

## E-MAIL IS OUR FRIEND?

**MYTH**

**REALITY**

<b>Bounce Notice</b>	I did not get a bounce note, so I know the e-mail got there.	Most recipient servers turn off bounce notices due to abuse by spammers. Therefore, no bounce notice certainly does not mean the message was delivered.
<b>Internal vs. Internet E-mail</b>	I copied myself and got the copy, so I know it was delivered.	Internal e-mail within the organization does not prove the e-mail got to the Internet and certainly does not prove delivery.
<b>Read Receipts</b>	I requested a read receipt so I will know when they get the e-mail.	Read receipts have little value. They are simple text files that can be easily forged. They tell nothing about content received. The recipient can easily opt not to return the receipt.
<b>Evidentiary Value of Printed E-mail</b>	I copy my assistant, and he prints a copy for the file.	A printed e-mail (sent folder, inbox) can easily be denied admission into evidence by a simple challenge to content authenticity, time of send, and receipt.
<b>E-mail Archive Offerings</b>	I save everything in my archive. I can prove what they received.	Your archive gives you a record to what content you claim to have sent but not what was actually received and when.
<b>E-mail Delivery</b>	When I click send, they get the e-mail.	Because not all business e-mail is delivered, the "I didn't get that e-mail" excuse is often used to avoid responsibility. As Ferris Research points out, "3% of non-bulk, business-to-business Internet e-mail goes undelivered to its intended recipient," making this a valid excuse in some instances.
<b>Store-and-Forward Web Systems</b>	If I send a link to our Web portal, people will come and download the information I want them to see.	Fewer than 50% of recipients click on links to download files.



## COMMUNICATING ELECTRONICALLY: WHAT EVERY MANAGER NEEDS TO KNOW

Electronic communication has become one of the most popular ways for managers to quickly and efficiently communicate with their employees. But that doesn't mean managers are doing it *right*. If you rely on e-mail to communicate, remember these seven rules:

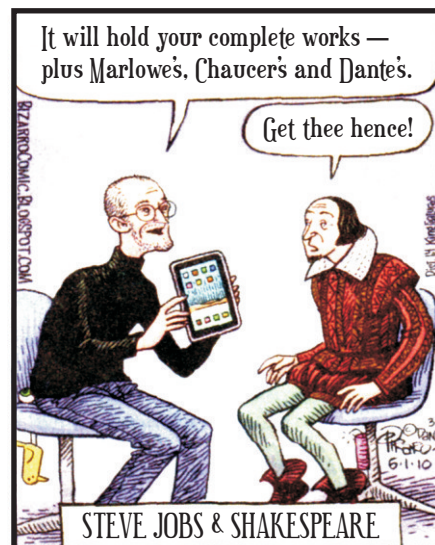


1. Keep it to one screen or less. When e-mail readers see words running off the bottom of the screen, they tend to start scanning rather than reading, potentially missing the key elements of your message. Edit yourself ruthlessly and cut out every extra word.
2. Write in bullet points. Online usability tests have shown that when people read messages off a computer screen, they find it easier to read and retain the information if it is broken into bulleted points, rather than long, dense paragraphs.
3. Give the "meat" of the message in the subject line. The subject line is the headline for your e-mail. It needs to grab people and tell them exactly what the e-mail is about. Here's a good formula for subject lines: *subject + active verb + object*. And be as specific as possible, "Meeting rescheduled" is a bad subject line; "Feb. marketing meeting rescheduled to Feb. 17" is a good one.
4. If you're sending e-mails from a wireless device, let people know. If you are a Blackberry user (or, as some people call them, a Crackberry addict), make sure you include a tagline telling people you're using one of those devices, which will help explain the terse nature of your message. Otherwise, you could come across as rude.
5. Spell-check your e-mail. Yes, it takes an additional five seconds. But if you want to hurt your credibility, send an e-mail to 50 people with six misspelled words in it.
6. Encourage questions via e-mail. Don't use it as a one-way medium. The true strength of e-mail is its interactive nature. When you blast out an e-mail to employees, make sure they know it's okay to send questions or concerns back to you. And then make time to answer them.
7. Remember: You're not the only one sending e-mails to your staff. Your employees are likely suffering from "e-mail rage." They are getting organizational announcements, HR messages, facility updates, corporate-wide memos, notes from colleagues, cafeteria updates . . . to say nothing about the e-mail from friends, family, and junk-mailers. Do your best to e-mail only when you need to, so you don't add to the in-box clutter.

And if you're ever worried about an important e-mail getting lost in the electronic shuffle, switch to a low-tech solution: Pick up the phone. 📞

## Comedy Corner

Bizzaro Dan Piraro



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