E-mail Communication  
(Monday Motivators, March, 2007)  
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Essential e-mail etiquette for every professional

Ah, e-mail. We love it. We hate it. We can’t live without it. We can’t live with it! When we’re supposed to be working on a project, it pulls us in with that elusive phrase, “You’ve got mail!” We are drawn in, and before we know it, we’ve lost track of our thinking and productivity is affected.

I want to focus on the many aspects of e-mail, including etiquette rules, privacy issues, writing tactful correspondence and knowing whether or not to e-mail someone versus using another form of communication.

E-mail is an absolute wonder. Just think of all the amazing things it does for us:
- Allows us to communicate with others at any time, regardless of time zones
- Keeps information flowing
- Reduces the costs of printing and postage
- Helps transform organizations into “networked” firms, and
- Lets senders keep records of their correspondence.

Despite these benefits, e-mail also presents us with many challenges and has its share of downfalls. For example, e-mail sometimes:
- Makes it harder to resolve disputes
- Prevents us from instantly confirming what was meant, creating anxiety and confusion
- Enhances biased perceptions of the other party
- Reduces feedback and social cues, and
- Allows for excess negative attention to be focused on statements made.

We’re going to explore some simple, yet essential e-mail principles. I hope you will focus on these:
1. Know your company’s e-mail culture – very important!
2. Carefully choose to whom you send information.

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General Membership Meeting Minutes  
March 13, 2007  
East Campus Union

President Donelle Moormeier called the meeting to order at 12 noon.

The minutes from the February 13, 2007 General Membership meeting were presented. Motion was made by Peg Johnson to approve the minutes as presented. Motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Treasurer’s Report—The Treasurer’s report was not available at this time. Donelle will e-mail the report to the members.

Announcements
* The UNOPA Notes deadline is Friday, March 16, 2007.
* Judy Anderson was the winner of the March photo contest, and will receive a free lunch at the April UNOPA General Membership Meeting.
* The NEOPA Spring Conference will be held on March 29 and 30 in Lincoln.
* Information for a scholarship opportunity from First-Plymouth Congregational Church was available on the tables. The scholarship is for a non-traditional female student continuing their education in a Nebraska educational institution. Deadline is March 31 for all application materials.
* The Chancellor’s Commission on the Status of Women needs to fill two office/service vacancies for three-year terms. Interested parties may access the application form on-line, and it is due March 21.
* The Awards Director, Nelvie Lienemann, received no nominations for the Rose Frolik award; therefore, no award will be presented this year. A tribute to Rose is being prepared and will be presented at the April 10 meeting.

Committee Reports
Bradley Munn Professional Growth Fund Committee—Becky Hastings reported the next deadline for applying for reimbursement is April 15. The committee is raffling a wreath as a fundraiser. Tickets will be available at the March and April General Membership meetings, and the drawing will be held at the end of the April meeting.

Nominating Committee—Carol Wusk, Chair of the Nominating Committee, reported its nominees as follows: For recording secretary, Janice Edwards and Janice Kohler; for corresponding secretary, Helen Sexton and Doreen Wagenaar; for treasurer, Peg Johnson and Marlene Pyatt; for president-elect, Mary Guest.

Donelle then opened up the ballot for nominations from the floor for each office individually. After receiving no further nominations, the nominations were declared closed. Upon receiving no objections, Donelle appointed the Nominating Committee as the Teller Committee after the ballots were sent out and returned.

Hospitality Committee—The 50/50 winner was Susan Thomas. A drawing was held for two door prizes, $20 gift certificates to the Nebraska Bookstore, and Deborah Smith-Howell and Sandy Watmore were the recipients.

Professional Growth Committee—Lorraine Moon reported UNOPA is hosting a workshop on March 22, 2007, 1:00-4:00 p.m. in the East Campus Union. Ali Moeller, Professor in the Department of Teaching, Learning, and Teacher Education in the College of Education and Human Sciences, will be the presenter. Her workshop is titled “Creating a Quality Workplace Through Team Building.” Registration forms are available on the UNOPA website and are due by March 15.

On April 11, from 12:00 noon to 1:00 p.m., EAP will present another workshop in their “Lunch and Learn” series titled: “The Irritable Male.”

Program
Gretchen Walker introduced Deborah Smith-Howell, Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, who gave a presentation on “Effective Public Speaking.”

Meeting was adjourned at 1:05 p.m.

Mary Guest, CEOE  
Recording Secretary

Member Concerns
A card with our deepest sympathy was sent to Becky Hastings following the loss of her grandfather.

“Thinking of you” cards were sent to Judy Yeck during her recovery time, and to Marie Dvorak following her surgery.

If you know a UNOPA member who would appreciate a congratulations, get-well-sympathy, or thinking-of-you card, please contact me at 472-0533, or at mjohnson4@unl.edu.

Peg Johnson  
Corresponding Secretary
E-Mail Communication
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3. Make sure important issues are talked about, not typed about.
4. Remember to present your best work. E-mail reflects the individual sending it. Be sure that e-mail messages are properly formatted, and that they use correct spelling and good grammar.
5. Get to the point!
6. E-mail is public information. When you’re crafting a message, you should consider not only who is going to read it today, but who might read it a year from now.
7. Every business e-mail user should avoid sending “flames” (angry or provocative comments) because they can, and have, damaged careers.
8. Your subject line should be succinct but informative. This helps the receiver prioritize e-mail messages.
9. Check e-mail at set times of the day to avoid interrupting your workload whenever a message board flashes.
10. When writing your e-mail, ask yourself, “Would I type this on our company letterhead and send it to 5,000 people?” If not, rewrite or don’t send it.

The startling truth (and risks) related to business e-mails

Did you know:
• 76% of American businesses monitor their Internet activities
• 65% of employers are using software to block staff access to some Web sites
• 55% retain and review e-mail messages
• 50% store and review computer files
• 26% have fired workers for misuse of the Internet

Companies with 1,000+ employees say they are most concerned about e-mails containing:
• Confidential memos – 76%
• Valuable trade secrets – 71%
• Internet e-mail policies – 66%
• Financial disclosure – 65%
• Inappropriate content – 64%

I hope the above got your attention! As a business owner, I can attest to the seriousness of employees misusing and abusing their company e-mail privileges.

Keeping the following points in mind can help you judge the proper ways to use e-mail while limiting risks:
• The company you work for owns the e-mail you write (not you).
• Every time you send an e-mail from work, your company’s name is attached to your e-mail address.
• As a result, your e-mail can put your organization in a good or bad light.
• Improper use of e-mail can increase spam and the risk of viruses.
What might be the domino effect if that happened?
• While you may think e-mail recipients delete your messages after reading them, you really don’t know – and never will – whether they’ve been printed off, shown to others or forwarded.
• Think before sending confidential information.

Communicating with tact is an art. Writing a tactful e-mail is a science that requires purpose and thought. As John Bowie, information engineering executive says, “E-mail has transformed inter-office communication. Sending messages electronically is painless, instantaneous, and reliable. It’s so easy, anyone can do it. And that’s the problem.”

Star-performing employees think about the receiver before sending e-mails. Why that’s critical: Without realizing it, we can offend the receiver because he or she cannot tell the tone in which our message is delivered, and misinterpretation can burn bridges with co-workers. What’s more, strong emotions are often misread in e-mail messages.

It’s not so much what you say as how you say it that’s important. A poorly written e-mail will detract from your professional image and could potentially cause conflict or embarrassment. A well written e-mail will make the receiver more receptive to your message, increase your effectiveness, enhance your professional image and help boost others’ respect for you.

I thought the best way to explain this to you is to offer an example from a book we sell called “E-mail: A Write It Well Guide.”

Example:
• Abrupt: “Get me the revisions by Thursday.”
• Polite: “Please be sure to get me the revisions by Thursday.”
• Polite: “I would appreciate your getting me the revisions by Thursday.”

Here are some Star e-mail tips:
• Remember, e-mail is a business tool. Keep it business-like. That means not having cutey quotes at the end of your e-mails or using emoticons, such as smiley faces.
• Use a professional “voice,” meaning try to sound positive and reasonable, and be specific.
• Focus on the issue, not the people. Never place blame.
• Read your e-mail before hitting the “send” button, and think how you would feel if you were the receiver.
• Choose your words with care. This is especially important when the receiver can’t see your facial expressions or hear your tone of voice.
• E-mail is the media of choice in today’s business world. Invest in a good e-mail etiquette and usage book. It could make the difference in advancing or sabotaging your career.
• Be respectful of cultural differences.
• While e-mail is an electronic tool, we must remember there is a human receiving the message.

Best wishes using these tips.

Choosing the right media: STOP… THINK… SELECT

E-mail, snail mail, fax, telephone, voice mail or face to face? Which is the appropriate medium to use in any given situation? You’re the one who will have to make that decision. That’s why today I want to provide you with some guidelines to help you make even better decisions and build a stronger rapport with others.

Start with the end in mind by asking yourself these questions:
• Why am I communicating with this person?
• What information am I sending?

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Dear fellow UNOPA Members:

I am in desperate need of your help. I know that UNOPA is full of professional women with very busy lives and I would love to tap into your world for help with my new book.

My name is Diane Sullivan and I have been a UNOPA member for 28 years. I now work half time in the INTSORMIL office and the other half of my life I own a business called The Organization Station. I am writing a book on how to have your weekends free. The concept is to get all your household chores, laundry and grocery shopping done during the 5 day work week, and then enjoy every weekend of the year with your family and friends.

Here is what I need from you. I have the “meat” of the book written, but I need to have the “stories” of real people in real life situations, to make the book more interesting to read. Here is a list of sample stories that you could tell me about:

- How frustrating it is to work all week and clean all weekend and turn around and do it all over again the next week.
- How tired you are at listening to your children complain that all they do on the weekends is clean the house.
- How you wish you could get your family to do more of the chores.
- The “chore” you hate to do the most.
- Stories about how company is coming over and the rush to get the house picked up.
- Stories about how you have the house clean and you come home and discover that the family has trashed it, in record time.

Please e-mail your stories to: diane@organization-station.net or mail to:
Diane Sullivan
800 No. 4th St.
Springfield, NE 68059

I will be sure that any story used in the book will get acknowledged.

When I get to talk about my book on Oprah I will be sure to mention all my friends in UNOPA.

Thank you SO MUCH for all your help!
Moeller challenges participants to soar

Why do geese fly in a V? Did you know geese are very loyal? What lessons are to be learned about quality team building from studying their flying formation and migration? If you’d attended the March 21st UNOPA Professional Growth Spring workshop presented by UNL Teaching and Learning’s full professor, Ali Moeller, you would know why, and you just might have taken with you some tools that would make your workplace a gaggle of fun, not just a place, for some, to “put in your time.”

Look at those smiles, and the seminar is over . . . or is it?

“It was exactly what I was hoping it would be.”

“. . . one of the best seminar / workshops I had been to in some time.”
Members, this is the last month for this contest.

Do you know who these ladies are who attended March’s general meeting? If so, please email your entries to bhomer@mail.unomaha.edu by Monday, April 9, 2007. All correct entries will be put in a drawing whereby one lucky person will win a certificate which entitles them to a paid luncheon at the May general meeting. Good luck!!

Judy Anderson was the winner of last month’s photo contest.

Congratulations, Judy!!

Monthly Photo Contest

Each year, the UNL Parents Association solicits nominations through a mailing sent to parents of registered students, asking parents to nominate a member of the UNL community who has made a significant difference in their student’s life. All who were nominated by at least one parent and/or student received a certificate.

Certificates of Recognition for Contributions to Students were presented at the annual recognition ceremony on February 2, hosted by the UNL Teaching Council and UNL Parents Association.

Two UNOPA members were honored at this reception, Mary Guest and Tonda Humphress.

ATTITUDE

“The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. Attitude, to me, is more important than facts. It is more important than the past, than education, than money, than circumstances, than failures, than successes, than what other people think or say or do. It is more important than appearance, giftedness, or skill. It will make or break a company . . . a church . . . a home. The remarkable thing is we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day. We cannot change our past . . . we cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have, and that is our attitude . . . I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I react to it. And so it is with you . . . we are in charge of our attitudes.”

-CHARLES SWINDOLL-
April Calendar

April 3 - UNOPA Executive Board Meeting, 1700 Y Street

April 10 - UNOPA General Meeting, Champions Club

April 11 - Lunch and Learn Series: “The Irritable Male” presented by Employee Acceptance Program, 12:00-1:00 P.M City Campus Union

April 13 - UNOPA Notes deadline for submission of articles

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