

SA 07.01: Email Practices Self-Assessment Reflection

Effective email writing is essential to effective performance and advancement in most organizational contexts. To quote the text, "Email is the dominant communication tool for private, written business messages." Therefore, it is essential you develop professional email practices. This self-assessment is intended to allow you to evaluate your use of the skills associated with effective email writing, and to offer some direction as to how you might improve.

Think of an important email or other electronic communication you have sent in which others misunderstood your emotions and/or intent. How did the other person respond? Did you think the response was fair? Why did this person misunderstand? Did the lack of richness of the communication channel have an impact? How could you have written or approached your message differently to avoid misunderstandings?

Then write three goals you have for becoming a more effective communicator by email. Go through the items in the survey one by one to help you think of areas where you most need to improve.

As an HR professional, I learned very early on how important E-mails can be. When working with my direct reports, I always tell them that you need to actively prevent trying to read tone and emotion in your first reading of an email or response, as it will inevitably determine your next reply. It is very important to read, reflect, and read again. When I first joined the Army and got to my first unit, I sent an email about a particular action item. In my last paragraph, I left a sentence in all capitals in regards to the importance of the response. This did not end well. I was a private, and was responding to a higher ranked soldier. Not only did physical exercise follow (Corrective training), but I was reprimanded as well. I literally did not know or even think to review my email, and how my audience would receive it. Lesson learned! To be more effective, I suppose my three goals would be to try to elevate my current skillset, improve my subject line, and keep it short and sweet. Sometimes I do drag on a bit too much as I try to be as explicit as possible to instruction with some groups.