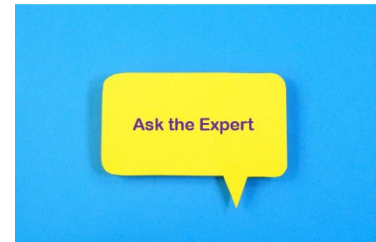


## Employee Matters: Ask the Expert

*Ask the Expert* is a monthly column published in the Employee Matters newsletter authored by experts from across the University and focused on common workplace challenges. Please find archived columns below this month's column.



### January 2025 | Author: Janet Walzer, Associate Vice President of Human Resources and Chief of Staff

**Q:** We communicate in an email-heavy workplace. I get frustrated by some of the emails I receive, and I bet I am guilty of sending ineffective emails myself! Can you share some best practices and/or tips regarding when email is not the best method to communicate -- as well as ways to make my emails more effective.

**A:** Yes, many of us rely on email to get our jobs done. It is easy to quickly send an email without thinking it through, but as you noted, there are consequences to sending automatically. Here are some tips to help you determine when and how to use email.

- Carefully consider if email is the best method to deliver your message.
  - Would it be better to set up a call/Zoom or in-person meeting due to the complexity of the topic, or because it requires a dialogue?
  - Is the content sensitive, confidential, personal?
  - Could your message be interpreted in more than one way?
- Do not use email in the following circumstances:
  - When you are angry, upset, emotional.
  - When you want to speak with your manager/staff member about your/their performance.
  - When there have been 3 back and forth exchanges already.
  - When the email should not go further than the intended recipient(s).
- Use specific subject lines and as needed, note urgency, required action, etc.
- Use standard punctuation and grammar (versus texting style).
- Get to the point; if you need to use subheadings, your message is too long.
- Delete any extraneous text if you are forwarding a message.
- Reply to all questions that have been asked (or acknowledge when you do not know the answer(s)) to avoid follow-ups.
- Re-read your message to make sure it is professional and clear. If you are wondering if you should send it – don't!
- Only copy those who should be in the loop on that particular message.
- Make sure your signature/contact info is up to date.
- Schedule messages in Outlook to be delivered only during business hours.