

# Risk Management Considerations for Creating an Email Etiquette Policy

Email is one of the most common communication tools in the workplace. It's quick, easy and portable thanks to handheld devices. However, with the increased reliance on email as a primary method of communication comes the need for an etiquette policy to ensure that it is used in an appropriate manner.

## An Email Etiquette Policy has Three Important Benefits:

1. It outlines the need for professionalism in email communications. This includes proper language, grammar and formatting that reflects the company's brand and voice.
2. It can increase efficiency. Properly written emails and responses can deal with an issue the first time, reducing the time spent on any one concern.
3. It demonstrates the risks of improper communication by protecting an organization against liability.

## Helpful Tips to Consider When Creating an Email Etiquette Policy:

1. Emails should be answered quickly. If all of the issues can't be answered immediately, a reply should be sent indicating that there will be a delay. Give an estimated time expectation for a complete response.
2. Read the email carefully to make sure all questions and concerns are answered. This can help to eliminate further back and forth emails.
3. The email shouldn't be too long. Messages should be straightforward to avoid losing the reader's concentration.
4. Proper spelling, grammar and punctuation are important. Emails are a business correspondence and should follow the same writing techniques used in letters or reports.

5. Avoid abbreviations and symbols. Don't assume that the reader understands what "LOL" or "BTW" means.
6. If there is more than one person in the "To" field, specify to whom any actions are directed to avoid confusion.
7. Before replying or forwarding, make sure that previous email content is appropriate. Delete before sending if necessary.
8. Make sure attachments aren't too big so as to not crash the recipient's system.
9. Create templates for frequently asked questions. This saves time and increases efficiency.
10. Before "Replying to All", think about whether everyone needs to see the response.
11. Consider whether it is necessary to include attachments when replying.
12. Do not allow chain letters or joke emails to circulate.
13. Disclaimers and notices of confidentiality should be added to the bottom of every email.
14. Re-read emails before they are sent to make sure:
  - a. All questions have been answered using simple, straightforward language;
  - b. The content is professional, and;
  - c. Spelling and grammar is correct;

Having a well thought out email policy can help ensure that communications from and within your organization adequately reflect your professional image.

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