



EPICENTRAL

A Newsletter from Epicenter Development Group highlighting ideas that improve organizations

Welcome to Epicenter Development Group's newsletter, EPICentral. The purpose of this newsletter is to highlight fundamental ideas that have helped organizations develop and maintain great manufacturing and service operations. We hope that you find our EPICentral newsletter helpful, and we would welcome your comments on its content.

E-Mail DOs and DON'Ts

Over the past fifteen years, e-mail has fundamentally changed the way people communicate both personally and professionally. With the press of a button, information can be sent to a project team, co-workers, suppliers, and customers; and it arrives in their in-box instantaneously. Done well, e-mails can be a great way to inform, strengthen relationships and get feedback. Done poorly, however, e-mails can cause confusion, lower productivity and destroy relationships. The purpose of this article is to summarize some of the common tips for ensuring that e-mail communications are supportive to a world-class organization.

The DOs:

- Send brief messages to announce non-controversial information or to confirm something that's already been agreed upon.
- Copy your boss or coworkers on important messages that are relevant to them.
- Include a descriptive subject header for the e-mail.
- Keep a hard copy of important documents for your records.
- Do a follow-up call or conversation when the communication is critical. You can't rely on e-mail communication on important matters. The person you're writing to might be out of town.
- Treat e-mails as you would treat a formal letter. Proofread the message (checking both the spelling and grammar) before sending the document.
- Clarify important details of the e-mail verbally.

The DON'Ts:

- Don't send anything in an e-mail that you would not share with your boss, peers or subordinates. Tell-tale signs that an e-mail might not be appropriate:
 - It takes you a while to write the e-mail, because you are being careful to use the proper wording.
 - You have said something in the e-mail that you would not want anyone but the intended recipient to read.
 - The person that you are sending the e-mail to does not trust you or has a poor relationship with you.
 - The subject is negative, controversial or requires additional dialogue.

- Don't send lengthy announcements or messages about something that is best handled through face-to-face discussion or debate.
- Don't give negative feedback via e-mail. These types of e-mails are sometimes called "Bombs" or "Flame E-Mails."
- Don't go over your boss's head, even though you have access to their personal e-mail address list.
- Don't leave your boss and significant members of your team "out of the loop" on e-mails that are relevant to them.
- Don't abuse the "high importance" flag.
- Don't type the message or portions of the message in all caps. This practice is considered to be the equivalent of shouting.
- To minimize the risk of "accidentally" sending a message before it is ready to be sent, do not enter anything in the "To" box until you are satisfied with your e-mail and have checked it for errors.

Considerations:

- Consider a formal electronic communications policy for your company. New employees should be made aware of the policy and consequences for non-compliance. A copy of Epicenter's policy is available per your request.
- Always remember that the e-mail messages you write in the course of doing your job belong to your organization and might one day be cited as part of a legal action.
- Consider ways to promote a company culture that uses e-mail and other communication media effectively: company training, intolerance for Flamers, policies for ensuring e-mail quality and coaching between associates.

Next Steps

If you would like more information on this topic or other similar types of tools, please contact Bill Proctor with your request at wproctor@epicentergroup.com or 216-702-0952. You can also find previous issues of EPICentral at [Newsletters](#).

Mr. Proctor also speaks on a variety of problem-solving and system design topics that can help companies significantly increase the success and profitability of their businesses. If you are interested in having Bill speak at one of your upcoming meetings/events or would like more information on any of the speaking topics, please visit [Speaker Services](#) or you can email sales@epicentergroup.com.

Epicenter Development Group is a unique consulting firm that seamlessly integrates the disciplines of Systems Engineering and Organizational Analysis & Development to create practical design solutions to your toughest challenges. It is on the cutting edge of problem-solving solutions and the creator of a unique process called GreenRoom Engineering. This process adds greater value and cost savings for clients as compared to traditional engineering methods.

Epicenter News



William Proctor, Epicenter's founder and president, has provided services around the country to more than 100 companies consisting of a variety of organizations; and Epicenter continues to grow as a resource for firms of all sizes.

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