

# Email

## BEST PRACTICE



**'All our communications  
should be like a  
conversation with a friend'**



# Email Best Practice

## What is it?

Publication of the GBC Grammar and Style Guide was so successful that we have produced the second in the 'Conversations with a Friend' series. This one focuses on Email Best Practice and is designed to help make your emails more effective.

It is not a set of rules but guidelines focusing on getting your emails read and urging your reader to take the action needed. The third in the series is also available and is called Guide to using Plain English.

All three are to help you to enhance your communication ability, write straightforward, clear messages that will speak directly to your reader and be easily understood.

The other titles in the 'Conversations with a Friend' series can be obtained by emailing: [enquiries@gbclearning.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@gbclearning.co.uk)

## What's in it?

- Sending emails: subject line, replying, urgency, signatures, forwarding and redirecting, confidentiality and copies
- Attachments
- Receiving emails
- General hints and tips
- Structuring your message
- Getting the most from MS Outlook™, including: colour coding, using flags, keyboard shortcuts and automatic spell check.

SAMPLE

## **Protect email addresses:**

Email addresses are valuable so don't divulge your colleagues' email addresses to people outside the organisation without their agreement. There are some simple ways to help you do this:

- For emails to external organisations, copy your colleagues using BCC unless you know it's OK to include their addresses
- Delete addresses from messages you forward – it doesn't take long.



## **Don't send jokes, rude or potentially embarrassing messages during your working day.**

You could be breaking the law and you might upset a colleague or client. Even if you only intend to send something to a friend, it is easy for them to send it on to their contact list leaving your email address there as the originator. Not much to gain and lots to lose, you never know where your emails will end up.

## **Don't forward or send 'chain letters'.**

There is no place for these at work.

## **Hoax Emails:**

You haven't won a lottery you didn't enter, there isn't someone who wants to deposit \$20m into your account and there is no prize worth having that an unknown person is going to email you about. Just delete them.

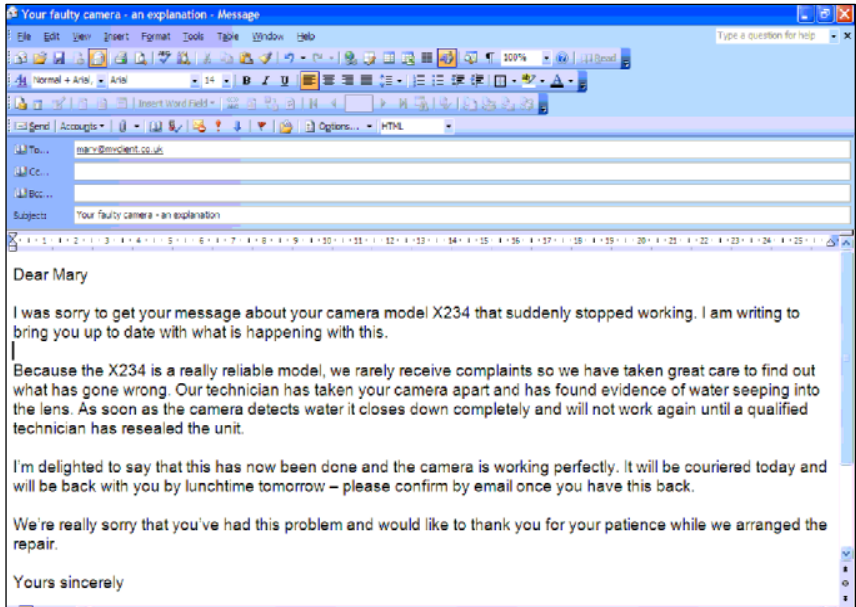
## Structuring your message

Here's a great formula to speed up the process of drafting or writing an email. You won't need this for the really short ones but it's great when you have a longer one to send. The structure of your emails (or your letters for that matter) should follow this format:

- S** subject line and salutation. Make the subject line mean something and use the correct salutation. Should it be 'Hi John', 'Dear John', 'Dear Mr Smith' or something else? You decide but take a lead from how the sender addresses you and if you're not sure – be formal.
- P** purpose or reason for sending the email.
- E** explanation of what happened and why.
- A** action. What's going to happen, what needs to happen, what they need to do etc. In other words 'what's the next step'?
- K** conclusion (poetic licence!). Depending on the situation, it could be a restatement of an apology or a reminder of action to be taken or a social comment – you decide.

On the next page is an example of an email response to a complaint from a customer.

S  
P  
E  
A  
K



The above email is a simple example of how the S P E A K format works in practice. It helps you plan your email and get the first draft done very quickly and accurately.

Try it for yourself – you'll be delighted with how effective it is.

# 'Conversations with a friend' series...

- ▶ Grammar and Style Guide
- ▶ Email Best Practice
- ▶ Guide to using Plain English



We hope this guide was useful and if you would like to find out about courses to improve your writing even more, then please contact:

**GBC Learning and Development**

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