

5 Rules for Forwarding Email

Is there a “nice way” of telling someone that you care about: relative, friend or associate, to not forward attachments, chain emails, religious and political commentary or the jokes that are so prevalent online.

People are afraid to ask others to stop and those who are asked to stop, no matter how nicely, get offended and feel as though their thoughtfulness is not appreciated. But let’s think about this a moment. How really thoughtful is it to click the forward arrow, then a bunch of email addresses and hit send? Well, your brain had to “think” about those steps but does that make the effort truly “thoughtful.” I don’t think so...

Here are the 5 Rules of Forwarding Emails that those who are being truly thoughtful follow. If everyone followed them all the problems associated with forwarded emails could be avoided. Sticking to these guidelines will assist both those thinking they are thoughtful and those who don’t want to appear otherwise:

1. Don’t forward anything without editing out all the forwarding >>>>, other email addresses, headers and commentary from all the other forwarders. Don’t make folks look amongst all the gobbly-gook to see what it is you thought was worth forwarding. If you must forward, only forward the actual “guts” or content of the email that you are of the opinion is valuable. Check out this neat free program to help you out: [Email Stripper](#).
2. If you cannot take the time to write a personal comment at the top of your forwarded email to the person you are sending to – then perhaps you shouldn’t forward it at all.
3. Think carefully about if what you are forwarding will be of value (accurate information – check for hoaxes @ [urbanlegends.com](#)), appreciated (something the recipient needs) or humorous (do they have the same sense of humor as you do) to the person on the other side. If you cannot think of why the person you are forwarding to would like to receive the email – then don’t forward it.
4. It should go without saying that forwarding of chain letters; regardless how noble the topic may seem, virus warnings or anything that says “forward to everyone you know” simply shouldn’t be forwarded because in most cases it is plain old garbage. Email is email–there is no chain to break or continue–no cause or effect whether you do or not. The fact is not all commentary will be appreciated by the other side if they have a different viewpoint than you do–be very careful here.
5. If you must forward to more than one person, put your email address in the TO: field and all the others you are sending to in the BCC: field to protect their email address from being published to those they do not know. This is a serious privacy

issue! Do not perpetuate a breach of privacy started by other forwarders who included their contact's addresses in the To: or Cc: field by continuing to forward those visible addresses to your contacts! Remove any email addresses in the body of the email that have been forwarded by those who brush off the privacy of their friends and associates. (highlight the address and hit delete).

The above 5 rules will help qualify if an email is worth forwarding and the right way to do so if it is. If one cannot make these extra efforts, then they really have no excuse to get mad or have hurt feelings when asked to stop. And if asked to stop forwarding, don't get mad; just realize the person on the other side certainly has the right to make that request.

On an aside, also keep in mind that if you are forwarding a private email that was sent to you, you must get the sender's permission to forward it on to others (or post it publicly). Emails are copyright protected by their authors. Not only that, common courtesy dictates that you should ask the author first if the email sent for your eyes only can be forwarded to strangers or others for which it was not originally intended.

At the end of the day, when it comes to receiving unwanted forwarded emails, if you fear hurting someone's feelings by asking them to stop forwarding you email, know they probably meant well, were really thinking of you, were trying to make a point – or, **just hit delete!**

<http://www.netmanners.com/email-etiquette/5-rules-of-forwarding-email/>