

CSW/USC

# Professional Development Conference

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UOEEE

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# Effective Email Communication: Think Before You Click

Commission on the Status of Women  
Conference

October 21, 2009

# *Scriptor caveo*

- Be careful the next time you hit "send" on a business e-mail because your message could wind up in your boss's hands, in front of a judge, or plastered in the newspaper.
  - Nancy Flynn, executive director, ePolicy Institute
- Emails send messages about your unit and your own performance.

# Objectives

- Print vs. electronic (vs. voice)
- Plan, write, review, send
- Effective subject lines
- Body of message
- Opening and closings
- Mail-etiquette
- Common sense



# Which Medium to Use

- **Print**
  - Formal impression, for the record correspondence
  - Legally required
  - Distinguishing method
- **Email**
  - Quick
  - Free
  - Record of exchange
- **Voice**
  - Personal
  - Informal



# Email

- Facilitates fast, convenient flow of information among users at various locations and across time zones
- Increases efficiency
- Reduces costs
- Reduces paper waste
- “The way we do business.”

# Suitable for an Email from Work?

- That health insurance rates are going up next year
- That your supervisor is being replaced
- That your performance wasn't very good last year
- That you want your friend to meet you after work at P.F. Chang's
- That you are dating your ex-supervisor

# Subject Lines

- Never leave blank-deleted
- Can be sorted into folders in Outlook
- Tells recipient which messages to read and when
- Captures attention (hook)
- Builds interest
  - *September requests for services*
  - *September Requests for Services: Good News and Bad News*
- Should not convey message

# Which Subject Line?

- United Way Drive Launched
- Kitchen Duty
- Email Request
- What Ya' Think?
- DNO: Out of Office
- Annual Fund Raising Effort
- Your Turn
- Request for Data File on Account #xxxx
- Opinion on Handling Complaint
- Judy- Whereabouts Tuesday Afternoon

# Message Body

- Use a greeting—convention and sets tone
- Titles? Names? Formal or informal?
- Pay attention to quality of writing
- Keep emotions under control—never write when angry or upset with sender or message content
- Remember to meet the needs of your audience
- Use a “you” attitude
- Be polite and conditional

# Reader's POV (You Attitude)

- What will be accomplished by reading this email?
- Focus on one idea usually
- Sequence ideas based on anticipated reader reaction (buffers)
- Careful use of jargon and technical terms
- Graphic (font, bulleting) highlighting

# Organizing the Body without Spandex

- AIDA
  - Attention
  - Interest
  - Details
  - Action
- Organization
  - Beginning, middle, end
- Bullets and other organizational clues



In response to your order dated November 2, 2008, I am pleased to inform you that we now have configured your electronic business card and you can link to our website to download it to your computer system at your convenience.



- Your electronic business card is ready for you to install.
- Don't bury main idea in long, wordy sentence.



- When the 30 days have expired, the information will be deleted from our system, so do not delay.



- Please install your card prior to the expiration date to be sure you safely retrieve it before the information is deleted from our system.

– Excellence in Business Communication –Thill and Bovee

# Closing

- Emphasis on action or purpose
- Always use signature appropriate to message
- Reread several times if message has potential for significant impact



# Closing

- Signals message is complete
- Asks for product/action
- Uses appropriate closing
- Includes signature
- Personalize if useful



# Traps

- Reread several times if message has requested action
- Observe chain of command
- Don't cc or bc unless necessary
- Don't use an email if some other vehicle would work better
- Consider this public record
  - Business correspondence
  - Public access if needed

# More Annoyances

- Sending emails that are not necessary
- Requesting return receipt
- Sending jokes, websites, etc. that are not relevant
- Forwarding on an email without comment
- Forwarding an entire message that may contain inappropriate information/identification/commentary
- Pre-judging or misjudging the recipient's reaction
- Turn around time
- Reply to all
- Lack of context for email
- Lack of purpose-What am I supposed to do?

# Good Luck

- Litigation is the No. 1 risk that employees face with employee e-mail," said Nancy Flynn, executive director at the ePolicy Institute in Columbus, Ohio. "People make inadvertent mistakes, and the opposing counsel is hoping there are smoking-gun e-mails they can use against you."
- Fourteen percent of workplace e-mail is subpoenaed in lawsuits, she said. Drafting and enforcing an e-mail policy -- one that includes specifics on how long a company should keep e-mail -- is the best way to prevent employee e-mail from causing a problem, Flynn advised.
  - [http://searchdomino.techtarget.com/news/article/0,289142,sid4\\_gci963433,00.html](http://searchdomino.techtarget.com/news/article/0,289142,sid4_gci963433,00.html)
- Do you have a personal policy on email?
- Does your unit?
- <http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/acd/acd125.html>