

Free Tech Report
Executive IT Info Series

*"Virtual CTO" Tim Gillen reports on
current business technology issues*

Why Your Company Needs an Email Policy

Email is an important and necessary part of your business. It provides an economical and instant means of communicating with staff, customers, and vendors - that's both simple to use and enables increased efficiency. An email policy is required to protect this necessary business tool.

An email policy is a legal document that details your organization's definition of acceptable use for the company email system. It should indicate who emails can be received from or sent to, as well as outline what constitutes appropriate content for work emails.

In addition, having a company email policy will:

Protect the Organization from Liabilities: When all employees read and sign an email policy, it proves they are aware and agree to the information contained in that policy. Should an email be sent that is not considered appropriate content according to the email policy, the employee, not the business, would bear the brunt of liability for any damages or suits brought as a result of their sending an inappropriate email.

Promote a Professional Environment: If email is used only in a professional manner in the workplace, you can be sure that embarrassing mistakes will not occur. For example, if staff are using work email to communicate with friends, the content in those emails are likely to be sloppy, unprofessional, and informal. If those emails accidentally get sent to clients or other professionals - the company image may become damaged. If an email policy does not allow for personal use of the work email system, your staff will remain in a professional mindset and eliminate the potential of personal emails going out to customers.

Increase Productivity: Email tends to be a distraction for employees who are using it for non-professional reasons. If an email policy prohibits the use of work email for personal use, your employees will stay on task more and avoid the distractions that come from sending and receiving personal emails during work hours.

Establish Systems for Email: If the email policy outlines appropriate content for an email sent during work hours over the company email system, it can also help establish systems to ensure all staff members are contributing to the brand or image of the company. Have each staff member use a template for email responses and set up signature lines that appear in all outgoing emails to further establish the company's professionalism and image in the eyes of individuals who may receive email from your staff. Setting guidelines for content and use of email creates a single, comprehensive image of the company that helps keep the organization aligned with its mission.

An email policy is a document that provides your business with certain legal protections involving misuse of the email system by employees. Because it is a legal document, many businesses elect to have a lawyer draw up the email policy, or at the very least, review the policy before it is implemented within the organization. Having a lawyer review or prepare

an email policy may seem like an unnecessary upfront cost, but has the potential to save you in legal fees in the future.

Timothy Gillen CNE | MCP
CEO & President
"Virtual" CTO

AskTim@terrapiIT.com