

# E-MAIL ETIQUETTE

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*With the proliferation of e-mail usage, it is important to learn appropriate e-mail etiquette in professional communications.*

## Applying for Jobs Using E-mail

Many companies prefer to accept applications via e-mail. Below are some important things to keep in mind when applying for available positions by e-mail:

- Avoid being too informal or casual in your correspondence.
- Submit both a cover letter and a resume.
- There are two options for e-mailing your cover letter:
  1. You can attach both your cover letter and resume to the e-mail as separate documents.
    - Convert all attachments to PDF files to avoid formatting problems.
    - In your e-mail, simply note that your cover letter and resume are attached. Keep the e-mail brief and professional. See below for an example:

Dear Mr. Anderson:

I am writing in regard to the marketing assistant position advertised on Shakespeare Publishing's Web site. I have attached both my cover letter and resume for your review.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Chris Jones

2. Another option is to treat the body of your e-mail as the cover letter.
  - Your e-mail should be written in the same way as a formal paper letter, with the exception that you do not need to include an address block. For more information about writing a cover letter, refer to the "Cover Letters" handout available in the career development office or online at [www.calvin.edu/career](http://www.calvin.edu/career).
  - Attach your resume as a PDF file.
- Address the recipients of your e-mail as "Mr. or Ms." until they explicitly state that it is acceptable to use their first name.
- Make sure that your e-mail address is professionally appropriate. Otherwise, your message may be mistaken as spam and deleted.
- The subject line of your e-mail should be specific and should inform the recipient of your reason for writing (e.g., Application for XYZ Position).
- Sign the e-mail with your first and last name and contact information.

## Using E-mail at Work

Knowing how to use e-mail appropriately at work is a necessity, as it is part of your professional image. If you want to impress on every front, steer clear of these common e-mail mistakes:

1. *Using a vague subject line*
  - Do not send a message that reads “no subject.” Given the volume of e-mail that each person receives, the subject is essential if you want your message read. The recipient will decide the order in which he or she reads e-mail based on who sent it and what it is about.
2. *Not personalizing your message to the recipient*
  - Failure to include the person's name can make you and your e-mail seem cold.
3. *Not accounting for tone*
  - When you communicate in person, 90% of the message is non-verbal. E-mail has no body language. The reader cannot see your face or hear your tone of voice, so choose your words carefully and thoughtfully.
4. *Forgetting to check for spelling and grammar*
  - If you don't read through your e-mail to check for mistakes, people will question the caliber of other work you do. Use proper capitalization and punctuation and always check your spelling.
5. *Writing the great American novel*
  - E-mail is meant to be brief. Keep your message short. Use only a few paragraphs and a few sentences per paragraph.
6. *Forwarding without permission*
  - Too often confidential information has gone global because of someone's lack of judgment in forwarding e-mail. Unless you request permission, do not forward anything that was sent just to you.
7. *Thinking that no one else will ever see your e-mail*
  - Once it has left your mailbox, you have no idea where your e-mail will end up. Use other means to communicate personal or sensitive information.
8. *Leaving off your signature*
  - Always close with your name and add contact information. Creating a formal signature block is the most professional approach.
9. *Completing the “To” line first*
  - The e-mail address of the person to whom you are writing is the last piece of information you should enter. Proofread everything carefully before entering the address, and make sure you include the attachment(s) you want to send. If you enter the address first, a slip of the finger can send a message before you intend to do so.
10. *Be careful with “Reply to all”*
  - Look at who else received a message you received. Make sure that your reply is appropriate and relevant for all the people who will be receiving it. Do not fill up your colleagues' in-boxes with frivolous e-mail.
11. *Beware of the “Blind CC,” both in receiving and sending.*
  - If you “blind cc” someone, beware that they may not realize they've been blind cc'd and jump into an electronic conversation. Be careful you don't do the same - if you're not listed as a recipient in a message received, that means you've been blind cc'd and it's not appropriate to jump into the fray.

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