Tools and Resources for Better Business Emails

Now that you've read *33 Ways Not to Screw Up Your Business Emails,* I hope you are fired up about mastering email! Here are a few tools and resources that will help you elevate your email skills.

Get to know your email software

What software are you using to read and send emails? Chances are it has many options that you're not using. Here are a few of the things to check out:

- Your Undo buffer: Both Microsoft Outlook and Google Mail let you set a short time period (around 30 seconds) for undoing an email send.

- Reply defaults: Never let Reply All be your default reply setting!

- Folder (and the Draft folder): Create a system for saving templates or re-usable files

- Multiple signatures. I only recently realized that I could set up multiple email signatures and then pick the one I wanted when sending a message. Eureka!

No matter how long you've been emailing, there's probably something new that you might find useful. Take a few minutes to look through the features of your application, find a book, or ask an email administrator for a tour.

Tools for checking your content

Most mail clients include basic spelling and grammar checking. You can raise your game with software like ProWriting Aid and Grammarly. Depending on the plan you use, these can integrate with your email clients.

I'm a big fan of WordRake, which goes beyond simply checking to suggest ways to communicate with better clarity and brevity. It's like having an editor on cal. It also integrates directly into tools like Microsoft Word.

Get better at managing email

You can find plenty of advice, methods, practices, and systems for managing emails. There are some who aspire to Inbox Zero (an empty inbox). The creator of this idea, Merlin Mann, admits that it's an impossible quest in this Fast Company article. (He came up with it decades ago, when our inboxes looked quite different!)

Sarah Tetlow, who provided input for this book, offers the A.R.T.T Email Productivity System.™

Tools for making video or voice recordings

It's getting easier to make voice or video recordings to either replace or supplement emails.

Most smart phones come with native voice recording and video recording capabilities. Many messaging applications take advantage of these, so you can record directly into a service. But you'll still have to do some file wrangling to connect with your emails or send to someone else.

There are other tools that use those device capabilities to make video and voice even easier.

Zoom. If you're already proficient with recording and managing Zoom meetings, then this is an easy way to go. Record a "meeting" with just you talking and share that recording.

Loom is designed for exactly this kind of thing. It's particularly useful for creating short videos that show people how to do something online, as it can capture both your talking head and the actions on your screen. There's a free plan for short videos, and its integrated with apps like Slack.

BombBomb is another, business-focused tool for video messaging. I haven't tried using it, but I've received its messages and they look great.

Have others? Let me know and I'll add them to this list.