

Email Communication Tips



- What is the purpose of my communication? Why am I sending this message?
- Who is going to be on the receiving end of this exchange?
- What is the best way to send this message (via telephone, email, letter, or in person)?



Top Ten Tips

- 1 *Keep it simple*
- 2 *Keep it short*
- 3 *Avoid technical language, jargon, and acronyms*
- 4 *Use subheadings and bullet points*
- 5 *Highlight main points*
- 6 *Provide conclusions and recommendations*
- 7 *Consider your audience*
- 8 *Avoid confusing or emotional language*
- 9 *Proof read and spell check*
- 10 *Be logical, clear and interesting*

Keep it simple —

- Try to communicate the message in as few words as possible. Summarize.
- It takes longer to write a clear, concise, short sentence than a long one. Executives are busy people.

Keep it short —

- The **short sentence may be read** while the **long sentence is ignored**.
- Imagine your audience reading your message on a blackberry

Cool Tools: Email Communication Tips

Subject: Ready to go live Dev Req 1238981

Ben,

The developers have been working on your Dev Request 1238981 since 10/1/14. They have completed the work with the vendor, ABC Company, on the file upload using the file specs given to them from Genie last month.

Genie and John went through several scenarios but found an issue with the co payment when it needs to calculate the tax in Ohio vs. Nevada. John found the issue in the SQL statement in the job and has fixed it. Genie has tested all the rest of the scenario and they are now good to go.

We can live next Tuesday, since that is when IT usually does deployments if you want. I will submit the change control and the production deployment team will take over from there. I have also drafted a user communication (see attached).

Thanks

Joe Cool,
Project Manager





Subject Line Ideas:

Workflow Codes

- *FYI*** - FYI – Notification Only
- *APVL*** - Approval Requested
- *REVIEW*** - Review requested, not Approval
- *ACTION*** - Action Required
- *CANCEL*** - Request Cancelled
- *DISAPVD*** - Request Disapproved
- *APPROVED*** - Request Approved

- *EARLY WARNING*** - No Action, here is our plan
- *ISSUE ESCALATION*** - Help Wanted

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- **Subject line:**

35% of email recipients choose whether or not to open an email based on subject alone.

- ensure that it is ***concise & clearly communicates expectations***
- change the subject line as topic changes

- **Body:**

You have gotten pretty far if someone opens your email, don't blow it with poor content

- Split content into sections for easier reading
- Headings and bullets are easier to read than essay formats.
Bullets will assist in highlighting your main points
- Subheadings help guide your reader through the organization of the report
- Relevant info at top (for smartphone/BB readers)
Put all the non-pertinent info at the bottom (*details at the bottom if they want to continue reading*)
- Use Document Links vs attaching documents
Do you have Sharepoint or some other shared file server?

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The Northern
Nevada Chapter
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Sample Format : *(Headings help readability)*

Subject: *APVL* Appname topic name deployment

Email Body:

[To Name]

Topic: Brief overview of request

Action Requested:

Please reply with your approval to deploy the above application/features on Thursday, 4/17/14 pm.

Deployment Features:

Details of what is being deployed, include source for the “Why” reference

This is a just a sample; point is to keep your request relevant and short at the top and the details at the bottom. Keep in mind some may be reading this from a blackberry.

Example:

Subject Line: *APVL* **SupplyMaster** Hot Fix Deployment Request

Topic: Approval Request for Deployment of SupplyMaster Project Hot Fix

Ben,

We have combined several fixes from various tickets into one deployment on Thursday night pending your approval.

Action Requested:

1. Please reply with your approval to deploy the below application/features on Thursday, 4/17/14 PM.
2. Once approved, please send out the user communication letting them know this will be live Friday, 4/18.

Deployment Features:

1. (TT Bob Smith - 334313) Update SupplyMaster stored proc for PMPlus project list pull to not pull projects with Pcode <>43. This caused issue with users selecting these projects when it shouldn't be available for ordering supplies.
2. (IT Efficiency) Project list - Removing hard coded projects from procedure and moving to table based for inclusion of projects that don't fit the logic requirements.

Background:

Include testing info why it should be approved and who tested/endorsed, etc.



Issue Communications



**ALREADY
CALM
I'M THE
PROJECT
MANAGER**



**KEEP
CALM
AND
COLLABORATE**



**KEEP
CALM
THE
PROJECT MANAGER
IS IN THE BUILDING**



**KEEP
CALM
AND
MAKE
DECISIONS**



**KEEP
CALM
AND
SEND
EMAIL**

Cool Tools: Email Communication Tips

It's important to communicate issues and early warnings of issues to management teams and sometimes stakeholders (message may vary between audiences). Communicate potential issues up through the chain before they hear it from someone else. Don't blindside your management team.

Communicate Early & Often!

Early Warning

- Defined as “An Issue has popped up; the project team is working through resolution and there is **no help wanted** at this point”.
- Explain succinctly what the issue is, what the impact is, what action plan is, anticipated resolution date/time or if not resolved by date/time when it will be escalated to an Issue Escalation for decisions or help wanted.



Issue Escalation

- Defined as “An Issue has popped up; the project team has recommendations including other options and has **help wanted requests** (decision, approval to move forward with recommendation, or actions.”



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Sample Format :

Subject: *ISSUE* Appname Issue Name

Or *EARLY WARNING* Appname Issue Name

Email Body:

[To Name]

Topic: Title of Issue

Situation: Brief Explanation of issue (include cause)

Impact: Brief explanation of business impact

Action Requested:

- Please approve the team moving with Option 1
- Nothing at this time, team will escalate on Friday if not resolved.

Action Plan: What are the steps the team is doing or are requesting to do.

Recommendations: Include all options and which one the team is recommending and why, and put the team's recommendation first.

Background: include details that are longer and not critical to above sections. This is the just in case they want to read more about the issue.

Cool Tools: Email Communication Tips

Example: Request Approval for Deployment

Subject: *EARLY WARNING* Travel App SQL Job Failing for Nightly Upload

Email Body:

Topic: Travel App SQL Job Failing for Nightly Upload

Situation: Starting Thursday night, 3/20, the sql job is failing. Job has been disabled.

Impact: No uploads are going to Travel App (new employees, name changes which would impact login access to Travel App). New Hires are added on Thursdays, little impact until Thurs 3/27. Name changes can be handled manually.

Action Requested:

- No action at this time.
- Team will escalate if assistance or decisions are needed.
- Issue will be escalated by Tues, 3/25 if progress is not made or sooner if necessary.

Action Plan:

Team is currently working though fix and test to deploy prior to tonight so upload to Travel App can go by 5pm.

- DEV: Suzie has been testing in DEV with the FTP site that Bob set up for her.
- TEST: Will move to Test as soon as possible.
- PROD: Slight chance to get in Prod prior to 5pm.

Next update will be at 4pm

Root Cause:

TBD – Suzie researching. The SQL Package has lots of logic in it that has since been abandoned with our change of direction prior to go live. This has made troubleshooting very complicated.



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Example: Request Approval for Deployment



Subject: *ISSUE ESCALATION* Travel App SQL Job Failing for Nightly Upload

Email Body:

Topic: Travel App SQL Job Failing for Nightly Upload

Situation: Starting Thursday night, 3/20, the sql job is failing. Job has been disabled.

Impact: No uploads are going to Travel App (new employees, name changes which would impact login access to Travel App). New Hires are added on Thursdays, little impact until Thurs 3/27. Name changes can be handled manually.

Action Requested:

1. Please approve pulling Dev Resource to work this issue today (need 3 hours of his time).

Action Plan:

Team wants to work though fix and test to try to deploy prior to tonight upload to Travel App by 5pm.

- DEV: Need Bob to set up FTP site and to update the code for the interface. Suzie will do a quick test.
- TEST: Will move to Test as soon as possible. Suzie will coordinate with users for test and sign off.
- PROD: Slight chance to get in Prod prior to 5pm.

Next update will be at 4pm

Root Cause:

TBD – Suzie researching. The SQL Package has lots of logic in it that has since been abandoned with our change of direction prior to go live. This has made troubleshooting very complicated.

Thanks!

