

# Your Communication Style Makes You or Breaks You

By Joann Javons

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Can you communicate well with your clients online? Sounds like a silly question, doesn't it? But you would be surprised how many professionals don't know how to communicate effectively online.

Your communication style is communicated every time you send an email.

You *\*don't\** want your potential clients and colleagues to hit the 'delete' button before even reading your emails. You *\*do\** want people to have a good first impression of you. Your communication style makes you or breaks you.

## The Big Rules

Here are 3 all-time *\*BIG RULES\** for making a positive impression with potential clients. They're the Big Rules because they will make or break your first impression... and affect your relationship.

1. Greet the client by name. This means "Hi John" or "Dear...", whichever you prefer.

2. Human contact comes before business. Ever go into a restaurant and just start ordering when asked if you're ready? I bet you smile at the waiter, ask 'how are you?' and chat a bit before you order. Your service will most likely be better because you've established human contact with that waiter/waitress before doing business.

Same idea is true in emails.

2 things help you establish human contact in email *\*before\** doing business:

*\*1)* The words you choose + how you string them together.

*\*2)* Email codes that let the person know something about your tone and mood. First, the words you choose and how you string them together...

Here's an example: You can say, "I'm available to coach you starting July 20 and have these times available...Let me know which time works for you."

Or

You can say, "Thank you for contacting me. I'm delighted you're interested in moving forward in

your life and I'm looking forward to working with you."

Now, which one would you respond to?

Warm me up first by showing me \*you\* are a warm, friendly person that I'd like to work with! The client already thinks you're competent in what you do; otherwise, he/she wouldn't have contacted you asking for an appointment.

The same point applies no matter what service or product you are offering. Show the client you're a human being first...if you want to have a continuing relationship with that person.

What about those 'email codes' I mentioned earlier? I would reserve these for people you know or have continuing contact with because many people don't know what they mean.

But these email codes definitely warm up and personalize your relationship so determine if they are appropriate for the people you're working with. Here are the basic tone-setting codes:

:-) This is a smile sign. I use it frequently, almost without thinking about it. You might see a variation on it which looks like this :- although that is used less frequently.

A smile sign :-) is a gentle message that you just can't convey any other way. Sprinkle it in your emails at the appropriate points.

lol: This means 'little laugh'

LOL: This means 'big laugh'

grin : This means you are grinning about something:-)

3. Use white space generously!

If you are sending more than 2 sentences, make them separate paragraphs with blank space between them so the reader can skim quickly.

You'll get a better response when people can skim what you have to say. One large paragraph is a turn-off because it's too difficult to read.

You don't know how many emails your clients and colleagues receive each day. You want to create the right impression with your email communication. Make it \*easy\* for your clients to read, understand and respond to you!

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