

Entrepreneurs' Roadmap Series:  
**Business Writing that Commands Attention**  
**Q&A**

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**Q 1: What does MCU stand for?**

**A:** MCU which is the Marvel Cinematic Universe. It's the Captain America and Iron Man and everything else movies.

**Q2: In an email, how can I come up with the most efficient and informative subject line?**

**A:** You want to keep your email as succinct as possible. If your subject line is a full sentence and a half long, probably a little bit too much. Omit the words that have the least amount of impact. Stick with your verbs, your nouns and your adjectives. Try and keep your subject line it to no more than four words. That's important, also, because if you're sending emails outside of your organization, you want them to know that this is probably a legitimate email based on the subject line, and not something lengthy that's going to wind up being spammy or contain something I don't want in my inbox.

**Q3: Are there specific times of the day that are best to send a written form of expression such as an email?**

**A:** Give email time. The great thing about the written word is that you have time to edit and complete your thoughts. It doesn't have to be immediate even though most people want it to be and sometimes expect it to be.

So, one: give it a little bit of time as far as when you should send it. I would keep it before lunch - probably 1010 to noon, and here's why business owners: we're busy, we hit the ground running in the morning. And probably the last thing we want to do is go through a bunch of second tier emails. If you send something a little bit too late in the day, the person that you're sending it to might not see it until the very next morning. I think that 10am to 12 noon window is probably going to be your most efficient.

**Q4: What are some examples of informal words to avoid when using an email?**

**A:** I would love to rattle off the top 100 uses words that you shouldn't use. I'll tell you what, we'll build that into the writing lab since you have just demonstrated that there is demand for this.

Also understand that (language) is a living breathing thing, there are going to be words that a year from now show up on that list that aren't present today. Probably some of the best guidance I can give is that to be good at something you you've got to do it. You can't perfect your baseball swing by watching video, you can't earn first chair just by reading sheet music, you

got to play you got to hit the batting cage. So, if you want to be an effective writer, make it a point to write some handwritten cards, make it a point to draft your own emails.

**Q5: What about using low or high priorities on email settings?**

A: Sparingly.

And here's why. If you start calling everything a priority, it's like the boy who cried wolf: people are eventually going to say "the sky is falling, but I know it's not." They're going to become anesthetized to your how you label things. So, use them very sparingly. That way, when you do use them, they will stand out and they'll grab that person's attention more effectively.

What I have found to be most effective is to focus on the way you format the text of the body of the email itself. We tend to want to default to drawing emphasis to something by using all caps, which comes across as yelling; there are also way too many tools in email, from underline, bold, italicized, etc. Indenting and making it a bullet point; there are lots of ways to draw emphasis to a couple of key specific points without going all caps on somebody.

**Q6: What about sending emails late at night, so they will be available early in the morning?**

A: Absolutely you can send things late at night. I'm not sure if it's a question about is it the best use of your time or is the recipient going to receive it in a timely fashion.

Here's the thing, it's still email, it's still an inbox. A person who prioritizes reading their messages is going to see it, regardless of when you send it; a person who doesn't prioritize reading their email inbox is going to miss it no matter when you send it. There's no rule against it, just understand that the recipient is going to receive it nearly the same. That is, they're going to have the same level of emphasis and priority on it, regardless of when you send it.

**Q7: Is it appropriate to add new people to an email recipient list?**

A: Are they germane to the conversation?

If so, make it a point in the body of the email to specifically say "I'm looping in," and then the people that you've added to the conversation --if you feel it's going to be a one-off message, like, "real quick as we wrap up this email thread, I'm including Dan and Laura." And then you say something like "Hey Dan and Laura, welcome to the conversation, just want to loop you in read the email traffic below."

If it's going to be more than that, start a new message thread with a new subject line and new set of recipients. Say "Just want to make sure everybody's on the same page. I'm bringing in marketing on this." And then you're off and running.