Study Guide

Business
Soft Skills
Career Enhancement

A Business Soft Skills lesson for your career enhancement

BUSINESS
SoftSkills, Inc.

Level One / 2.0

"Business SoftSkills Career Enhancement Study Guide"

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"Introduction to Study Guide"

Lesson #10   *"EMAIL ESSENTIALS"*

Email is now a mainstay in all businesses. Emails you send out will say a lot about you and who you are. There are even email liabilities that you must know about in order to protect you, your job and your company. This lesson presents the ten rules of effective emails, and then we will show you the six key steps to writing an effective email. An actual email exercise will show you how to create a professional, business email.

Video Lesson Timing

VIDEO	Entire Lesson	Open	Intro	CHAPTERS									Exercize	Review & Quiz	Summary
				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9			
Email Essentials	34:46:00		1:35	:45	1:29	:55	1:44	4:25	2:01	1:47	4:23		5:31	7:42	2:26

Script

["As Spoken" script - not edited for grammar]

INTRO

Hi, my name is Galen Guseman and this lesson is on Business Email Fundamentals. From 1993 to 2007 business email has grown to over 550 million in-boxes.

91% of all Internet users have email accounts and 183 billion – and that's B for a billion messages are sent each day. Email is now a mainstay in all businesses. This presentation is going to inform you how to use email as an effective tool in business. It is important for you to know that the e-mail you send out will say a lot about you and who you are. So let's get into Business email fundamentals.

Oh, by the way, we are going to break this lesson into two major sections. The first will be the 10 Rules of Business email and the second will be the six key steps that go into

creating an effective and professional email. Finally, we'll have a review section followed by the summary.

CHAPTER 1

Business email is totally different than your personal email. You must learn how to create and respond to business email in a professional manner. There are even email liabilities that you must know about in order to protect you, your job and your company. Employers have the legal right to examine and archive all employee emails and instant messaging.

Look in your employee handbook or ask Human Resources for a copy of the Corporate Email Policy for your company. Review it... and be aware... if you violate this policy, you will definitely face disciplinary action.

CHAPTER 2

Rule number one is: Be brief. Nobody wants to read a long email. Be concise with your information and don't make it any longer than it needs to be. You want to make your point as soon as possible and not linger on redundant information. The professional email is concise and to the point. When you do this you've got a better chance of it getting read and answered.

Answer all questions is the second rule. When replying to an email make sure that you answer ALL the questions asked of you. This will prevent ADDITIONAL emails from being sent and reduces the possibility of miscommunications. It also shows that you are professional enough to have read and responded to the ENTIRE email, not just a portion.

Rule number three; Use proper spelling, grammar and punctuation. Poor spelling, grammar and punctuation errors will give you a bad reputation. Remember, your email may be forwarded to others in the company or even customers without your knowledge. And you don't want to make a bad impression. Emails without periods or commas are difficult to read and can sometimes even change the meaning of what you are trying to say.

CASE STUDY #225

Here is a Case Study. One of the warehouse workers sent his assistant manager an email that asked if it was ok to scrap all of the parts for an obsolete project. The assistant manager was on the road and only had his Cell phone to reply to the request. He sent back just two words – dont stop - When he got back to the warehouse, he realized that he forgot to put punctuation in the email, because what he really wanted to say was "Don't ! Stop !" Too late, the materials were gone and the assistant manager was left trying to figure out how he was going to tell his boss about the mistake. Proper spelling, grammar and punctuation are necessary in business today. It helps with communications and makes you look more professional than those who don't use it.

CHAPTER 3

Reply quickly is rule number four . Emailing is now the primary form of written communications for business and people expect quick replies. A study recently found that 88% of the business people expect a response within 24 hours. Make sure that you always reply within the business day that you got the email.

If you need time to gather information, let the sender know that you got the email and you're working on it. If there are any further delays, be sure to update them so they do not have to send follow-up emails.

Rule number five is: Do not write in CAPITALS. Typing in Capitals makes it appear you're shouting. This is improper email netiquette. By the way, the term netiquette is derived from the phrase "network etiquette" which was a termed coined back in 1988. Capitalizing words in an email can be very annoying to the reader and may come off as very emotional and unprofessional. You do not want any email communications to be misinterpreted.

Don't leave out the message thread is rule number six. A message thread is a group of messages that were sent in reply to each other. The original message is first in the thread; the reply to this message is second in the thread, and so forth. Without this information, it may be difficult for the reader to know or remember what was going on in the previous emails. If there are no message threads, all you have to do is to select "Reply" to the message.

CHAPTER 4

The seventh rule is: Watch your formatting.   Non-standard fonts and sizes may not be able to be viewed by other email programs used by your customers or vendors. Always use Arial or Times Roman fonts in 10 or 12 point sizes. These are easily read by ALL email programs. Stay away from different colors if you can.

But if you have to use a color, be sure to use a color that's easy to read on the background you're using. Also it is best to stay away from Internet slang when using business email. Some examples of Internet slang are: "lol" meaning "laugh out loud" or "imho" – "In my humble opinion" or "dgms" for "don't get me started." Avoid the truncation and morphing of words. You never know when these new words will confuse or annoy the reader.

The eighth rule is very important. Avoid sending confidential information. Sending an email is like posting the data on a bulletin board. If it is confidential, keep it out of the email. This may include corporate classified or sensitive information, social security numbers, user names, passwords, credit card numbers or other account information. Confidential data put into emails may be hacked from the outside or end up in a corporate court case. Almost 13% of domestic companies have battled lawsuits triggered by employee e-mail, so never, ever, send any confidential information via email.

Never send libelous or offensive remarks is rule number nine. It has been reported that almost 50% of email business users send or receive risky content that has included offensive jokes, gossip, confidential information or even pornography.

You could be fired and your company could face litigation resulting in multi-million dollar penalties if you send or even forward any type of sexist, defamatory, offensive, racist or obscene comments in corporate emails. You should also stay away from statements on gender, age, sexual orientation, national origin, disabilities, religious or political beliefs. Even if they were just originally meant to be a joke, you and your company could get into a lot of trouble.

And talking about humor, try to stay away from humor when writing business emails. Not everyone thinks the same things are funny or they may take offense to your jokes. In fact a report recently revealed that only 55% of email readers were able to accurately communicate sarcasm and humor. It's safer to not to do it at all.

 Don't air your grievances or problems about your colleagues, customers or the organization. Never write an email when you're angry or upset. Words can cut deep

and once you push the send button the email is gone and you can NEVER get it back. As a final point, personal attacks should always be avoided in emails. If you have a personal problem with someone, go see them in person or pick up the phone. But NEVER get into email wars.

The tenth and final email rule is: READ it before you SEND it. Now I know this sounds simple but most people just don't do it. And you can tell who those people are by the spelling and grammar mistakes contained in their emails. In addition, re-reading your emails a second time will help you send a more effective message and avoid misunderstandings and inappropriate comments.   This will enhance your written communications and give you a positive and polished reputation.

CHAPTER 5

It's time to reveal the six key steps to writing an effective and professional email.

Key step number one is: Determine who you are sending your email to. It may be an individual or it may be a group. If you're requesting something to be done, the "Send To" field should only have that person's name, otherwise no one will know who is being asked to reply. If you are sending out an informational email, such as the new location of the meeting, be sure you put ALL the names that will be attending the meeting into the "SEND TO" field.

The second step is completing the CC or Carbon Copy field. This is like telling someone FYI or "for your information." Try not to use this field unless the recipient knows WHY they're receiving a copy of the message. Otherwise it may be confusing to know WHO is supposed to act on the message.

The Subject field is the third step in the creation of your email. The subject field must be short and meaningful with only one subject per email.

And remember, emails may not be read the same day you send it, so stay away from such phases as "interviews tomorrow" or "Meeting today." Your reader may be on vacation or out sick. Clarify the subject line with such information as "Interviews on Wednesday, March 12th" or "Meeting Today, March 11th." This will keep the time line consistent and reduce the chance of miscommunications.

CHAPTER 6

The fourth step is the actual writing of the body of the email. When composing your email, use the same words that you use when speaking. Never use complex words or those you do not fully understand. Write clear, short paragraphs and be direct and to the point. If an email looks too busy or complex, most people won't read it. Use "Bullet" points if you feel it will be a more effective way to present your information. Be polite, business-like and cordial. Business people want email messages in simple, easy to read and understandable sentences. Make sure you use punctuation and proper grammar. If you are asking specific questions, keep all the questions together and "bulleted" to make them stand by themselves.

The fifth step is your Signature Block located at the bottom of the email. Think of is as an electronic copy of your business card. It should include the following information:

- Your full name

- Title

- Company name

- Address

- Phone number with extension

- And, company website address.

This may seem to be overkill but, when sending emails to customers, they may not recognize you if it is just signed "Tom in shipping" or "Samantha from accounting."

CHAPTER 7

The sixth and final step is the proof-reading, It's also the most important step in this entire process so listen closely. I know you have a lot of things to do in your job and you really are busy, but you MUST take time to proof-read your emails before you send them out. Once they're gone, you can't get them back and there have been some situations that resulted in terminations because of embarrassing emails being sent to the wrong people.

Lesson #10   *"EMAIL ESSENTIALS"*

Here is another case study.

Susan had just started working at a big law firm for a few months.   Her best friend, Julie, also worked there and they were always using the company email to gossip about their dates and love lives of others in the office. One morning Susan revealed in great detail an affair she was having with one of the potential partners in the company.

When she went to send the email to Julie, she accidentally sent it to the distribution list for the entire company! After weeks of snickering and grins from her co-workers, she was so embarrassed that she actually ended up quitting her job and moving to another city! Never send personal information through the company email.

Always read the entire email at least twice. When reading it for first time through make sure everything makes sense. Did you leave out any important details? Did you answer all the questions?

On the second pass look for any grammar, spelling or punctuation mistakes. Review the "SEND TO" and CC fields to verify the correct people are getting the email. If you're going to reply "TO ALL", make sure everyone on the list NEEDS a reply. You do not want to send out email to people who don't need it! Re-read the subject field to ensure it makes sense. Next, do a spell check of the body of the text. But, remember that spell checking will not catch those words that were spelled right but are used incorrectly; such as "you" for "your" or "here" for "hear." It may also show some acronym as misspellings.

When proofing look for common punctuation errors and any other problems with grammar. The final proof should be for spelling of names and numbers used in sentences. Double-check all the individual names because it is so easy to misspell a person's name and spell check may not catch it. If you don't catch it, you can be sure your recipient will and that will be embarrassing and highly unprofessional.

Now is the time to also make sure that any attachments you have referred to are now part of your email. You don't want to have to send out a second email with an apology about missing an attachment! Remember, it will take additional time to proofread your business emails but it is well worth it! Every single piece of written communication you send out is a reflection of you AND the quality of your work. Any problems with your

email will be quite obvious to your reader and, whether you like it or not, they'll judge you on your written communication soft skills.

You ALWAYS want to project a positive and professional image with your emails. When you reply to an email be sure that you know where it's going. You may not want to send a "REPLY ALL" response. Look at the distribution and determine who really needs to see the reply. And don't forget our case study about accidentally sending correspondence to everyone! In addition, never reply to an email with just "YES" or "NO." Always repeat the question along with your answer so there will be no misunderstandings.

Email Creation

SCENE #1
Galen: Now we are going to have our guest employee create an email based on what we've learned today. Our employee needs to send an email to some of the key managers on a change of meeting location and time along with a new agenda as an attachment.

First of all lets start with the "TO" field. Who does the email need to go to?

TO: R Jackson, L Owen, S Jones, C Smith, B Wang, A Newman, J Foster, K Kramer, D Bank,
E Allen, M Simmons, A Murray

Galen: You just selected one of your mail groups. Do you really need to send it to all of them, and is anyone missing?

(Guest employee goes back and erases about half of the names, adds G Brwn)
TO: R Jackson, L Owen, C Smith, B Wang, A Newman, G Brwn, D Bank

Galen: OK, that's good. You're just sending to the people who have a need to know.

Next, is there anyone you need to COPY such as your supervisor?

CC: P Howard

Galen: Good! Always keep your supervisor informed as to what you're doing! Now, we need to fill out the SUBJECT field

SUBJECT: Meeting

Galen: Well, I think you need a little more information than that. Remember, we want to use the key words in this email?

(Guest employee goes back and erases everything and types the following:)
SUBJECT: Change of location and time of status meeting

Galen: Very good! That tells us a lot more detailed information. Now, let's move on to the BODY of the email and write it.

SCENE #2
BODY: ATTENTION, THIS

Galen: Oh! Whoa! Wait! Don't forget that when you use caps, it appears that you're shouting.

(Guest employee goes back and erases, and retypes in lower case)
BODY: Attention, this is to inform you that the status meeting has been changed to Wednesday and…

Galen: OK, let's make sure that we're not causing any misunderstanding. Wouldn't it be better to add the exact date so everyone knows for sure?

(Guest employee goes back and erases back to Wednesday and adds date)
BODY: Attention, this is to inform you that the status meeting has been changed to Wednesday April 14, at 2:00

Galen: Good.

and will now be held in Conference room #3.

Galen: You're doing it correctly!

The new adgenda is attached. Please let me know if you have any question or cannot make the new meeting time.
Thank you!

Lesson #10   *"EMAIL ESSENTIALS"*

Galen: Super! Short, accurate and to the point!

SCENE #3
Galen: It's now time to fill out the signature block of your email.

Skippy from the "hole"

Galen: Well, that doesn't look very professional does it? Besides, not everyone knows your nickname. Why not try it again?

(Guest employee goes back and erases everything and retypes signature block)
William Henderson
IT Administrator
Acme Industries

Galen: You're doing it correctly!

123 Main St
Basement Level
Anywhere, USA 99999
888-999-0000 x1234
w.henderson@acme.com

SCENE #4
Galen: Very professional! Remember your email may be going to customers or vendors who do not know who you are. Now, let's do a re-read and look for any problems. First of all, double check the "TO" and "CC" names.

TO: R Jackson, L Owen, C Smith, B Wang, A Newman, G Brwn, D Bank

Galen: Does it appear that everyone that needs this email is on the list? GOOD! Uh, are the names all spelled correctly?

(Guest employee goes back and corrects the spelling of the BROWN name)

TO: R Jackson, L Owen, C Smith, B Wang, A Newman, G Brown, D Bank
CC: P Hogan

Galen: Excellent! You never want to misspell anyone's first or last names! Now let's re-read the subject area and make sure the keywords makes sense.

SCENE #5

Galen: Ok, let's review the body of the text.

(Guest employee goes back and changes "Question" to "Questions")

Attention, this is to inform you that the Status meeting has been changed to Wednesday April 14, at 2:00 and will now be held in Conference room #2. The new adgenda is attached. Please let me know if you have any questions or cannot make the new meeting time. Thank you!

Galen: Very good! Remember, you want to impress people with your emails and little things like this are necessary. Now let's do a "spellcheck."

Attention, this is to inform you that the Status meeting has been changed to Wednesday April 14, at 2:00 and will now be held in Conference room #2. The new adgenda is attached, Please let me know if you have any questions or cannot make the new meeting time. Thank you!

(Spell Check finds agenda spelled incorrectly)

Attention, this is to inform you that the Status meeting has been changed to Wednesday April 14, at 2:00 and will now be held in Conference room #2. The new agenda is attached, Please let me know if you have any questions or cannot make the new meeting time. Thank you!

Galen: That's great! Now let's verify the signature block.

William Henderson
IT Administrator
Acme Industries
123 Main St
Basement Level
Anywhere, USA 99999
888-999-0000 x1234
w.henderson@acme.com

Galen: Finally, we have one last item to check before we send the email. Remember what it is?

ATTACHMENT: New Agenda

Galen: Yes! Excellent! It is really embarrassing to send out an email referring to an attachment when it's missing! You're now ready to send your email.

I know it took a few extra minutes to follow this procedure, but we now have a professional, error-free, short, accurate email directed only to the people who need to know. A good start to a professional reputation. Good job!

Review and Quiz

Questions in **BOLD** answers <u>underlined</u>

Ok, it's time to get a pencil and piece of paper out. We're going to see a review and have a quiz on the key points of Business Email Essentials. Once in a while you'll see a slide come up with a missing word or multiple choice question. You will have eight seconds to write down the answer before it appears. As a final assignment, send your instructor a business email with any three key points that you've learned from this video Ready? OK, good luck, here we go into the Business Email Essentials Review and Quiz.

- Business email over 550 million in-boxes

- 183 billion emails sent daily

- 91% Internet users have email

- 13% of companies have

   lawsuits from employee e-mail

- 50% of emails have risky content

- Only 55% can accurately

   communicate humor

- There are email liabilities

- Employers can read

   all your emails

- Face disciplinary action

   if policy violated

Business email is

different

than personal email

Rule 1 –

Be brief

- Get to your point

   and it will get read and answered

No one wants to

read long emails

Rule 2 –

Answer all questions

- Prevents additional emails

- Reduces miscommunications

Rule 3

Use proper spelling,

grammar and punctuation

Poor grammar, spelling

and punctuation= <u>bad reputation</u>

Emails without punctuation

are <u>difficult</u> to read

- Your emails may be

  forwarded to others

- Poorly written email can

  have different meanings

Rule 4

Reply quickly

88% expect a response within

 a) 2 days

 b) Immediately

 c) 24 hours

 d) None of the above

Rule 5

Do not write in CAPITALS

- It appears you

    are SHOUTING

Netiquette from the term

"network etiquette"

Rule 6

Don't leave out

message threads

- Threads are messages

    sent previously

- Original is 1st,

    Reply is 2nd and so forth

- Without threads emails are difficult to read

Lesson #10 *"EMAIL ESSENTIALS"*

Rule 7

Watch your formatting

- Use Arial and/or Times Roman fonts

- Use 10 or 12 point sizes

- Avoid odd colors

Avoid Internet slang such as:

"lol" "imho" or

"dgms"

- Avoid word truncation

  or morphing

Rule 8

Avoid sending

confidential information

Confidential data can be <u>hacked</u>

Lesson #10   *"EMAIL ESSENTIALS"*

Rule 9

Never send libelous

or offensive remarks

Avoid which email topic:

a) Asking a co-worker

to lunch

b) Informing someone

about a new employee

c) Telling a co-worker the latest gossip

Avoid statements on:

- Sexual orientation

- National origin

- Religious or political beliefs

- You or your company

   could face litigation

- Never send angry emails

- Avoid humor in emails

- Once an email is sent,

   you cannot get it back

Rule 10

Read it BEFORE

you send it

- Avoid misunderstandings

- Create a positive reputation

Six key steps to

writing an

effective email

STEP #1

Determine email destination

- Send informational

    emails to ALL involved

Step #2

Completing the "CC" field

- Same as "for your

    information" (FYI)

Do not send a "CC" unless the recipient <u>knows why</u>

Step #3

The "Subject" field

- Must be short and meaningful

- One subject per email

Step #4

Writing the Body

of the email

- Emails should be simple,

    easy to read

- Keep questions together

- Be polite, business-like

    and cordial

Step #5

Signature Block

- Electronic copy of your

    business card

- Without the signature block,

    you may not be recognized

Lesson #10   *"EMAIL ESSENTIALS"*

Step #6

Proofreading

- Always read the entire

   email twice

- Verify everything makes sense

Once sent, you <u>cannot get it back</u>

- Spell checking does

   not catch everything

- Make sure attachments

   are part of the email

- You are judged by your

   written communication

- Project a professional

   image with emails

Never reply with just <u>"Yes"</u> or <u>"No"</u>

Lesson #10   *"EMAIL ESSENTIALS"*

Use these business email techniques and earn a reputation of being a professional communicator .

Summary

Some people take a casual approach to email and that's the wrong attitude. Email needs to be taken seriously. If you think of an email as a business letter and give it the respect it deserves, you'll always make the right impression. Don't assume your email will be read only by the person you're sending it to.

By using proper email etiquette you too can have a professional image. You can be known for writing efficient email that's easy to read and gets to the point. Once you learn and use these Business Email Fundamentals, you'll earn a reputation of having effective written communication skills and being a professional communicator.

Good luck and thanks for watching!

Lesson #10   *"EMAIL ESSENTIALS"*

Lesson #10 *"Email Essentials" Test*

True or False

1-Business email is the same as your personal email..T or F

2-Employers do NOT have the authority to read your business emails...................T or F

3-Improper punctuation can change the meaning of your emails...........................T or F

4-88% of business people think you should answer emails within 24 hours ....T or F

5-Typing in CAPS makes it appear that you are shouting ....T or F

6-Message threads should be included in all emails that need them ....T or F

.

7-Internet slang such as "lol" or "imho" should be avoided in business emails ....T or F

8-It is acceptable to send confidential information via email as long as you have
an anti-virus program in place ....T or F

Lesson #10 *"EMAIL ESSENTIALS"*

9-You should only send offensive remarks to people you know ....T or F

10-The best way to settle a grievance with another person is to do it via email ......T or F

11-Always re-read your emails before you send them ....T or F

12-Never use the CC (carbon copy) section of the email ....T or F

13-Try to put as much information as you can in the subject line ....T or F

14-When composing your email, always use the same words that you use when

you are speaking ....T or F

15- Your signature block is like an "Electronic Business Card" ....T or F

16-Proof reading all your emails should became a habit ....T or F

17-Spell checking your emails is a waste of time ....T or F

18-Most people do not care if you misspell their names in emails ....T or F

Lesson #10   *"EMAIL ESSENTIALS"*

19- When responding to an email, always repeat the question along with your answer...T or F

20-Learning and using Business Email Soft Skills, will earn you a positive reputation ....T or F

Lesson #10   *"EMAIL ESSENTIALS"*

Answers

1- Business email is the same as your personal email

False

2- Employers do NOT have the authority to read your business emails

False

3- Improper punctuation can change the meaning of your emails

True

4-88% of business people think you should answer emails within 24 hours

True

5- Typing in CAPS makes it appear that you are shouting

True

6- Message threads should be included in all emails that need them

True

7- Internet slang such as "lol" or "imho" should be avoided in business emails

True

8- It is acceptable to send confidential information via email as long as you have an anti-virus program in place

False

9- You should only send offensive remarks to people you know

False

10- The best way to settle a grievance with another person is to do it through email

False

11- Always re-read your emails before you send them

True

12- Never use the CC (carbon copy) section of the email

False

13- Try to put as much information as you can in the subject line

False

14- When composing your email, always use the same words that you use when you are speaking

True

15- Your signature block is like an "Electronic Business Card"

True

16-Proof reading all your emails should became a habit

True

17- Spell checking your emails is a waste of time

False

18- Most people do not care if you misspell their names in emails

False

19- When responding to an email, always repeat the question along with your answer

True

20- Learning and using Business Email Soft Skills, will earn you a positive reputation

True

Lesson #10   *"EMAIL ESSENTIALS"*

QUICK REFERENCE CARD

[See next page]

The Quick Reference Cards for this lesson are located on the next page. These cards provide the rules and key points of this lesson.

The Quick Reference pages can be printed on a heavy card stock then cut into individual cards for easy access. They can also be printed in the 8 ½ x 11 format and laminated or put into a notebook .

Use them whenever you need a quick referral to key points of this lesson.

Ten rules of business email

1. Be brief
2. Answer all questions
3. Use proper spelling, grammar, and punctuation
4. Reply quickly

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Ten rules of business email

5. Do not write in CAPITALS
6. Don't leave out the message thread
7. Watch your formatting

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Ten rules of business email

8. Avoid sending confidential information
9. Never send libelous or offensive remarks
10. READ it before you SEND it

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Six key steps to creating an effective, professional email

1. Determine who you are sending your email to
2. Complete the CC (Carbon Copy) field
3. Create the subject of your email

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Six key steps to creating an effective, professional email

4. Write the body of the email
5. Locate your Signature Block at the bottom of the email
6. Proof read and edit

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