

MANAGEMENT ENGLISH

12 EMAILING

No.1 - Issued June 2025

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E-mail Structure

1 Title – ensure it is both concise and clear

2 Opening remark – ensure it is both polite and professional

3 Purpose of the e-mail – ensure it is specific and SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time bound)

4 Provide background and / or information – summarise the 6 Ws (where, when, which, what, who and why?)

5 Call to action – ask the reader do something (confirm / reply / share / understanding)

6 Close – ensure it is polite and professional

E-mail Checklist

Simple

How many points is too many? What level of language is appropriate? How long should sentences be? Is it structured effectively with headings, paragraphs and spaced well?

Points – 3 is normally enough for most audiences, if there are more would splitting over 2 emails be more effective? Could some points be covered in a phone call or meetings then detailed in writing later?

Sentences – more than 20 words increases the chances of misunderstanding; plus good use of commas can help with clarity.

Headings, paragraphs and bullet points used well help the reader, especially when they are reading on a mobile phone or tablet.

Understandable

Does the email have a clear structure? Is the purpose of the email clear? Does the email contain a specific call to action?

Structure - is there an opening, clear points and an end?

Topic - is the topic easily understandable from the title?

Purpose - is the purpose written clearly at the start of the email?

Review - have you reviewed the email after writing it? The more important the more time should be spent on reviewing.

Safety – if it is an important email do not type the email address of the receiver in the ‘To’ box until you have reviewed the email and are completely sure about sending it.

Purposeful

Is there a clear reason for writing the email? Am I expressing this reason? Can its purpose be understood quickly? Is the subject clear?

The purpose must clearly connect with the email’s call to action. Many people receive 50+ emails per day, their purpose needs to be very clear and its worth remembering 50% of emails are read on mobile phones. If the subject contains clear key words and are searchable.

Executable

Urgency - if it is urgent or requires action, state that in the subject line.

Individualize - make them personal, use the receiver’s name.

Slow down - good writing takes time for most people.

Bite-sized - use short paragraphs and bullet points, they are easier to read, particularly on a telephone.

Attachments – only attach information that is understandable, relevant, formatted in a way that is usable and you have checked.

Relevant

Being relevant means the receiver knows why they are receiving the email?

Language – is it appropriate to? Is it appropriate in terms of how formal and polite it should be?

Tone – this is important and is often misunderstood, in cross-cultural communication tone must be both relevant to the situation and relationships. The receiver will remember the emotional tone of the email much longer.

Timing - are you sending this email at the right time? What else is going on for the receiver? Remember the receiver might not be in the same mood as you when they read the e-mail. Think about how the receiver could interpret it, review and find a clearer way to phrase your words if necessary. Always consider would it be better to pick up the phone.

Humour - be careful, particularly in cross-cultural emails, irony and sarcastic comments and jokes normally just does not work and can damage relationships and business.

Think How You Would Feel if it Went Public

What if your email landed in the receiver's boss' or your boss' inbox? What if it was published on the web?

Be aware of what is going on in the world at the time for all

If you are aware of events happening in the receiver's country, mention it such that the receiver knows you are thinking of them and build the relationship.

Know why you are copying each receiver into this email

The To: Line. Only include people you actually want to do something.

The Carbon Copy: Line. Include those who will benefit from knowing what is covered in the email.

The Blind Carbon Copy: Line. Be very careful using this as it can create significant issues.

Reply to All only if you really need to as nobody needs extra email.

Useful Phrases for Emails

Greetings

Dear Sir/Madam, (very formal) Dear [Name],

Hello [Name],

Good morning [Name], Good afternoon [Name],

Starting

I recently read/heard about . . . and would like to know . . . I would be interested in (obtaining/receiving) ...

I received your address from ... and would like to ...

Thank you for taking the time to [write to us/give us some feedback etc. — something the customer has done for us]

Thank you for your email on [date]. Congratulations on [achievement if you know it]!

Opening Lines

Please allow me to introduce myself I hope this email finds you well

I hope you enjoyed your weekend I am eager to get your advice on... I am reaching out about...

Thank you for your help

Thank you for the update Thank you for getting in touch

Thank you for the quick response

Opening Statement/Reference

Thank you for contacting us about

We have received your request for a demonstration of....

I'm writing to you in connection with

Further to our telephone conversation yesterday,

Following your email enquiry,

Thank you for expressing an interest in.....

My colleague has informed me you're interested in.....

I would just like to follow up your interest in

Stating Your Purpose

I would like to give you a personal demonstration of

I would like to arrange a time to present

Could we arrange a time for one of our representatives to....?

Could we meet you to explain the benefits of....?

It would probably be a good idea if we met you to explain.....

Could we arrange a demonstration of....?

We'd like to explain the many benefits of using.....

We'd like an opportunity to show you how your company can benefit from....

Reference by Thanking

Thank you for your email of 21st September.

Thank you for your call of 5th March.

Thank you for our meeting on Thursday.

Thank you for your e-mail about ...

Thank you for your email regarding ...

Thank you for visiting our offices yesterday.

If You're Following Up on Something

As promised, I am...

As we discussed on our call...

Please can you provide me with an update on... I am getting back to you about...

To follow up on our meeting... Congratulations on [recent accomplishment] How did [recent project] turn out?

I hope you enjoyed your [event or vacation]

[Mutual Contact] recommended I get in touch with you

Referring to Previous Correspondence

With regard to your recent email, I....

I have received your request of 22nd May for...

In response to your email, we are able to confirm...

With reference to your call of 2nd October, we...

I refer to your email of 15th December regarding...

In reply to your email of 12th November, we would like to update you regarding...

Referring to Your Own Previous Correspondence

On 2nd April, I emailed about.....

Further to my email on 17th April regarding ..., I...

In reference to my previous email of 21st May concerning...

We recently contacted you about ...

Referring to Previous Verbal Communication

Further to our discussion yesterday, I...

Regarding the meeting we had at the conference last month, we....

Further to our virtual meeting this afternoon, we would like to confirm that...

I refer to the negotiations that took place on the 21st of June, ...

Following our phone conversation on Tuesday, ...

Referring to Someone's Request

As promised, I am forwarding the sales plan...

As you suggested, I am sending my CV for review.

As requested, I am submitting our project plan for review.

In response to your earlier request, I have attached a copy of our company brochure.

Regarding your request for further information on..., we...

Referring to Something the Reader Already Knows

As previously agreed, the product launch will take place on 10th October...

As we discussed on Monday, we would like to offer a further 5% discount and marketing contribution.

As you already know, the sales launch was not a success, therefore we are submitting plans for a new exciting advertising campaign.

In line with your suggested project plan, we would like to...

Request a Convenient Meeting Time

When would be a convenient time for me to?

When would be a good time for us to....?

Could you let me know when you would like us to?

When would be a suitable time for us to meet you?

Suggesting a Suitable Meeting Time

One of our representatives could come to your office anytime next week.

I could demonstrate our product sometime next week.

I would be happy to present our services to you at a convenient time for you.

I'd be happy to explain the benefits of using our company's service anytime you are available.

Please let me know when you are available to meet me.

I would be grateful if you could let me have your availability over the coming weeks.

Declining an Request Meet

Thank you for your offer to meet us but.....

Thank you for offering to demonstrate.....

I'm afraid we're not able to meet you at the moment.

We're not ready to make any decisions at the moment.

I'm sorry but we're not interested at the moment.

I don't think we require a meeting at this stage.

We don't require a meeting at present.

Accepting a Request to Meet

Thank you for offering to meet us.

I appreciate your offer to demonstrate....

I'd be happy to meet you.

We would appreciate a demonstration of...

We'd be happy for you to present.....

We would welcome a demonstration from you.

We'd like you to meet us and explain....

We'd like you to demonstrate....

Delaying a Request to Meet

I appreciate your offer to demonstrate the product to us.

Please get back to us in a few months.

If we are interested, we'll get in touch with you later in the year.

We might be interested in this later in the year.

I've put your company details on file and will contact you if....

Suggesting Specific Meeting Times

Could you meet us on....?

What about next Thursday afternoon?

How about sometime towards the end of the week?

Are you available on Monday at 10.30 a.m.?

How does Wednesday afternoon, around 4 o'clock suit you?

Could you possibly make Thursday at around 10?

Saying a Date/Time isn't Convenient

I'm afraid I'll be in a meeting on Monday morning.

I'm sorry but I'm tied up all week.

Sorry, that time doesn't suit me.

I'm afraid I can't make it on Tuesday.

Saying a Date/Time is Convenient

Friday, 16 June at 10am suits me fine.

I can meet you on Friday, 16 June at 10am.

I am available to meet you anytime on 16 June.

When you're initiating email contact with someone new

Very formal

"Might I take a moment of your time..." (to begin the email) "Please may I introduce myself..." (to begin the email) "Many thanks again for your time." (to end the email)

More informal/friendly

"I am just emailing to ask..." (to begin the email) "I am a friend of Bob's..." (to begin the email)

When you've answered someone's question(s)

Very formal

"I trust the above resolves your queries. Should you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me."

More informal/friendly

"I know that is a lot to take in, so let me know if anything I have said does not make sense."

"I hope the above helps, but please email again if you are still having any difficulties."

When you're asking the recipient to take some action

Very formal

"I would appreciate your help in this matter."

More informal/friendly

"Please could you look into this?"

"Would you mind checking it out for me?"

"Please can you get back to me once you have had a chance to investigate?"

When you need a response (but not necessarily any action taking)

Very formal

"I await a response at your earliest convenience."

More informal/friendly

"Please can you drop me a quick word so I know you have received this?" "I look forward to hearing from you."

When you've heard nothing back and want to chase up a reply

Very formal

"In reference to my email of June 20th ..."

More informal/friendly

"I wondered if you got my email (June 20th)?"

"When you get a moment, please could you drop me a line about my last email?"

Explaining Why You're Writing I am writing to tell you about ...

This email is to confirm that... (e.g. This email is to confirm that we've received your payment.)

We're sending you this email because...

In this email we wanted to [tell you about/give you...]

We are writing to [why you're writing]

We wish to inform you of [news] (e.g. We wish to inform you of a change in our rates.) I am writing concerning/with regard to/about ...

Just a short email + [to inform you that/ to confirm/ to request...]

I am writing just so you know ...

I am writing to remind you about... I am writing to let you know that...

This email is just to let you know that...

Just a quick reminder that...

I would like to [action]. (e.g. I would like to inform you that...)

This is just to let you know that...

I wanted to give you a friendly reminder that...

I am contacting you for the following reason.

Just a quick email to [purpose] (e.g. Just a quick email to see how you're doing.) I just wanted to let you know that...

Reconnecting with Old Customers

So happy we reconnected after this time.

So glad that we're in touch again.

It's always nice to get in touch with old friends!

Long time no see! Glad to hear from you again.

Introducing Value

I highly recommend (doing something, e.g. visiting our new Knowledge Base/checking out this new article)

Here is a copy of the information...

[value] will help your team [do something] (E.g. This library will help your team create websites much faster)

To get the most out of [Product], [what you want them to do, e.g. don't forget to take a look at the Start Guide]

In this email, we wanted to give you a few links to articles that we've written that will help you get up to speed on how to use some of our best features.

We brought together some of the best tutorials which

We're confident you'll see big improvements since ...

We know you're busy but we would hate to see you miss out on this opportunity! You can do so much with...

Here's how to... [action which is important to the user] We thought you might find this useful.

Referring to Previous Contact

Thank you for your letter of March 15 ...

Thank you for contacting us. • In reply to your request ...

Thank you for your letter regarding ...

With reference to our telephone conversation yesterday ...

Further to our meeting last week ...

I would just like to confirm the main points we discussed on Tuesday. Further to your email on [date], ...

I am writing in reply to your email on [date] about [topic]. In reply to your email ...

We understand from your email that you're interested in (product/service/feature). We talked last week about...

We had a phone call on [Date] about... It was nice to hear from you yesterday. I was glad to catch up yesterday.

Making a Request

We would appreciate it if you would ... I would be grateful if you could...

Could you possibly tell us/let us have... In addition, I would like to receive ...

It would be helpful if you could send us ... I am interested in (obtaining/receiving...)

I would appreciate your attention to this matter. Please let me know what action you propose to take

I would be grateful if you could send me further information about... Shall I [verb]? (e.g. Shall I meet you at the airport?)

Would it be possible to...? (e.g. Would it be possible to have a quick chat on Monday?)

Would you mind if [+ past simple]? (e.g. Would you mind if I took the day off on Tuesday?)

I was hoping you could [do something]. What would you like to do next?

Could you please send me ... ? Let's discuss your next step.

Could you please [what you want the person to do]? It would be great if you could...

Would you mind [doing something]? (e.g. Would you mind having a quick chat?) I was wondering if you could...

Could you confirm these details?

Would you like me to ... (e.g. Would you like me to send you a link to the article?) Just wondered if (you could send me a copy/there is any news etc.)

Enquiring (would like to know)

We are writing to ask the lead time required.

We are writing to ask if the statistics are already available.

I would like to know further details.

I'd like to know where we can obtain further information.

Enquiring (tell, let (you) know, confirm)

Please could you confirm the deadline?

Please would you confirm when your manager will contact me?

Could you tell me if you have xxxx in stock?

Could you let me know you weekday opening times?

Further Enquiring (same subject)

Further to this, I would like to know if...

On the same subject, could you tell me if...

In the same connection, I'd like to know whether....

Further Enquiring (new enquiry)

Also, could you confirm whether.....

I would also like to know if/whether...

One more thing, could you tell me if/whether...

In addition/Furthermore, please would you let me know

Requesting Further Details

Please would you let us have further details of ...

Please can you give us full particulars of...

Would you please let us have further information about...

Giving Reasons for an Enquiry

Please could you let us know the date of delivery as we need the equipment urgently?

We'd appreciate it if you could let us have this information soon because we need to make a purchase decision by the end of the month.

We need these details now due to a problem with...

Email Body

Here are the details on...

Furthermore...

In addition, I would like to...

In spite of/Despite [something] (e.g. We're glad the issues got sorted out in spite of the delay.)

For example/For instance, ... In other words, ...

In order to [do something], we would need to [do something else]. (e.g. In order to fix this bug, we would need to research it a bit further.)

That's why ...

Would [time] would work for you? I'm pleased to hear that...

First of all, ... Firstly/Secondly...

Talking about Problems and Solutions

There seems to be a problem with the new feature. Issue number 35402 has been resolved.

Here are the possible solutions:

We could [solution 1], or we could [solution 2]. (e.g. We could add a new button or we could redesign the whole dialog.)

While running the tests, we've discovered that [something] is not working properly.

Which option would you like us to work on?

What would you like us to do about [problem]?

The [page, feature, button] is not working the way it should.

The first solution will take about 3 days, and the second one can take up to 10 days. If we implement the first solution, we can have [possible problems] in the future.

However, the second solution will take much longer, and we cannot give even a rough estimate at the moment.

We'd like to research this problem a bit more in order to give you a more detailed list of options.

What would you like to go with? Which solution works best for you? We've found a bug in [where].

Here's how we would like to take care of this issue. How would you like us to solve this issue?

When we click on the [button], we should see [result]. However, now [problem]. (e.g. When we click on the Create button, we should see a new page. However, now it shows an Error message.)

We can see three options.

There are two ways to solve this. We've taken care of bug [name].

We've come up with a workaround for this issue.

This solution is better, but it will take longer to implement.

If we go with the first option, we might run into some problems with [topic] in the future.

Showing Empathy

I hope you haven't been inconvenienced by our team's visit.

Sorry, I hope this hasn't caused you too much trouble and work.

We hope our requests have not inconvenienced you.

We regret the problems this has created.

Apologising (formally)

We would like to apologise for delivering the stock 3 days late.

I would like to apologise for not attending the meeting on time.

I must apologise for my team's approach to the problem.

We wholeheartedly apologise for quality of the work not being satisfactory.

I apologise for everything that happened and are putting a plan in place to correct this.

Please accept my apologies for failing to take on board the severity of the issue.

Please accept our apologies for not responding to the request appropriately.

Apologising (strong)

I am extremely sorry for delay in the calling the meeting.

I really am sorry about last week's meeting.

We are very sorry for not appreciating the urgency of the issue.

We would like to apologise for not replying promptly.

Giving Reasons

He was late because of the bus strike.

Our late reply was due to the fact we were short-staffed.

The drop in sales was caused by a shortage of stock.

The quality problem was the result of a maintenance issue.

Giving Assurances

I will do my best to resolve the issues you have raised, thank you for bringing them to my attention.

I would like to assure you that we understand the inconvenience caused.

We assure you that this will not happen again.

We can give you our assurances that your business is appreciated and we are doing everything in our power to regain your trust.

We guarantee that we have learnt from this and have already put a plan in place to prevent this happening again.

We promise you the quality team are closely monitoring everything such that it can not happen again.

Rectifying Problems / Mistakes

I am doing my best to rectify this issue as quickly as possible.

I will correct the problem as quickly as possible.

The team are taking all the necessary steps to improve the service.

We are doing everything we can to improve the quality of production.

We are doing our best to resolve the problems in production.

We have rectified the situation and are now in communication with your team.

We have resolved the system failure.

Asking for Clarification

Could you give us some more details on ... please?

Could you please clarify when you when we can re-arrange the meeting?

If I understand correctly, your team would like us to...

Please confirm exactly what you mean by...

Please could you be more specific?

Please could you clarify what you would like us to do about our failure to deliver the goods on time?

Please could you explain what you mean by ...?

Please could you repeat what you said about ...?

Sorry, did I hear you correctly when you said ...?

Therefore, would you like us to...?

Asking Questions

Have you given any further consideration to our proposal?

How would you feel about meeting next Monday?

Please confirm when it would be convenient for my team to visit?

What would you like us to work on next?

Which option would work best for you?

Would it be possible to update us next month on the project milestones?

Would you like to reschedule to a later date?

Would you prefer a discount or a contribution to your marketing budget?

Would you prefer to delay the product launch?

Call to Action

Are you considering [action]? (e.g. Are you considering upgrading to the new version?)

Just book time on my calendar and I can answer all your questions on the product and pricing.

Or if you'd rather [alternative option], you can...

Help us [give value to you] by [what action we want them to take]. (e.g. Help us give you the best advice by telling us a bit more about your project.)

I would appreciate it if you could walk me through your project.

This may be a great time to ... [call to action] (This may be a great time to take a look at our Knowledge Base)

If you are interested, drop me a line and we can [action] (e.g. If you are interested, drop me a line and we can have a quick chat to discuss your further steps.)

Come check out what's new and get inspired!

Asking Them to Contact Us

Could you please keep us updated on this?

You can reserve a free consultation here [link] or just give us a call at [number]

If you have any questions, please email or call me. Please feel free to contact me anytime.

If there is anything I can do for you, please let me know.

You can reach me at [phone number] if there's anything you'd like to discuss. Feel free to call me.

Talking about Meetings

At the meeting on Tuesday/yesterday, we discussed [topic]. Let's discuss this at the meeting, if you don't mind.

At our last meeting, we talked about [topic]. At the meeting, we agreed to [do something].

We'd like to have a meeting about [topic] on Thursday. Let's have a meeting sometime this week.

How about talking this over at a meeting?

Why don't we talk this over at a meeting?

I'd be glad to tell you more about this at the meeting today. This issue came up at the meeting we had on Friday.

Let's have a meeting to discuss this issue.

I have set up a meeting for Friday at 5 p.m. Here's the link.

Offering Help

We are quite willing to ... (e.g. We are quite willing to consider a discount.)

Our company would be pleased to ... (e.g. Our company would be pleased to work with you.)

If there's anything I can help you with, just let me know. We would be happy to ... (e.g. We would be happy to help.)

Would you like us to ... ? (e.g. Would you like us to create a template for you?)

Thanking

Thank you for your consideration.

I appreciate that you [did something] (e.g. I appreciate that you took the time to give me these details.)

Thank you for taking the time to [do something] (e.g. Thanks for taking the time to give us your feedback.)

Thank you for [Verb-ing/noun] (e.g. Thank you for your email. Thank you for writing to us.)

Thanks a lot for everything. Thank you for your time.

Thank you very much for ... Many thanks for...

You are so helpful.

That is really thoughtful of you. I really appreciate your help.

Thank you for your patience.

It was really great of you to [do something]. Thank you for clearing this up.

Thank you for helping us in this matter.

Giving Good News

We are pleased to announce that .../ to inform you that...

We have some good news for you. [News].

It is my pleasure to let you know that [news]. I am glad to tell you that...

I just wanted to let you know that...

You will be pleased to learn that .../ to hear that...

Giving Bad News

We regret to inform you that ...

I regret to inform you that due to a mistake in our database, ... Unfortunately, we cannot/we are unable to ...

After careful consideration we have decided (not) to ... I am afraid it would be impossible to [do something].

Due to [reason], it would be impossible to [do something]. It is against company policy to [do something].

Despite my best efforts, it has proved to be impossible to... I am afraid I've got some bad news for you.

Unfortunately, [news]

I am afraid it would not be possible to ... Unfortunately, I have to tell you that...

I am afraid that we can't [do something]. That's not really possible.

I can't see any way to ...

It's out of my hands. (means that there's nothing you can do about it, you don't have enough authority)

I am afraid I won't be able to... I am sorry to tell you that...

Apologizing

We apologize for [what you're apologizing for]. I wish to apologize for... (Verb-ing/noun)

I regret any inconvenience caused by...

I apologize for the problems you've had. Please accept my apologies.

Sorry for any inconveniences this situation may have caused. I would like to apologize for (the delay/the inconvenience) ... Once again, I apologize for any inconveniences.

We are sorry for the delay.

I'd like to apologize for making you wait. Sorry to keep you waiting.

I am really sorry, but ... Sorry again for ...

Talking about Orders

Thank you for your quotation of ...

We are pleased to place an order with your company for ... We would like to cancel our order #...

Please confirm that you have received our order. Your order will be processed as quickly as possible.

It will take about [period of time] to process your order. We can guarantee delivery before ...

I would like to cancel the order I placed on [Date]. I would like to place an order for [product].

Please confirm your order.

We are processing your order and we'll get back to you as soon as we can. We have received your order #...

Thank you for your order.

Your order shouldn't take more than 2 days to arrive. Thank you for your order #...

We are glad that you chose us to help you with this!

Delays / Apologies

The items are back-ordered and we expect delivery....

We will be able to ship your order within three weeks.

Your items have been delayed due to....

We are experiencing a delay in filling some orders due to....

Unfortunately, your order has been delayed.

We are sorry to inform you that your order has been delayed.

Please accept our apologies for the delay.

We are sorry for the delay in shipping your order.

We apologise for the delay to your order.

Cancellations

I'm afraid we are unable to wait for our order.

Unfortunately, we have to cancel our order.

I'm sorry but we must cancel our order due to the delay.

Please cancel our order.

Please would you cancel our order for?

Attaching Documents I am attaching ...

Please find attached ... You will find attached...

I have attached the [file] for your review. The attached [file] contains ...

Could you please sign the attached form and send it back to us by [date]? Please take a look at the attached [file].

I have attached ...

Closing Remarks

If we can be of any further assistance, please let us know. For further details ...

If you require more information ...

Thank you for taking this into consideration. We hope you are happy with this arrangement.

We look forward to a successful working relationship in the future. I would be happy to have an opportunity to work with your firm.

I look forward to seeing you next week. Looking forward to hearing from you.

I would appreciate your reply.

I look forward to doing business with you in the future. I enjoyed working with you and look forward to...

Thank you once more for your help in this matter.

If you require any further information, please let me know. Looking forward to hearing from you,

Let me know if you need any help.

If I can help in any way, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Please do not hesitate to contact us again at [telephone number/email address] if there's anything we can help you with.

Thank you for your help.

I hope to hear from you soon.

Thank you for your patience/time/cooperation Please let me know what you think

Thanks again

Thank you for taking your time

Ending Your Email Sincerely

Yours sincerely Yours faithfully Kind regards Yours truly Many thanks Regards

Best regards Best wishes All the best Thank you

Have a great weekend!

Have a wonderful day!

Take Care

Managers should take a lot of care when selecting the language they are using. Slang, idioms, phrases and phrasal verbs can often be misunderstood as they are not taught in many countries, so managers should only use them when they are confident, they will not be misunderstood, or the listener will give them the benefit of the doubt. If in doubt it is always best to use clear and simple language. Words hold significant power, many of the words used every day are often misunderstood and transmit meaning the manager is not conscious of. The following words are some to avoid.

Dramatic words, words such as ‘absolutely, totally and very’ often do not offer any value, instead they create a drama of little value and actually make the message more difficult to receive, understand and remember.

The words “just” and ‘basically’ immediately reduces the importance and impact of the language that follows this word, in addition it presents an impression of the speaker that is normally not desired. The word is a ‘protector’ word which means it softens what the speaker is trying to achieve. If a manager writes, ‘I am just following up on my project brief...,’ they reduce the importance of their e-mail and their reason for sending the email.

Defensive words, words such as ‘Arguably’ or ‘I think...’ can communicate that a manager is not confident and might be wrong. The only time these words might be appropriate is if it is advisable for the manager to protect themselves if the audience has a tendency to over-react and their confidence could be perceived as aggressive. On the other hand, sharing an opinion clearly and directly, even if others are likely to disagree, often gains respect.

A lack of commitment and belief can be communicated by an ‘I will try’ as it shows a lack of confidence and leads to anxiety in the audience. This is where expectation management is complicated because managers are better off saying ‘I will’ and then be careful with the rest of the sentences.

Appropriate apologies are very effective and required in business communication, but the more the word ‘sorry’ is used the less impactful and sincere it appears.

Condescending words such as ‘actually’ and ‘obviously’ are used by many managers but are often very damaging to effective communication. These words can be annoying because they imply that the audience does not understand the topic, but the manager does.