Ombuds
University of California, Merced

EMAIL CIVILITY

Ombuds.ucmerced.edu

CIVIL USES OF EMAIL:

- Assuring that everyone knows about appointments and meetings
- When ensuring timely communication
- Conveying accurate information, data, and attachments to all that needs to know
- Supporting flexible work arrangements (e.g. telecommuting)
- When asking for broad input

CIVIL EMAIL ETIQUETTE:

- Make the subject line clear for the recipient.
- Be concise, the longer the email the less likely the recipient will read them carefully.
- Use blind carbon copy (Bcc) when you need to send out a mass email, not everyone needs to know all the recipients. This saves recipients from unnecessary reply-all emails.
- Make it personal and address your email to the person and make sure the content applies to them and end with a closing (Greetings; Thanks; Best Wishes, etc.).
- Respond in a timely manner (24 hrs. if possible) if unable to get to the emailers request, respond with a note that you acknowledge receipt of the email and will get to it as soon as you can.

UNCIVIL USES OF EMAIL:

- In place of staff meetings, one-on-ones or avoidance of face-to-face interactions
- Calling out or criticizing someone in a mass email
- Forwarding without consent (explicit or implicit)
- To settle a conflict with someone rather than addressing concerns in person
- To discuss controversial or confidential topics- there is no expectation of privacy in emails

UNCIVIL EMAIL ETIQUETTE:

- Over use of priority flags on emails: If too many are marked priority the recipient may begin to ignore them.
- Unnecessary uses of reply-all: colleagues may get irritated when their inbox is flooded with unnecessary responses.
- Sarcasm or humor: without body language and tone it can be mistaken for rudeness.
- Typing in ALL CAPS or one word responses can be read as aggressive or too assertive.
- Requesting read receipts: if you need confirmation simply request in the message for the recipient to confirm receipt.
- Emailing when angry or emotional: if needed, wait on the response for 24hrs.

Sources:
1) Email Etiquette in the Workplace; Everyday Health; 2017: https://www.everydayhealth.com/healthy-living/email-etiquette-workplace/
2) 10 E-mail Etiquette Tips for the Workplace; Fresno State: http://www.fresnostate.edu/studentaffairs/pchre/civility/email-etiquette.html
3) Email Civility; Staff Ombuds Office; 2012: https://staffombuds.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/civil_and_uncivil_uses_of_email.pdf
4) BIFF: Quick Responses to High Conflict People; 2011; Bill Eddy, LCSW, ESQ.: