

Too informal for most business emails

While all of it is correct in English, the following language is too impolite, informal or short for most business situations. Do you think any of the sentences are suitable for your own business emails? If so, why do you think so and for what kinds of emails?

- Hiya!/ Hey Bob
- Hi dudes
- Whassup?
- I got your email yesterday/ I was thrilled to get your letter yesterday.
- I promise that it won't happen again.
- Sorry, I'm busy then.
- It's not our fault.
- You sent the wrong amount.
- Look at this document.
- There's no way I can do that.
- Gonna do it soon.
- It's gonna take ages. Sorry!
- Forward this to Mr Jones.
- Please do it by Friday/ I need this asap/ Wanna get it finished by Friday.
- Great!!! CU there!
- Miss you!
- Write soon/ Keep in touch
- See ya!
- Give a kiss to John from me.
- Lots of love/ Kisses/ XXXX/ Hugs and kisses/ XOXO

Change the sentences above to make them more suitable for your business emailing needs (while keeping the meaning more or less the same).

What are the general reasons why the phrases above are too informal?

Can you think of any other language which is too informal for your business emails?

Choose one informal phrase or sentence and compete to make it more and more formal and polite. You should take turns trying to make the last person's sentence even more polite. Stop when you run out of ideas or the last attempt was actually less formal/ polite than the previous one. The person with the politest attempt wins that round, then you can try again with another sentence above.

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Suggested answers

Listed in order of formality/ politeness:

- Hiya!/ Hey Bob – Hi (Bob)
- Hi dudes – Dear all/ Hi everyone/ Hi guys
- Whassup? – I hope you are well/ How are you?/ How's it going?/ How are things?
- I got your email yesterday/ I was thrilled to get your letter yesterday.- Thank you for your email yesterday
- I promise that it won't happen again. – You can rest assured that this will not happen again/ We have... to make sure that it won't happen again.
- Sorry, I'm busy then. – I'm afraid I am... ing... at that time
- It's not our fault. – This was due to...
- You sent the wrong amount. – The amount we received was not what we expected/ The amount sent does not seem to be correct
- Look at this document. – Please see the document attached./ Can you have a look at this document and...?
- There's no way I can do that. – That is not really possible at this time/ I'm afraid that is rather difficult.
- Gonna do it soon. – I will complete it as soon as possible
- It's gonna take ages. Sorry! – I apologise in advance for any delay in finishing this/ I'm afraid it might take some time
- Forward this to Mr Jones. – Could you forward this to Mr Jones?/ Can you forward this to Mr Jones?/ Can you send this on to Mr Jones?
- Please do it by Friday/ I need this asap/ Wanna get it finished by Friday. – If you could get this finished by Friday, that would be a great help./ This needs to be finished by the end of the week
- Great!!! CU there! – I look forward to seeing you then/ Miss you! – It seems ages since we last met/ Long time no see
- Write soon/ Keep in touch – I look forward to hearing from you (soon)/ I'm looking forward from you (soon)
- See ya! – See you/ CU
- Give a kiss to John from me. – Give my regards to John/ Pass my best wishes onto John/ Say "Hi" to John from me
- Lots of love/ Kisses/ XXXX/ Hugs and kisses/ XOXO – Yours/ Best regards/ All the best/ Best wishes

What are the general reasons why the phrases above are too informal?

- Too short
- Spoken rather than written form
- Missing subject and auxiliary verb
- Only used with friends and family
- Too passionate
- Abbreviations, e.g. textspeak
- Exclamation marks/ Multiple punctuation marks
- Missing polite language
- Informal spelling that matches informal pronunciation