

10 emails you should never send

from the HP Technology at Work website



Here's a scenario most of us are familiar with, whether first-hand or as a witness to a colleague's faux pas: an email with a crude joke or a funny picture that crosses into the personal-email realm is sent to a cluster of friendly internal contacts and accidentally included on the recipients' list is the company CEO. Embarrassing for the sender? Yes. Grounds for dismissal? Unlikely.

What can prove far more detrimental to your career, however, is the way you compose your everyday emails. We often treat email communication in the same casual manner as we do informal telephone conversations, and it's all too easy to forget that there's a flawless digital record of what's been communicated.

Unlike verbal conversations, emails can be forwarded to the wrong people. Likewise, if a message is written in a hurry, it can end up sloppy or leave itself open to misinterpretation and, as a result, it can have nasty repercussions. It's always better to think before you send.

Convenient email enabled devices such as HP iPAQ handhelds and notebooks also allow you to send emails from anywhere these days too, but it's important to train yourself to send in "work mode". Next time you reach for your iPAQ, remember that you're representing yourself and your company, no matter where you are.

10 email mistakes that could cost your job:

- 1. Emails sent after happy hour**
Company happy hour after work? It's probably best to save the iPAQ responses for the next day and not to respond to emails from home after a night out.
- 2. Sarcasm and dry humor**
Email is not a good medium to convey the intricacies of sarcasm, and often it can be taken out of context – with disastrous repercussions.
- 3. Private matters**
Always better to separate business and pleasure – and using company resources for personal matters is generally a bad idea.
- 4. Professional criticisms**
If it's a small thing, say it over the phone; otherwise it looks too official and can cause unnecessary worry. If it's really bad, discuss it in person.
- 5. Personal remarks and gossip**
It's very easy to treat email like water cooler conversation, but these emails can have a tendency to get 'Forwarded'.
- 6. Angry responses**
It's easy to fire off an angry response without thinking, but not always easy to retract it. Best to [put a delay on your email](#) if possible, or wait a day before you respond if you're really that upset.
- 7. Bad language**
Most people just don't do it, but for the few who do – it's a terrible idea; swearing has no place in work emails.
- 8. Company or industry secrets**
This one may well get you sued as well as sacked. Most companies have a confidentiality agreement you sign at the beginning of your employment that would be violated in this case.
- 9. Racist/sexist language**
It's best to avoid this in your everyday speech, as well as your work emails. Like the above, most people sign a zero-tolerance agreement which would be violated and such violations are grounds for termination.
- 10. Sloppy writing**
Even if it's sent from your iPAQ while you're at the beach, remember that your image is on the line.

Last but not least, if you work in government or other offices of interest to the general public, be extra cautious. Very abundant in the news are email leaks that get government and other official people in serious trouble.