

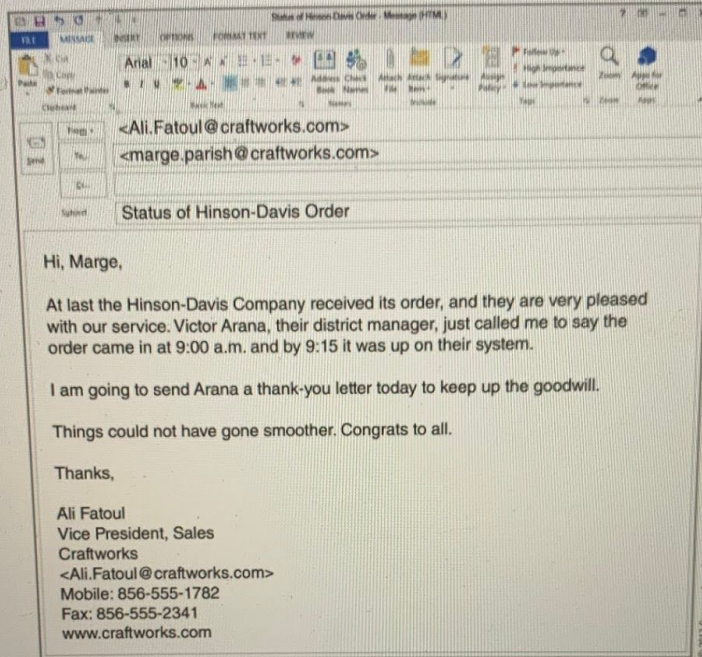
Header contains all necessary information

Gives all necessary details concisely

Indicates follow-up

Uses informal yet professional tone

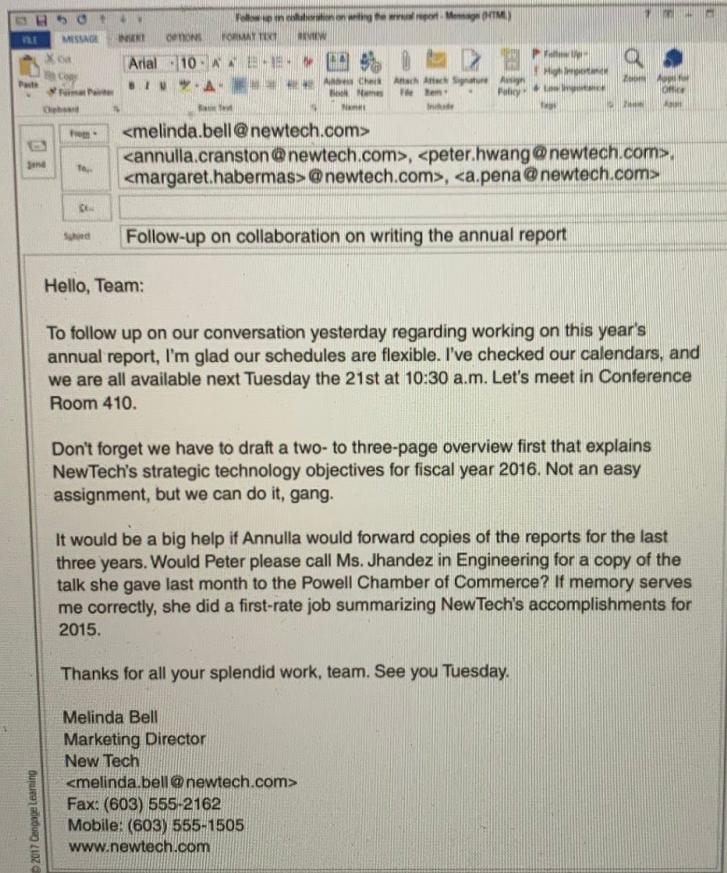
Gives contact information



Unlike with your personal email, you need to consider the impact your business email will have on your company and on your career. When you send a business email, you are representing more than yourself and your preferences, as in a personal email. You are speaking on behalf of your employer. Because your email must reflect your company's best image, make sure it is businesslike, free from grammatical mistakes, carefully researched, and polite. Sarcasm, slang, an aggressive tone, name-calling, and inappropriate clip art do not belong in a company email. As we saw, Figures 4.1 and 4.2 illustrate effectively written business email. Notice that these emails are cordial without being unprofessional.

#### Guidelines for Using Email on the Job

When you prepare and organize your email message, always consider your reader's specific needs as well as those of your company. The guidelines set out here will help you to write effective business emails.



*Precise subject line*

*Starts with context for and confirmation of meeting*

*Provides clear explanations and instructions*

*Requests information politely*

*Ends by building morale*

*Provides contact information*

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**1. Make sure your email is confidential and ethical.**

- Avoid flaming, that is, using strong, angry language that mocks, attacks, or insults your employer, a colleague, a customer, a government agency, or a company, as in Figure 4.3 (see page 125). Abusive, obscene, or racially or culturally offensive language in an email constitutes grounds for dismissal.

messaging. Include only those abbreviations and jargon that your recipients will understand (e.g., *fyi*). Also, stay away from emoticons (smiley faces, sad faces, etc.) in your professional communications.

- **Don't use red flag words unnecessarily.** Stay away from words like "Urgent," "Crucial," or "Top Priority," along with accompanying exclamation marks, in your subject line just to get your reader's attention. Your tactic will backfire, potentially upsetting readers or, worse yet, causing them to ignore any genuinely urgent messages you may send in the future. Instead, utilize your email system's method of indicating prioritization of an email, which is a more professional approach.
- **Include a signature block.** A signature block, found at the end of your message, includes your name, title, and contact information (see Figures 4.1 and 4.2). Make it easy for others to contact you. Such information is crucial when you are part of a large organization.

#### 4. Adopt a professional business style.

- **Use a salutation (greeting), but always follow your company's policy.** Use a comma before the party's name in a direct address.
  - to a colleague—Hi, Hello
  - to a customer—Dear Ms. Pietz, Dear Bio Tech
- **Get to the point right away.** Because readers receive a lot of email, they may look only at the first few lines you write. Start by briefly reminding readers why you are writing. Refer to a previous email. Fill in the background that explains the purpose of your message.
- **Keep your message concise.** Cut wordy phrases, and send only the information your reader needs. Exclude unnecessary details and chatter.
- **Don't turn your email into a telegram.** "Send report immediately; need for meeting" is rude, as is a reply only with "Yes," "No," or "Sure." Save words like "Nope," "Yeah," and "Huh" for your personal emails and texts.
- **Never send an attachment without a cover email that politely and concisely tells readers what you are attaching and why it is important.** Because of the fears of viruses and malware, many business people don't open email attachments, especially ones sent with no explanation.
- **End politely.** Let readers know in your last sentence that you appreciate their help or cooperation and look forward to their reply (see Figure 4.2).
- **Use a complimentary close, but always follow your company's policy.**
  - to a colleague—Thanks, Later, Take care,
  - to a customer—Sincerely yours, Sincerely, Best regards,
- **Do not include your favorite quotation** at the bottom of your email. Your boss or customer may not agree with you. Remember, your email represents your company.
- **Proofread and spell-check** your email before you send it.

#### 5. Respect your international readers.

- Use international English, which calls for short sentences, common words, and so on (see "Using International English," pages 10–11).

- Avoid using abbreviations, symbols, or measurements your reader may not know.
- Respect your reader's cultural traditions. Don't be too informal or chatty. For example, do not use first names unless the reader approves. Use the reader's title and last name. Some cultures (East Asian, for instance) regard the use of abbreviations as discourteous.
- Always spell your reader's name, address, and country correctly, including the use of hyphens, accents, and capital letters.
- Be careful about sending photographs or other graphics which may not be appropriate in your reader's culture.
- Avoid humor; it might be misinterpreted.

#### 6. Ensure that your email is safe and secure.

- **Use email antivirus software.** Always consult with your company's information technology (IT) department.
- **Don't be a victim of identity theft, or "phishing."** Companies you do business with will never ask for personal information, such as your bank account or Social Security number.
- **Create an email password that is not easy to guess.** Do not use a password such as "ABCDE" or "123456." Change your password regularly, and do not use the same password for all your accounts.
- **Back up important files, including emails.** Save your most important and current files in case your computer contracts a virus or crashes.

Figure 4.3 shows an example of a poorly written email that violates many of the preceding guidelines. Figure 4.4 contains an effective revision that reflects the professional and courteous way the writer and his company conduct business.

#### When Not to Use Email

Although email is convenient, easy to use, and appropriate for routine business correspondence, be careful not to use it in the following situations:

- Send a formal letter rather than an email when you apply for a job and for any follow-up communication.
- When you make a new business contact or welcome a new client, write a formal letter, not an email. International readers, in particular, will expect this.
- Always acknowledge a business gift or courtesy by sending a handwritten thank-you note or formal letter rather than dashing off an email.
- Never send an email in place of a letter for any type of legal notification or financial statement.
- When a situation involving a client or vendor is too complex to handle in a short email, a phone call may be more productive and provide the chance for "real time" discussion and feedback that is difficult to capture in a series of emails.