Episode 1 Script

Description

This script was used when creating the episode 1 video. Reading it may help to clarify some of the things talked about in the video, however, it is not a word-for-word transcription.

Script:

More and more of our communication happens through our phone. That means that we do a lot of communicating with just one hand and while doing other things. But just because all of your information is accessed through the same device doesn't make all of that information equal.

When you get an important email, consider putting down your phone and using your computer to compose.

When a piece of correspondence appears that is related to business or school, you should get in the right headspace to make good decisions about your word choices, tone, and format. This is all about finding the appropriate level of formality.

You might note that that even in your correspondence with friends, being mean, or brief, or even confusing can portray the appropriate level of formality. After all, you don't want your friends to think that you worry about them too much. That you fuss over every word that you send to them. But while you want your friends to know that they can treat you informally, you want the people you work with to know that you can pay attention to details, and treat your work with respect.

Use the appropriate level of formality.

What is appropriate takes a little bit of time to calculate, but one of the best things to do is to follow the lead of the people you are working for or with.

The top of the email is called the salutation, that's where you greet the recipient of the letter.

Traditionally, it began with "Dear Soandso,"

This might sound old-fashioned, but if the person you are working for persistently uses that salutation, you may want to stick with that, or find something that feels right to you. That said, it might be a signal that the person you are working for is traditional and respects tradition.

If that's the case, why not stick with tradition?

But in real-life, you probably won't communicate with somebody like that. You are more likely to end up in an email chain where somebody starts dropping the salutations. If your boss drops the salutation first, you might want to consider what is appropriate for your next email. It could be a sign that your communication is moving more rapidly, and doesn't need all the formality as you address more specific issues. At the same time, you may want to show that you still respect the authority of the other and want to continue to use proper salutations. That's up to you, but be careful not to drop the level of formality too soon. This appears disrespectful.

I have a specific note about COVID-19 in this situation. During the early days of lockdown, it became customary to have stronger well-wishes for the recipient. For example, you might say

Dear Soandso,

I hope that you and your loved ones are healthy and safe at this time.

At the same time, what if their family members weren't healthy? Were you actually ready to provide anything besides words to your recipient? This was a tricky time for writing emails that shows that finding the appropriate level of formality requires thought in each email you write.

1. Communicate Correctly

>Correct writing is free of style, usage, punctuation, and spelling errors.

There is no magical solution to this, however, using a combination of editing software like Grammarly can help. Still, the best thing you can do when writing an email, especially an important one, is to double check what you wrote. Make sure that you do not overuse pronouns like "it, they, he, she." Because you are trying to communicate technical information,

1. Project the "you attitude"

Communicate any issues you have positively and from the reader's point of view. For example, if you are having issues with other people you are working with, those problems don't concern your reader. Make sure that if you need to compromise a solution, you do so in a way that is fair to everybody involved. Let your reader know that you can understand things from their point of view.

2. Avoid Correspondence Cliches

Over time, certain groups of words and phrases have been associated with business correspondence, such as "as per your request." Be careful not to overuse phrases like these, as they may come off as stilted and insincere. In a way, some of these cliches can convey a level of formality, and so you might be tempted to overuse them. Remember though, you should be making sure you are using the appropriate level of formality.

Another example is wedding invitations. Some day your friends will start getting married and you will get a letter that says you are "cordially invited to attend" a wedding. This might feel a little insincere to you, but it also matches with the heightened level of formality that goes along with weddings.

3. Communicate Honestly

Communicating honestly is always an important aspect of communication, but it is even more important in business. In fact, you will probably want to double-check your facts and when it comes to agreeing to take on new responsibilities, you should not over-promise. This can lead to confusion and disappointment.

-DO SAMPLE CORRESPONDENCE-