

Email etiquette: Keep them short, simple, and respect the reader's time:

Try not to include abbreviations, industry jargon and corporate buzzwords in your emails.

Here's what busy workers don't have time to tolerate: Any email that fails to include a subject line. People don't go to their inboxes for treasure hunts.

Any email that only says 'Hi!' holds too much danger behind that fake friendship. Any email written in all caps is hard to read. The same goes for a gray blob of italics or other odd scripts. Decades after email became the common conveyance for workplace messages, a lot of people are still clueless or uncaring about how to use it appropriately.

A new Robert Half survey of executives said they reported wasting 17% of their time on "unproductive emails." But here's the thing: You often don't know if it's unproductive until you've opened it and at least given it a cursory glance.

Company spam filters do a decent job of filtering out foreign language spam, porn and, usually, direct sales pitches. But annoyances still pile up in the inbox. One of the biggest peeves is the rambling message that buries the lead. One needs to include a brief, descriptive subject line and an initial sentence that says exactly what the email is about.

Two paragraphs is a good limit. Be respectful of your readers' time. If you need to convey more detail, include an attachment or propose a follow-up phone call.

Try not to include abbreviations, industry jargon and corporate buzzwords in your emails. Phrases such as "rationalizing the cost structure," "optimizing human resources" and "shifting economic leverage" don't say anything meaningful to most readers.

Know your target audience. If you're writing only to industry insiders, it's fine to use insider language. If you want anyone else to understand, translate and simplify.

One of the common offenses is abuse of "reply all." Whatever the original topic, be careful about "reply all." Careers have been killed when "private" emails were shared. And thumbs down on wading through a long response chain. You are better off starting a fresh new email.

Source | Hindustan Times | 21 June 2016

If You're Not Outside Your Comfort Zone. You Won't Learn Anything:

You need to speak in public, but your knees buckle even before you reach the podium. You want to expand your network, but you'd rather swallow nails than make small talk with strangers. Speaking up in meetings would further your reputation at work, but you're afraid of saying the wrong thing. Situations like these — ones that are important professionally, but personally terrifying — are, unfortunately, ubiquitous. An easy response to these situations is avoidance. Who wants to feel anxious when you don't have to?

But the problem, of course, is that these tasks aren't just unpleasant; they're also necessary. As we grow and learn in our jobs and in our careers, we're constantly faced with situations where we need to adapt our behavior. It's simply a reality of the world we work in today. And without the skill and courage to take the leap, we can miss out on important opportunities for advancement. How can we as professionals stop building our lives around avoiding these unpleasant, but professionally beneficial, tasks?

First, be honest with yourself. When you turned down that opportunity to speak at a big industry conference, was it really because you didn't have the time, or were you scared to step on a stage and present? And when you didn't confront that coworker who had been undermining you, was it really because you felt he would eventually stop, or was it because you were terrified of conflict? Take an inventory of the excuses you tend to make about avoiding situations outside your comfort zone and ask yourself if they are truly legitimate. If someone else offered you those same excuses about their behavior, would you see these as excuses or legitimate reasons to decline? The answer isn't always clear, but you'll never be able to overcome inaction without being honest about your motives in the first place.

Then, make the behavior your own. Very few people struggle in every single version of a formidable work situation. You might have a hard time making small talk generally, but find it easier if the topic is something you know a lot about. Or you may have a hard time networking, except when it's in a really small setting.

Recognize these opportunities and take advantage — don't chalk this variability up to randomness. For many years, I've worked with people struggling to step outside their comfort zones at work and in everyday life, and what I've found is that we often have much more leeway than we believe to make these tasks feel less loathsome. We can often find a way to tweak what we have to do to make it palatable enough to perform by sculpting situations in a way that minimizes discomfort. For example, if you're like me and get queasy talking with big groups during large, noisy settings, find a quiet corner of that setting to talk, or step outside into the hallway or just outside the building. If you hate public speaking and networking events, but feel slightly more comfortable in small groups, look for opportunities to speak with smaller groups or set up intimate coffee meetings with those you want to network with.

Finally, take the plunge. In order to step outside your comfort zone, you have to do it, even if it's uncomfortable. Put mechanisms in place that will force you to dive in, and you might discover that what you initially feared isn't as bad as you thought.

For example, I have a history of being uncomfortable with public speaking. In graduate school I took a public speaking class and the professor had us deliver speeches — using notes — every class. Then, after the third or fourth class, we were told to hand over our notes and to speak extemporaneously. I was terrified, as was everyone else in the course, but you know what? It actually worked. I did just fine, and so did everyone else. In fact, speaking without notes ended up being much more effective, making my speaking more natural and authentic. But without this mechanism of forcing me into action, I might never have taken the plunge.

Start with small steps. Instead of jumping right into speaking at an industry event, sign up for a public speaking class. Instead of speaking up in the boardroom, in front of your most senior colleagues, start by speaking up in smaller meetings with peers to see how it feels. And while you're at it, see if you can recruit a close friend or colleague to offer advice and encouragement in advance of a challenging situation.

You may stumble, but that's OK. In fact, it's the only way you'll learn, especially if you can appreciate that missteps are an inevitable — and in fact essential — part of the learning process. In the end, even though we might feel powerless in situations outside our comfort zone, we have more power than we think. So, give it a go. Be honest with yourself, make the behavior your own, and take the plunge. My guess is you'll be pleased at having given yourself the opportunity to grow, learn, and expand your professional repertoire.

Ms. Monisha D'costa

Source: Harvard Business Review

Need to Maximize Efficiency at Work? Follow These Tips:

It's a hard but unavoidable truth that many workers have to deal with, having too much work and not enough employees to do it.

In a study, Gallup found that 38 percent of Americans who do have a job said their company is understaffed.

While the statistic is a bit dated, based off further research, understaffing still seems to be an issue in a variety of industries.

Some workers are being required to put in overtime in order to make up for the short-handedness but in reality, working more efficiently could save them a lot of time.

While maximizing efficiency at work could equate to more profits for employers (and not necessarily raises for employees), according to business owner, publicist, and Entrepreneur contributor Kristin Marquet, if you're not performing as efficiently or effectively as others, your long-term job prospects could be in trouble. Follow these tips in order to maximize efficiency at work.

The Basics

When there's a lot to do, it's easy for things to get missed. Some of the easiest ways to maximize your own personal efficiency are by:

- *Setting reminders.* Put pressing tasks into your computer and set reminders.
- *Organizing files.* Create unique folders in your inbox and on your computer or external hard drive for projects.
- *Not multitasking.* Our brains on multitasking are not good, wrote CNN, adding that there is about two percent of the population that are super multitaskers and it's "sort of a genetic gift." Work on one task, finish it, then move onto the next. Stop multitasking.
- *Getting small and quick tasks out of the way.* While it's important to prioritize your tasks, sometimes it's more efficient to just get smaller tasks that take 15 minutes or less to do out of the way.

- *Keeping your desk clean:* According to Forbes, a messy desk is dangerous; 77 percent of people who took OfficeMax's Workplace Organization Survey said clutter damages their productivity.

Operational Efficiency

Project Management: Planning and Development

During every stage of a project, communication is going to be key. As part of the planning and development stage, get all stakeholders on the same page by:

- Identifying timelines, deliverables, and expectations.
- Clearly stating who is going to be responsible for each and in which capacity.
- What the goals and objectives are.
- Additional resources that will be needed.

Project Management: Execution

As projects are being executed, you'll need to know what progress is being made; there might be milestones you need to hit. One of the best ways I have found to organize this is through the use of a project management tool; there are several out there such as Podio, Asana, Basecamp, Wrike, and Trello. Instead of sending emails to discuss tasks that are part of the project, have stakeholders comment right on the task on the tool to avoid a ton of time spent sorting emails and remembering details.

Employee Management

If you are in a management position, whether you realize it or not, you play a huge role in your employees' efficiency, or lack of it. Follow these tips to help improve it.

- *Make sure your employees are trained accordingly.* In some jobs, how things are done is always changing. Proper training can help minimize frustrations and help get projects done correctly the first time around. Huffington Post cited training information from American Society for Training and Development (ASTD): Companies that offer comprehensive training generate a six percent higher shareholder return if the training expenditure per employee increases by \$680.
- *Be their cheerleader, mentor, and coach.* A Forrester research report found mentoring saves organizations money in the forms of reduced turnover and recruiting costs, helping employees learn skills and gain knowledge, plus more.

Workplace Comfort

Worker comfort directly affects important predictors of operational efficiency such as job satisfaction, retention, well-being, and worker health wrote Herman Miller. In a few of my earlier Business.com articles, I wrote about how to be more comfortable at work which include:

- *Bringing Zen to the Office:* using a heated footrest and creating sensory experiences.
- *Office Organization:* Tips to Help You Work More Productivity. Getting organized is key.

- *Affordable & Easy Ideas for a Workplace Décor Update:* lighting and carpeting among other things impact comfort.

Technology Efficiency

Even with every efficiency tip in place, technology can be your worst enemy. Here's how to fix three common technology problems.

Getting the Printer to Print

Sometimes getting a printer to print can be as simple as turning a printer off then back on. Other times, try:

- Reading error messages thoroughly and taking actions accordingly.
- Checking that cables are plugged in and if you are printing remotely, the printer has an Internet connection.
- Checking for paper jams. Open up the feed and see if there's paper stuck inside. According to PC Advisor, old paper can absorb moisture which makes it stick and then it's pulled through two or more sheets at a time.

Speeding Up a Slow Computer

I have one of the best laptops money could buy and even so, from time to time it's slow. The technology experts at offtek offered threeways to speed up a slow computer:

- Reduce the number of programs that automatically launch when you boot your computer.
- Upgrade to a solid-state drive.
- Add more memory.

Fixing Network Issues

Multiple times a week I either lose Internet connection or have slow Internet. While I typically just switch over between the two networks I have access to and that seems to work, your network might require more; try rebooting it.

Source | <http://www.business.com/productivity/need-to-maximize-efficiency-at-work-follow-these-tips/>

Rural Marketing Potential in India:

Rural marketing involves addressing over 700 million potential consumers and over 40 per cent of the Indian middle income. No wonder, the rural markets have been a vital source of growth for most companies. For a number of PMCG companies in the country, more than half their annual sales come from the rural market.

Among various media of communication, television and radio have played prominent roles in the rural India to-day. In the South, the penetration of satellite television is very high. Due to globalization, economic liberalization, IT revolution, female power, and improving infrastructure, middle and rural India today has more disposable income than urban India.

Rural marketing is getting new heights in addition to rural advertising. Rural marketing gives challenge to ensure availability of product or service in India's 6, 27000 villages spread over 3.2 million square kilometers. Marketers have to locate over 700 million rural Indian and finding them in not easy.

The size of the rural market is one that companies cannot afford to ignore, particular, as the number of simple lining in non-metro areas increased by 10 percent over the past decade. Thus, looking at the challenges and opportunities, which rural markets offer to the marketers, it can be said that the future is very promising for these who can understand the dynamics of rural markets and export them to their best advantage.

Rural marketing is currently growing at about 20% every year and companies are spending amount Rs. 600 crore per years for promotional budget.

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