

KEY POINTS

The chances of your email being opened, read, and understood are significantly affected by the subject line and introduction. Follow these methods and your emails will be better than most of the others in your recipient's inbox.

SUBJECT LINE

- Shorter is better.
- Include the topic and purpose.
- Show urgency (if appropriate).
- Avoid false urgency, clickbait, or bait and switch.
- (*if multiple topics*) summarize the common theme or purpose.

TWO FORMULAS FOR CLEAR SUBJECT LINES

- Single-topic emails = [URGENCY] + [TOPIC] + [PURPOSE]
- Multi-topic emails = [URGENCY] + [THEME] + [TOPIC & PURPOSE SUMMARY]

GREETINGS

They are not as important as you think. Observe what people around you use and choose what fits with the culture and what's comfortable for you.

INTRODUCTIONS AND THE FIRST FEW LINES

- Include these four key ingredients in your introduction:
 1. What the email is about.
 2. What the reader must do with it.
 3. What the key message (headline) is.
 4. The expected time frames for any actions are.
- Say how many questions you've asked.
- *If multiple topics*, give a one-line summary of how many topics are in the email, then include all the information in the bullets above.

REPLIES VS. FIRST MESSAGES

Replies do not need to follow the same rules given above for subject lines and introductions. But there are two new rules to use when replying.

1. Don't change the subject line (unless it is inaccurate).
2. Don't say "Thank you" at the start of the reply.

THE STRUCTURE FOR A GOOD INTRODUCTION

[GREETING]

[TOPIC] + [WHAT YOU WANT THE READER TO DO] + [URGENCY] + [KEY MESSAGE] + [TIME FRAMES]

(If appropriate) [NUMBER OF QUESTIONS]

(If appropriate) [LIST THE QUESTIONS]