Professional Email — Cheat Sheet

Bonus one-pager for uniquestoremarket.com's “How to Write a Professional Email That Gets a Reply” guide

The five chapters, outside in

1. **Subject line (Ch. 1)** — topic plus type (question, decision, action with a date, or FYI), useful words in the first 40 characters.
2. **Opening (Ch. 2)** — delete the first paragraph; the point or the ask goes in the first sentence or the second.
3. **One email, one ask (Ch. 3)** — each ask names what, who and by when; split anything aimed at a different person.
4. **Bad news (Ch. 4)** — state the outcome, give one reason, offer what you can actually offer; apologise once.
5. **Follow-up (Ch. 5)** — same thread, restate the ask in one line, offer an easy out; two follow-ups at most.

Before you hit send this week

- Rewrite the subject lines of your last five sent emails using topic plus type (Ch. 1).
- Rewrite one email so the ask is in the first sentence, and compare the word counts (Ch. 2).
- Turn three vague asks into the what/who/when form, e.g. “Could you confirm the delivery date by Wednesday?” (Ch. 3).
- Write the hardest email you are avoiding as outcome, one reason, one offer; save it and re-read it tomorrow (Ch. 4).
- Add a stated default (“unless I hear otherwise, I'll...”) to one pending request (Ch. 5).

Watch out for

- Subjects like “Quick question” or “Following up”, and “URGENT” on things that are not (Ch. 1).
- Four questions in one paragraph: you will usually get the last one answered (Ch. 3).
- Over-softening on one side and two-line compression on the other (Ch. 4).
- A third chase, or “just bumping this” and “as per my previous email” (Ch. 5).

Full guide: uniquestoremarket.com/write-a-professional-email-that-gets-a-reply