**HANDOUT: Email Tips (Kara Cooper)**

Professional communication should be as concise and direct as possible.

If you are a people person, it will feel like you are being unfriendly and brusque until you get used to communicating this way. No one thinks you are being mean. I found, when I was working on this, it was easier to start with *written communication*, i.e., email.

When you are writing an email to anyone other than a peer, or one that is a friendly update, take the time to re-read it.

**First,** look for:

* Run on sentences or sentences that are written in passive voice. Revise to be shorter sentences and active voice when possible.
* Places where fewer or shorter words will work.
* Filler words, like “very”.

**Second,** eliminate anything that is not relevant to the reason you are emailing.

**Next**, look for the following phrases:

1. *Sorry, or any apology*

You don’t need to apologize for having an opinion, needing help, or just being human

* if something took longer than originally promised, and there weren’t downstream impacts, try “thank you for your patience”
* you made a minor error, “thanks for catching that”
* you misunderstood, “*thanks for the clarification”*
* something happened that is unfortunate, but no one is “at fault” – delete the apology
* if something is truly “your fault” “this took longer than I had hoped, my apologies” and move on.
1. *Does that make sense, let me know if this makes sense, let me know if you have questions*

Delete. The reader will reach out if they have questions.

1. *“Just”* Delete, a filler word, weakens your voice.

1. *“I think” or “I feel like”*

Delete. Of course, you think that, or you wouldn’t have written it.

You are the expert here, own it.

**Then**

Reread for clarity and concise language. The reader should be able to understand in 3-5 sentences what the situation is and whether you need something from them.

**Example:**

Hello Dr. So and So,

I hope you had a nice weekend! I just wanted to let you know that our participant we screened last week, Minnie Mouse, got her lab results back. Unfortunately, her potassium levels are too low to a qualify for the study. I think we need to screen fail her. I’m sorry this happened, I know you really want to enroll to this study. Luckily, if you want to rescreen her, you can just call the medical monitor. Her name is Daisy Duck and you can reach her at 867-5309 or her email daisy.duck@pharma.com.

Let me know if you have any questions!

Thank You,

Dory the CRC

**Instead**

Hello Dr. Incredible,

M. Mouse’s labs (MRN 1234) were resulted last week and are attached to this email. You will note that her potassium level is outside eligibility range per protocol. I will register her as a screen fail today.

If you wish to rescreen, you may reach out to the medical monitor, Dr. Duck, at 867-5309 or daisy.duck@pharma.com.

Best,

Dory the CRC

A few final notes:

1. If you get to know a coworker or PI better and they start adding some warmth or personality to their email, feel free to match their style and tone. Keep these “email sparkles” occasional and short. For the email above you could say – “I will continue to screen for potentials, we’ll find a qualified participant soon!” Still stick to the rules above. Don’t start apologizing because they are friendly to you and continue to keep your communication concise.
2. As you practice writing this way, it will start to feel more natural to speak this way.
3. My general email formula is:

Salutation

1-2 sentences for the problem

1 sentence for the solution

1 sentence for the ask or further direction

1 sentence for a carrot to move quickly or downstream consequences if ask isn’t met (reserve the consequence if this is a follow up request, or if there is history of ignoring you)

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