

Happy Emailing Choosing a Subject Line Video Transcript

- You know the feeling. You open up your inbox after a day off, and ugh, 349 unread messages. How do you prioritize? What needs your attention right away and what can wait until later? After you've read the messages from your boss, who or what do you go to next? Your readers are asking themselves these same questions when they open up their inbox, and that's why a well-thought-through subject line is so important. I've got three tips to help you craft a subject line that gets attention. Number one, your subject line should summarize the content of your message. Vague subject lines are less likely to grab your reader's attention. Remember, they have a list of unread messages to respond to, and you want to quickly communicate your needs in a way that gets the result you need. Number two, if your message requires action from the reader, specify that action in the subject line. Good business writing is clear and concise. The reader should know right away if you need something from them. If there's a quickly approaching deadline or if you need something specific, make that your headline. You can also indicate when you need your information in the subject line as well. Number three, keep subject lines short. While you want to provide enough detail to show the reader what to expect, you don't want the subject line to get cut off because it has too many characters. Remember, your recipient may be reading on a mobile device, which will reduce the subject to fit on the screen. Let's apply these tips with an example. Let's say you need to send your team an email to let them know that your meeting time and place has changed. A vague subject line would be something like, "Our meeting," which forces the reader to open and read the whole message. But if instead you put the key information in the subject line, say, "Meeting moved to 3:00 p.m. in Room 200," the recipient doesn't need to open your email to get the most important point of your message. If they have the time or interest, they may open the email to read the details you're including, like why the meeting time and place have changed. But if they don't need to know or don't have the time to read on, you've saved them those extra steps. Now, who wouldn't appreciate that?