



## EFFECTIVE E-MAIL COMMUNICATION

As one of the most revolutionary communication tools in recent history, e-mail offers several major benefits over other communication tools: *convenience*, *cost-effectiveness*, *speed* and *reach*. But e-mail is also a quite vulnerable tool due to its impersonal, asynchronous nature which often makes it susceptible to misinterpretation. Therefore, the way we use e-mail can make all the difference. The following 10 tips are a compilation of some of the most basic, but highly important rules of good e-mail use:

### **1. Get straight to the point.**

E-mail is designed and best suited for brief, time-sensitive and concise information. By following this, you show respect for not only people's time, but also attention.

### **2. Craft a meaningful subject line.**

A subject line that provides a good reference and "title" to the e-mail you are sending will make the communication process efficient for both the sender and the receiver, but especially for the receiver.

### **3. Follow proper grammar, spelling and punctuation rules.**

Modern spell check tools can help you with most of grammar, spelling and

punctuation rules. However, never fail to proofread your e-mails before hitting the "send" button because many common errors require human attention as they are not visible to auto checks.

### **4. Employ proper structure and layout.**

Since reading from a screen is often more difficult than reading from paper, use short paragraphs or lines between each paragraph to break up the content visually. When making points, number them or mark each point as separate for added emphasis.

### **5. Avoid using lower or upper-case letters only.**

A message that is composed of all lower-case letters can be considered as too casual, and a message that has all upper-case letters is the written equivalent of yelling. Vary the use of lower and upper-case letters to showcase proper capitalization rules.

### **6. Be aware of the tone of voice you are conveying through your e-mails.**

As a basic example, an extremely short e-mail can be misinterpreted as anger or frustration. If the tone of voice you are conveying as you are preparing your e-mail starts to sound questionable, it might be better to

stop writing that e-mail and talk to the person directly.

### **7. Avoid using abbreviations and short forms.**

Avoiding abbreviations and short form will minimize any missed or misinterpreted references at the receiver's end.

### **8. Use the "high priority" flag with caution.**

Only flag very important e-mails because overusing this feature will make it lose its impact and could negatively affect your future communication.

### **9. Provide a preliminary response to time-sensitive requests.**

If you sense urgency in the sender's e-mail, respond with a quick note letting them know when they can expect a complete response.

### **10. Be aware of privacy issues involved in forwarding other people's e-mails.**

Ask for approval from the sender before forwarding. Remember to remove any lists of previous recipients out of respect for privacy, and to show common courtesy.

## COST CONTROL

Controlling costs is an extremely important practice because it often has a direct impact on the financial picture of an enterprise. An adequate cost control strategy does not only allow for the efficient allocation of resources, but also offers a way for managers and business owners to show strong profits by minimizing costs.

In this edition of InfoPays, we look at different tools and techniques you can use to implement an efficient cost control strategy for your enterprise:

### 1. Collect data on your costs.

Compile an inventory list of costs that your company is incurring and organize them into relevant groups for easier management.

### 2. Control the budget.

Cost control is in a direct relationship with budgets. If you follow a budget, track your actual costs against the forecasts and inspect any significant variances.

### 3. Communicate cost awareness.

All employees should know the basic financial strategy of the company they work for and understand the financial implications of their everyday decisions. Each employee should have access to sufficient information about the costs involved in their activities, and a way to learn about alternatives.

### 4. Analyze your fixed costs.

Determine which costs the company incurs regardless of sales volume. Analyze each cost separately and seek

ways to decrease them.

### 5. Analyze your variable costs.

The costs that are tied to sales volume, also known as variable costs, often require close attention. Look at the relationship between your sales volume and your costs.

### 6. Monitor your costs and expenses on a regular basis.

Effective cost control can help you increase your profits under the same or even reduced volume of sales. Keep a close eye on the patterns that emerge from your costs incurred on a daily or weekly basis, and know the reasons for any radical increases.

