

# Electronic Etiquette

Electronic communication is a common way of doing business today. Professionals often use the following technologies to help them do their jobs more effectively.

- Electronic mail (e-mail)
- Answering machines/voice mail
- Cellular phones
- Digital phones with speaker and conferencing capabilities
- Fax machines

As a job hunter and new employee, it is important that you know the “etiquette” associated with each mode of communication so you make a positive impression for you and your organization.

## Electronic Mail

Because it tends to be quick and efficient, employers as well as candidates are utilizing e-mail during the job search process. However, there are some pointers to remember when interacting with a prospective employer electronically.

- **Be mindful of your e-mail address.** What impression would your e-mail address make on an employer? For example, what impression does the address, hotmama@aol.com or partyboy@yahoo.com give to you? Some students choose an e-mail address that is humorous, meaningful or unique to them. However, it may sound less than professional to an employer.
- **Include a subject line.** Let the reader know what the message is about. If you are submitting a resume electronically, the subject line should say something like “Resume and Cover Letter for Jane Doe” or “John Smith’s Resume for Advertised Position.”
- **Be clear and concise.** Most people appreciate messages that are to the point. Have you said what you meant to say? Is your message clear? Before sending the message, have someone review it to make sure that it is interpreted the way

that you want it to be interpreted.

- **Proofread your message before sending it.** The convenience of e-mail does not give you a license to be sloppy. As with any correspondence, it is imperative that your message is free of grammatical, typing, and spelling errors. Be sure that you have not used distasteful or unprofessional language that might make the recipient perceive you in a negative way.

Electronic messages should be composed according to standard business-letter format. When sending an application or thank-you letter via e-mail, we encourage you to refer to the Career Services publication, [Job Search Letters](#).

## Answering Machines and Voice Mail

Because you or your roommates may have potential employers calling your residence, it is important to be aware of how your answering machine’s recorded message comes across to the person on the receiving end. The person recording the outgoing message should use a professional tone. Do not assault your caller with your favorite music before the beep sounds to take the message.

When you are leaving a message for someone, keep the following in mind:

- **Provide some basic information.** Messages should include:
  - Whom you are calling
  - Your first and last name
  - The date and time of your call
  - The reason for your call
  - Your telephone number
- **Talk distinctly.** Don’t mumble; speak slowly.
- **Don’t leave messages that ramble on.** Come to the point of your message quickly.

- **Be sure your messages are clear.** Don't leave mysterious or ambiguous messages that the person might find confusing.
- **Don't assume that the answering machine where you are leaving a message is in working order.** If the message is important or urgent, follow up within a reasonable amount of time to ensure the person received your message.

### Taking Telephone Messages

A good message is a complete message. When taking messages for roommates or friends that are job hunting, be sure to take accurate messages. Make sure you obtain:

- The caller's name, title, and organization
- A phone number with area code and extension number, when pertinent
- The time the person called
- The name of the person to whom the message is going
- A brief and simple message. Don't overload the message with complicated information or instructions.

### Cellular Phones

Because many students now use cellular phones for everyday conversation, it is important to keep some rules in mind when you are utilizing this mode of communication.

- Bringing a cellular phone to a public place can be distracting to the participants. It should only be done when absolutely necessary.
- Turn off your cellular phone while you are in class, a meeting, or an interview so you do not interrupt or offend those around you.
- Ask others present if they mind if you use your phone while you are with them.
- When on a lengthy call, excuse yourself and complete the conversation elsewhere.

### Speaker Phones

Many telephones are equipped with a speaker phone feature. While this is a convenient way to converse with your friends and relatives, it is not a recommended way in which you should be interacting with potential employers. Many

people find speaker phones offensive because they give the impression that you are doing other things while you are talking. They often echo in your ear, are impersonal, and are perceived as unfriendly.

### Fax Machines

On occasion, you may be asked to send application materials to an employer via the fax machine. Give your faxes the same professional treatment as you do all correspondence.

- Include a cover sheet that includes your name, phone number, and fax number, the receiver's name and contact information, the number of pages in the transmission, and a brief message indicating the nature of the fax.
- Do not include information that is personal or confidential. Faxes may be seen by others.
- Do not fax documents on colored or textured papers. Make a photocopy on white paper and fax the white copy.
- Notify the recipient by phone that the fax has been sent.
- Send thank-you notes by mail or electronic mail, not by fax transmission.

### Portfolios and Personal Web Pages

Many students create portfolios or personal web pages to document their educational information, skills, achievements, and experiences. An electronic portfolio also allows you to showcase class projects and communicate your ability to use technology.

Be sure that your web pages are professional and do not contain inappropriate or offensive information that might be viewed negatively by potential employers. For additional information about portfolios, refer to the Career Services publication, [Portfolio Planning](#).

Career Services Center  
Clarion University  
114 Egbert  
Clarion, PA 16214  
Phone: 814-393-2323  
Web: [www.clarion.edu/career](http://www.clarion.edu/career)