

How to end an important email so you don't appear unprofessional - and which sign-offs to use and avoid

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FULL TEXT

* Most professional emails should end with a call to action, sign-off, your name, title, and contact information. * Be thoughtful about the sign-off you use in your email messages; avoid being potentially offensive or unprofessional.

* Some all-around safe and professional sign-offs include "best," "regards," and "thank you."

Don't overlook your sign-off; writing a clear, effective, and professional email is equal parts art and science, and if you put a lot of effort into making the body of your messages, don't fumble at the end with an email ending that's curt, rude, or tonally inappropriate.

That's true whether you're writing an email to coworkers, a potential client, hiring manager during a job hunt, or any other situation that can arise in your daily correspondences.

Table of Contents: Customizable Table of Contents

Tips for ending a professional email

You can think of the end of your email as a conclusion that ties everything together and poises you and your correspondent for success. That means that, for the most part, every email should have some kind of closing —don't end your message abruptly and then sign off with a curt "Sincerely."

It's a good idea to get in the habit of closing any important email with these four elements:

* **A summary or call to action:** This is a final sentence that leaves your correspondent with the most critical information, whether it's, "I look forward to continuing this conversation in our meeting on Monday," "Thanks for putting your proposal together by next week," or "Thank you for considering me for this role." * **A contextually appropriate sign-off:** Whether it's "Thank you" or "Sincerely," use some form of sign-off to segue from the email to your contact information. See the next sections for sign-off suggestions. * **Your full name and title:** It's a good idea to include your full name. Just your first name or initials can be too familiar for some kinds of emails, but more importantly, if the message gets forwarded or snipped, other recipients can lose the context of who sent the message. * **Contact information:** If you're sending an email, the recipient obviously has your email address. Or do they? Again, if the message gets forwarded or snipped, other recipients might not have access to the email header and may not be able to reply directly to you. Alternatively, you can use the closer to supply additional contact information, such as your phone number or website.

Email sign-offs you should use

Your sign-off in particular deserves some additional thought because many sign-off expressions have unanticipated implications or can convey an unprofessional tone. Here are a selection of all-around excellent sign-off choices that should serve you well in the vast majority of professional email situations.

* **Sincerely:** This is an all-around solid choice for all professional emails, but it's especially suitable for initial contacts and when you are exchanging emails with recruiters and hiring managers. * **Regards:** This is the vanilla cake of sign-offs —plain, unremarkable, and inoffensive. * **Best:** Signing off with "best" works well in virtually any situation, though it's somewhat more casual than "sincerely." It's a good choice for communication within your team and with correspondence whom you know well. Switch to sincerely for more formal messages. * **Thank you**

or **thanks**: Saying thank you (or the more casual thanks) is a great choice for email messages in which you, unsurprisingly, are asking for the recipient to take some kind of action. Even if the email is purely informational, it's still a professional and inoffensive choice. * **Respectfully**: This is among the most formal sign-offs you should consider using. It's a great choice for emails sent to government officials or executives in senior leadership positions. For other correspondences, though, you might want to dial it back and use one of the other options.

Email sign-offs to avoid

Likewise, there are some regrettably common sign-offs that strike a very unprofessional tone and can offend some recipients, or at the very least demonstrate a lack of polish.

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