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# How to Write Networking Emails That Will Get Responses



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I recently had a client who said she wasn't getting the response to her networking emails she'd hoped for.

She asked me if there was anything she could do to increase her response rate.

I went back and looked at some of the previous emails she'd sent me to see if I noticed any patterns possibly interfering with her networking efforts. In doing so, it was immediately clear how she could improve her response rate.

If you're also not having as much success in getting responses to your own networking emails as you'd like, check out these tips I shared with her, plus some bonus tips!

## **Tips to Increase Responses to Your Networking Emails**

### **Always include an appropriate subject line.**

Emails without an appropriate subject line are often viewed as suspicious.

But sometimes it's hard to know what the subject line should say to get the recipient to open the message.

One subject line that tends to work well is one including a mutual contact's name. If someone referred you to the person you're emailing, include a subject line like,

| *“Referral from [mutual contact's name].”*

The reader will immediately know the message isn't spam or junk mail.

Avoid any spelling errors in the subject line. Misspellings often send the signal the message could be spam or phishing.

### **Copy your mutual contact.**

If you're emailing someone you've been referred to by another contact, copy your mutual contact on your initial message. This adds validity to the relationship and your claim of the referral.

Better yet, ask the person referring you to do an introduction email with all of you copied on it.

Or ask them to send their friend an email giving them a heads-up that you'll soon be reaching out.

Your potential contact is more likely to open an email from their friend they already know than from someone they've never heard of.

### **Keep it cheerful, yet professional.**

Avoid writing networking emails when you're in a bad mood. Sometimes it can come across in your wording, and the tone may be easily misconstrued.

It could also make you sound or seem entitled. You definitely won't get a response then.

And while you always want to be concise, you can also come across as abrupt if you don't include a friendly greeting or any context as to why you're emailing the contact.

Frame your message with a friendly opening and closing, but be professional!

This means not using any emoticons or exclamation points. In fact, an email with too many exclamation points will usually end up in the recipient's spam folder.

### **Be clear but concise.**

Make your reason for emailing clear from the start.

If you need to give an explanation for your request, do so as concisely as possible.

Avoid anything too lengthy, including background info the reader doesn't need to know just yet. Save this for when you set up a meeting to connect in person.

People are busy, so make your message easy for them to read quickly. They'll appreciate you being mindful of their time.

## **Do NOT use the phrase, "Can I Pick Your Brain?"**

Don't. Ever. Say. This.

Just don't!

Not ever.

I previously wrote an entire blog post explaining why you should never use the phrase "Can I pick your brain?"

If you're wondering why, stop reading this post right now and go read "[This Is Why You Should Never Ask an Expert 'Can I Pick Your Brain?'](#)"!

If it is information you're wanting from your networking contact, find a better way to phrase your request than, "Can I pick your brain?"

## **Say thanks, but don't be too presumptuous.**

In your closing, thank the recipient in advance for their time and consideration.

I've read studies that claim email response rates increase if you include the simple phrase,

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*"Thanks in advance."*

I've personally found this to be true on most occasions.



However, you don't want to sound presumptuous. So to counter-balance this phrase, indicate you're willing to follow the recipient's lead on the next steps.

For instance, you might say, "I'm happy to meet at a mutually convenient time," or "I can meet you at a location that works best for you."

You must be flexible since you're asking for someone's time.

### **Give your recipient an out.**

I once had someone I'd never met email me wanting to get together for lunch so he could ask me some questions.

He said, "Let me know what time next week works best for you."

(He also asked, "Can I pick your brain?")

I wanted to respond with, "Well, if next week is my only option, the answer is 'no'."

Why did he assume I was even able to meet the following week?

I immediately felt like he was trying to control the situation for his preference and convenience.

Had he just left out the words "next week" (and "Can I pick your brain?"), he would have left a better impression on me.

If you're asking someone for their time to help you out, don't be picky with time or location.

And don't try to put constraints on them or try to force them into a "yes" they may not be able to give.

Craft your message so it gives the recipient some options, including the option to say "no" if they need to.

## **Follow up.**

It's okay to follow up with someone if you don't get a response the first time. Sometimes your message gets lost in their inbox or they forget to respond.

I've had situations where I followed up with someone after a few weeks and they actually thanked me for doing so! They simply forgot and were glad I spared them from the embarrassment of never having responded.

The appropriate amount of time to wait before you follow up is one to two weeks.

If it happens to be more urgent (which it most likely isn't), at least give people 24–48 hours to respond.

And when they do, make sure you show the same courtesy by responding within 24 hours to all networking emails.

If after following up you still don't get a response, move on.

## **Should You Skip Networking Emails and Just Call?**

You always have the option to call instead of sending an email.

Keep in mind, however email is less intrusive on people's workday. It allows people to respond at a time most convenient for them.

If your mutual contact tells you the new contact prefers phone calls, by all means call instead of emailing.

I don't recommend texting since that's more personal than professional.

When receiving a response, always return messages with the same method they used in reaching out to you.

Remember to always be courteous and professional in all your networking efforts. Using career etiquette will go a long way!

## Related Posts:

- [This is Why You Should Never Ask an Expert “Can I Pick Your Brain?”](#)
- [How to Be Realistic About Networking](#)
- [Why You Need to Stop Overthinking Networking](#)

*Lori Bumgarner is the owner of [paNASH](#), a passion and career coaching service that helps people get unstuck and pursue their passions and find work they love.*

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