

# GrayMatterz

THE ZIMMERMAN GROUP, INC.

*Marketing/Consulting*

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## ELECTRONIC WORDS: YES, THEY REALLY DO MATTER

### **THE NEW HANDSHAKE**

Like you, I send and receive dozens of emails every day.

Increasingly, email has replaced the personal touch of a handshake or the warmth of a telephone voice.

As we see and hear each other less, our email communications become increasingly important. In fact, these messages "sound" to recipients like the voice of your company. As such, they can either help or hurt your company's bottom line.

Here's an example:

*Situation:* We asked a publication to reserve space for our client's ad.

*Actual Response:* By not understanding the importance of email as a partnership-building tool, the media rep risked losing the dollars that keep his publication in business.

*Thank you for your contract to run a full-page ad in the August issue of XX. Unfortunately, your insertion order contains a stipulation that goes against our policy . . . Your ad will be placed on pending status until acceptable paperwork is received.*

*Better Response:* The rep could have used his response to nurture a relationship.

*As soon as we receive the revised paperwork reflecting this small change, we will be glad to schedule your ad. We value your business.*



## FACTORS TO CONSIDER

Even though we talk about dashing off emails, those messages – whether crafted carefully or sloppily – play a critical part in today’s business communication. And, unwittingly, they could be damaging your company’s reputation.

Consider these four key elements: tone, style, set-up, and reply choices.

How can **tone** demonstrate a strong customer-service orientation? For instance, how formal or informal should you be?

What about **style**? How do font choice and email signatures create a perception of your organization? And what are the pros and cons of using rich text?

How is **set-up** important? Most emails create trackable threads; that is, they show my reply to your question at the top of the communication. One of our vendors, though, cuts and pastes my question at the top of her response, eliminating the rest of the original message. Another vendor’s response always appears last on the page, so I have to scroll down to find the new information.

When should you **reply** only to the sender? When should you hit Reply to All? Using this function wisely can boost efficiency dramatically – or waste buckets of time.

The Zimmerman Group helps organizations develop communications programs that build your bottom line. To find out how to create email guidelines that reflect your voice – to clients, prospects, and vendors – give us a call. Or send an email (any style). Maybe we’ll even end up in a face-to-face meeting with an old-fashioned handshake.