yours faithfully* as appropriate (see **Letters**, page 16).

Exchanging information

Could you mail me the sales figures for last month by 4pm?

Here is the brochure on the new product you asked for (see attachment).

I'm sending you the board's recommendations with this mail.

Please note that today's appraisal meetings have been cancelled. They will be rescheduled for the same times next Monday.

Just to let you know, I sent the attached minutes of Tuesday's Production meeting to all the participants.

Replying to emails

Thank you for your mail.

I got your mail, thanks.

Sorry I didn't get back to you yesterday but ...

Re your request for last month's sales figures ...

I couldn't open the attachment you sent - please resend it as soon as you can ...

Thanks for the information about the appraisal meetings. I'll make a note of it.

Sample emails

Formal

style guide - Message

Reply Reply All Forward Follow Up

From: Michael Hart, Despatch Assistant
To: Raehid Akkouch
Cc: Ray Hopper, Despatch Manager, Pascal Winterbottom, Accounts Department
Bcc: Jo Berry, Sales Manager
Sent: 3 June 200_ 09:47
Subject: Re: Delivery delay
Attachment: Contract

Dear Mr Akkouch

Thank you for your mail. I have checked to find out why your order hasn't been delivered and it seems we haven't received payment yet. I am sending you a copy of our contract, which states that all payments must be made in advance.

Please accept our apologies for any misunderstanding. If you wish to cancel your order, please let me know ASAP.

Yours sincerely
Michael Hart
Despatch Assistant

Semi-formal

style guide - Message

Reply Reply All Forward Follow Up

From: Pat White, Sales Manager
To: Kim Potter, Sue Young, Harry Taylor, Jacques Benoit
Cc: Val Murrey, Managing Director
Sent: 3 February 200_ 11:08
Subject: Email overload

Hi Everyone

Apparently, complaints have been made to Mr Murrey about the unnecessary quantity of emails currently circulating in the company. The finance and production departments in particular feel that much of their time is wasted reading mails that do not directly concern them. It has also been brought to Mr Murrey's attention that we in Sales are the chief offenders!

I recognise that I am partly to blame as I did ask you to keep the other departments informed of our activities. I would now ask you, however, only to cc in other members of staff on communications which are of direct concern to them.

I know I can rely on your co-operation in this matter.

Best wishes
Pat

