

Projecting Your Image Via Email

About two weeks ago we relocated and upgraded our Exchange server. Since then, I have noticed a dramatic increase in the number of NDR's (Non-Delivery Reports) only after distributions to the TENG. I initially assumed that a problem had developed with our Email server. In the middle of all this, we lost Email service altogether due to an unrelated problem. When I distributed the newsletter and several job leads shortly after mail service was restored, the NDR's continued. Needless to say, I have been discussing this with our network engineers all week. They have examined the problem and have also discussed it with MicroSoft support. We changed some settings on our server, which may have caused the TENG distributions to be seen as spam by some member Email providers. Most important however, many NDR's indicated that the recipient's Email box was over quota. This has been most prevalent with users of Hotmail, Sprintmail and some of the other large free Email providers. Our engineers informed me that prior to our server upgrade, we did not receive all of the NDR's issued to our account with our Email service provider, however now we do. This being the case, the NDR problem may have existed for some time without my knowledge, but I want to stay on top of it and we may be sending test messages and/or calling some of you to verify whether you are receiving distributions. As an experiment, I am also posting this newsletter to the TENG-Discussion Group. Nearly all TENG members are subscribed to the Discussion Group. If you receive this newsletter via the Discussion Group, but not through your Email account, please contact me immediately. When you advise us of a change in Email address, we make the correction as soon as possible.

One of our network engineers informed me that earlier this year, Hotmail revised its policy for its free Email service. Users of the free service are now allowed only 2MB of storage on the Hotmail mail servers. Also, Hotmail users are now limited to 1MB of attachments when sending or receiving messages. If the TENG newsletter or job leads with attachments containing graphics or Web links are over 1MB, which is unlikely, the Hotmail servers will more than likely reject them. Even if a TENG Email is under 1MB, which I suspect most are, but causes the recipient to exceed the storage limit, it may also be rejected. Many of our NDR's report, "There was a problem with the recipient's mail server". Our engineers have advised me that this means our mail system successfully communicated with the recipient's system, but could not deliver the message due to a restriction or problem with the receiving system. They also advised that Yahoo Email, in addition to Hotmail, limits file size and message total, but they did not have further details readily available.

Any job seeker in a tight market like the present one must be readily accessible and available. It is a rare exception to encounter a senior executive that does not have a cell phone to allow immediate contact with recruiters and companies. If you have gone to the expense of having a cell phone with voice mail, why use an Email service that is not "industrial strength"? I understand that you may wish to keep costs down, but if your free Email box is full and you miss a lead for your perfect job, how much have you saved? A missed opportunity could be worth hundreds of thousands of dollars. When will the next one surface? Time constraints do not permit me to re-distribute leads. I re-distributed the last newsletter because the number of NDR's I received from the first distribution was significant.

As a CIO or senior IT executive, you want to distinguish yourself from the masses. Email services such as AOL, Yahoo, Hotmail, and the like are intended for the recreational and home user. Relying upon such services for senior-level career search may be cause you to miss important opportunities or at the least, create a less than executive image for you. I suggest you consider the following ideas concerning use of Email for your career search:

- As a senior IT executive, you may have rarely used Email. Some CIO's have an assistant to deal with this. If this is the case with you, understand that by having an AOL, Hotmail or Yahoo Email account, you are including yourself with every software developer, high school student and mass recreational user on a global basis. This is not enhancing your best professional image. It is saying that you are cutting corners. You are placing price ahead of reliability. While every corporation is cost conscious these days, top management always will pay for solutions that work reliably. You are sending a statement that high uptime does not matter for your current most important project, your job search.
- Use an Email service that does not limit file size and number of messages. On a national level, I understand that AT&T, Optonline and Earthlink are reliable. If none of these appeal to you, find a high quality local Internet Service Provider. Here in Connecticut, I have been using Cybershore for my personal and former business Email since 1996. I can't remember an outage or technical problem with them in three or four years. Go to <http://thelist.internet.com/>, which is known as "The List". You can search for ISP's in any state via telephone area code.
- If you have multiple Email accounts, which include both the more "robust" and the free services, use the former for all job-search related activity. Save the Hotmail or Yahoo account for personal and family use. You may also wish to forward all mail from multiple Email accounts into the one account that provides the greatest capacity.
- Use an Email address this is either your name or initials or some combination. Initials or some alphanumeric mix are appropriate if you wish to be gender non-specific. Avoid using descriptive or humorous handles such as "cool dude" or comparable. They are not dignified and will tarnish your image.
- Check and respond to Email at least once every twenty-four hours. If you have a laptop or hand-held with Email capability, use them when traveling. Missed Emails concerning an urgent opportunity or follow-up interview with a tight deadline could be very costly to you.
- AOL automatically "zips" certain attachments to outbound Emails leaving its network. For your recipient, this may be an annoyance if they don't have the right software available to "unzip" your attachment. Some resume screeners, faced with hundreds of Emails, will simply delete those with attachments that can't be opened. Avoid sending resumes as PDF files or with password protection. Someone who is having a bad day may choose to delete them as well. The best attachment is a Word attachment without password protection. Can someone change your resume? Yes, but I doubt that this happens enough to make it a major concern. In a tight job market, you want to make things as easy as possible for your reader.

- Emails that do not use proper grammar, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, spacing and structure shout to the recipient that the sender doesn't have time and doesn't care. Email conveys an impression of you, as does your personal image. You never know who will see it. Always send Emails that look professional.
- Avoid using distracting or unusual type fonts. Times New Roman, Arial, Garamond and comparable conservative fonts are best.
- Don't mark your message as urgent or high priority unless it really is that important to justify the red flag. Inappropriate use of this feature will annoy your user.
- Attaching a reply request to all your messages may be annoying to some users. Some people use this with every message, which is impolite and excessive. It adds superfluous messages to your recipient's "Sent" file and for them, it creates another step in handling your mail. I understand that many of your Emails go unanswered. Trying to force everyone to reply to you may not be a solution however. You are saying to your recipient that you are insecure and desperate. Use this feature with discretion.

Whether you are communicating by the oral or written word, you want to create an impression that you are someone special. Using mass-market tools detracts from this image. To employ an automotive analogy, do you want others to view you as a Mercedes or a Yugo?

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