



According to a recent *Forbes* article, email is here to stay for the foreseeable future despite annual predictions of the “death of email.” Although other technologies, platforms, and communication methods have emerged, email remains a mainstay in office operations. Several benefits of using email in the workplace, as noted by the Ariel Group, include generating a paper trail of important communications, creating efficiency in communicating with multiple parties in spite of time and distance, and allowing colleagues to read emails when convenient as opposed to real-time messaging that creates constant interruption.

Consider the following tips to improve email communications and improve productivity and workplace effectiveness:

GET BACK TO BASICS. Attending to grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, and organization demonstrates professionalism and allows for clear communication. In a world where text messages and emojis are often used to communicate, remember that office emails need to be more formal, at least in initial communications. Successive emails on the same thread can drop some formalities such as salutations and closing statements.

BE CLEAR ON WHY. Spend a few moments thinking about the why behind the email (i.e., provide information, request information, clarify expectations, document progress) and the intended outcome. Make sure the email communicates if any action is needed or if a response is requested.

WRITE WITH THE READER IN MIND. Consider the audience and what it needs to know. Try to anticipate questions or objections and answer these concerns. Carbon copy (cc) only those who need to be included to minimize unnecessary email clutter.

KEEP IT SIMPLE. Avoid overly complex language, be concise, and eliminate unnecessary phrases. For longer emails, use bolded headings to break up content to make it easier to read.

READ EMAIL OUT LOUD. Listen to the email out loud to help determine if the flow is on target or out of sequence. This technique can also help identify mistakes in grammar, missing words, incorrect verb tense, and problematic tone.

USE GOOD JUDGMENT. Discern when a conversation is the preferred starting point for communication. If emotions are high or there is a conflict brewing, communicating by email may be counterproductive.

Americans spend about 28% of their workday writing and responding to email, according to the global management consulting firm McKinsey & Company. With email here to stay, workers who hone their ability to effectively communicate will contribute to company and organizational success as well as their own career advancement.



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