HARBOR TOOLS · NEW-HIRE TRAINING

Business email basics

How to write to someone outside Harbor Tools so they can act on the first read.

SESSION 1 · 16 NOVEMBER 2026 · TRAINER-LED, 60 MINUTES

SIX PARTS, IN THIS ORDER

1. Subject line
2. Greeting
3. Opening
4. Body
5. Closing
6. Signature

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the hour you can send an outside email the reader can act on.

01 Build an email from six parts

Subject line, greeting, opening, body, closing, signature — always in that order.

02 Write a subject line that is a request plus a deadline

So the reader knows what to do and by when before opening it.

03 Order the body and answer in time

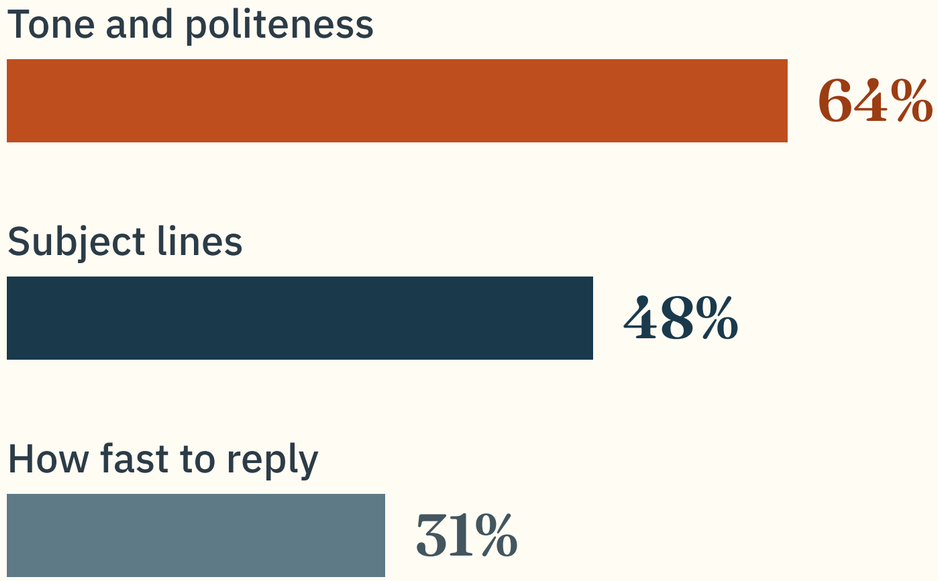
Conclusion, reason, request, deadline — and reply to outside contacts inside 24 hours.

THE SESSION IN FOUR MOVES

1. The six parts, one real email
2. To, CC, BCC and three common mistakes
3. The 24-hour reply rule
4. Five minutes of writing, then answers

WARM-UP

42 new hires told us what worries them most about email.



Harbor Tools new-hire survey · 42 respondents

Hands up — which of the three is yours?

WHERE TODAY ANSWERS EACH ONE

Tone and politeness

Greeting, opening, closing and signature do this work for you.

Subject lines

One formula: the request plus the deadline.

How fast to reply

Within 24 hours for anyone outside the company — a holding reply counts.

THE WHOLE EMAIL · WORKED EXAMPLE

Every outside email has the same six parts, in the same order.

SAMPLE · TO THE CLIENT CONTACT FOR ORDER 1142

1 **Please review: quote for order 1142 (by Nov 20)**

2 Dear Ms. Grant,

3 Thank you for your order last week. I am writing about the quote for order 1142.

4 The revised quote is attached for your approval.
The carry case you asked for is now included.
Please check the unit prices and confirm them.
We can ship on time if you reply by 20 November.

5 Thank you for checking the prices.
Best regards,

6 Your full name
Your role · Harbor Tools
Your direct line · your work email

1 · Subject line
The request and the deadline, in one line.

2 · Greeting
Their title and surname, then a comma.

3 · Opening
Thanks, then why you are writing.

4 · Body
Conclusion, reason, request, deadline.

5 · Closing
Thanks for the help you just asked for.

6 · Signature
Name, role, Harbor Tools, contact.

A subject line is a request plus a deadline — nothing else.

THE REQUEST	+	WHAT IT IS ABOUT	+	BY WHEN
Please review:		quote for order 1142		(by Nov 20)

= Please review: quote for order 1142 (by Nov 20)

WEAK SUBJECT	WHY IT FAILS	REWRITE IT LIKE THIS
“Quick question”	The reader cannot plan it, so it waits behind everything else.	Please confirm: delivery date for order 1142 (by Nov 20)
“Order 1142”	Names the topic but asks for nothing and sets no date.	Please review: quote for order 1142 (by Nov 20)
“Urgent!!”	Pressure instead of information — and it is rude to an outside contact.	Please approve: revised quote for order 1142 (by Nov 20)

PARTS 2, 3, 5 AND 6

Greeting, opening, closing and signature carry the politeness for you.

2 · GREETING

Title and surname, then a comma. Spell it the way they sign their own emails.

> Dear Ms. Grant,

3 · OPENING

Two short sentences: thank them for something real, then say why you are writing.

> Thank you for your order last week. I am writing about the quote for order 1142.

5 · CLOSING

Thank them for the specific help you just asked for, then one sign-off line.

> Thank you for checking the prices. / Best regards,

6 · SIGNATURE

Three fixed lines, set once in your mail client and never retyped.

> Full name / Role · Harbor Tools / Direct line · work email

Put the conclusion first and the deadline last — never the other way round.

01

Conclusion

What you decided or what you need. One sentence.

`The revised quote is attached for your approval.`

→

02

Reason

Why it changed or why you are asking. One sentence.

`The carry case you asked for is now included.`

→

03

What you need

The one action, named as a verb for them.

`Please check the unit prices and confirm them.`

→

04

Deadline

The date written out, with what it protects.

`We can ship on time if you reply by 20 November.`

Every sentence stays under 20 words.

The whole email fits on one screen — no scrolling.

ADDRESS FIELDS

To is for people who must act. CC is for people who should know.

To



The people who have to do something. Name them in the first line of the body.

Everyone on the email can see this list.

CC



The people who should know it happened. They are not asked to act.

Everyone on the email can see this list.

BCC



Mass emails only, where the recipients stay hidden from each other.

Each reader sees only their own address.

Before you send: if a name is in CC, you are not expecting anything from them.

THREE COMMON MISTAKES

Three mistakes force you to send a second email to say sorry.

A vague subject

“Quick question” tells the reader nothing, so it sits unopened until the deadline is gone.

THE FIX

Name the request and the date: “Please review: quote for order 1142 (by Nov 20)”.

The missing attachment

The email says “attached” and nothing is attached. The reader has to write back and wait.

THE FIX

Attach the file first, write the email second. Then reread the word “attached”.

CC used wrongly

People in CC think someone else will act, or they feel put on the spot in front of a client.

THE FIX

To = must act. CC = should know. Never add a name just to apply pressure.

All three cost the same thing: a second email, because the first one did not land.

REPLY SPEED

Answer outside contacts within 24 hours, even when you have no answer yet.

24

hours

The limit for anyone outside Harbor Tools — customers, suppliers, anyone who is not a colleague.

WHEN YOU CANNOT ANSWER YET, REPLY ANYWAY

> “Got it — I’ll get back to you by Thursday.”

Two seconds of work. The client stops wondering, and you have named the day you will keep.

Their email arrives

Hour 0. The clock starts, including on a busy day.

Within 24 hours

The full answer, or the holding reply above. Never silence.

On the day you promised

The real answer lands by Thursday, because you said Thursday.

LET’S PRACTISE · 5 MINUTES, ON YOUR OWN

Write an email asking a client to move a meeting.

YOUR TASK

You have a meeting with a client this week and you cannot attend at that time.

Write the whole email asking to move it. Five minutes, on paper or in a draft.

KEEP TO THE RULES FROM TODAY

Invent the details you need — the day, the reason, the new time you want.

You are writing to a client, not a colleague, so the 24-hour rule applies to their reply too.

When the five minutes are up, swap drafts with the person next to you.

A GOOD ANSWER HAS

- ☐ Subject: the request plus a deadline
- ☐ Greeting with title and surname
- ☐ Opening: thanks, then why you write
- ☐ Body: conclusion, reason, request, deadline
- ☐ Every sentence under 20 words
- ☐ Closing and a three-line signature

ANSWERS · ONE WAY TO WRITE IT

Moving a meeting, in nine short sentences.

SUBJECT	**Please confirm: new time for Thursday’s review (by Nov 18)**
GREETING	Dear Ms. Grant,
OPENING	Thank you for making time this week. I am writing about our meeting on Thursday.
CONCLUSION	I need to move our meeting to Friday morning.
REASON	A delivery audit was booked over the same hour.
WHAT YOU NEED	Could you confirm Friday at 10:00, or suggest a better time?
DEADLINE	Please reply by 18 November so I can hold the room.
CLOSING	Thank you for your flexibility. Best regards,
SIGNATURE	Your full name Your role · Harbor Tools Your direct line · your work email

CHECK YOUR DRAFT

- ☑ Subject: the request plus a deadline
- ☑ Greeting with title and surname
- ☑ Opening: thanks, then why you write
- ☑ Body in four moves, in this order
- ☑ Longest sentence here: 11 words
- ☑ Closing and a three-line signature

SUMMARY

Six parts, one screen, one deadline, answered inside 24 hours.

01 Build every outside email from the same six parts, in order.

02 The subject line is the request plus the deadline — never “Quick question”.

03 The body runs conclusion, reason, what you need, deadline.

04 Sentences under 20 words, the whole email on one screen, the attachment on before you write.

05 To for people who must act, CC for people who should know, BCC for mass emails.

06 Reply inside 24 hours; a holding reply with a named day counts.

KEEP THIS AT YOUR DESK

SUBJECT

```
Please review: quote for order 1142 (by Nov 20)
```

BODY ORDER

```
conclusion → reason → request → deadline
```

HOLDING REPLY

```
“Got it — I’ll get back to you by Thursday.”
```

BEFORE YOU SEND

Attachment on? Deadline in the subject? Everyone in To able to act?