

How to Write Better, Faster: Email Tips

This course highlights research on attention spans in today's digital environment and simple tips on **getting your emails to stand out** in crowded mailboxes.

Digital Overload

Research shows that the average working professional has more than 200 emails in their inboxes and spends almost a third of their day reading and responding to emails. **To help your messages stand out, follow these key tips:**

Short, Clear Subject Lines

This is the prime real estate for your message. Whether your reader sees it on mobile or an inbox preview pane, you have approximately 4 seconds to capture their attention.

- **Put the action in the beginning**, such as “FYI Only: Extended Deadline for Website Project” or “Action Needed: Headcount Approval Needed by EOD Oct 1”
- A **subject line is not a sentence**. It shouldn't have punctuation. When possible, include the who, what, and when: “Oct. 1 Agenda Items: Kristin & Trina 1:1”

Bottom Line on Top (BLOT)

An email is not a short story. Have your key point and/or ask as your first sentence. This can be as simple as “This message is being sent to all North America people managers to outline changes to the expense approval process effective January 1.”

- Help your reader know **why they are getting your message** and what they need to know and to do right up front so they are more likely to read and respond quickly.

111 Words

Online studies have shown that 49% of people stop reading after the first 111 words. In addition to using a BLOT, pay close attention to your first 111 words.

- **Use bullets, subheads, and links** to help your readers quickly track the key information and actions they need to take. See example below.

Most Important Next Steps (MINS)

Unless your note is purely informational, **call out the Most Important Next Step(s)** that you or your readers need to do.

- Put that **action in bold** with the date, details, and owner of each MINS.
- This is different than listing all the steps needed. Given short attention spans, tell your reader the **what, who, and by when** to increase the chances of them responding quickly and accurately.

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FYI ONLY

When creating a BLOT, indicate if it's a need-to-know or a need-to-do. Use bold working on a key action needed, date or deadline, or information given.

Have space between BLOT and rest of information. Content here should not be bold; however.

- Bullets are great.

Additional information is here. **This is only 62 words.** Users spend only 4.4 seconds more for each additional 100 words. **This is now 78 words.**

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