

# Internet Etiquette Do's and Don'ts

For Students Communicating with College Admissions Counselors and Prospective Employers

Communicating via the internet can be a very quick and easy way of accessing and disseminating information. Most students rely on this form of communication to stay in touch with friends or family. Sometimes, it is appropriate in a business setting. Students need to realize that anything posted on a social website, emails and instant messages are all prone to be seen by potential employers as well as college admissions counselors. Here are some helpful tips that can help you as you navigate through the electronic world of communication.

## **DO...**

- Create an appropriate e-mail address such as john.smith@gmail.com. Your email address sends a message to the reader before he has even begun to read your message! Make it a positive one by saving your silly email addresses for use with your friends.
- Remember that your e-mail message may be added to your admissions or employment file.
- For college admissions e-mails, include your full name, address, phone number and high school on each message.

Spell check each message, and check for proper capitalization and punctuation. This is not the time to be using abbreviations.

- This is a business email - use salutations such as "Dear Mr. Jones".
- Be as polite and respectful in the email as you would be in a face to face meeting or on the telephone.
- Use the "reply with history" feature to help the reader remember previous emails. They read several per day and will not appreciate having to back track through old emails from you to try to determine what your current one may be about.
- Before sending a email containing several questions, check on the school or company website to see if you can find the answer yourself first. If you still have specific questions, it is better to call and have a conversation that will take care of future questions.
- Monitor what is posted on your social networking websites. This information is PUBLIC information, even when you have set it up as "private". Employers and college admissions officers have the right, and they do look into your social networking sites. Be sure that comments and photographs show you in the best light, and that they are appropriate.

## **DON'T...**

- Don't use all upper case letters in email, as it reads as if you are shouting. Don't use all lower case letters, as it is difficult to read.
- Don't use "IMPORTANT INFORMATION" as the subject line for your email. This is a common practice for junk email, or viruses, and the intended reader may delete it before ever reading it.
- Don't send a blanket email to several colleges or employers. Do some research then ask specific questions indicating genuine interest.
- Don't "friend" and Admissions Officer or Human Resources Associate on social networking web sites. It is in your best interest to keep your relationship professional during the application and interviewing process.
- Don't post inappropriate or offensive messages about any university or company on any web site.
- Don't IM your admissions counselor or future employer.