DIGITAL LITERACY SKILLS

EMAIL EFFECTIVENESS

Module 5

TRAINING PROGRAM FOR VOLUNTEER MANAGERS

EMAIL EFFECTIVENESS

Welcome to Email Effectiveness! In this module, we will learn simple yet powerful email principles to help you – and enable you to help others – to open up new opportunities with digital skills.

We'll establish email expectations in the workplace and describe the skills you'll need in your role as a Volunteer Manager. From foundational to more advanced techniques, we'll make building email effectiveness feel as easy as hitting the 'send' button!

HOW MUCH DOES THE AVERAGE PROFESSIONAL USE EMAIL?

Email is now an integral component of most people's workdays. In fact, most employees start and end their days by checking their inboxes!

Research shows that over one quarter of an employee's time at work is spent on email, and that more than four out of five workers keep their email accounts open on their computers, to keep updated on projects. Because email can take up so much time in the workday, it's essential that everyone feels confident navigating, using, and organising their inboxes.

HOW MUCH DOES THE AVERAGE PROFESSIONAL USE EMAIL?

Overall, the average worker uses email to:

- Communicate internally with colleagues and managers.
- Communicate externally with stakeholders and customers.
- Create proposals and negotiate projects.
- Market products, programs, and services to customers and stakeholders.
- Resolve problems, organise information, and send out resources.

WHAT BASIC EMAIL SKILLS DO MODERN-DAY EMPLOYEES NEED?

Depending on the workplace, employees will need to know how to use and navigate Gmail and/or Microsoft Outlook. For the most part, these platforms have the same features, but the user experience is slightly different. Being familiar with an email platform can give you the extra confidence to communicate with success.

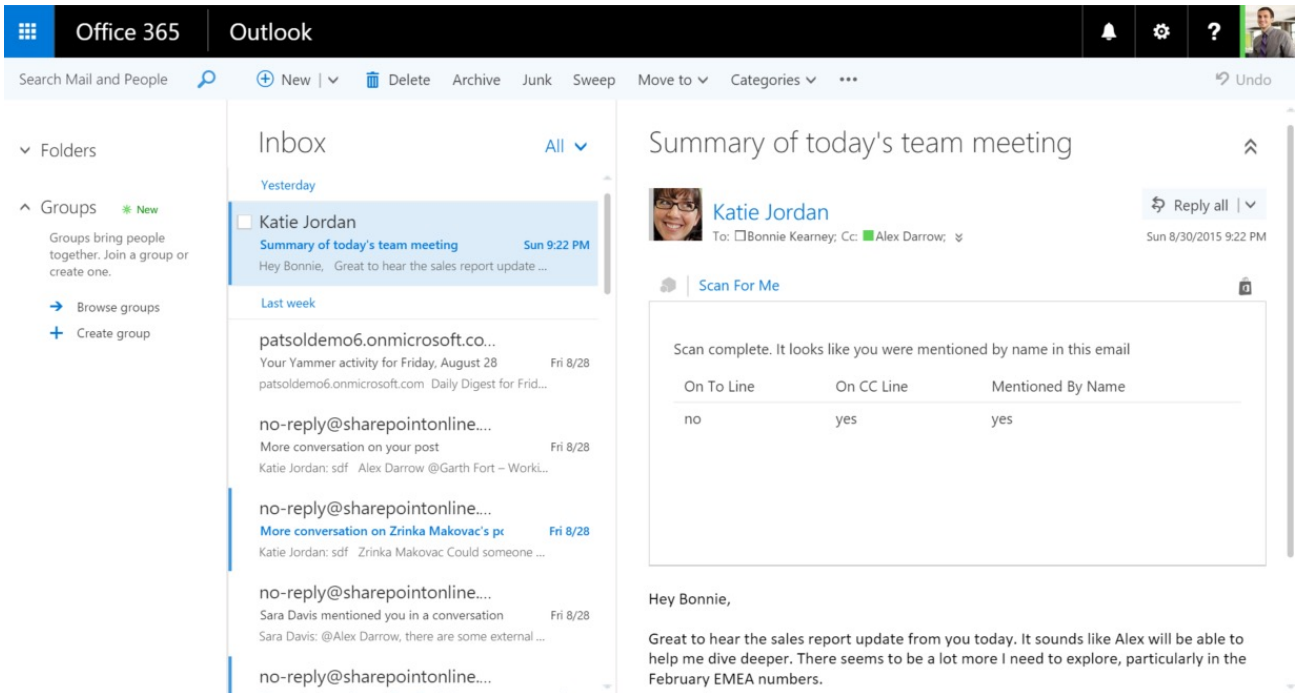
On a basic level, you should be able to:

- Format your email with an appropriate subject line, greeting, and sign-off.
- Attach files and documents.
- Use receptive, grammatically correct language.
- Manage your spam inbox and know the signs of fraudulent emails.
- Keep your inbox organised.
- Reply and address the correct recipients in their messages.
- Send and check emails in a timely manner.

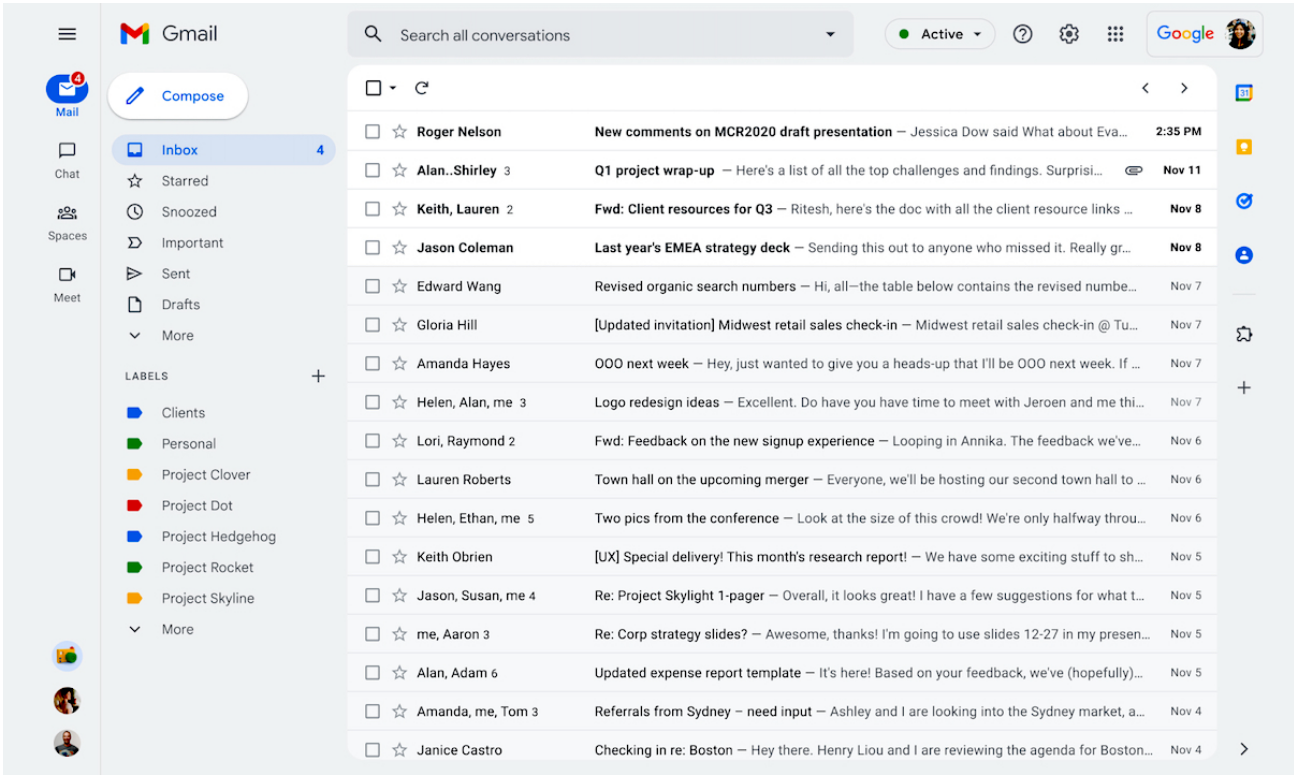
We'll explore some of these skills next!

WHAT BASIC EMAIL SKILLS DO MODERN-DAY EMPLOYEES NEED?

Example of a Microsoft Outlook inbox:



Example of a Gmail inbox:



BUILDING FOUNDATIONAL EMAIL SKILLS

This section will break down some of the most basic email skills you'll need to feel confident in your role and in your workplace.

Dealing with Spam

Most of the time, email platforms automatically catch signs of a fraudulent email and send them directly to a user's spam inbox. But sometimes, these emails make their way into users' main inboxes, putting them at great risk.

Spam emails are likely trying to steal information, identities, login information, or money. This can put you in harm's way, and if you fall victim to a spam situation at work, you can also put the company at risk.

There are a few ways to deal with spam and phishing with ease:

- Regularly clear out your spam inbox. Don't ever open any emails in this section unless you 100% know it's not actually spam!
- Check the email address of the sender, not just their name... If the email address is completely irrelevant or misspelt, it is likely to be a fraudulent email.
- Don't give out sensitive information, such as passwords, credit card numbers, or personal data, via email.
- Don't open external links or download files you aren't familiar with.
- When in doubt, ask a colleague for a second opinion.
- Only use your work email for work purposes.

BUILDING FOUNDATIONAL EMAIL SKILLS

Organising Files

By email, people receive important information and files they'll need to be able to find and access throughout the workday quickly. If your inbox is not organised, you can waste time and fall behind simply trying to find a file.

To help:

- Organise emails under tabs and folders. "Star" or create a file for important emails so you can access them at any time.
- Delete emails you are 100% sure you won't need in the future, to keep your inbox from getting cluttered.
- Unsubscribe from or block spam emails.

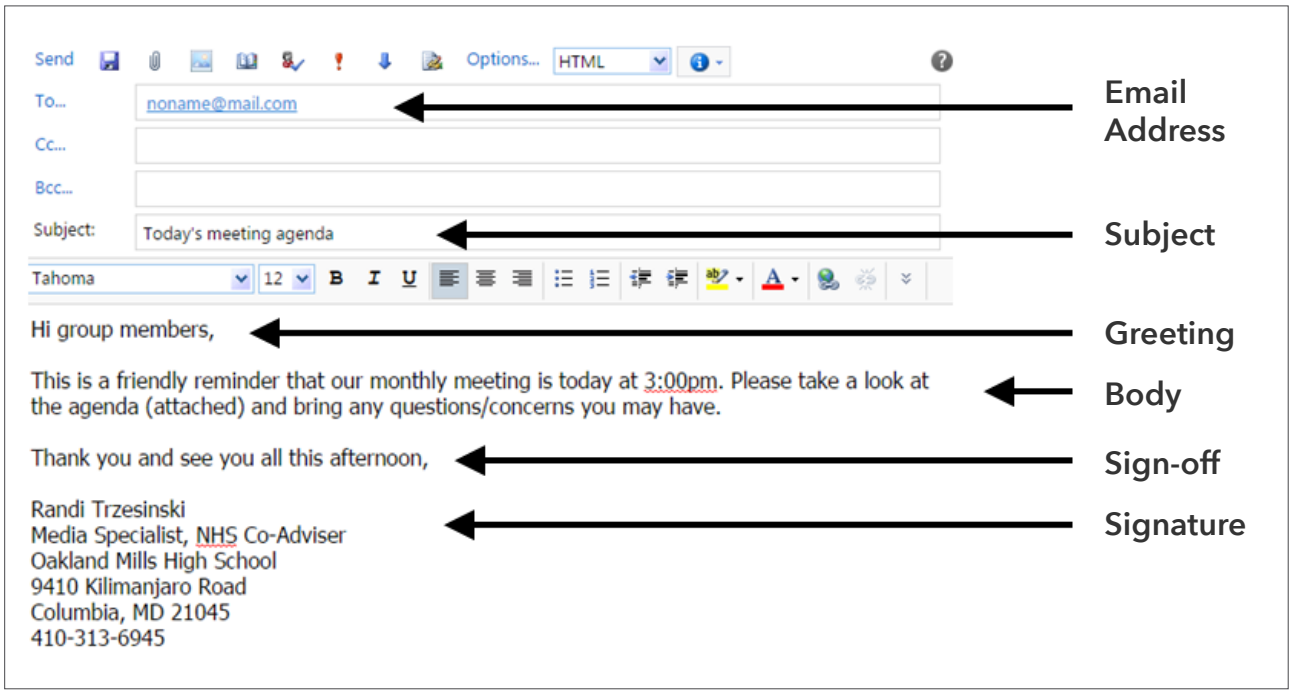
BUILDING FOUNDATIONAL EMAIL SKILLS

Basic Professional Email Formatting

Work emails are different from personal emails. When addressing your friends or family via email, you can talk casually. But work emails should be more formal. This can ensure respect and professionalism when talking with a volunteer, stakeholder, or manager.

Here's the basic format to follow when writing a work email:

- **Subject Line:** Your subject line should be brief, yet specific enough to describe the purpose of your email.
    - Examples: "2022 Budget Review" or "Follow-up Question on the New Volunteer Project."
- **Greeting:** You should start your email with a greeting followed by a comma and a space, like a letter.
    - Examples: "Dear [Name]," or "Good morning, [Name],"
- **Body:** Next, you'll need to write your message. This should include the main purpose or point of your email, any context or additional information needed for clarification, and end with a brief summary of what you talked about or what action needs to be taken.
- **Sign-off:** Close your email thanking the recipient for their time. Before signing your name, you'll need an appreciative sign-off.
    - Examples: "Thank you," "Best regards," or more casually, "Cheers,"



BUILDING FOUNDATIONAL EMAIL SKILLS

Using Receptive and Expressive Language

Communication is at the heart of success. How people interact with their teams, managers, stakeholders, and customers can make or break a program's success and either positively or negatively affect career development.

Now, you don't need to be Shakespeare or write a best-selling novel… You simply need to be able to use receptive and expressive language, as well as correct grammar and spelling to ensure that your email is understood and that you seem professional.

Receptive language is our ability to comprehend a message. So, it's how well you can understand an email you've received. When reading a work email, be mindful not to quickly scan it – this can breed misunderstandings and even mistakes.

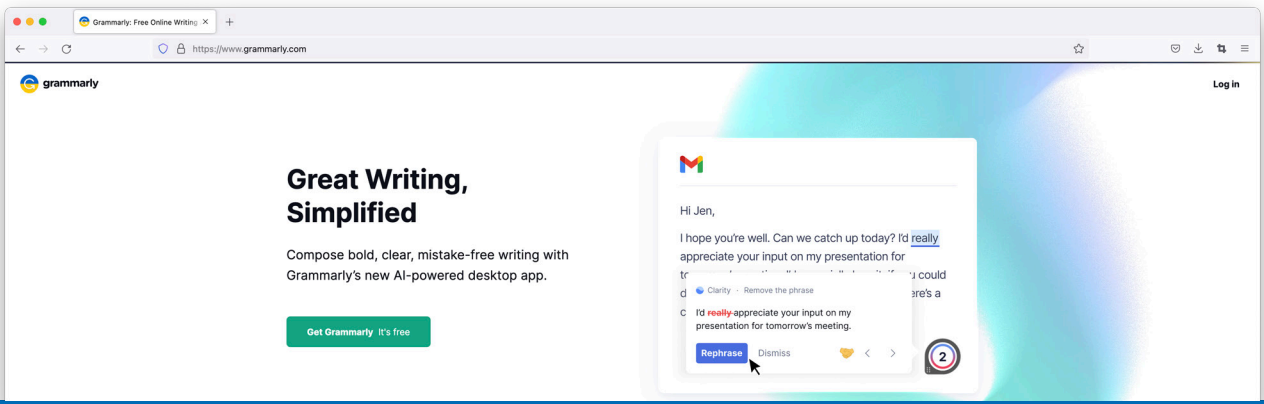
Instead:

- Read through each line carefully.
- Look for context, tone, and the main points.
- If you are confused by any message, never be afraid to ask follow-up questions. It's much better to ask for clarification than to jump to conclusions.

Expressive language is our ability to communicate a message. So, it's how well we can write an email.

Strengthen expressive language by:

- Writing a message, the same way you'd say it out loud. This can ensure that it makes sense and flows conversationally.
- Don't be afraid to be specific, to give context, and to clarify where needed.
- At work, always try to keep a respectful, objective tone.
- Proofreading before you send any message, no matter how short. Read over it, to make sure that you've included everything you meant to, looking out for anything you might have missed. Always run your email through spell check, as well. You can also download free programs such as Grammarly to your computer to help check more advanced spelling and grammatical errors.



BUILDING ADVANCED EMAIL SKILLS

You're doing great! Having covered some of the foundational email skills, let's move on to more advanced email strategies. These techniques will be helpful for volunteer managers looking to incorporate marketing in their programs. Email marketing is one of the most affordable and profitable ways to advertise.

Goal-setting

First things first: We need to set a goal! When marketing a product, you need to know the end goal. That way, you can aim and hit the target!

Be S.M.A.R.T. with your goal –– make it Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound. For example, let's say you're creating an email campaign to promote a new program. This means you will be creating and sending out a set of emails to your audience to advertise it. Your goal could be to find new volunteers interested in taking part. Or your goal could be to find sponsors. Make your goal measurable by aiming to find a certain number of new volunteers or sponsors! Be sure this number is attainable based on your resources. Ensure the goal is relevant, as we want to make sales and spread the word about this new clothing brand. As the cherry on top, you'll want to put a deadline on your goal to help you stay focused and achieve it.

Remember: Setting a goal or purpose for an email is always the first step. From there, you can use your expressive language skills to write an email that entices people to want to volunteer for the program, or to encourage organisations to sponsor it!

Growing an Email List

Once your email goals are set, it's time to find users to send your email to. There are several ways to accomplish this:

- Add a feature on your website for users to sign up for your email newsletter. Give them a reason to sign up, too. Maybe you send out a biweekly or monthly newsletter with free tips, news, and resources!
- Advertise your email newsletter on your blog, social media, and other platforms. This can help you stay in closer contact with your target audience and potentially convert them into volunteers, sponsors, or other stakeholders.
- Give out a 'freebie' to anyone who signs up for your email list! You might create a free guide for helping in the community, based on your new program. You would then advertise this free guide. Users will be able to download it in exchange for inputting their email on your website. The guide will be automatically sent to them, and you'll also have them on your email list! It's a win-win.

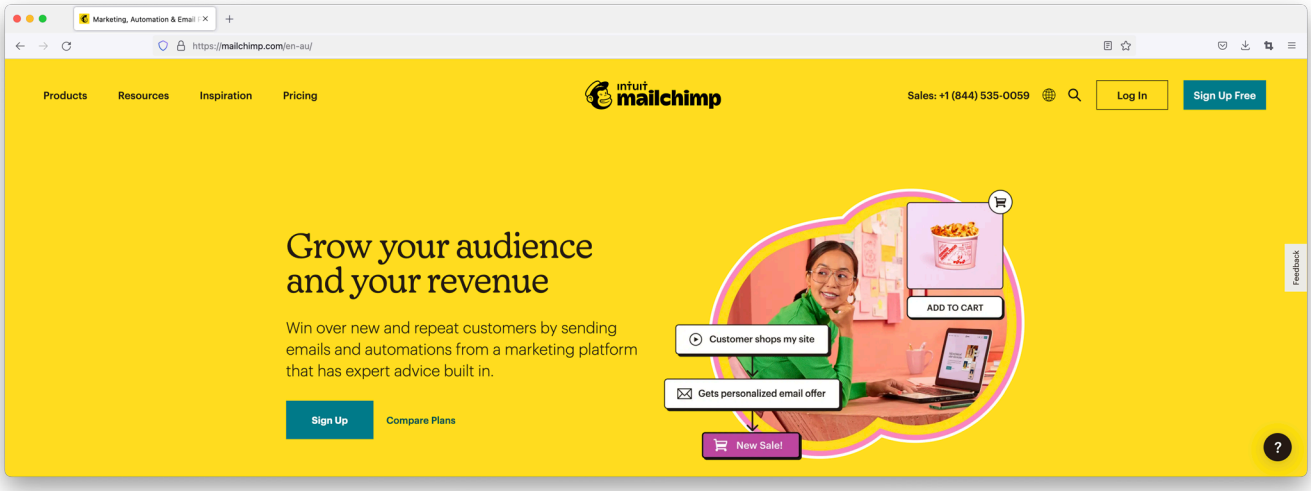
BUILDING ADVANCED EMAIL SKILLS

Utilising Email Marketing Software: Mailchimp 101

We'll end with email marketing software. Many organisations use software such as Mailchimp to design, schedule, and automate email campaigns. It can help make email marketing faster and more effective.

Here's a quick overview of how to start using Mailchimp:

- Create a Mailchimp account.
- Import your email contacts to Mailchimp to start building your mailing list.
- From there, Mailchimp allows you to pick an email template. This makes it easy to add the text, images, and any information you want included in your email.
- Next, you can choose who will receive your email.
- Finally, you can hit send or schedule your email to send out at a specific time.

That's just the beginning! Mailchimp also allows you to see insights as to which users opened your email! This can help you know what works and what doesn't.

You can schedule out several emails at a time, and even target specific users: perhaps those who may volunteer, and those who may sponsor. Or maybe those who've sponsored in the past. This is what we call segmenting –- making smaller email lists targeting unique groups, so you can personalise your marketing campaigns even more. The options are endless!