

FC Expert Blog

First Impressions: What Your Email Says About You

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What does your email address and signature say about you? In short, everything.

Often, your email is the first impression anyone will have of you, from the actual email name and address to the signature in the body of the email. Your email carries a lot of weight when someone is deciding what his or her first impression is of you.



Start with your email name. It is probably best to use your full name or first initial and last name. Using just your first name may be a little too informal for some companies. Nicknames? Pet names? Are you insane? My stepson has used 'CrazyCris' for years. However, when he started getting serious and began to look for that first internship in the oil and gas industry, he knew that name would never get him taken seriously. CrazyCris, HappyRita, Party Hearty or anything remotely close to those is not going to get you an interview, it won't get your foot in the door and it definitely won't be read.

Now take a look at the end of your email address. It is always best to have your 'company name.com' if you want to be taken seriously. Comcast.net or sbcglobal.com says "You are working from home in your pajamas, aren't you?" And, I'm sorry to say that @hotmail.com and @yahoo.com make you look cheap. Some even say @aol.com needs to go, it makes you appear old and out of touch.

On to your email signature, specifically your job title. Take a look at your job title. Does it really tell people what you do? Does it grab their attention? Does it make them want to know more? Does it bore them? Does it chase them away?

I recently had an appointment with a major firm in New York City. Located on Park Avenue, I was surprised to walk into the reserved and well-appointed reception area and immediately see a sign in front of the receptionist that read "Director of First Impressions." Half kidding, I asked her if it was on her business card. "Yes," she replied and added, "It's on my email as well." Brilliant. I immediately had my first impression of this company, which was, "They get it."

Then, there are the boring and pompous titles. Shouldn't "professional" be a given? "Consultant?" Yeah, you and a million others. "Expert?" Says who? "I don't use 'expert' in my title the same reason I don't introduce myself as a 'God of Sex.' It's much better when other people introduce me as such," advises social media "expert" and speaker Peter Shankman.

What about the different, unique titles such as the afore mentioned "Director of First Impressions?" If it's going to be different or even amusing, you had better be able to back it up with something good like these folks do:

- **Paige Craig, Good Angel:** Craig is a prolific investor and supporter of doing the right thing. His newest venture is BetterWorks, a company perks platform that rewards and motivates employees with top brand services employees want, need and love.
- **Sarah Worthy, Go Get 'Em!:** Her fearlessness when it comes to approaching strangers and her affinity towards research and the internet in particular provides her with an ability to find things pretty quickly, making her a valuable asset to Schipul.com.
- **Christopher Hoyt, Talent Engagement:** Chris makes sure those wanting to work with PepsiCo have everything they need to attract the best to the company including a dedicated job site at pepsijobs.com
- **P. Graham O'Neil, Recovering Rocket Scientist:** An aerospace specialist with a NASA contractor, he finds himself in the position of looking for work with the end of the NASA Shuttle Program. Though not an industry known for its sense of humor, I think this is good for O'Neil to stand out in the crowd and give a little levity to the situation.

Tip: *You should have the same title on your business card as you do in your email signature. The same rules apply.*

Going back to the "Director of First Impressions," I asked Richard A. Rosenbaum, CEO of the prestigious law firm Greenberg Traurig, for the story behind that title.

"Reputations are not determined solely by fancy marketing strategies dreamed up in an ivory tower or by your 'star' lawyers, but by the performance of every single member of the team doing his or her job at a very high level and always centered on the client. A few years back, in an effort to make the whole firm better, we asked our staff to tell us what they did to provide the highest quality experience for our clients. One of our very best receptionists told us about how hard she worked in creating that critical first impression on the phone and when a client, guest or employee walks in the door. I said, 'You are now a Director of First Impressions,' which also made her feel great and try even harder, and the rest is history."

Rosenbaum also added, "Seeing that plaque on the front desk reminds everyone every day how important we each are, how respected everyone is, and what our goal is--impressing our clients beyond their expectations!" The company that "gets it," Greenberg Traurig, implemented the title "Director of First Impressions" nearly 10 years ago, beginning in its New York office.

So, again I ask, what does your email address and title say about you?

Everything.

Dayna Steele,
Creates Rock Stars