10 **Dos** and **Don'ts** of Em@il

Follow these steps to take back control of email in your organization

DO

Keep it brief – Email is a good way to alert people of key news and direct them to detailed information elsewhere. If you need to cover several topics, summarize the important points in the first paragraph and provide highlights with subheads and brief introductions that link to attachments or intranet pages for more information.

Share key content in the subject line – The subject line will help recipients screen and prioritize email in their inboxes. Specify "Action needed" or "Reply requested" when you need immediate response.

Target the right people – Limit email communications to those for whom the topic is relevant. Use group lists only if information is meaningful for the entire group. Copy supervisors or managers on emails sent to their employees so they can be ready to answer questions as needed.

Consider the timing – Email is not an appropriate vehicle for something requiring an urgent response – keep in mind the audience and the fact that some may not check or respond to email immediately.

Check it twice – Prevent most-embarrassing moments by proofreading everything in an email, including the recipient email addresses, message content (including previous emails you may be forwarding) and any attachments, before you push "send."

DON'T

Email personal or confidential information – Emails live on forever and can be forwarded, shared, copied and subpoenaed. Don't share anything in an email that you would not want to see on the front page of a newspaper or a billboard in Times Square.

Send unnecessary business emails (this includes "reply all" messages) – Being the source of unnecessary or excessive emails puts you at risk of being ignored now and in the future. Don't send something by email unless it's needed, especially if information is repeated in other internal communications vehicles.

Forward virus warnings, chain letters or junk mail – Check with your information technology department to verify any virus warnings and let them communicate issues to the organization.

Use sarcasm, negative comments or ALL CAPS – Remember that email messages lack the nuances of voice inflection or facial expressions that are part of personal conversations. Don't take chances with misinterpretation – err on the side of positive language and never send an email response when you are upset.

Use email as a replacement for personal contact – Never underestimate the importance of a face-to-face or voice-to-voice conversation, especially for matters that are personal or sensitive. Don't use email to avoid a difficult situation – if you have a problem with a person or must admit a mistake, speak with the people involved directly.

ARE THERE PROBLEMS WITH EMAIL IN YOUR ORGANIZATION?

We've helped companies tame their email monsters with creative, practical and results-driven campaigns that engage employees to improve email communications and reduce email "clutter." For one organization, overall email volume was reduced by 20% in 6 months.
Do you want 20% fewer emails in your inbox each day? If so, give us a call.

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