Keys to Writing a Work Email
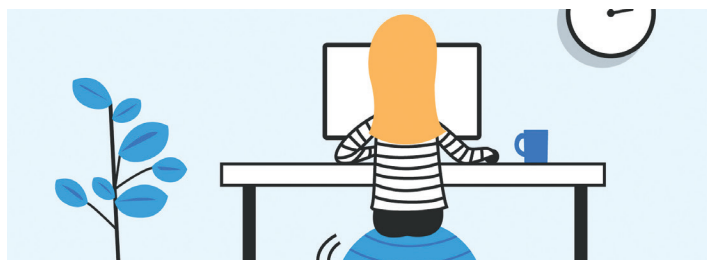
AREA	GREAT EMAIL	NOT SO GREAT EMAIL	BEST PRACTICE
Tone	Positive and team focused whenever possible.	The tone is indifferent, negative, or accusatory.	Positive
Subject	Crisp and clear	Vague	Specific and action-oriented
To	Who needs to take action and who really matters.	Several names and it's a guess at who needs to take action.	You've done your research and know who needs to take action.
CC	Who else really needs to know.	Everyone is shoved into CC.	Those that really need to know. Request to others on email to share as needed.
Greeting	A quick sentence to help people pause and get ready. This sets the tone as the reader "enters" the email.	No greeting at all.	Warm greeting, by name if possible. Thank the person and team for the effort to date.
Goal/ Objective	Very clear and at the top. It's the first thing to grab attention.	You're not sure, it's buried in the details, or it's at the end.	At the top after the greeting.
Content	You know and have researched the details. It needs to be clear, fact-based, and credible.	You've collected some of the info but you feel pressured to get something out. You use long paragraphs.	You've got the facts or know the questions you need to be answered. Use bullet points for simpler topics. Use tables for more complex thoughts and logic. Ask for a phone call or meeting if a complex issue or email has been circling with multiple responses.
Attachments	Summarize what's in the attachment.	The email has a lot of detail that is overwhelming. You have asked the reader to open the attachment to get to key summaries, conclusions, or to find an attachment on an old email.	A summary of the content and/ or conclusion of the attachment is included in the main body of the email. Attachments from previous emails are attached to allow for efficiency and convenience.
Closing	Sets tone for moving forward.	No closing at all. Vague about what's next and who needs to do what.	Positive and clear about next steps with a positive tone.
Final Review	Always make sure to review the entire email for grammar and spelling, before sending.		