COMMUNICATION ETIQUETTE

EMAIL ETIQUETTE

First impressions are important. Continued professional communication is equally important. Whether you are emailing a professor about an assignment, your mentor about an upcoming meeting, or a potential employer about an internship, it's essential to follow some basic rules of etiquette with every email you send.

DO:
- Use an appropriate email address. Teddybear@yahoo.com just can't sound professional, no matter how well written your message is.
- Include an accurate subject line. If you are writing to set up a meeting, state that in your subject. Never leave the subject line blank, and avoid using generic subjects such as "Hi!"
- Use a salutation and address your contact by name. Examples: Dear Ms. Boone, Hi Professor Campbell, Dear Mr. Smith.
- Use punctuation and grammar as if you were writing a paper or business letter.
- Use a signature that gives the reader your contact information. For example:
  > John Q. Xavier
  > Bachelor of Arts, English, May 2011
  > Xavier University
  > (513) 745-3000
  > xavierjq@xavier.edu

  Your email software probably has an option to automatically include your signature at the end of every email.

DON'T:
- Treat email as an IM to a friend.
- Ramble on in one long paragraph what you would have written in three if you were writing in proper English.
- Use email to avoid a phone call or face-to-face meeting. Some things are better discussed in person.
- Have a cutesy quote in your signature. A quote relating to professional life may be okay. You'll know the difference.
- Use fancy fonts or stationery that may be difficult for some computers to download with your email message, or that make your message difficult to read.

Keep in mind that email, as much as face-to-face communication, can be a huge reflection on you, your communication skills and your work ethic. Treat it with care and your email correspondence can positively impress the reader.

TELEPHONE ETIQUETTE

Voicemail Greeting

Now that you've given some thought to email etiquette, what does your *voicemail message* say about you? Applying the same thoughts and principles, review your *voicemail greeting*. Will the caller know they've reached your number? Do you speak clearly? Have you gotten rid of any music or extraneous noise in the background? Consider disabling ring-back tones or adjusting your settings so that they only play for friends.

Returning Phone Messages

If your mentor, a potential employer, a professor, or any other professional calls you, it's important to return the call in a timely manner. Telephone messages, as well as email messages, should be returned within two days of receipt. Regardless of your ability to assist or to respond to a caller's or sender's request, professional etiquette requires an expeditious reply on your part. It reflects poorly on you and Xavier University when phone messages and emails go unreturned.

Leaving Messages

Be sure you speak clearly and slowly when leaving a message. State your name and telephone number, the reason for your call, the action you hope for, and then restate your name and telephone number. Again speak clearly and slowly.

YOU'VE RECEIVED AN INVITATION- NOW WHAT?

Reply to all invitations! R.S.V.P. is an abbreviation for the French phrase, "respondez, s'il vous plait," which means "please reply." Whether it's a social invitation or a business invitation, when a host requests your reply, s/he is counting on hearing from you to determine a headcount for the event and everything that relates- the number of seats available, handouts, refreshments, etc. It is best to respond within a couple of days of receiving an invitation (so that you don't forget!), and definitely by the deadline indicated, *whether your answer is yes or no*. We strongly encourage you to get in the habit now of "RSVPing" when requested to do so. It will be an etiquette skill you'll use for a lifetime.

THE POWER OF A THANK YOU NOTE

If you really want to stand out as a courteous and professional individual, send thank you notes or letters whenever someone has gone above and beyond for you. Whether it's a professor who has served as a reference for you for an internship or the mentor who takes time from his schedule to meet with you and talk about your career interests, you will be thought of positively. When you take the time to thank someone for their efforts on your behalf, they are more likely to then refer you on to someone else who may be helpful to you. It's important to show your appreciation to keep that individual in your network in the future.

Sample Thank You Note

Dear Ms. Boe,

Thank you so much for your advice last week on connecting with my mentor. When I followed up with a phone call, Mr. Smith was really happy that I did. I'm glad you pointed out that my initiative is important to keep my mentor relationship going.   Your coaching on the phone call made a difference. I feel much better about contacting Mr. Smith in the future.

Sincerely,
John Q. Xavier

PUT YOUR BEST FACE(BOOK) FORWARD

Online Profiles Can Hurt Your Chances of Getting a Job:
When a recruiter looks at your application they may use any number of criteria to guide them in making an informed decision: grades, awards, summer internships, volunteer experience, computer skills, and more. If your resume is well crafted and you meet the qualifications, you might think you are a shoe-in for the job. So what happens when that recruiter decides to Google you? What happens when that recruiter finds you on Twitter or Facebook? (Yes, this IS possible and DOES happen!) With one click of the mouse all your professional experience, grades, and glowing recommendations from professors can become obsolete.

While sites like Facebook and Twitter are great for networking with friends and acquaintances now, you have to start thinking about who might have access to your information now and a year or 2 years or 5 years from now. It is not unheard of for a recruiter at a company or graduate school to look up candidates on these websites. There are currently over 7 million Facebook users and the site receives over 250 million hits per day. If you think your fellow college students are the only people viewing your "private" information, you are wrong! The best thing to do is play it safe from the start – don't put anything online that you wouldn't want **everyone** to see!!

Just because it seems unlikely that an interviewer would access your online profiles, doesn't mean they won't. Be especially wary when applying for government jobs. Under the Patriot Act, government agencies can gain access to all of your online information regardless of privacy settings.

Not Job Hunting Yet?
Don't be fooled into thinking that you can put anything you want online now and just take it off before you start your job search. Putting something on the Internet is like getting a tattoo – it lasts forever! Search engines like Google and Yahoo keep copies of all the pages they find (notice the "cached" link when you do a search.) This means that if they copy your page today and you change it tomorrow, the original version (the one you don't want employers to see) still exists and can be accessed.

What to do:
   1. Google yourself.
   Fully investigate any link with your name attached to it. If you find something you don't think is appropriate, you may have to email Google or the website's editor in order to get your name removed. This process is more complex than it may seem, so be persistent. Don't forget to use quotation marks around your name.
   2. Clean up your Facebook.

- Remove or de-tag any pictures you would not want your future boss to see. Though you may not like the idea of removing them now, it will pay off in the long run.
- Remove inappropriate wall posts. What your friends say about you can be just as damaging as what you say about yourself.
- Keep it "PG." Use what your professors might find offensive as a guide. Though you might write something as a joke, others might not see it that way.

3. Use privacy settings.

Anyone can join Facebook and easily view your personal information. What you write about yourself or your friends can be misconstrued by others who may end up with a negative opinion of you. Consider changing the settings so that only your friends can view your profile. (Remember government agencies will still be able to access your information.)

Use your online profiles to help you get a job.

A Facebook profile can be used to your advantage. Let your profiles become an extension of your resume. Write positive things about yourself in the "interests" and "activities" sections and demonstrate your passion for the career field of your choice. Post pictures of yourself using their product or performing a service they provide. It may sound silly, but you should take every opportunity you have to convince an employer that you are smart, responsible, and hardworking.