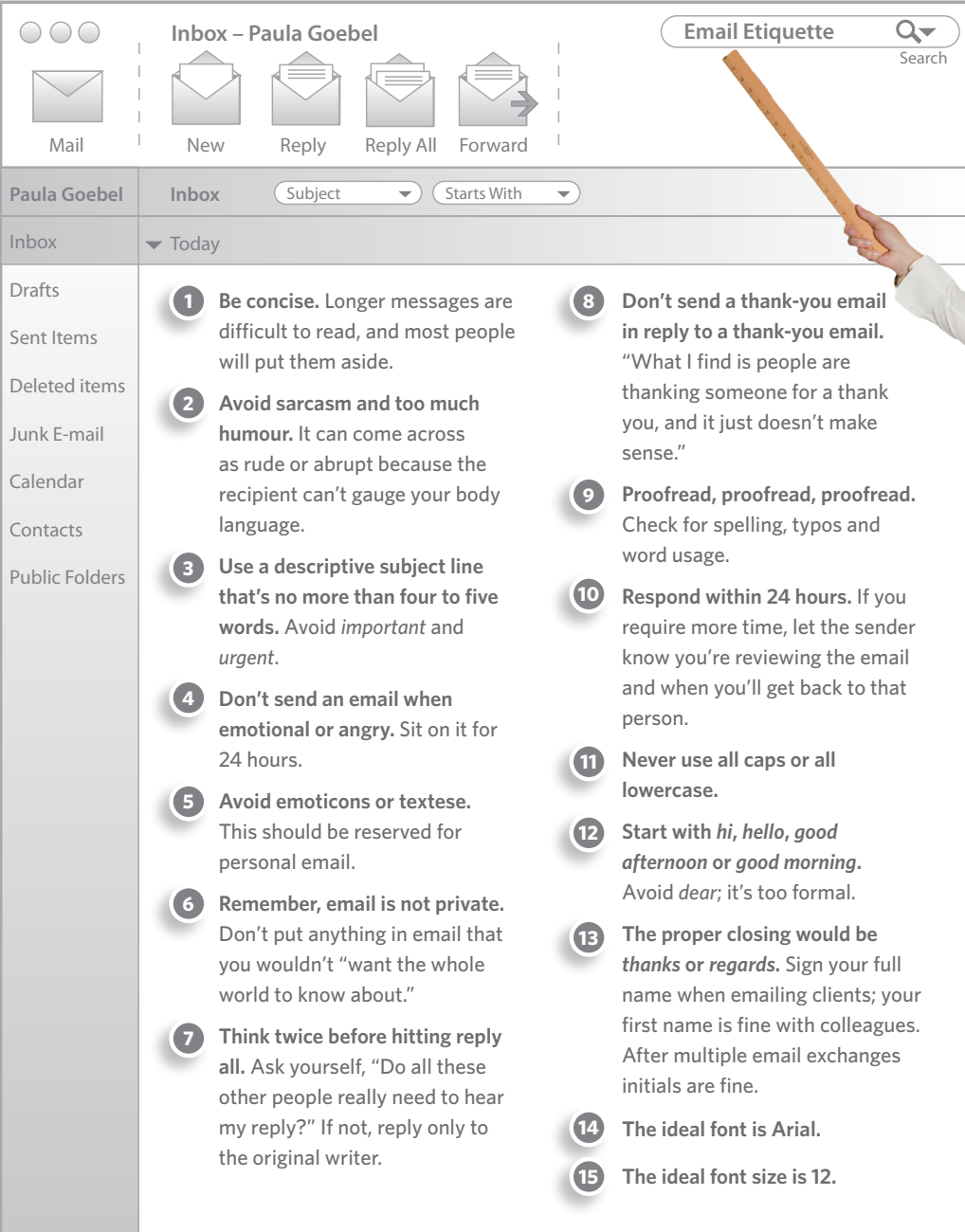


BEFORE YOU HIT SEND

15 tips for better workplace email

People treat email very casually, says corporate trainer Paula Goebel, but in the workplace, "Your credibility, professionalism and competence will be judged based on how you communicate online." Be perceived as a professional by following these tips from Goebel. — *Kristen Vernon*



1 Be concise. Longer messages are difficult to read, and most people will put them aside.

2 Avoid sarcasm and too much humour. It can come across as rude or abrupt because the recipient can't gauge your body language.

3 Use a descriptive subject line that's no more than four to five words. Avoid *important* and *urgent*.

4 Don't send an email when emotional or angry. Sit on it for 24 hours.

5 Avoid emoticons or textese. This should be reserved for personal email.

6 Remember, email is not private. Don't put anything in email that you wouldn't "want the whole world to know about."

7 Think twice before hitting reply all. Ask yourself, "Do all these other people really need to hear my reply?" If not, reply only to the original writer.

8 Don't send a thank-you email in reply to a thank-you email. "What I find is people are thanking someone for a thank you, and it just doesn't make sense."

9 Proofread, proofread, proofread. Check for spelling, typos and word usage.

10 Respond within 24 hours. If you require more time, let the sender know you're reviewing the email and when you'll get back to that person.

11 Never use all caps or all lowercase.

12 Start with *hi, hello, good afternoon* or *good morning*. Avoid *dear*; it's too formal.

13 The proper closing would be *thanks* or *regards*. Sign your full name when emailing clients; your first name is fine with colleagues. After multiple email exchanges initials are fine.

14 The ideal font is Arial.

15 The ideal font size is 12.

WEB EXTRA

Goebel on cellphone etiquette in the workplace.

techlifemag.ca/cellphone-etiquette.htm

ABOUT OUR EXPERT

Paula Goebel, founder of Goebel Communications Group, is a professional speaker and corporate trainer specializing in business communications and leadership. She graduated with a Marketing Management diploma from NAIT in 1985 and a Bachelor of Commerce from the University of Alberta in 1987. She has worked in human resources and taught at NAIT and, currently, Grant MacEwan University.