

E-mail Etiquette for Cybersecurity Professionals



Indiana University of Pennsylvania

1. Confidentiality is never guaranteed. Don't write anything you wouldn't want to be re-posted.
Good: "I don't think this is a good topic for e-mail, so let's try to meet and discuss."
Poor: "This is very sensitive, so please keep this email between you and me."
2. Include a clear and concise subject line. Never leave the subject line blank.
Good: "This weekend's upgrade re-scheduled"
"Question about your proposal"
"Reimbursement guidelines revised"
Vague: "See attached"
"Upgrade"
"IMPORTANT!"
3. Use a professional salutation. Avoid starting right in with your message.
Good: "Dear Michael,"
"Good morning,"
"Hi, Michael."
Breezy: "Hey"
"Hello there"
"Yo, John." (Do not shorten names unless you are sure of the person's preferred name.)
4. Keep the message clear and concise.
Good: "Thanks for your presentation today. I have two quick questions for you. First....
Second...."
"I would like to set up a meeting to discuss today's presentation with you, or we could speak by phone if that is better for you. I'm generally available this week in the afternoons. Have a good day."

Too vague and long: “Thanks for your presentation today. I’ve been thinking about it and have a number of ideas I’d like to run by you. Sorry in advance if this e-mails runs long, but I wanted to get these thoughts out of my head before I forget them and get your reaction. First of all...”

5. Avoid humor, sarcasm, and anger.

Good: “Congratulations to Michelle for a great presentation today. We can definitely put her ideas to work for us.”

Grating: “Way to rock and roll in today’s presentation, Michelle. Bet you thought the presentation was going to be rough, but we got rid of all the crazies last year (haha)!”

Angry: “Michelle, regarding your presentation, the name of the company IS NOT “Syn-tech Scientific” but “Syntech Scientific” – see the difference. Getting the company name wrong is never acceptable. Best, Joe.”

6. Be aware of cultural differences. Some cultures are more formal in email communication than others. If someone writes in a formal way, respond formally.

Good: “Dear Mr. Abal hassan, Thank you for your recent inquiry. Unfortunately, we do not offer the service you request, but I can recommend another company that does offer the service. Would you like me to ask someone there to contact you? Please contact us again in the future if we may be of help. Best wishes.”

Abrupt: “Sorry. We do not offer that service. Please let us know if we can help you with something else.”

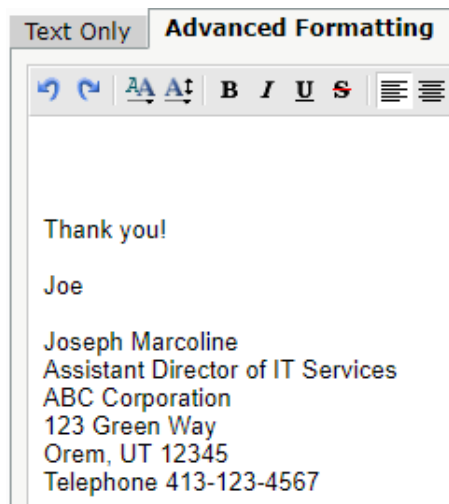
7. Proofread every message before you send it, and don’t rely on spell-check.

Good: “I apologize for the mistake in your invoice.”

Sloppy: “I apologize for the mistake in you’re invoice.”

8. Include a proper closing and signature block.

Good closing and signature:



Abrupt closing and signature:

