Electronic Communication

Electronic communication has become the most efficient and expedient means for communicating inside and outside of companies. While there are a variety of electronic mediums available for interoffice communication—e-mails, texting, instant messaging, and intranet—e-mails remain one of the most popular mediums. E-mails are an efficient means for sending messages, sharing files, facilitating discussions, and collecting opinions.

In addition to the various types of communication, many companies now incorporate social networking, blogs, and websites into their repertoire of strategies for maintaining a competitive edge and for developing consumer relationships. In order for you to perform well, there are some important behaviors that are associated with using these various modes of communication. Practicing electronic etiquette (netiquette) is expected, and if not practiced, it can be grounds for termination.

Maintaining Electronic Etiquette or Netiquette

- Know your company’s policy for using electronic communication
- Maintain a high level of professionalism
  1. Do not forward jokes, spam, or gossip
  2. Do not use racist, sexist, or any other language that promotes exclusion or hate
  3. Do not flame (send messages that are abusive, obscene, or derogatory)
  4. Do not use an e-mail account that has an unprofessional name (hotmamma@yahoo.com or Inurman@aol.com are not appropriate e-mail addresses)
- Do not send a message with all capitals—it indicates shouting
- Do not send a message with all lower cases—it indicates sloppiness
- Do follow the rules of business writing
  1. Write, revise, and edit
  2. Use punctuation, good usage, and correct grammar
  3. Do not start a sentence with a lower case letter
  4. Maintain a professional and formal tone and style
- Do not use e-mail abbreviations (LOL, BTW, etc.)
- Do not use emoticons
- Always end your messages using a closing block
- Do not attach religious, political, or philosophical messages to your signature
- Do not send messages that are hateful, sarcastic, rude, profane, graphic, or demeaning
- Do not forward an electronic communication without getting permission from the generator of the e-mail
- Courtesy copy (cc) allows you to send multiple copies to multiple recipients. If you are responding to an e-mail and have used the cc to include a third party into the conversation, you should tell the person who generated the first contact e-mail that you have cc’d someone and why
- The blind-copy (bcc) feature allows you to send an e-mail to multiple recipients without the bcc recipients’ names or addresses appearing. You should not use the bcc without first consulting your company’s policy. Ethically, you should let your primary recipient know that you are adding people to receive the message

Social Networking:
Because companies are concerned with protecting their reputations, they are now performing Internet searches on prospective employees. By investigating prospective employees, they are able to answer two important questions: 1) Could this prospective employee bring a potential financial risk to our company and 2) Does this employee practice behaviors that are contrary to our company’s ethos? Consequently,
there are some companies who hire internet detectives to do background checks. If you have a Facebook account, Twitter account, or blog that has questionable material, you may want to spend the next few years cleaning these places up. While you can never delete what you have put out in cyberspace, you can try to distance yourself from harmful images or texts and begin building a more professional Internet reputation. Questionable material can range from you posting risky behaviors to racist rants. If you are not sure what qualifies as questionable, drop by the Walton College of Business writing center and allow one of the tutors to give you further information.