Email Q&A

By Rachel Melanie Mills

*HR Intern Rachel Mills did web research to find the most relevant responses to common questions about email management. This is her report.*

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| **Question** | **Web link and quote of answer** |
| How do I deal with people who are constantly cc’ing me on emails I don’t need to be reading? | <http://www.philcooke.com/stop-ccing-so-many-people-on-your-emails/>  Simple clarification?  “I've clarified with people that I work with that To: means you want me to do something, CC means you want me to know something but don't require anything of me, and BCC means you want me to know something but don't want others on the e-mail to know that I'm seeing it. And for e-mail management, I created a rule in Outlook that any message where I'm not in the To line is not put in my inbox. If someone wanted me to do something, they'd send it To me.” |
| How do I keep myself from being distracted by incoming email when I am working on a project? | <http://lifehacker.com/top-10-ways-to-defeat-distractions-and-get-your-work-do-1580198318>  Numbers 1, 2, and 6-9 (webpage goes more into depth for each number).   1. Don't Go Overboard: Distractions Are a Necessary Part of Productivity   2. Train your Brain to Focus  6. Track How You Spend Your Time  7. Silence Your Excessive Notifications  8. Block or Hide Distracting Websites or Apps  9. Go Full Screen |
| What do I need to do to make sure people read and understand my emails? | <https://businesscollective.com/9-ways-to-make-sure-your-email-gets-read/>  Key Details:   * Make the first sentence count * Be concise * Examine your audience’s motivation * Use a snappy subject line * Be engaging and use everyday vocabulary |
| How should I manage the amount of time I spend on email? | <https://hbr.org/2014/02/limit-the-time-you-spend-on-email>  “The best way to keep email from crowding out the rest of your professional and personal priorities is to set an email budget: a specific amount of time you’ll spend on email, and a plan for how you’ll make the most of that time. Like a financial budget, an email budget helps you make the best use of a limited resource — in this case, your time.” |
| What do I need to do so that my emails don’t come across as harsh or judgemental? | <http://blog.collabspot.com/2014/12/03/avoid-rude-emails/>  “Your subject line can make or break you. If you’re cold-emailing, it’s especially important to craft the right subject line. [A recent statistic shows that 69% of people will mark an email as spam based on the subject line alone](http://www.convinceandconvert.com/convince-convert/15-email-statistics-that-are-shaping-the-future/).”   * Use a greeting and a closing instead of disregarding a person’s “humanity” |
| I know there are tools out there for better handling email? Which are the best ones? [focus on plugins for gmail] | This link shows a direct list of the different types along with details about each:  <https://www.diygenius.com/15-free-gmail-plugins-that-will-improve-your-email-workflow/>  More options for extensions and their ratings out of 5 stars:  <https://www.process.st/gmail-extensions/> |
| Who should I cc and when? | \*Could use the link to the first question on this sheet as a simple clarification\*  <https://www.businessemailetiquette.com/to-or-cc/>  “Use the To: field for those who you desire to have a conversation with and want to encourage their input.  The Cc: field is best used in new conversations and is used to FYI without an expectation of a reply or additional input. Now here’s the important part — if you need to simply inform others about the outcome of the topic at hand — discuss this first with those already involved and start a new e-mail that includes all involved.” |
| When is an email better than a call? | <http://grasshopper.com/resources/articles/talking-to-customers-phone-vs-email/>  Stats to consider:   * Phone calls lead to sales 10x more often than emails * 57% of people think that email is spam unless it directly relates to them (even if they know the vendor) * Email open rates for sales are highest on Friday afternoons * Phone leads can be marked by any marketing source and can be included in lead scoring   <http://grasshopper.com/resources/articles/talking-to-customers-phone-vs-email/>  “I find email, on the other hand, to be far more flexible and thorough, and actually find they *increase* my productivity.  I also agree that sometimes phone calls are necessary…although not nearly as often as many people assume. For instance, I’m okay with hopping on a phone call pre-sale because I believe it improves conversion rate and helps to prove there’s a real person behind the email address.”   * When you do not need an immediate response * You will not be able to go back and review the conversation in a phone call, so make sure you either take notes during the phone call, or just take the email route |
| Should I include a signature in my email? What should it say? | <http://www.yesware.com/blog/email-signature/>   * Limit it to three or four lines of text * Include an image * Make it personal * Do not include your email address in it * Examples are shown at the bottom |
| How do I make sure I don’t say anything I’ll later regret on email? | <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/21/your-money/what-to-think-about-before-you-hit-send.html?_r=0>   * #1 Question: “Is this going to one person?” (make sure “reply all” was never selected)   Use “cc” sparingly.  ¶ Make one point per e-mail. If you have more than one point, send separate e-mails. (I’ve found this to be true. If you add a second topic to an e-mail, the recipient often fails to notice it.)  ¶ Be mindful of your tone. Bend over backward to make sure that things don’t get lost in translation in your writing. Sarcasm is especially dangerous.  ¶ Don’t overuse the high-priority flag. Remember the boy who cried (or e-mailed) wolf.  ¶ Don’t forward chain e-mails. Don’t forward chain e-mails. Don’t forward chain e-mails.  ¶ Check proper grammar and punctuation.   * Check to make sure you did not use any acronyms or abbreviations as you would use in text messages * Try reading it aloud:   + <http://www.writerightwords.com/why-you-should-read-your-work-aloud/> |
| How do I manage other people’s expectations about how long it will take me to respond to email? | <https://www.entrepreneurs-journey.com/8750/expectation-management/>  Major bullet points from this:   * Managing the expectations from people who view your online profiles (can be assimilated to emailing, I presume) * Managing expectations in product delivery * Overcome the challenge of preconceptions * Manipulate expectations so you can use them to your advantage * Do not over manage these expectation |
| How do I know I’m not missing or losing track of anything important in my email? | <http://blog.hubspot.com/blog/tabid/6307/bid/32874/13-Things-to-Check-Before-Hitting-Send-on-Your-Next-Marketing-Email.aspx#sm.00000yh9kzum0af57sk4xf20479u8>   * Read it over, aloud * Go back to the email you are responding to and compare it to the one you have written * Check for broken or forgotten links and attachments * If you are sharing anything you copied from somewhere else, make sure copyright laws are consistent with your email |
| Using gmail, what is the best way to get a reminder that I need to follow up on an email on a certain day? Ideally the message would come into my inbox the day I choose. | **Plugins that are Available for Free:**  Right Inbox  <http://www.rightinbox.com/>   * Schedule emails to be sent   + ex: 1 hour from now, tomorrow morning, etc. * Email reminders * Recurring emails * Private email notes * 4 ½ stars (8196)   Boomerang  <http://www.boomeranggmail.com/l/email-reminders.html>   * Sets reminders to go back and check on an email or prepare another one to be sent if the first one has not been responded to   Gmail Snooze  <https://gmail.googleblog.com/2011/07/gmail-snooze-with-apps-script.html>   * When you open a message, instead of ignoring (and possibly forgetting) it, you can hit the snooze button. * The drop-down menu will give you options to pause the message for a few minutes, hours, or days. When time’s up, you’ll get a reminder to follow up on that email.   Signals  <https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/hubspot-sales/oiiaigjnkhngdbnoookogelabohpglmd?hl=en>   * 4 ½ stars (8744) * shows you when and how often your email was opened * Shows if and where links were clicked through. * the recipient has no idea the email is being tracked * Signals also lets you schedule emails to be sent later |
| Extra Useful Gmail Plugins | Rapportive  <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UP5RaquVV6U>   * Shows all information about the person you are communicating with   Unroll.me  <https://unroll.me/features/>   * Helps filter the emails that you want to see * Helps stop subscriptions to unwanted emails   MxHero  <http://mxhero.com/>   * removes from the recipient’s inbox five minutes after it’s read. * lets you know if your email was opened * tracks which links are clicked * allows you to see if attachments were viewed |
| **What does research say about employees who are expected to answer email at all hours?** | **Pressure to answer emails after-hours leads to stress and detachment – even when there’s not actually much email to answer**  Expecting employees to answer email after regular work hours prevents people from ever fully disengaging from work and leads to chronic stress and exhaustion, finds [new research](http://aom.org/News/Press-Releases/Pressing-employees-to-respond-to-emails-after-hours-is-a-recipe-for-trouble,-study-finds.aspx) from Colorado State University. Interestingly, it’s not just the added work associated with answering email after hours; rather, the expectation itself “creates anticipatory stress” and “influences employees’ ability to detach from work regardless of the [time required for email](http://quickbase.intuit.com/blog/email-is-killing-productivity-study-finds) … Even during the times when there are no actual emails to act upon, the mere norm of availability and the actual anticipation of work create a constant stressor that precludes an employee from work detachment.” The authors note that while those norms might benefit organizations in the short-run, they can be quite damaging in the long run, as people become increasingly stressed and emotionally detach from work. They urge managers to consider mitigating practices, such as weekly email-free days, rotating schedules, or other methods of reducing pressure to maintain email connectivity after leaving the office. |

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