

How to Write Effective Emails

Peter Diamandis
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Over 300 billion emails are sent every day. That's 3.5 million emails sent per second.

Personally, I receive hundreds per day—and frankly, most of them are just bad... and most are too long to read.

This blog is about email mastery: a look at how to send effective emails, get your message across, and not waste time.

If you are an entrepreneur, mastering this simple skill can make or break your ability to raise money, land customers, attract partners, and win over advisors.

Let's dive in.

TIP 1: KEEP IT UNDER FIVE LINES

I don't read emails over five lines. I just don't. I don't have time for it.

No email should be over five lines.

If you can't communicate your message in the first few lines, it shouldn't be an email—instead, the email should be a request for a phone call or meeting (see below).

TIP 2: MAKE THE SUBJECT LINE UNIQUE, MEANINGFUL & EASILY SEARCHABLE

The subject line is one of the (if not THE) most important parts of the email.

You'd be shocked how little people actually pay attention to it and how many people mess it up.

The subject needs to be unique and compelling—just like a headline on a news article, the subject should capture my attention, pique my interest and make me want to open your email.

The subject line should be meaningful: I should know what you want, based on the subject.

And importantly, it needs to be searchable...

Searching through emails on mobile is bad enough (a big business opportunity for the entrepreneurs out there), so I need to be able to remember unique keywords in your email subject to find it quickly. Otherwise, it's going to get buried.

TIP 3: USE EASY-TO-READ FORMATTING!

It sounds intuitive, but you'd be shocked by how many emails I get with font size 9. It's impossible to read on my phone.

"Hard to read" means "it's not read."

Keep your audience in mind, and assume they are going to read the email on their phones, or better yet, their smartwatches.

Keep your font size 12 (or even 14) point... and keep your font style simple, ideally sans serif. I like Arial.

Use bold, underline, and ALL CAPS for the **MAIN QUESTION, IMPORTANT DATES, and other KEY DETAILS**.

Use line breaks to your advantage. Spacing is key. Give important details their own lines.

TIP 4: PUT YOUR SPECIFIC ACTION REQUEST IN THE FIRST LINE

A busy exec wants to touch an email once and take action: delete, respond or forward for action.

I want to know what you're looking for in the first sentence.

Don't bury the lede. Don't give me three paragraphs of context—this can come after.

Start with the action/request, and then explain if you need to.

This can be as simple as "FYI:" or "Have time for a 10 min phone call?" or "Can you sign the attached document?"

Then, and this is REALLY IMPORTANT, be specific in your request...

Instead of saying, "Can you meet sometime next week?" say, "Can you meet Wed, Sept 10 in XYZ location between 10 a.m. and 12 p.m. PST?"

Or, you can say, "I'm available to meet at these three time windows. My EA is copied. What works?" (Then list the three windows.)

This will save you about five emails back and forth figuring out logistics and a lot of unnecessary clutter to your inbox.

TIP 5: MAKE THE ASK REALLY, REALLY SIMPLE—SUCH THAT IT'S HARD FOR YOUR READER TO SAY "NO"

Have your email make a single, specific, simple request:

- Do you have time for a 5 min call this week?
- Please review and sign this document.
- Can you make a quick intro to XYZ person?
- I'd love a letter of support from you. I've attached a draft for your review.

I should be able to reply to the email in one word (ideally Yes or No), or forward it on to the right person to reply in full.

If you ask for lengthy feedback on an idea, or are asking for a big favor, or want to set up a three-hour meeting, you're going to dramatically decrease the probability that a busy executive responds.

Not to mention, these things shouldn't really be done over email.

Email is not a replacement for a phone call. Keep emails very short and factual. If they are long, then schedule a call or a meeting.

In general, meeting with someone is best, calls are second best, and an email is the third option if you can't seem to get either of the first two.

FINALLY, IF SOMETHING IS TRULY URGENT, THEN DON'T EMAIL... CALL OR SEND A TEXT

We've gotten so addicted to email that sometimes we assume this is the fastest way to get someone's attention. It's really not.

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR SOMETHING BETTER?

Email really hasn't changed much since it came out over 50 years ago.

Platforms like Slack and a few plugins and AI assistants have been useful additions to the professional communication ecosystem, but I still think there's an opportunity to reinvent email in a big way.

We need to rethink email from first principles. I'd love to hear your ideas.

Have an idea? Tweet at me [@peterdiamandis](https://twitter.com/peterdiamandis).

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My mission is to help A360 members **obtain mastery in four specific mindsets**: an Abundance Mindset; an Exponential Mindset; a Moonshot Mindset; and a Longevity Mindset. Together we will actively select and reinforce your preferred Mindsets.

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