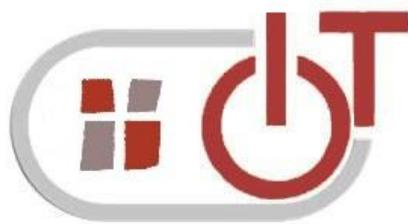


Email Etiquette

Archdiocese of Malta



Reference: **PACHTER Barbara** - *The Essentials of Business Etiquette*, McGraw-Hill, 2013

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Due to sheer volume of email messages that we are reading and writing each day, we may be more prone to making embarrassing errors. Such mistakes can have serious professional consequences. When reference is made to business we mean our daily modus operandi.

RULE N° 1 - Include a clear, direct subject line

Example of a good subject line include “*Meeting date changed*”, “*Quick question about your presentation*”, or “*Suggestions for proposal*”.

People often decide whether to open an email based on the subject line. Choose a subject line that lets reader know you are addressing their concerns or business issues.

RULE N° 2 - Use corporate email address

You should always have an email address that conveys your name so that the recipient knows exactly who is sending the email. You should always use our corporate email address provided by the Archdiocese of Malta for business matters. (*cf. Email and Internet Acceptable Use Policy #9*)

You should never use your personal email address or a generic email address for business purposes. Our corporate email addresses are protected with TLS encryption.

RULE N° 3 - Think twice before hitting REPLY ALL

No one wants to read emails from 20 people that have nothing to do with them. Ignoring the emails can be difficult, with many people getting notifications of new messages on their smartphones or distracting pop-up messages on their computer screens. Refrain from hitting REPLY ALL unless you **really** think everyone on the list needs to receive the email.

RULE N° 4 - Use professional salutations

Don't use laid-back, colloquial expressions like “*Hey you guys*”, or “*Hi folks*”.

The relaxed nature of our writings should not affect the salutation in an email. “*Hey*” is a very informal salutation and generally should not be used in the workplace. Use “*Hello*” instead.

RULE N° 5 - Use exclamation marks sparingly

If you choose to use an exclamation mark use only one to convey excitement. A lot of exclamation marks at the end of sentences render the writing to appear too emotional or immature.

RULE N° 6 - Be cautious with humour

In a professional exchange, it's better to leave humour out of emails unless you know the recipient well. Also, something that you think is funny might not be funny to someone else. Keep in mind that something perceived as funny when spoken may come across very differently when written. **When in doubt leave it out.**

RULE N° 7 - Reply to your emails – even if it wasn't intended to you

It's difficult to reply to every email message ever sent to you, but you should try to. This includes when the email was accidentally sent to you, especially if the sender is expecting a reply. A reply isn't necessary but serves as good email etiquette, especially if the email was sent from some person working in an entity of the Archdiocese of Malta.

Here is an example reply: *"I know you're very busy, but I don't think you meant to send this email to me. I wanted to let you know so you can send it to the correct person."*

RULE N° 8 - Proofread every message

Your mistakes won't go unnoticed by the recipients of your email. Depending upon the recipient, you may be judged for making them.

Don't rely on spell-checkers. Read and re-read your email a few times, preferably aloud, before sending it off.

RULE N° 9 - Add the email address last

You don't want to send an email accidentally before you have finished writing and proofing the message. Even when you are replying to a message, it's a good precaution to delete the recipient's address and insert it only when you are sure the message is ready to be sent.

RULE N° 10 - Double-check that you have selected the correct recipient

Pay careful attention when typing a name from your address book on the email's **TO** line. It's easy to select the wrong name, which can be embarrassing to you and to the person who receives the email by mistake.

RULE N° 11 - Keep your fonts classic

For business correspondence keep your fonts, colours and sizes classic. Your emails should be easy for other people to read. Generally, it is best to use 10 or 12 point type and an easy-to-read font such as Arial, Calibri or Times New Roman. As for colour, black is the safest choice.

RULE N° 12 - Keep tabs on your tone

Tone is easy to misconstrue without the context you'd get from vocal cues and facial expressions. Accordingly, it's easy to come off as more abrupt than you might have intended – you meant "straightforward", they read "angry and curt". Even when trying to convey a strong message it is important to be very diplomatic.

To avoid misunderstandings read your message out loud before hitting send. If it sounds harsh to you, it will sound harsh to the reader. For best results, avoid using negative words (“failure”, “wrong” or “neglected”) and always say “please” and “thank you”.

RULE N° 13 - Nothing is confidential – so write accordingly

Always remember that every electronic message leaves a trail.

A basic guidance is to assume that others will see what you write, so don't write anything you wouldn't want everyone to see. An email is dangerously easy to forward and it is better to be safe than sorry.

RULE N° 14 - Out of office notice

It's important to be professional and reliable even when you're taking time off. If you have a good work/life balance, your vacation should be a true vacation without checking your email every five minutes. The key is an effective “**Out of Office**” auto-responder which automatically gets sent to whoever emails you after you activate it.

There are two types of auto responders

- The **Out of Office** reply – when you are on vacation, medical leave, have a family emergency etc
- The **slow to respond** reply – for when you are at a work related event.

Out of Office Reply Example

Keep your out of office reply short and simple

Example:

Subject line: Out of Office

Hello,

Thanks for your email. I am Out of Office until [DATE]. I shall reply to your email after I return.

If you need more immediate assistance please email [NAME & SURNAME]
(example@maltadiocese.org).

With kind regards

[YOUR NAME]

Things not to include:

- Why you are out
- When your first day out was

- Where you are going
- Excuses – no need to say you will not have access to WiFi

Slow To Respond Reply Example

Do not use the **slow to respond** reply when on vacation

Example:

Subject line: Slow to Respond

Hello,

Thanks for your email. I am at [EVENT NAME] until [DATE] and may be slow to reply until then.

If you need more immediate assistance please email [NAME & SURNAME]
(example@maltadiocese.org).

With kind regards

[YOUR NAME]

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