

PROFIT MATTERS

Helping you realise your full profit potential



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Importance of email etiquette

When it comes to professional email communication, the importance of using the correct email etiquette cannot be underestimated.

Emailing is one of the most common forms of communication used in offices today, with the average worker spending around a quarter of their day engaging in email correspondence.

However, many employers and employees tend to ignore the rules for writing, grammar and polite communication when emailing, perhaps because it seems like a shortcut form of correspondence.

Email etiquette is especially important for businesses. The way a business composes their emails is primarily a reflection of their professionalism and personality.

Basic spelling and grammatical errors, accidentally miscommunicating a message's true meaning, or even coming off as being too casual or unprofessional can negatively impact on this reflection, which in turn can be quite detrimental to a business's relationships and future interactions.

Despite this, it can be quite easy for simple mistakes to slip into an email exchange as many workers may respond to emails as quickly as possible so they can resume working on more important tasks.

This can be easily avoided by spending a little more time on incorporating simple yet effective email etiquette rules into emailing activity. Email is as important as any other form of communication, so certain guidelines must be followed especially when communicating with someone where a more formal, polite tone is required.

Make sure emails include a courteous greeting and closing, as this will help make the email

seem less demanding or terse. A friendly greeting and closing is crucial for a business who is interacting with a new customer for the first time, as it is important to make a good first impression. Make sure the receiver is addressed with the appropriate level of formality, and that their name is spelt correctly.

Emails with mistakes are not taken as seriously as those with no errors. Errors have the potential to make a business look incompetent and unprofessional, so make sure an email undergoes a quick proofread or spell check at the very least before sending.

Have a go at reading an email out loud to make sure the correct tone is being conveyed. Including words like 'please' and 'thank-you' can go a long way when requesting something from customers, so don't forget to include them.

Make sure all the necessary information has been included. It is vital that a request or point of view is conveyed correctly, as generalities can result in confusion or pointless emailing back and forth. However, emails should be kept brief and go straight to the point. Long conversations take too long to read and can be saved for the telephone.

Just like spelling and grammar, the use of proper sentence structure is very important. Complete sentences should always be used, with the appropriate punctuation and capitalisation. Use multiple exclamation or question marks sparingly, as they might be perceived as being rude or condescending.

Overall, businesses should keep in mind that email exchange is very similar to a face-to-face conversation. All the aspects considered when wanting to make a good impression during a formal exchange should also be considered when composing an email.

Dealing with negative feedback online

For many people, receiving negative feedback can be difficult to handle. But those who receive this kind of feedback online are in an especially unfortunate situation.



When dealing with negative feedback from a customer through an email, letter or face-to-face conversation, businesses can save face by addressing the issue or problem behind closed doors. But when any negative feedback is shared online, in a place that is accessible and therefore viewable by everyone, a business's reputation may face more harmful repercussions.

Any negative feedback found on a business's blog, website or social media sites can be quite damaging to the business's reputation. One simple post has the power to deter future prospects and influence current customers to leave the business. But there is a way businesses can turn a negative online incident around, by following just a few simple steps.

1. Read the comment carefully to determine exactly what the customer's problem is. Then figure out a way to fix the problem. It might also be a good idea to document the message, so you can use it for training purposes if this

kind of situation arises again in the future.

2. Do not delete the comment or message. As tempting as it may be to hit delete so no-one else can see it, deleting messages may show others that you have something to hide. However, there may be times when it is appropriate for businesses to delete comments, such as ones that are derogatory or offensive.

3. Address the comment as soon as possible. The majority of internet users expect instantaneous responses. Timeliness is key here.

4. Maintain a calm and collected manner when responding. Keep in mind that this is an online scenario, so your response will be judged by who you're talking to, as well as anyone else who is following you.

5. When replying, include an apology if required. This is your opportunity to turn a negative incident into a positive one, by showing everyone how well you deal with customer problems.

Top five habits of productive workers

For many workers, maintaining productivity levels in the workplace can be a daily struggle. But with just a few simple schedule changes, tackling that workload can be a whole lot easier.

Contrary to what some may believe, being a productive worker isn't based on your intellectual abilities and doesn't necessarily mean you are gifted or talented. Quite simply, productive workers are those who have developed and implemented certain habits into their work schedule that specifically contribute to completing their work in the most time-effective way possible.

Productive workers achieve more in less time, and usually leave work feeling accomplished and confident that they have made a difference. Being aware of common barriers to productivity in the workplace, as well as engaging with advice on how to boost productivity to above average levels, can be extremely beneficial to business outcomes. Here are five habits every worker should consider including into their work schedule:

1. Make lists

As soon as you arrive to work, have a go at making a list of everything that needs to be done that day. Once you have all your tasks in front of you, it is much easier to rank each job from most important to least important. Then write up a timetable of the day so you

can delegate a specific amount of time on each job. Lists help workers stay organised, are easy to read, and can make complicated information easy to understand. Reading information in list form will also help make you feel less overwhelmed by tasks, which can improve your mood and outlook for the rest of the day.

2. Cut out the unimportant stuff (and be ruthless!)

By ranking the importance of your work tasks, you can evaluate whether or not they are worth spending your time on. For all the unimportant tasks, see if you can push them to a later date, or take them off the list completely. You want to focus on finishing the tasks that are most important before even considering the others, and one of the best ways to do this is to be ruthless and cut them out!

3. Try out the '2-minute' rule

The 2-minute rule is very simple. If you need to complete a task and know it will take less than two minutes, then do it right away. You never know, you may find yourself surprised at just how many things you can accomplish within a two minute period.

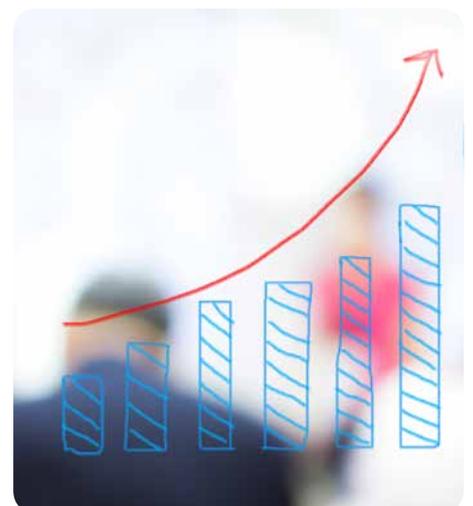
4. Allocate breaks strategically

Being a productive worker does not mean you work nonstop for 8-10 hours a day. If anything, people who do that will definitely be less productive than others. If you're

feeling tired from working, having a quick break can make a world of difference to whether or not you finish all your tasks. So if you're ever starting to feel unproductive, have a quick break. This could be walking away from your desk, getting a drink, going to the toilet or having a short conversation with a colleague.

5. Don't multitask

Even though there are those that think of the ability to multitask as an important skill to have that helps us finish tasks sooner, it can actually result in the opposite! Make sure you commit yourself to finishing a single task before moving on to the next assignment.



Acting on customer feedback

Customer feedback is a great learning source for any business looking to improve their competitive edge. But actually acting upon this feedback is the most important, an often neglected next step.

Feedback from customers is a valuable asset for many businesses. It provides them with customer insights which can assist in improving services, products and overall customer experience. Feedback has also been shown to improve a business's customer retention rates.

But while feedback does create a competitive advantage for businesses, that advantage doesn't



just come from collecting the feedback. It is how a business chooses to act based on this feedback that makes all the difference.

Businesses may like to treat the challenges that come to light through customer feedback as projects with defined deadlines and expected outcomes. Details such as how long it will take to address a challenge, what strategies should be used or what actions need to be taken, should be taken into consideration when developing the projects.

An action log can help to maintain the momentum and focus of these projects, and after a reasonable period of time, may serve to give businesses a good understanding of whether goals and targets were achieved in an adequate space of time.

Communicating results with customers is the next important stage. When businesses make any changes that are customer-based, it is important to keep customers who were part of the feedback process updated. This encourages customers to continue giving their input if they know they are being heard and are responsible for any positive changes.

A business may want to conduct follow-up feedback once customers have experienced the improvements. Customer feedback, after all, can be the reason for short-term programs as well as entire company transformations. When collecting feedback, the overall task isn't in the listening, but the actual implementation and follow-up. The more businesses can get their customers to participate in these kinds of projects, the more likely a business is to grow.

Why sensitivity is an office asset

Being a highly sensitive person is often perceived as being weak in nature or a liability around the office.

Highly sensitive people may often be told that they are 'too sensitive', highly strung, or have a bad work ethic because they let their emotions get in the way of their work.

But as it turns out, there are definitely some considerable benefits of working with or even being a highly sensitive person, especially in regards to industries where companies have regular interaction with customers.

For starters, highly sensitive people have higher levels of empathy compared to other people. They have a much easier time relating to and empathising with others, and this motivates them to want to help out. This kind of attitude is especially handy when helping customers who are going through delicate financial situations that need to be treated with care.

Highly sensitive people are deep thinkers. Before making important decisions, they will often think about any related events that have happened in the past, and weigh up all the possible future outcomes of their

decision, before taking any action.

Because highly sensitive people react strongly to all emotions, they will make a conscious effort to go the extra mile to provide the services customers want. Highly sensitive people will put in the extra effort to figure out exactly how to make good things happen so everyone can enjoy a positive experience, over a negative one.



Wise Words

The only place success comes before work is in the dictionary

- Vince Lombardi

The value of temporary staff

If you're currently in the position of hiring new staff, you may want to consider the benefits of hiring someone on a temporary basis.

It may come as a surprise to some, but hiring temporary staff can result in achieving greater outcomes for companies in both the short and long term. Below are a few reasons why hiring temporary staff may be in the best interest of your business.

Immediate start

Whether one of your regular employees is absent or you need to cover a maternity leave position, hiring temporary staff is a quick and easy way to fill a position for a certain period of time.

No training required

There are many temporary staff members who already have experience in their field of work, so when hired for a certain period of time, they will require little or no training before commencing their duties in their role.

Motivation to work

Those who are hired as temporary staff but are looking for full-time work are more likely to work hard, impress their employer and prove themselves as an asset to the company. This can result in high productivity levels which may benefit around the office.

Co-operative competition

Traditionally, to be successful meant being better than your competition in every way, shape and form.

But for some businesses, it may just be in their best interest to look into working



collaboratively with their competition.

Times have changed. Business is no longer about working against the competition to gain the upper hand. Instead, some businesses have discovered the benefits of co-opetition, working with competing businesses in order to enhance specific areas of a business or the overall quality of a business.

Co-opetition can result in many beneficial outcomes for businesses. These may include product or service improvements, reputation enhancement, or even gaining a more informed understanding of the industry.

Businesses who work together can share ideas, resources and generate discussion about the industry. Regularly interacting and exchanging information with one another, means businesses can gain quality advice and insights from other industry experts.

Keeping in regular contact with other businesses is a great way to build strong relationships with competitors, and can be of great assistance when facing industry challenges. These challenges may

include working with difficult customers, adopting new marketing strategies or adapting to any changes to rules and regulations.

Although they may be similar in some areas, each business does have its own strengths and weaknesses, and businesses working collaboratively may find that their strengths and weaknesses compliment each other. Working together can also result in finishing projects and achieving goals in shorter timeframes, which may not have been necessarily possible working independently.

Another positive for businesses working together is the possibility of gaining new customers through referrals. Businesses don't always necessarily target the same audience. By working alongside another business who has a different clientele than you can mean more business without the risk of losing customers.

About us

Finding your ideal customer

Attracting more customers to your business is typically the focus of many marketing strategies.

However, what the real focus should be on is attracting the right kind of customer that is a suitable fit for your business.

Every customer is different. They each have individual and unique wants, needs and opinions. Because of this, there are often times when businesses simply can't help them out. But this isn't necessarily the business's fault.

Sometimes businesses may find themselves dealing with customers that cause more stress and trouble than what they are truly

worth. These are the kind of customers that are unappreciative, demanding, do not heed to advice given, and are slow to pay the bills. They are a liability to a company, rather than an asset.

The opposite of these customers is the ideal customer. This person sees the value in employing your services, actively seeks out your advice, and is willing to pay you for what you're worth. Surprisingly, it can be quite easy to find these ideal customers. The key is knowing who to look for.

Businesses should begin by asking what type of customers they really want and where it is they will find them. It is important to be quite specific at this stage. Otherwise, you may risk attracting the kinds of customers that drag your business down.

Create a list based on how you think your ideal customers should feel once they start working with you, and also what you expect from them in return. Some aspects to consider could include:

- Paying you on time
- Paying the price you ask for
- Taking fast action on assignments
- Providing feedback and;
- Telling others about your products and services

Next, have a go at creating your ideal customer avatar. This is quite simply just a detailed profile of your ideal customer. Be

sure to include all the characteristics you think are important. These may include a customer's age, the area they live in, if they have any children, life goals and interests.

Finally, all that needs to be done now is to plan how to target your ideal customer based on the information you have created. It is only once you narrow down your search that you'll be more likely to build a better business faster with the right customers.

