

# Common Sense Email

By Bob Osgoodby

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Now there is no law that says you have to follow these rules, but if you are in business on the Web, you should definitely pay attention.

Rule #1 - Turn off your CAPS LOCK - Some people seem to feel that if they write their E-mail in ALL CAPS it will be more effective. Quite the opposite is the case. CAPS should be used only for emphasis. Many people consider the use of ALL CAPS as being the equivalent of shouting and do take offense at it.

Rule #2 - Never send multiple E-mails without using Blind Carbon Copies (BCC). If every E-mail address you sent it to is displayed, you are making the scammers job a lot easier when they harvest addresses. But you have to address it to someone, even if using BCC, so remember, there are a lot of "kooks" in this world who will persecute anyone they can identify.

When using BCC, never send the note to someone on your mailing list. If you have a second ID use that, or send the note to yourself with copies to everyone on your list. That way, if someone decides to "vent" it will come back to you and not someone on your list. It also gives you a permanent record of the E-mails you sent to your mailing list. If you don't have a second ID#, you can get one easily at Juno, Hotmail, etc.

Rule #3 - Are you sure your E-mail was actually sent to your mailing list? One easy way to be sure it was is to include your E-mail address in your file of names you send it to. A good method is to include your address at the end of the list. If you get your copy, you can be sure everyone else did as well.

Rule #4 - Don't Bore Them to Death - Advertising by E-mail is a cheap and effective way to get your message out to people, and most people don't mind getting an E-mail if it is short and to the point, but don't spam and send to people you don't already have a relationship with. Also, don't try to sell them your product or services with your first mailing. Try to pique their curiosity instead and have them either reply to your E-mail or visit your Web Site.

Rule #5 - Honor Removes - if someone asks to be removed from your mailing list, do it immediately and send them a courtesy note advising them it has been done. Keeping people on your mailing list that don't want to receive your information is not only bad form, but can cost you your ISP if a

complaint is lodged against you.

And NEVER forge headers so they can't respond to you by E-mail. This is the favorite trick of the scamsters who don't want you to respond to their E-mail, and give you a number to call or a form to fill out instead.

Rule #6 - Be sure that you are not sending the same person multiple E-mails. This is a definite sign of spam and most people will simply delete them.

Rule #7 - I still get E-mails with no text and the message they wish me to read is an attachment to the E-mail. It is immediately deleted as it could very well contain a virus - even from someone you know. Some ISP's have a top limit to the amount of text they will display, and anything larger is automatically converted to an attachment. Many people will not go through this exercise, so you should ensure that your E-mail message can be read by all the people it is sent to, without them having to open an attachment.

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