

# Your Career, Accelerated.

## Hit the Ground Running — Communicate Through E-Mail Effectively

The following list offers helpful tips for communicating electronically in the business world. These pointers will help save you time as well as ensure that your audience reads your message.

- 1. Watch what you write.** CSC's e-mail policy states unequivocally: "There should be no expectation of electronic communication media privacy on the part of the User. Users should be cognizant at all times that electronic media messages are public messages, typically accessible not only by CSC but also by any number of other entities at any time. Users should also be aware that files or messages that the User has deleted may be stored elsewhere and are not necessarily erased from the network."
- 2. Consider face-to-face or telephone messages.** E-mail is generally not the best communication mode for highly important, complex or sensitive issues — particularly where serious discussion is needed.
- 3. List recipients alphabetically.** List recipients in alphabetical order by last name to reduce the chances of unintentional omissions and to expedite verification of recipients.
- 4. Proofread your messages.** Review what you write — preferably through the eyes of the receiver — before hitting the Send button.
  - Edit to make certain your message is clear and contains the essential information.
  - Proofread for word choices ("wood" does not mean "would"), misspellings and grammar mistakes.



**5. Make readability a priority.** Reading computer screen messages is harder than reading the printed page.

- Be concise. A to-the-point, well-written e-mail message saves the writer's and the reader's time.
- Make paragraphs short, and put a blank line between each paragraph to make your reader want to read your e-mail.
- If you are making points, use bullets or numbers for each point and separate them to promote readability.

**6. Do not SHOUT; do not flame.** WHEN YOU WRITE IN ALL UPPERCASE LETTERS, IT LOOKS AS IF YOU ARE SHOUTING. While it may be easier to type in all uppercase or lowercase letters, the practice annoys readers, slows them down and can result in a misunderstood message. Flaming is caustic, inflammatory, insensitive and critical writing — equally dangerous for management and non-management staff alike.

**7. Don't send "mad".** Never send a business-related e-mail message when you are angry. Weigh your words carefully. Build in some time between writing and sending the message. Once you hit the Send button, the message is irretrievable. Do not burn bridges.

**8. Leave a history.** People who send and receive many e-mails cannot be expected to remember each message, so:

- Reply promptly to e-mails.
- Include a message thread for context. Lotus Notes provides fail-safe message threads; simply click one of the options under "Reply," rather than clicking on "New Memo."
- Avoid single-word, out-of-context replies such as "Yes" or "No." Without history, the message is likely to confuse and frustrate the reader and waste their time by compelling them to reconstruct a context.

**9. Treat with care.** Treat e-mail messages with the care you would give any other client or employee correspondence.

**10. Watch your spelling.** Misspellings in e-mail are easy to make. Activate your Lotus Notes spell-checking tool. (From the Lotus Notes desktop, go to Tools > Preferences [Mail tab] > Spell checking. Put a check in "Automatically check mail messages for misspellings before sending" and click "OK.")

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