Professional Writing Etiquette

Professional Development – E-mail and Letter Writing

In the working world, knowing how to properly write professional correspondence is vital to your success. The two major forms of formal writing are letters and emails. This document will detail the proper procedures for writing both.

Overview

Professional writing skills are essential to success in the workplace. This doesn't simply apply to your grammar and spelling, but also to the structure that you select. There are two major forms of writing that are commonly used in today's working world.

Letters are a very formal, if outdated, form of written correspondence and are still commonly used. The letter should be reserved for specific instances when you are seeking written interaction that addresses a superior, or when soliciting specific information. You should also write a letter when you want documentable evidence of written correspondence that can be shown to anyone in a workplace environment

Emails are the most common form of communication in today's working world, and can be written in several different forms along the range of formality. This will depend on to whom you are writing and the purpose of your correspondence.

The following document will outline etiquette for both letters and emails.

Letters

The outline for formal letters follows these guidelines:

Sender's name
Sender's address
Sender's address line 2
Sender's phone number

Date

Recipient's name
Recipient's company
Recipient's address
Recipient's address line 2

Greeting

Body

Salutation,

Signature

You should always address the person using a title such as Dr., Mr., Mrs., or Ms. One must be careful with the use of Mrs. and Ms., as the former implies a married woman while the latter unmarried. If you are unsure, always use Ms.

Also important are a brief introduction if the person does not know you, and a brief conclusion thanking the person for their time.

As always, spelling and punctuation are important, but correct formatting will give you credibility before the person reads a single word

Emails

Emails have become the most common form of written communication in workplaces and can vary based on the level or formality the writer is seeking. Generally speaking, this document will address formal email writing. The format should be as noted:

To: Recipient's email address
From: Sender's email address
Subject: Brief Reason For Writing

Greeting,

Body

Salutation,

Name
Title
Company
Phone number

Presented in order, the first thing to note is your email address. If you are writing from a personal account, make sure that the address is professional. Emails from CutiePieBabe69@hotmail.com will most likely be deleted immediately. The next thing to note is that the subject is presented with title capitalization, in other words all words are capitalized. The greeting, as in letters, should appear with a title for the recipient. Finally, your signature needs to include your contact information, current job position and company.

One more important note about emails: The etiquette of replying will depend on how the recipient first replies to you. If they address you by first name, you can do the same when you reply again. If they simply start writing without greeting you, then you can feel free to do the same. The best rule for replying to an email is to follow the same format that the recipient used to reply to you.