Email Etiquette

Email etiquette offers some tips that will better facilitate communication between sender and receiver.

Different guidelines apply for the type of message you are sending and to whom you are communicating with. If you are communicating with friends, acronyms and informal communication is appropriate. When communicating with others especially those you don’t know or professional people the following points will help you:

* Be sure to include meaningful subject line; this helps clarify what your message is about and may also help the recipient prioritize reading your email.
* Just like a written letter, be sure to open your email with a greeting like Dear Dr. Jones or Ms. Smith.
* Keep your message brief and use standard spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. THERE’S NOTHING WORSE THAN AN EMAIL SCREAMING A MESSAGE IN ALL CAPS. (ALL CAPS MEANS YOURE SHOUTING!!!!)
* Write clear, short paragraphs and be direct and to the point. Don’t write unnecessarily long emails or otherwise waste the recipient’s time.
* Be friendly and cordial, but don’t try to joke around (jokes and funny comments may be inappropriate and, more commonly, may not be taken in the way you wanted them too.)
* When body language, facial expressions, and tone of voice are not present, the meaning of our message can be lost. Something that was funny in person may not be funny when communicated via email.
* Use a signature that includes contact information. To ensure that people know who you are, include a signature that has your contact information, including your Name (first and last), Company name (if applicable), email address, and phone numbers. If you are sending an email from your place of work, your signature should also include the company address.
* Emails are public documents despite the fact that you may send an email to someone privately. Therefore, only include that statement in an email that you can openly defend should your message be circulated to other parties.
* Flaming is a real problem in emails. Flaming is a virtual term for venting emotion online or sending inflammatory emails. Misinterpretations happen very easily in neutral emails because there is a lack of nonverbal expression to cue the recipient about your motives and intentions.
* When sending an email ask yourself 3 things before sending
  + Would I say this to this person face to face
  + Am I putting the receiver in an awkward position?
  + How would I feel if I got this message
* There are many inappropriate times to send an email. Try to think of as many times as you can.