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| **Activity Title:**   | **Social Etiquette – Language Styles and Choices** |
| **Background** | Language is an important part of our culture and it is always used in context. Who are you talking to?, How are you connected to the recipient? What do you want to convey? What outcome are you looking for? Different situations and people call for different language styles, formal and informal. In most cases, you would not talk to a friend in the same style you would talk to the vice president of your company. Language defines the relationship between people. Especially in today’s digital age of texting and social media we have to be careful of the spoken as well as the written words we use. [www.emailreplies.com/#1concise](http://www.emailreplies.com/#1concise) was used to write the e-mail portion of this lesson |
| **Objective** | Students will understand that the words and language that they use to communicate effectively in the workplace have to be carefully chosen. You cannot use the same style and formality in all situations. Some companies’ culture will have a very formal style while others will be informal. Students will also brainstorm appropriate vs. inappropriate conversations for work. |
| **Time Required** | 30 minutes |
| **Personnel** |  |
| **Resources Needed** | Language Styles and Choices PowerPointE-mail etiquette, e-mail talking points, e-mail video, E-mail Etiquette Rules (passed out at the end of the lesson) |
| **Activity Description** | Review the slides from the PowerPoint. Ask the students why does it make a difference which language and style you use? Brainstorm ideas on the board. What are the consequences of using the wrong language? Are you being inauthentic? Explain that it is all about image.  |
| **Outcome or Result** | Students will be aware that there choice of language in communication – speech, writing, e-mail and the affect it can have on their professional image. |
| **Student Handouts**  | E-Mail Etiquette Rules |

www.emailreplies.com/#1concise

**Answer quickly and be concise and to the point.**Customers send an e-mail because they wish to receive a quick response. If they did not want a quick response they would send a letter or a fax. Therefore, each e-mail should be replied to within at least 24 hours, and preferably within the same working day. If the email is complicated, just send an email back saying that you have received it and that you will get back to them. This will put the customer's mind at rest and usually customers will then be very patient!

Do not make an e-mail longer than it needs to be. Remember that reading an e-mail is harder than reading printed communications and a long e-mail can be very discouraging to read.

**Answer all question****s** An email reply must answer all questions, and pre-empt further questions – If you do not answer all the questions in the original email, you will receive further e-mails regarding the unanswered questions, which will not only waste your time and your customer’s time but also cause considerable frustration. Moreover, if you are able to pre-empt relevant questions, your customer will be grateful and impressed with your efficient and thoughtful customer service. Imagine for instance that a customer sends you an email asking which credit cards you accept. Instead of just listing the credit card types, you can guess that their next question will be about how they can order, so you also include some order information and a URL to your order page. Customers will definitely appreciate this.

**Use proper spelling, grammar & punctuation.**This is not only important because improper spelling, grammar and punctuation give a bad impression of your company, it is also important for conveying the message properly. E-mails with no full stops or commas are difficult to read and can sometimes even change the meaning of the text. And, if your program has a spell checking option, why not use it?

**Do not attach unnecessary files** **or copy a message or attachment without permission.**Do not copy a message or attachment belonging to another user without permission of the originator. If you do not ask permission first, you might be infringing on copyright laws.

By sending large attachments you can annoy customers and even bring down their e-mail system. Wherever possible try to compress attachments and only send attachments when they are productive. Moreover, you need to have a good virus scanner in place since your customers will not be very happy if you send them documents full of viruses!

**Do not write in CAPITALS** **or overuse the high priority option.**IF YOU WRITE IN CAPITALS IT SEEMS AS IF YOU ARE SHOUTING. This can be highly annoying and might trigger an unwanted response in the form of a flame mail.

We all know the story of the boy who cried wolf. If you overuse the high priority option, it will lose its function when you really need it. Moreover, even if a mail has high priority, your message will come across as slightly aggressive if you flag it as 'high priority'.

**Read the email before you send it.**A lot of people don't bother to read an email before they send it out, as can be seen from the many spelling and grammar mistakes contained in emails. Apart from this, reading your email through the eyes of the recipient will help you send a more effective message and avoid misunderstandings and inappropriate comments.

**Do not overuse Reply to All** **and use the CC field sparingly** Only use Reply to All if you really need your message to be seen by each person who received the original message.

Try not to use the cc: field unless the recipient in the cc: field knows why they are receiving a copy of the message. Using the cc: field can be confusing since the recipients might not know who is supposed to act on the message. Also, when responding to a cc: message, should you include the other recipient in the cc: field as well? This will depend on the situation. In general, do not include the person in the cc: field unless you have a particular reason for wanting this person to see your response. Again, make sure that this person will know why they are receiving a copy.

**Take care with abbreviations and emoticons.**In business emails, try not to use abbreviations such as BTW (by the way) and LOL (laugh out loud). The recipient might not be aware of the meanings of the abbreviations and in business emails these are generally not appropriate. The same goes for emoticons, such as the smiley :-). If you are not sure whether your recipient knows what it means, it is better not to use it.

**Do not forward chain letters** **or send or forward emails containing libelous, defamatory, offensive, racist or obscene remarks.**Do not forward chain letters. We can safely say that all of them are hoaxes. Just delete the letters as soon as you receive them.

By sending or even just forwarding one libelous, or offensive remark in an email, you and your company can face court cases resulting in multi-million dollar penalties.

**Do not request delivery and read receipts.**This will almost always annoy your recipient before he or she has even read your message. Besides, it usually does not work anyway since the recipient could have blocked that function, or his/her software might not support it, so what is the use of using it? If you want to know whether an email was received it is better to ask the recipient to let you know if it was received.

**Do not use email to discuss confidential information.**Sending an email is like sending a postcard. If you don't want your email to be displayed on a bulletin board, don't send it. Moreover, never make any libelous, sexist or racially discriminating comments in emails, even if they are meant to be a joke.

**Don't reply to spam.**By replying to spam or by unsubscribing, you are confirming that your email address is 'live'. Confirming this will only generate even more spam. Therefore, just hit the delete button or use email software to remove spam automatically.

