



## E-mail Etiquette and Advice

Whether you are sending a special mailing or newsletter, or just responding to guest inquiries, here are a dozen guidelines that will help.

- 1. Create the hook: Effective subject lines**
  - a. Given the quantity of email we all receive daily—much of it unsolicited—be sure that your subject line is relevant and attention-getting, or many of your would-be readers will hit the delete key without ever opening your message.
  - b. Your email address should include your domain name, so that recipients will recognize the sender, i.e. [relax@myinn.com](mailto:relax@myinn.com), not [johndoe@aol.com](mailto:johndoe@aol.com).
- 2. Remember the key rule of marketing: What's in it for me?**
  - a. Tempt readers with the inviting experiences that await them at your inn when they respond to your offer.
  - b. Focus special messages on such details as a unusual event, cost-saving offer, or distinctive dining experience that is available on a specific dates.
- 3. Remember the key rule of writing: Keep it short.**
  - a. Keep your message as brief as possible—250 words at most.
  - b. Make your writing as simple and clear as possible, avoiding clichés, typos, misspellings, and poor grammar.
- 4. Make it easy to read.**
  - a. Unless you are using skilled tech support, sending emails in HTML rich format may mean that some recipients will be unable to read your message.
  - b. If sending your message in plain text format, allow space between every two or three sentences to increase legibility.
  - c. NEVER WRITE IN ALL CAPS. It's hard to read and is the Internet equivalent of shouting.
- 5. Don't forget the call to action.**
  - a. Urge potential guests to telephone immediately (preferably via your toll-free number) to make reservations if you only have two guest rooms available at a special last-minute rate.
  - b. If you're promoting a special event—perhaps a wine-tasting weekend, with a winery tour, barrel tasting, and special dinner, include a link to a page on your web site that details the cuisine and the vintages.
- 6. Email is interactive.**
  - a. Expand your mailing list by including a sign-up page on your web site.
  - b. Encourage readers to forward your email to interested friends.
  - c. Make it easy to unsubscribe.
  - d. Encourage readers to respond to you with questions that can lead to new reservations or improvements.
- 7. Utilize signature files**
  - a. Create a signature file that includes all your key contact information (name, address, phone, fax, email, URL) as well as a brief but distinctive phrase about your inn)
  - b. Never send email without your signature file, or guests will not remember who is contacting them.

**8. Use your domain name to create your email address.**

- a. People can remember [relax@myinn.com](mailto:relax@myinn.com) much more easily than someone's name and ISP.
- b. If you change ISPs, your email address will stay the same, eliminating time, trouble, and lost messages

**9. Make it easy to email from your web site.**

- a. Your web site should have your correct email address.
- b. If your site uses a form for reservation requests, be sure that it also includes a direct email link. Forms sometimes malfunction with different browsers, and some readers will prefer to send a message in a format that they can save on their own computers.

**10. Check your email early, and check it often.**

- a. Guests expect prompt responses to their emails—within the hour at best, within a day at worst.
- b. Check your email as frequently as your voice-mail
- c. If you can't respond promptly to emails, set an explanatory auto-responder.

**11. Don't be trigger happy: Never sent an email when you're angry.**

- a. Wait until you cool off before responding to a difficult situation. Once you've hit the "send" button, you can't run out to the mailbox to take the letter back.
- b. Nothing is easier to forward than an email. Don't risk embarrassment, or worse, with words you'll later regret, read by people you hadn't intended to be your readers.

**12. Don't clog the Internet.**

- a. Don't forward chain letters, or unverified virus warnings or petitions.
- b. Keep your anti-virus software up-to-date, and be cautious about opening attachments.

**BedandBreakfast.com**  
**1855 Blake Street, Suite 201**  
**Denver, CO 80202-1288**  
**1-800-GO-B-AND-B**  
**(303) 274-3465 Fax 274-2900**  
**<http://www.bedandbreakfast.com>**