

# Histotechnology Society of NSW Email Etiquette

Turn off email pop ups or alerts as these distract you from your day to day work.

## **1. Include a clear, direct subject line.**

Examples of a good subject line include "Meeting date changed," "Quick question about your presentation," or "Suggestions for the proposal at XX Customer."

People often decide whether to open an email based on the subject line, choose one that lets readers know you are addressing their concerns or business issues.

It is always good to include "Action Required" or the Deadline with "Date and Time" in the Subject Line. Never reply or forward an email with the same Subject Line after changing the content to another topic. This makes it impossible to find the email in the future as the heading has no meaning to the content.

## **2. Use a business email address if possible.**

Always use your company email address.

If you have a personal address that you cc in your emails, please ensure that the email address is appropriate for business and does not have nicknames that will be seen by all the people on the email.

## **3. Include a signature block.**

Always provide your reader with information about you.

## **Smart Phone Email**

As we also work remotely and send emails either via our computers or our smartphone devices, we should also have a correct professional email signature on our device.

Remove "Sent via iPhone / Samsung" etc. and add at least the following as mandatory

**First name Last name**

## **4. Use professional salutations.**

It is not professional to shorten anyone's name. Say "Hi Michael," unless you're certain he prefers to be called "Mike."

If in doubt always use what they have on their own email signature

## **5. Keep your fonts classic.**

The cardinal rule: 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.

Bolding or Italics for in line responses is appropriate and it is best to indicate this in the email response i.e. ("Dear xxx, please see my comments to your questions in line below in Bold or Italics starting with my initials"). This will allow the recipient to easily identify your answers to their questions.

## **6. Make it clear when Actions are required.**

Within the email it is important to be clear if actions are required. Use the heading, **Actions:** in the email and state what actions need to be acted on by whom and by what date. If the recipient has a challenge with the proposed date, they will contact the sender and determine what is a mutually agreed deadline that meets everyone's priorities. It is so important to understand that your priority may not be the same as other associate's priorities. Understanding and respect is key.

## **7. 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.

## **8. Understand that people from different cultures speak and write differently.**

Miscommunication can easily occur because of cultural differences especially in the writing form when we can't see one another's body language. Tailor your message to the receiver's cultural background or how well you know them.

If we respect them then they will respect us in return.

### **9. Think twice before hitting 'reply all.'**

No one wants to read emails from 20 people that have nothing to do with them. Refrain from hitting "reply all" unless you really think everyone on the list needs to receive the email.

Even local emails with multiple recipients need to be checked before hitting send. Not everyone on the original email will need to see your comments especially if it is just a smiley face.

Double check who really needs to be on the email then hit send.

### **10. Proofread every message.**

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

Don't rely on spell-check. Take time to proof read and when the emails are very important it may be an idea to ask an associate to proof read it for you before sending.

### **11. 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.

Important rules for email addresses

- In the "To" line, enter in the person/s that need to be involved or act on your request in the email.
- In the "cc" line, enter the associates that do not need to action any part of the email and they can read these at their leisure to be informed on the subject. Never expect an action or an answer from someone in the cc line.

### **12. Double-check that you've selected the correct recipient.**

Pay careful attention when typing a name from your address book on the emails "To, cc and bcc" lines. It's easy to select the wrong name, which can be embarrassing to you and to the person who receives the email by mistake.

There are many David's for example in this world.

### **13. Call if the issue is not resolved.**

Email communication is fast and convenient at times and given that we are a region with multiple time zones it is sometimes easier to send an email than call the person. However, please consider calling a person to avoid back and forth emails that can easily be resolved in a quick call if the time zones are appropriate.

### **14. Sleep on it.**

Fastest finger doesn't always win. Many of us are eager to respond to each email at the soonest possible time, especially those that can be calling us out on a task and/or our responsibility. Be patient. Ensure that you are careful while you create a response.

### **15. Keep tabs on your tone.**

Just as jokes get lost in translation, 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."

To avoid misunderstandings, it is recommended to 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 unequivocally negative words ("failure," "wrong," or "neglected"), and always say "please" and "thank you."

**16. Nothing is confidential — so write accordingly.**

Every electronic message leaves a trail.

A more liberal interpretation: Don't write anything that would be ruinous to you or hurtful to others. After all, email is dangerously easy to forward, and it's better to be safe than sorry.

**17. Reply to your emails, even if the email wasn't intended for you.**

It's difficult to reply to every email message ever sent to you, but you should try to when you are in the "To" address line. 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.

It is also important to understand if you are the owner of a question being asked. Many times, multiple people will be added to the "To" line of the email, if you own a problem or a department then you should take ownership and respond.