



# EMAIL EFFECT

*What Your Emails Say About You*

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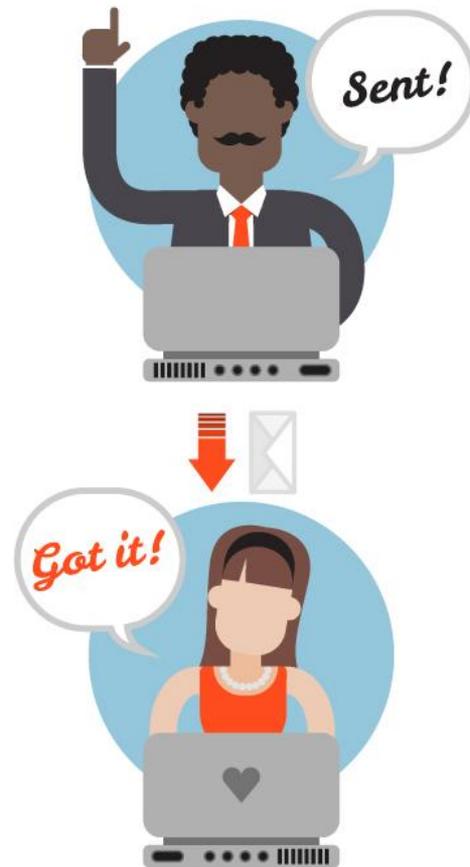


# Intro

It's easy to see why email is the preferred form of communication within the workplace: access via your laptop or smartphone makes it incredibly convenient, it's become ubiquitous and it only takes a few clicks to send a quick response. Plus, with more companies adding remote employees and clients, **it's the go-to tool for increased productivity.**

The only drawback? It limits face-to-face interaction, so **you have to rely heavily on the quality of your content and etiquette.** And since an email serves as a reflection of yourself, you'll want to make sure it's well organized and error free. But should certain vocabulary and structure be avoided?

**Every email you send adds to or detracts from your reputation,** so professional success relies on your ability to write clearly and intelligently. Knowing when to keep your language simple, when to be more formal and even when it's appropriate to add a bit of humor will help you develop and nurture valuable relationships.



# Methodology

In order to determine the most effective and preferred email habits, we surveyed over 1,200 men and women between the ages of 18 and 64 to find out how they use email and how gender, age, and level of education influenced specific preferences.

Our survey asked respondents about a variety of email habits, including their preference in tone of voice (i.e. formal versus informal). We also asked them whether they found humorous emails, emoticons, and slang phrases acceptable.

We analyzed their responses to see how email etiquette influences someone's perception of another and determine if there are any distinctions among demographics. Here are five takeaways – and how you can apply them.



# Finding 1: Keep Your Vocabulary Simple

It's in our nature to want to impress others, especially in the workplace. In order to come across as more intelligent in our emails, we might include business jargon instead of simpler terms.

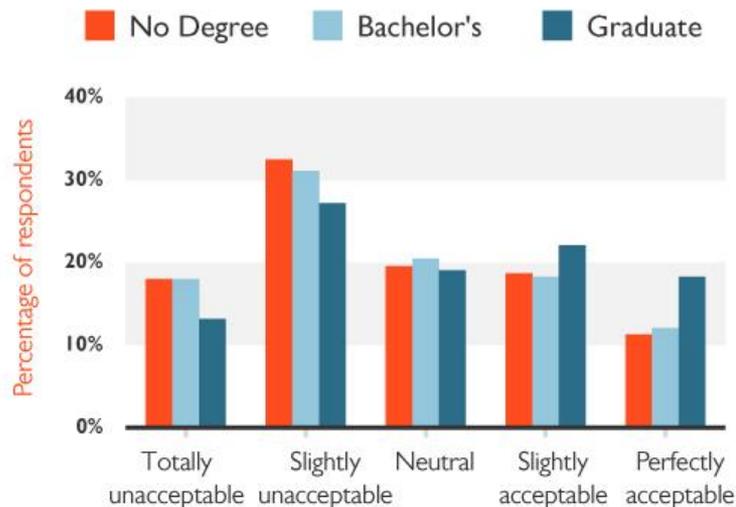
**Clarity is key, and you'll be better received if you use plain language.**

When asked how they felt about advanced or obscure vocabulary being used in emails, **over 25 percent of each group** – those with graduate degrees, bachelor's degrees, and no degrees – agreed that its use was “slightly unacceptable.”

However, respondents with a graduate degree were more likely to appreciate a more expansive vocabulary than their counterparts. They were the only group to see **over 20 percent of respondents find the practice acceptable.**

*Tip: Keep your sentences short, and choose a shorter word over a longer one whenever possible. And if you don't need a word, remove it entirely.*

*Using an advanced and widely unknown vocabulary in email*



# Finding 2: Formal Persuades Males

Your emails have a large audience within the workplace: Some go to clients while others go to coworkers. **The trick is to find the right balance between a formal and informal voice**, and this usually depends on who your recipient is.

We asked respondents to identify which words they associate with a formally structured email that carried a more professional tone. **Each gender shared the same top three, believing that the sender was more “intelligent,” “educated,” and “authoritative.”**

However, a point of contention was whether or not the sender came across as persuasive. **Nearly 50 percent more males find formal language more persuasive than their female counterparts.** Men also find the sender to be more authentic – 17 percent of males compared with only 10 percent of females.

Other areas that varied? **Men found a formal tone more “authentic,” “reliable,” and “helpful” than women.**

*Tip: If you want a recipient who is male to agree with you, stick to a more formal email.*



# Finding 3: Both Genders Like Humor

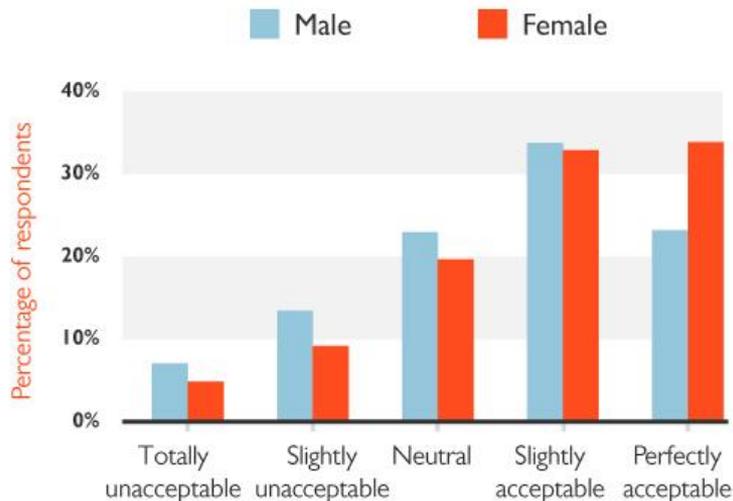
In a professional email exchange, **the lack of face-to-face interaction can cause a lot to get lost in translation – especially humor.** Something that you think is funny might not be funny to someone else, so you always want to be cautious. However, you don't want to rule out the practice entirely, especially if you're familiar with the recipient.

We found that **more than 50 percent of each gender believe that humor is acceptable in emails.** The results tended to favor women – over 15 percent more females enjoy lighthearted emails when compared with males.

**And when it comes to a smiley face, its use is fairly accepted between both genders,** although the data slightly favored women – half of female respondents find its use acceptable compared with only 43 percent of males.

*Tip: If you're familiar with your recipient, it's OK to use humor.*

## Using humor throughout an email



# Finding 4: Avoid Slang

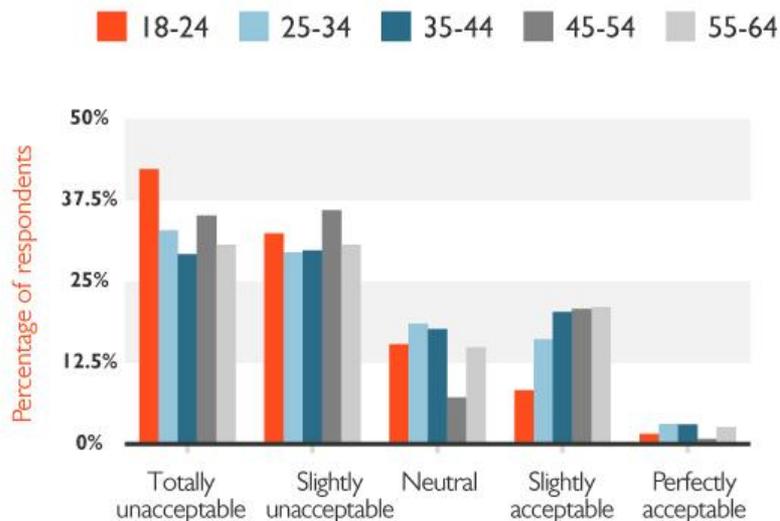
As mentioned before, email etiquette is a balancing act between your formal and informal voices. Phrases like “TTYL” and “lol” have found their way from our smartphones into our more casual emails, but are they as widely accepted?

After we segmented our respondents into five age groups – 18–24, 25–34, 35–44, 45–54, and 55–64 – **we found that the youngest demographic prefers slang the least compared with all other age groups.** Specifically, more than 40 percent of respondents 18–24 found its use “totally unacceptable.”

The overall trend revealed its use is off-putting. A majority of every age group found slang unacceptable to some degree, although older generations – specifically anyone 35 or older – were more accepting of its use, **with 20 percent of respondents in each age group agreeing with the practice.**

*Tip: Avoid slang and abbreviated phrases in your emails, especially if you're sending it to anyone in their 30s or younger.*

## Using *slang* in an email (TTYL, BTW, Thx, AFAIK, BRB, etc.)



# Finding 5: Informal Is Authentic to Females

Even if our coworkers sit only a few feet away from us, a majority of communication is done via email. And its constant use leads us to be more casual and laid-back in our correspondence, but is this helping or hurting your professionalism?

Like a majority of our data, it all depends on your recipient. When asked their opinion on informal and less structured emails, **each gender shared a similar top three, believing that the sender was “young,” “funny,” and “creative.”**

However, a distinction was the level of perceived authenticity. Compared with men, **45 percent more women believe that an informal email is more authentic** than one that is more structured. They also believe the sender is younger and more reliable than their male counterparts.

*Tip: If your recipient is a familiar female, keep your voice more casual.*



By understanding how **age, gender, and level of education** influence perception in email correspondence, you can **tailor your tone of voice and structure** to align closely with your recipient and **ensure stronger and more authentic** communication.



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