

Email Faux Pas: Embarrassment to Avoid

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Save Yourself the Embarrassment of a Technological Faux Pas



Office technology is like a double-edged sword.

You can use it to slash away at a to-do list, saving you a ton of time. But technology, like **email** and **voice mail**, also offers plenty of chances to embarrass yourself.

Don't get burned!

Deborah Schneider, author of [Office Etiquette Essentials](#) at the [American Bar Association](#), offers some **email guidelines** that will help you AVOID a **technology faux pas**.

- Treat e-mail **like a letter or memo**. Spell check, grammar check, and review all e-mails before sending them.
- Make the subject line as **informative as possible**. Going through 20 e-mails from one person where the subject line is only the client or project name can be a waste of time.

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- Organize your thoughts, be succinct, and use **line breaks literally**. Format your e-mail so that it **scans well**, particularly on a [Blackberry](#). If what you have to say requires more than a few paragraphs, write a memo.
- Don't send snippy or derogatory e-mails, and don't send e-mails when you're upset. Don't type in all caps, either, as that's considered **"yelling."**
- Don't put anything in writing that you wouldn't want to see published in a newspaper. "Before you send a message, always ask yourself: 'What if this got forwarded to my boss?'"
- Always check **the "To:" line** before sending an e-mail. Check the "Cc:" and "Bcc:" lines as well to make sure you are copying the appropriate individuals.
- Don't let your e-mail address book **automatically fill in a recipient's name** based on typing in the first few letters of the address. You can easily send an email that is intended for a friend to a firm partner.

Many of the mentioned email essentials can be applied to **voice mail** too.

For example, don't leave a voice mail you wouldn't want forwarded around the office. Messages should also be **brief**. If you plan on taking more than 60 seconds, send an e-mail or warn the listener at the beginning of the message.

Bottom line: Always exercise good judgment!

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