

5 RULES TO IMPROVE EMAIL RESPONSES

1. Action Words in the Subject Line

- Start all subject lines with one of these “Action Commands:”
 - **ACTION REQUEST** – When an email response is **REQUESTED** (polite)
 - **ACTION REQUIRED** - When an email response is **REQUIRED** (forceful)
 - **APPROVAL REQUEST** – Asking for a decision. Simple **Yes/No** or **Approve/Deny**. A frictionless reply.
 - **INFO ONLY** – The recipient need NOT reply. It is a “Read Only” email. The email is background material that can be used as a reference.

2. Clearly Stated Actions in the Message

- At the top of each email message, provide a short summary of the email and **WHAT IS EXPECTED** from the reader. If you need a response. Clearly state it. Make it easy to respond.

3. Effective Addressing

- For ACTION REQUIRED/REQUESTED, attempt to limit the TO line to a single person. Multiple CCs are fine. This clearly identifies WHO needs to respond.
- If you must include multiple actions for multiple people, then clearly state what each person must do in a summary section. Make it CLEAR and use COLOR.

4. Limiting Multiple Actions in an Email

- Best if there is only ONE task per email. Use multiple emails for multiple tasks or reply requests. This improves the odds of each task getting addressed.
- Send a series (“Task 1 of 3,” “Task 2 of 3,” “Task 3 of 3”) of messages with a stated SUBJECT LINES for each task.

5. Effective Long Email Strategies

- ALWAYS start with a TL;DR summary. Include what you expect the recipient to do **WHILE** they read the long email. The instructions might include the request of what the recipient is to do **AFTER** reading the long email. Be clear!

