EMAIL
Communication
GUIDE

EASTIN CENTER FOR CAREER READINESS
Spears School of Business

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION GUIDE: EMAILS

Proper email communication has become a necessary skill for almost every professional career. This guide was designed to assist you with the following areas:

- Proper email structure
- General tips and resources
- Email etiquette

EMAIL STRUCTURE

Starting an Email

- To: Enter Recipients name and/or email address

- Cc: Carbon Copy (Computer Copy) = Enter the email addresses of the people you want to know about the email.
  (Remember: Everyone will see their names)

- Bcc: Blind Carbon Copy (Blind Computer Copy) = Enter the email addresses of the people you want to know about the email but not announce to everyone else (the recipient(s) in the To: line and the CC: line) that these people are getting a copy.

- Subject Line: Summarize the main idea, but avoid meaningless one-word subject lines such as 'Help!' or 'Meeting.' Instead, an appropriate subject line might be 'Expense Form Due by Friday at 5pm' or 'Task Force Meeting Thursday, May 28th'. Type in upper case and lowercase, as you would a title. Never use a complete sentence or leave the subject blank.

Formality of an Email

- Informal writing:

  - Uses first name of recipient
  - No name (for reply chain)
  - Retains some casual qualities (personal pronouns, contractions)
  - Is conversational
  - Example: "I've read your excellent proposal. I predict the administrators will approve it."

- Formal Writing:

  - Uses "Dear" with full name of recipient or "Good morning" or "Good afternoon"
  - Maintains distance between writer and reader
  - Avoids personal references and contractions
  - Example: "The proposal is excellent. The executives are likely to approve it."

Email Structure

- Conciseness
    - Begin directly for most e-mails
    - Use bullets when appropriate for easier viewing
    - Keep sentences and paragraphs short (many read emails on phones)
    - Use words economically

- Clarity
    - Practice clear writing techniques and use simple, clear language

- Courtesy
    - Build goodwill
    - Avoid angry e-mails

- Correctness
    - Check for grammatical and formatting errors

Closing an Email

- Informal: The writer's name or no name for reply chain
- More formal: 'Thanks,' 'Regards'
- Formal: 'Sincerely'
- Signature Block: Name, Job title, Company name, Website Link, Phone number, Email address
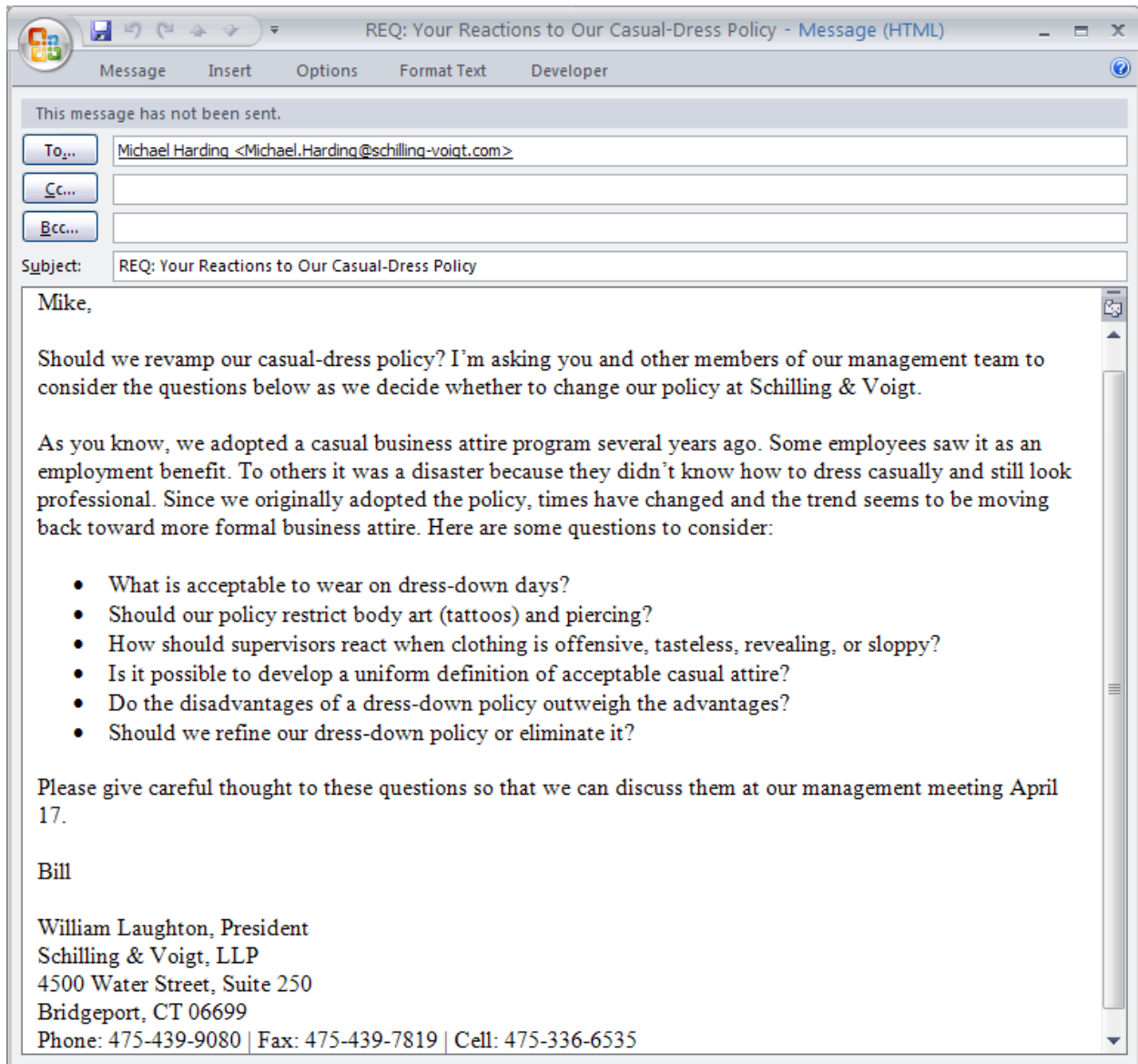

EMAIL TIPS

- Try composing offline or before entering recipient's address (see "Write email backwards" below)
- Read your email out loud to catch grammatical errors and organization issues
- Get the address or addresses right
- Avoid misleading subject lines
- Apply the top-of-the-screen test (Important content at the top before scroll)

- **Write email backwards**
    - Step 1: Open new e-mail
    - Step 2: Download attachment, if applicable
    - Step 3: Compose e-mail
    - Step 4: Type subject line
    - Step 5: Type in address or addresses
    -
    This practice will help prevent embarrassing "Oops" e-mails about forgetting the attachment or sending before the message is ready.
- Edit the thread of your replies to remove parts of the previous email that no longer apply or begin new email thread
- Avoid anything that might be misinterpreted, such as sarcasm, humor, quotes or sayings

EMAIL ETIQUETTE

- Design your messages effectively to obtain the quickest and most effective replies

- Consider cultural differences. You will be sending e-mails to people from all different cultures and countries.

- **Double-check before hitting the *Send* button**

- Set up spell-check in the options of your e-mail account

- Use a professional e-mail address

- ***Email Etiquette Checklist:***
    - Is your message really needed by the recipient?

    - Should your message be a phone call or in-person conversation instead of an email?

    - Is your message for routine rather than sensitive messages? (email is not typically the best way to communicate a sensitive message)

    - Have you attached all materials referenced in the message?

    - Have you carefully checked that your message is going to the correct recipients?

    - Are you putting something in the email that you wouldn't want someone else to see, such as gossip or talking negatively about someone? The general rule of thumb is if you wouldn't be comfortable with your message being on the front page of a newspaper, then you should reconsider sending it at all.

    - Has everyone necessary been copied on it?
      (You don't want to offend by leaving someone off.)

    - Have you proofread your message carefully?

    - Does your signature avoid offensive quotes? Does it need a quote at all?

Email Message (Outlook)

REQ: Your Reactions to Our Casual-Dress Policy - Message (HTML)

Message | Insert | Options | Format Text | Developer

This message has not been sent.

To...: Michael Harding <Michael.Harding@schilling-voigt.com>
Cc...:
Bcc...:
Subject: REQ: Your Reactions to Our Casual-Dress Policy

Mike,

Should we revamp our casual-dress policy? I'm asking you and other members of our management team to consider the questions below as we decide whether to change our policy at Schilling & Voigt.

As you know, we adopted a casual business attire program several years ago. Some employees saw it as an employment benefit. To others it was a disaster because they didn't know how to dress casually and still look professional. Since we originally adopted the policy, times have changed and the trend seems to be moving back toward more formal business attire. Here are some questions to consider:

- What is acceptable to wear on dress-down days?
- Should our policy restrict body art (tattoos) and piercing?
- How should supervisors react when clothing is offensive, tasteless, revealing, or sloppy?
- Is it possible to develop a uniform definition of acceptable casual attire?
- Do the disadvantages of a dress-down policy outweigh the advantages?
- Should we refine our dress-down policy or eliminate it?

Please give careful thought to these questions so that we can discuss them at our management meeting April 17.

Bill

William Laughton, President
Schilling & Voigt, LLP
4500 Water Street, Suite 250
Bridgeport, CT 06699
Phone: 475-439-9080 | Fax: 475-439-7819 | Cell: 475-336-6535

Note that the Subject Line summarizes the main idea of the message and uses REQ or "Action needed" to remind the receiver that a response is required. The email opens with the receiver's name to express friendliness and mark the beginning of the message. The email starts directly, amplifies the main idea, and explains and discusses the topic.

As you look further into the message, notice that the writer uses document design (in this example, bullets) to improve readability. Also, consider columns, headings, enumerations, numbered lists, and so forth. In the closing, the writer uses appropriate closing etiquette by restating the requested action and dates (or deadlines.) The final portion of the email contains full contact information.

EMAIL RESOURCES

- https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/636/01/
- http://101emailetiquettetips.com/
- http://www.businessinsider.com/email-etiquette-rules-barbara-pachter-2013-10