



INTRODUCTION

E-mail is possibly one of the greatest inventions of our lifetime. It's having a phenomenal effect on the way we communicate, but that may not always be for the better! Reading, writing and managing e-mail is taking an increasing amount of our time. However, research shows that the major cause of e-mail stress is not its volume but its inappropriate use as a communication tool.

More of us have taken to using e-mail to stay in touch while we are travelling or working from home, using not just desktops and laptops, but also handheld devices. We are using e-mail to communicate with friends and family, as well as with business contacts, both at home and overseas. Perhaps we can relax standards a little in our personal e-mails, but e-mailing for business purposes has reached a new dimension. People whose jobs never used to involve writing skills are now finding themselves replying to dozens of e-mails every day.

Most of us comment about the increasing quantity of the messages we receive and the pressure we are under to respond quickly. But when we are under such pressure, what happens to the quality of the messages we exchange?

The bottom line remains: just as a handshake and eye contact say something about you and your organisation when you meet someone in person, the approach you take in an e-mail gives an impression as well. Whether you are writing a thank you note, a meeting reminder, a proposal or a sales pitch, what you write and how you write it affects what people think of you, and it affects the image of your organisation.

A well-written message that looks and sounds professional will make it easier for people to want to do business with you. It will help people feel good about communicating with you. It will also help you achieve the right results.

The fact that you've picked up this book means that you want to make e-mail work for you, not against you. You are interested in improving your reputation as a caring communicator, as someone who uses e-mail thoughtfully. You also want to use e-mail in ways that present you and your organisation in a positive light.

I hope you'll practice the guidelines I've shared in this book, and that you'll find the techniques useful. It's a book that I hope you will keep on your bookshelf, dipping into it occasionally as you learn and experience more.

Start turning the pages and enjoy the huge rewards it will bring!

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