How to Stop Writing Average Emails: 16 Quick Tips

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The adage that first impressions mean everything is truer than ever within the world of emails.

See walls of chunky text or misspelled words, and you'll likely bounce or lose focus, regardless if a c-level executive, family member or some marketeer pitching stories wrote the email.

Bad email etiquette can ruin relationships among your clients, team and partners.

After experiencing failed communication due to my own faulty emails and then coaching other writers and clients through this common problem, I've allowed the following principles to guide clear and conscious emails.

Following are 16 tips on how to stop writing average emails. Be different.

1. First, don't have a goofy email name

This is obvious for most, but I do see emails coming from YouCould@, MakeMoney@, etc. Use real names – goofy ones sound unprofessional.

For personal emails, two formulas always work: first name and initial of last name or full names, such as ronl@ or ronlieback@.

For other emails used for a team to say access a client's website or performance reporting, use more generic terms, such as team@, sales@, etc.

2. Clear subject lines

Don't be vague here. The two primary points of a subject line are what the email is about and the action needed. This keeps things simple and clears up any confusion.

This formula also helps you find emails when searching.

Also, you can influence openings by using brackets and parentheses at the start of the subject line. Use them to set the tone and capitalize that part of the email, leaving the rest standard sentence capitalization. An example for a team member:

[Edits Needed] XXX's ghostwriting article needs final edits

An example for a client:

[Action Needed] Ghostwriting article on email etiquette needs approval

3. Change the subject line when replying

When replying to an email, update the subject line for clarity.

One way to quickly do this is:

[Ron Response] Re: Did you get the new SEO report?

4. One subject per thread

This is a golden rule of clarity. When answering an email,

only discuss the main subject of the thread. This makes things less confusing and much easier to find responses when searching email threads (that's why you always need a clear subject line explaining the necessary subject and action).

5. Hello…Bye: addressing recipients

Firstly, always address the recipient by name. Don't just begin speaking. That shows that you have zero time for them and don't care (although emails should be short and to the point).

Don't use slang or street language, such as "Hey."

Think of the way you'd address a respected war veteran or 100-year-old lady. Be sincere but simple.

My favorite three are:

- Hello (name)
- Good morning (name)
- Good evening (name)

Follow the same process when saying goodbye.

My three favorites are:

- Best
- Thank you
- Onwards

The latter is a favorite I use after reading Howard Schultz's *Onwards*. I use it more with partners over clients unless something is super exciting.

6. Customize signature to amplify you and your business

Always have a customized signature that at the minimum list:

Also, if you regularly publish on third-party publications, wrote a book or were featured on a reputable media channel, mention that in your signature: Read my latest book “title”; read my latest *Entrepreneur* article; etc.

7. Format with short paragraphs and watch funny stuff

Ever get an email that is just one long paragraph? This brick of text appears challenging, and you’ll lose focus.

Use shorter paragraphs. One or two sentences.

And keep sentences short and concise. This allows the readers to get your message quickly and clearly.

Also, be weary of using exclamation points and emojis.

8. Never write emotionally

When emotions are flowing, especially in a negative or pressured manner, don’t write your emails. If things are urgent, like an urgent email from a client about a missed deadline, take a second and breathe. Go for a quick walk. Open a book. Do anything for some time but think about responding.

Then respond when refreshed, or if you deal with someone who expects extremely urgent replies, respond that you’ll get right back ASAP. Then take that mental break.

This is also the genius of drafts. Create them for super essential emails, and sleep on them. The following day, you’ll

most likely change what you want to say, and that message will be better and more engaging.

9. Respond in a timely manner

Response times vary on urgency.

I expect my team to respond to clients by EOD for urgent things, such as things that can negatively affect the client's business. As for others, 24 hours is fine. As part of my personal time management, I only check emails three times daily, though others like those in sales need to check much more.

If you know you need more time to reply, send a quick return within that 24-hour window to explain that, along with an exact day they can expect the return reply:

Hello Pam,

Hope all is well. Let me look into this deeper and get back to you by Friday.

Best,

Ron

10. Don't send/respond to emails on the weekend or off-hours

Unless it's part of your job. Here are a few reasons:

- This shows prospective clients you're desperate.
- This shows clients or your team that you're nervous, which shows bad time organization.
- This shows workaholicism, something that pairs well with a lack of focus.

Also, you'll train others to think that you're always "on," and they'll start expecting responses from you during off-hours. And if it's truly an emergency, like a client website crashing or something bad for a client/team member, text or call.

11. Know your time zones

Know the time zones of those you're emailing. Again, this shows that you took the extra time to learn something, which shows you care.

Imagine getting an email from a client in Israel when they're starting your day, and you're heading to bed that says, "Good morning." Again, this shows they're not focused.

12. Add your recipient's email address last

How many times did you hit send by accident? Systems like Google Gmail have a buffer zone of sending, but not all others do. This can save you from sounding pompous when retracting an incomplete or unedited email.

13. Watch your reply all

Email is public. Always double-check your recipient field before hitting send. You may talk completely different to one person versus the other, and messages can get confusing (or you in trouble if negativity is there).

Also, remember others may respond all with a reply for only you. Keep that in mind before sending the same email to multiple people.

14. Don’t use “sorry”

The worst is “sorry for the delay.” This sends signals that you’re unorganized. Instead, use the phrase “excuse the delay.” There’s no need to go into details.

Another wise practice is to ditch the use of “sorry” entirely. The word shows weakness. You don’t want to sound weak. Ever.

15. Talk to the reader

Minimize the use of “I” and talk directly to the recipient. This is especially true for clients.

I get emails daily: Hey Ron, I was once the owner of a seven-figure tech company, and I learned much. I can…blah, blah, blah.

Email deleted before I even finish.

Always speak directly to the recipient and keep as many “I”s out as possible.

16. Change negatives to positives

Words carry meaning on both the conscious and subconscious. Stay away from using terms like “I can’t” or “My company wishes it could” or “If only I could.”

These are various levels of negative talk and can harm your overall positive messaging. Without getting deep into neuroscience, these types of conversations create negative programming for both you and your client. And the more someone hears these things, the more they will become a habit.

Use positives. Replace the can’ts with the cans and psychologically produce a more positive conversation. Instead of saying, “My company wishes it could produce more timely

results," keep things in the present tense, saying "My company produces more timely work as we focus on your…"

Emails are the make-it or break-it forms of communication, even more so nowadays as remote work changed the communication factor for many entrepreneurs.

These quick tips will help you stand out among the noise, simplifying and clarifying your messages. They'll make you a more confident email writer, which will help you become a more confident entrepreneur.

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