8 Common Email Mistakes (and How to Avoid Them)

Email is something we take for granted these days. Our fore-fathers put a lot more time and effort into communicating, whether that meant handwriting a letter, chiseling a message into stone, or gathering enough firewood for a decent smoke signal. Email, by contrast, is so easy to use, it requires little thought (and no kindling). But that can lull us into complacency … and next thing you know, we've committed a blunder.

Take a moment before hitting SEND to avoid these common email mistakes.

1. **USING ALL CAPS.** Writing in all caps is perceived as yelling and turns people off. Studies show that emails with all-cap subject lines are 30% less likely to receive a reply.

2. **Vague subject lines.** Keep your subject line clear and concise so the recipient understands what the conversation is about. Avoid generic or misleading subject lines and shy away from anything that might end up in a spam filter.

3. **Skipping a greeting or closing.** Don't start a conversation without a basic greeting or end one abruptly. Include something like "Hi" or "Dear" so you don't appear rude. When closing, thank them or sign off with "Sincerely" or "Best regards."

4. **Not using CC and BCC correctly.** Only include names of those you require action from on the "To" line. "CC" those you want to share information with. Use "BCC" to keep certain peoples' involvement secret and to keep email addresses private when sending to groups of people who don't know each other.

5. **Forgetting to add an attachment.** It's embarrassing for the sender, frustrating for the recipient, and a waste of time for both when an attachment is missing (or the wrong attachment is added). Take your time when replying to ensure all relevant information is included.

6. **Accidentally replying to all.** Be careful when replying to messages. Hitting "reply all" when you meant to send a response to one individual can have far-reaching consequences, especially if the reply is snarky or contains sensitive information. Even if your message is not offensive, including people who aren't relevant to the conversation is a drain on productivity.

7. **Making spelling or grammatical errors.** Emails riddled with spelling and grammatical errors are annoying and unprofessional. Look over everything carefully before sending … and use spell check!

8. **Turning your signature line into a novel.** When it comes to your email signature, less is more. Including your name and a contact number or two is fine but ditch the legal jargon and all nonessential information.

Email isn't complicated … it just requires a bit of etiquette. Follow the above guidelines and you'll avoid the wrath of your coworkers!

Golden West Helps Businesses Score Better

When Eric Eisenbraun stepped into the role of virtual chief information officer (vCIO) for Golden West Technologies in 2019, his goal was to provide clients with tools to protect against cyber threats. Evaluations of existing clients indicate progress — and now there's a new member of the team to help expand the program.

The Technology Leadership Services group — which includes the vCIO positions — helps organizations in three key areas: risk, productivity, and opportunity.

"The most obvious way to measure that is through alignment scores," Eric says.

Alignment Scores Spell Success

"When we started working with these clients just over a year ago, the average score was about 55%," he says. "We ended last year just under 80%. So, with this technology leadership program, we were able to move our clients into a better security posture and improve employee productivity."

Alignment scores are calculated by measuring against 86 different technology standards. These provide a snapshot into network security and employee productivity, among other factors. The 25% increase in scores over the past year is evidence that the Technology Leadership Services group is providing value to customers.

Now that they have gotten their clients to a good place, they want to build upon that success. Doing so meant adding Spar Stormo to the team.

New Team Member Brings Valuable Experience

Spar's background is a bit unusual. He's a licensed attorney in the state of Colorado who moved to South Dakota primarily to be closer to his parents. There were other intangibles that factored into his decision, too.

"Just like half the country, it seems, I decided to move out of an urban area to a more rural one," Spar says. His trips through the Black Hills sparked a love affair that persuaded him to buy a cabin in Hill City. He commutes from there to Rapid City every day.

Spar had been doing some consulting work while living in Denver. After selling his law practice, he focused more on technology.

Spar Stormo

A six-month cyber security boot camp boosted his skills for the vCIO role; coupled with his small business knowledge, he was a natural fit for the position.

Golden West Technologies Sales Manager James Van Loan believes the addition of Spar will help with organizational objectives such as long-term strategic planning.

"Spar joining the team will help maintain alignment," James says. "We'll use his background to advise on business impact through the lens of risk and opportunity."

Employees who refer customers to the Technology Leadership Services program are eligible for rewards. Visit Lead Rewards on SharePoint (under Processes/Requests) for more information.

New Faces in Accounting

Niki Mohr, GWTC Regulatory Accountant Since April 2021

Niki grew up and attended high school in Wall. She then earned a bachelor's degree from Black Hills State University in business management with an accounting emphasis. Golden West's local community support is what attracted her most to the co-op.

Niki and her husband, Terry, have three kids who all attend the Wall School District – Jhett, Jace, and Jersey. In her free time, Niki can be found cheering her kids on at their sporting events and activities. When she's not in the stands, she likes to read, go on walks, and spend time with her friends and family.

Dave Verhey, GWT Accounting Technician Since Sept. 2021

Dave was born and raised in Rapid City and attended college at Dakota State University. He previously worked in the Contact Service Center and, when he was pursuing a career change last year, Golden West topped his list. "The staff is brimming with co-workers who are happy to share their expertise and knowledge to help others succeed," he shares. Dave lives with his fiancé, Alexis, and their lively cat, Angus. When he's not working, Dave can be found cooking or playing video games.

Learn more about other full-time employees who recently joined Golden West in upcoming issues of the IGGI newsletter.

NEW TEAM MEMBERS   Welcome!

Karissa Bell / Twana Carr / Denise Leanhart - *Answering Service Agents,* GWT, Rapid City

Lacy Puhlman - *Member Service & Sales Specialist,* GWTC, Wall

Allen Schulz - *Facilities Technician I,* GWTC, Wall

Jaicee Williams - *Marketing Intern,* GWTC, Rapid City

PROMOTIONS   Congratulations!

Sam Stone – *NOC Agent to Network Assurance Technician,* GWTC, Wall