Written Communication

EMAIL ETTIQUETTE

Fundamentals

The fundamentals of every email should follow the following guidelines:
- ❖ Include a signature
- ❖ Have a subject
- ❖ Get straight to the point
- ❖ Spell check
- ❖ Email only necessary parties

Signature
<u>An Example:</u>
Tiffany Chin
tiffanychin@excite.com
Senior Industrial Engineering - North Carolina State University
National Society of Black Engineers National Communications Chair

- Please note NSBE is spelled out, this is necessary when sending emails to recipients who are not familiar with the organization.
- A quote can be used, but please be careful because some quotes may be offensive to recipients.
- You can have multiple signatures depending on the recipients. For example, if you are in another organization, you can have a different signature for those emails than the ones for NSBE.

Subject
Every email should include a subject. The subject should allude to the body of the email. It should be short and to the point. Certain subjects can be in all caps to draw attention to the email. Certain subjects include cancelled programs or meetings. For example: CANCELLED –team meeting

Get Straight to the Point
The email should not be a novel. You should get straight to the point. Only relevant information should be included in the email. Also avoid using acronyms specific to a group or organization when sending information to a wide range of people. This will only cause confusion. It is also good practice not to use NSBE acronyms when sending an email to the entire organization, preferably the general body because many members are not very familiar with the acronyms.

Spell Check
Please check all emails before sending them out. This is both professional and necessary for complete understanding of your message. If your email account does not have spell check functionality, please cut and paste your email into a word document and check the spelling before emailing your message. Please proofread your entire message before sending out. This will also reduce misunderstandings from your readers.

Email Only Necessary Parties
Your email should only relate to the necessary parties. You should not send an email to a distribution list if you are only intending for one person to respond or read the email.

Other Email Terminology

Flames
Flaming is a message that is sent to have a deliberate emotional content. To be flamed means you have sent an email to a person(s) that causes them to react in an unpleasant manner. It's an argument via email. The

intent of the sender may not be to offend anyone, but it can happen. A comment or accusation to someone can cause a flame. If you are the original sender and someone responds with a flame, you should contact the person immediately and clear up the situation. Many times the person has misinterpreted the intent of the email.

If you are reading an email and it causes you to become angry, resist the temptation to fire off a response. If it makes you feel better, you can write a response, but DO NOT SEND it. Wait at least 24 hours to reevaluate the email and to read it with a clear head. After doing so, either email or call the person to clear up the matter.

If you cause someone to flame you, you should contact that person immediately by phone. If you are unable to do so, immediately email that person requesting their phone number to resolve the issue. Many times the expression and pitch in someone's voice can ease a situation rather than trying to interpret emotions through an email.

Offline Notice
It is useful to everyone you are in constant contact with via email that you notify him or her when you will not regularly check your email. The cause of this could be a scheduled trip, meetings, or a really busy schedule. In any case, an offline message should be sent. This message should be sent no later than 48 hours in advance. This will allow others to contact you with information, questions, etc. before you become unavailable through email. This notice can be sent via phone or email. An offline notice should be short and to the point. Some examples include, but are not limited to the following:

Example 1
Subject: Offline (10/12/01 to 10/16/01)
Message: I will be offline until Saturday evening. I will respond to all emails and messages on Monday.

OR

Example 2
Subject: Offline
Message: I will be offline from 10/21/01 to 10/16/01. I can be reached at 919.555.4545.

Turn Around Time
All emails and phone messages should be returned with 48 hours. Even if you are unable to respond with the exact answer at that time, a reply stating that you have received the message and will get back with him or her at a said time should be done. Some responses could be…

Example 1
I received your email; however I will have to talk with the secretary to get that information for you. I will email you by Monday with that answer.

OR

Example 2
I am not sure who is the person who is responsible for that event. I have forwarded your original message to the chair, and he should be following up with you.

With Example 2, you should include in the beginning of the forwarded message a note indicating you have told the original sender that you were sending the email to him or her (forwarded person, in this case the chair) and for them to follow up with the needed information.

By sending a quick response, you let the sender know that you have received their message.

Don't Ignore an Email

You should not delete an email without at least opening it. The sender will assume you read the message and fully understood it. If you know from the content of the message that you were not the intended recipient, you should notify the sender and attach the original message. If you know who the intended recipient is, you should forward the message to them.

Reply to Emails

If someone sends you an email with a needed response, such as a meeting preference and the message is sent to multiple people, you should "reply all" and send in your desired meeting times. This will allow others to see your response and act accordingly. This is also good practice when sending in a vote or opinion on a topic. If someone sends you an email that only asks for your time and it does not effect the others on the distribution list, you should use "reply" and not "reply all". For example:

Subject: *Community Service*
Message:
Hello everyone,
I need to know when everyone is available to tutor. You need to tutor at least one hour a week. Please email me your available times.

This message does not require everyone to know when you are available to tutor. Only the sender finds this information helpful; however in another instance everyone might need to know your response. For example:

Subject: *Community Service*
Message:
Hello everyone,
We are going to the Raleigh Food Bank this weekend for our community service. We need to have at least five people in attendance. If you can come please let me know. If you don't think we should do this community service, I need to know that as well.

Your opinion could effect the outcome of this event; therefore "reply all" will allow everyone to see your response, thus be able to make a decision as a whole.

Listserv Guidelines

All mass emails must be pre-approved before dissemination. Approval can be obtained from the following personnel:

- Any NEO member
- The Regional Secretary/Telecommunications chair (for regional mailing)
- National Secretary/Telecommunications chair (for national, or cross-regional mailing)
- Senders must follow their respective communication protocol before sending information (i.e. contacting your counterpart, obtaining approval from zone leaders, etc.)
- Mass mailings are restricted to Regional and National Officers only. All mass mails must be pre-approved for dissemination. The National Communications Chair, National Secretary, or National Telecommunications Chair must approve cross-Regional mails.
- NO CHAIN MAILS! NO CHAIN MAILS!
- Do not send attachments, unless they are official NSBE documents.

National Mailings (Cross-Regional Mailing)

- Any member of the NEO, National Secretary, National Communications Chair, or the National Telecommunications Chair can do cross-regional mailings
- Mails originating from non-NEO personnel must be sent (in its entirety) to the National Communications Chair for approval and dissemination.
- No advertising of any kind unless approved by the National Telecommunications Chair, the National Secretary, or a member of the National Executive Officers.

- Do NOT REPLY TO THE LISTSERVER! Communication on the list is unidirectional. All replies should be sent to the SENDER, not the entire list.

Regional Mailing
- Regional mails are restricted to the REB
- Mails originated from a non-REB member (chapter member, CEB, etc.) must be sent to the Regional Secretary for approval and dissemination.

Using the Listservers (this information can also be used in any email practices)

Sending Mails
- All mails must contain the sender's name, e-mail address, chapter, and position

Forwarding Mails
- Forwarded mails must be stripped of all email addresses, except that of the original sender
- No chain mails
- E-mails should reflect NSBE mission, goals, and vision
- You must verify mail content (i.e. claims), before dissemination. YOU are responsible for any mail that you send. NOT the ORIGINAL SENDER.

Replying to Mails
- Do not reply to the listserver, unless your reply is targeting the entire list. This does not include request of personal information (from sender), or any individual request.
- All replies (i.e. response to individual request) must be sent to the SENDER, not the entire list

Sending Attachments
- Only official NSBE documents may be sent as attachments
- As a rule of thumb, if it's not something you would make available on the web for downloading, then you shouldn't send it as an attachment.

Other Listserv Guidelines
- If you feel the need to flame or send hate mail, do it off-list.
- Respect other people's opinions. If you disagree, do it politely.
- Do not forward copyrighted material to the list unless you have permission to do so.
- Credit original authors
- Keep list postings brief. If your posting doesn't add value, don't send it
- Use common sense when posting a message to the list. Be aware that you always have two options: responding to the list or to a member individually.

Letterhead
- Official NSBE letterhead includes the NSBE logo and the entire name "National Society of Black Engineers".
- All official documents, memos should be printed on letterhead. It does not matter whether this is an internal or external communication.
- All information sent to non-members should be on NSBE letterhead.
- All communications with companies or corporate sponsors should also be on NSBE letterhead. (See Appendix)

NSBE PR Basics

Logo Usage
- The name of the NSBE logo is "The Torch". The logo may, and should be used on all official documentation distributed to individuals who are not members of the Society.
- **"The Torch" is a registered trademark of the National Society of Black Engineers and shall be used only by recognized chapters of the Society, and outside vendors who have gained the expressed written consent of NSBE.**
  - The official colors of The Torch are as follows:
  - The "N" shall be green
  - The letters "SBE" and the handle of the torch shall be black
  - The flame of the torch shall be red
  - The lightning bolts shall be yellow
- *The logo shall not stand-alone*. Whenever using The Torch, the name of the society shall be in close proximity to the logo, to create name recognition of The Torch as the official pictorial symbol of the National Society of Black Engineers.
- The official meaning of The Torch shall read as follows:
  - **The NSBE torch symbolizes our everlasting burning desire to achieve success in this competitive society and to affect a positive change on the quality of life for all people. The lightning bolt represents the striking impact that will be felt by the Society and industry due to the contributions and accomplishments made by dedicated members of the National Society of Black Engineers.**

Statements Regarding the Society
- The National Public Relations Chair, with consultation and approval from the National Chair will construct any and all statements regarding the state of the Society, or any official stances taken by NSBE. If you have a question about what NSBE's stance is on a particular subject, please contact the National Public Relations Chair.
- As a non-profit entity, NSBE must take caution when making statements regarding the organization's stance on certain issues, and we must also ensure that our statements are a reflection of tangible facts, figures and other research to support our claims.

Events
- Appearances at cultural and career events are important to the exposure of NSBE.
  1. Information for potential event attendance shall be submitted to HQ at least 6 weeks prior to potential event
  2. Necessary information pertaining to event shall include: Name of event; location, time, date; cost of registration; booth space and signage limitations
  3. All signage shall feature the official NSBE logo and the full name: The National Society of Black Engineers.
- A standard NSBE promotional brochure, past/current editions of the *NSBE Magazine*, *The Bridge*, *The Career Engineer*, and a National Fact sheet will be on hand at all events. You should include any regional/chapter information that you would like to be handed out.

Miscellaneous
- Nomenclature - in all documentation, the first reference to the organization shall be listed as the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE), and thereafter can be referred to by the letters NSBE. This policy shall extend to all other abbreviations, i.e. Golden Torch Awards, (GTA), Regional Leadership Conference (RLC), etc. For internal publications, the organization may be referred to as "the Society".

Fact Sheets

A useful reference tool is a fact sheet. It summarizes the essentials about your region/chapter and/or special event. Fact sheets can be attached to news releases or distributed at functions. Chapter fact sheets will include information about National Society of Black Engineers. For consistency, use the following when providing information.

Name:	National Society of Black Engineers
Established:	1975 at Purdue University, Indiana
Classification:	Student-run organization whose mission is to increase the number of culturally responsible Black engineers to excel academically, succeed professionally, and positively impact the community.
Membership:	~15,000
Divisions:	Six geographic regions in the United States with international chapters in Canada and London.
Chapters:	350 student chapters and 70 alumni chapters
Headquarters:	1454 Duke Street, Alexandria, VA, 22314 (703) 549-2207
Key Officials:	National Executive Board of Directors (NEB) headed by national chair and comprised of 23 individuals, including 6 regional chairs and a National Alumni Chair. National Advisory Board, past chairs and respected leaders who advise the NEB.
Chief Executive Officer:	Delano M. White, National Chair
Chief Operating Officer:	Michele Lezama, Executive Director
Chapter/Regional Information:	Include the date of establishment, chapter size, major projects summary statement, chapter chair and contact for the project/event, and key points about the event.

Verbal Communication

When communicating, there are many different aspects and one area that takes some true practice is verbal communication. If you are not able to clearly articulate your thoughts to anyone, from an employer to a fellow classmate, it can hinder your progression. Many companies and organizations require you to present information. When completing a project or submitting a proposal, you need to be able to effectively present your information and persuade your audience.

Overall Etiquette
- Avoid using slang
- Refrain from conversations pertaining to political, racial, religious or any controversial issues.
- Keep direct eye contact
- Nod occasionally while others are speaking. This makes people think you are genuinely interested in what they are saying.
- Introduce yourself and include any relative position.
- If you are introducing someone to another person, always introduce the person in higher rank or importance first, including his or her position.
- Always begin an encounter with a firm handshake.
- Watch your facial expression. A negative facial expression can give the wrong message.

A Presentation
- You should prepare for your presentation
- Your attire should be one level higher than your audience. For example, if your audience is dressed in business casual, you should be in business attire. If you audience is dressed in business attire, you should also be in business attire.
- Your make-up and jewelry should be kept to a minimum (5 pieces, including your watch). An example of five pieces is one ring per hand, a watch, bracelet, pair of earrings for females or a chain for gentlemen. If you have on a business shirt and tie, there is no need to wear a chain.
- If you have on too much jewelry or make-up, it takes the attention away from what you are saying to what you are wearing.
- Watch your posture.
- Keep eye contact with the room. Do not focus on one side of the room or a particular group or person.
- Project your voice and speak clearly.
- Watch the pace of your speech and slow down if you find yourself speeding up.
- If you find yourself talking a lot with your hands, hold a pen with both of your hands. This will reduce the amount of hand movement you use doing your presentation.
- Use your slides as a reference. Do not read directly from your slides. Preparation and practice prevents this.
- Make sure your slides have contrasting colors between the text and the background (dark background, light text or light background, dark text)

An Interview
Use all the Overall Etiquette along with the following
Think out loud instead of just sitting in silence while coming up with an answer to a question. You can use phrases such as , "..let me see…", "…well, let me think of a perfect example…", or repeat the question out loud

Other Communication

Conflict Resolution
- Please resolve all issues from the beginning
- Do not allow issues to fester.
  - This only makes matters worse because the issues continue to grow over time.
- All issues should be addressed when both parties have clear heads and have calmed down and a mediator is present.
- Never assume ANYTHING.
  - If you feel that someone is not doing his or her part, by all means, ask. If you assume, you may assume wrong.
- People react off of how you say things rather than what you say.
- Being tactful and mindful of how others will perceive your message is key when letting people know your thoughts and feelings.
- When effective communication is exercised in an organization, conflict can be brought down to a bare minimum.
- Everyone is not like you. Everyone is not like you.
  - Remember that everyone does not think or act like you; therefore, you should always be mindful of others.
- Listen before you speak or respond
- Watch your body language while others are speaking to you especially when trying to resolve issues.
  - You should not fold your arms, roll your eyes, not give them your undivided attention, smack your lips, huff or puff, etc. This causes a negative reaction from the other party, thus prolonging the resolution process.

Appendix

- **Letterhead**
- **Example of Emails**
  - Example 1: How to give direct deadlines and/or information you need along with an introduction
  - Example 2: How to send a general message updating everyone on a current event
  - Example 3: How to send a request out, respond to the request and the original sender's response
  - Example 4: How to send a "Out of Class" notice to a professor
  - Example 5: How to respond to an interviewer's email

  Please note the different styles of signatures and formats
- **Common Email Terms**