Using Email as a Business Communication Tool

Email has made communication faster and is in constant use in the business world. However, as in all other methods of business communication, you should follow certain guidelines to use emails to your greatest advantage.

Some Tips for Business Email Messages

1. **Good news or neutral messages:**
   - Begin with the good news in paragraph one
   - Promote related business interests or include other relevant information in paragraph two
   - Close on a positive note by referring to the news again or making a positive comment in paragraph three

2. **Bad news or refusal messages**
   - Use a buffer or neutral statement in paragraph one
   - Give reasons for the bad news or refusal in paragraph two, and then imply or state the bad news (these can be split into two separate paragraphs if necessary)
   - Offer any alternative suggestions or benefits offered to the reader in paragraph three
   - End with a positive close

3. **Persuasive or sales messages:**
   - Begin by getting the receiver's attention in the first paragraph and the subject line
   - Show a need for a product or service in paragraph two
   - Say how this need can be satisfied and make your request in paragraph three
   - Urge action that is easy to accomplish in paragraph four

Business Email Dos and Do Nots:

**Do:**

- Use the subject line and ensure your subject is relevant to the topic of your message. If there is more than one topic, list all topics, or send separate emails.
- Use a suitable salutation with the receiver's name.
- Be concise.
- Maintain the thread of your message without going off-topic. If answering questions related to a long document, cut and paste the sections you are responding to along with your responses. For a short document, it is appropriate to send it back whole.
- Include your contact information in your signature.
• Pay attention to standard rules of grammar and punctuation. Run the message through a spellchecker before sending, but be warned that spellcheckers also make mistakes, so go over it yourself one final time.
• Be as courteous and formal as you would in any other method of business communication.
• Account for the tone of your message. Since the receiver cannot see your facial expressions or hear your tone, she/he may mistake your meaning if your words are vague and/or negative.

Do Not:

• Begin your email with "Hey" or "Hi".
• Attach documents unless absolutely necessary. If you do, ensure that the files attached are in a format that is visible to the receiver.
• Send personal information unless it is completely relevant.
• Send private emails if you would be uncomfortable with seeing them pinned on a public bulletin board.
• Use emoticons.
• Send any unsolicited mail, chain mails, joke forwards and the like.
• Include jokes or your philosophy of life in your signature.
• Forward email sent only to you without permission from the sender.
• Forget to be as formal and correct as in any letter you may mail to a business associate or contact.

Use these guidelines to help you to appropriately use email as a successful business communication tool.

References:
