GracoRoberts Family of Brands - Internal Communication Guidelines

Purpose

At GracoRoberts, one of our core values is **Communicate: share information with transparency and frequency.** These internal communication guidelines are designed to help us live this value with accountability by fostering efficient, respectful, and results-driven communication across our global teams. By establishing best practices around email etiquette, response time, clarity of asks, and collaboration across time zones, we can work more effectively together—and better serve our internal and external customers.

Response Time Recommendations

Response is acknowledging receipt of the email, even if you are still working on the answer. Follow these standards for response time recommendations:

Message Type	Recommended Response Time
Urgent (clearly marked in email subject line or by using the 'High Importance' icon) ! High Importance	Acknowledge receipt of request within 3 business hours (during recipient's working hours) or **ASAP.** The Sender should follow up with a phone call thereafter.
Standard business requests	Within 1 business day/24 hours
FYI/No Action Needed	No response required; a 'thank you, received' is best practice for acknowledgement

Urgent communication:

- Don't overuse the message type "URGENT." If everything is critical, nothing is critical.
- Provide context behind urgency, ensure all necessary information is included and clearly describe the impact (for example, AOG, Line Down, MOD, Government Contract, Expedite Needed, Non-Conformance, Turnback). This helps the recipient prioritize requests.
- Include a request for the recipient to respond with acknowledgement
- If unavailable for an extended period, consider setting an out-of-office message that includes alternative contact details for urgent matters
- **If request is *very time sensitive* (a response required within an hour), it is appropriate to call someone for immediate action.**

How to Write a Clear and Actionable Email

Use the "ABC" Formula:

- A = Action: What do you need the recipient to do and by when, with specific date/ time
- B = Background: Ensure recipient has all the information/context they need in the first communication
- C = Clarify: Clarify expectations and ensure that a clear timeframe is agreed upon.

Note: When crafting your email, clearly call out the person(s) responsible for the action.

Email Best Practices

- Subject Lines: Include the action + topic + due date.
    - Action Needed: RF 6110 TDS Sheet Review – Due 5/31/25 5pm CT.
- Use the "To" field for individuals who need to take action.
    - Be sure to address them directly in the body of the email so responsibilities are clear.
- Use "CC" only for those who need to be informed, not those expected to act.
- Avoid using "Reply All" unless everyone copied truly needs to be part of the response.
- Avoid sending blanket requests—understand your org structure, know individual responsibilities, and consult your manager or org chart if unsure who owns a task.
- When working across time zones, always specify time zones in deadlines, use shared calendars for key events, and schedule meetings within core overlap hours (e.g., 8–11AM CT / 2–5PM BST).
- When receiving a request, reply to confirm what you'll do and by when, propose a new deadline if needed, and ask for clarification if anything is unclear.
- If the task is taking longer than expected, let the other person know in advance of the due date and reset expectations.

Email Template Example

Subject: Request for Review: Q2 Report - Due Friday May 30 3PM PT

Hi Ashley,

I'm reaching out to request if you can review the attached Q2 report and provide feedback and data for sections 2 and 4. This report is for one of our key suppliers. I would appreciate if you can provide to me by Friday, May 30th at 3pm PT. Please confirm receipt and if you can complete by the due date.

Thanks so much,

Faye

Example Response:

Got it! I'll complete the review and provide feedback by Friday, May 30at 3pm PT, if not sooner.

Automatic Replies (Out of Office) Templates

Standardizing our Out of Office messages offer consistency and add clarity to our customer communications. When you are next out of the office for business or personal reasons, please use one of the messages below and fill in the bracketed information for both internal and external recipients.

Note: For Account Services team members in the US, a different automatic message template applies. See below.

For business travel:

Hello, I'll be out of the office on business from [x/xx to x/xx], returning to the office on [x/xx]. I may have limited access to email during this time. If you are in need of immediate assistance, please contact [First/Last Name] at [direct phone number] or [email address]. Otherwise, I will reply to your message as soon as I'm able. Thank you.

For business meetings/ travel/business cell phone:

Hello, I'll be out of the office on business from [x/xx to x/xx], returning to the office on [x/xx]. If you are in need of immediate assistance, please call my cell phone at [xxx-xxx-xxxx]. Otherwise, I will reply to your message as soon as I'm able. Thank you.

For all PTO with return date:

Hello, I'll be out of the office from [x/xx to x/xx], returning to the office on [x/xx]. If you are in need of immediate assistance, please contact [First/Last Name] at [direct phone number] or [email address] who may be able to help. Otherwise, I will reply to your message upon my return. Thank you.

For all PTO with unknown return date: (example: you're sick)

Hello, I'm currently out of the office. If you are in need of immediate assistance, please contact [First/Last Name] at [direct phone number] or [email address] who may be able to help. Otherwise, I will reply to your message upon my return. Thank you.

For the Account Services team in the United States:

Hello, I am currently out of the office from [x/xx to x/xx]. My emails will be monitored during this time. If your request is urgent and you need to speak with someone, please call +1 817-535-3200 or contact [insert TAM or Account Manager name and email]. Thank you.

Hubspot

Many now use HubSpot for communication, but please still set your out of office in Outlook to keep things consistent

Tools to Support Clarity and Efficiency

We use a variety of communication tools to support effective collaboration, each suited to different types of interactions. The choice of channel should reflect the urgency, complexity, and formality of the message.

1. Email/Hubspot Tickets

- Purpose: Formal communication, detailed updates, documentation, and external correspondence.
- Tone: Professional and structured.
- Best for: Summarizing meetings, sharing attachments, formal requests, and communicating with external stakeholders.

2. Microsoft Teams Chat

- Purpose: Quick questions, informal updates, and real-time collaboration.
- Tone: Semi-formal to informal, conversational.
- Best for: Internal team communication, clarifications, and informal check-ins.

3. Text Messaging (Business Cell Phones)

- Purpose: Urgent or time-sensitive communication when other channels are unavailable.
- Tone: Informal and brief.
- Best for: Immediate updates or alerts, especially when on the move.

4. Project Management Tools (e.g., Asana)

- Purpose: Task tracking, project updates, and workflow management.
- Tone: Professional and concise.
- Best for: Assigning tasks, tracking progress, and maintaining accountability within projects.

5. Phone Calls

- Purpose: Real-time discussion, clarification, or when tone and nuance are important.
- Tone: Professional but conversational.
- Best for: Sensitive topics, complex discussions, or when a quick resolution is needed.

6. Face-to-Face Meetings

- Purpose: In-depth discussions, team collaboration, relationship-building, and decision-making.
- Tone: Professional and respectful.
- Best for: Strategic planning, performance reviews, brainstorming sessions, and conflict resolution.

When selecting a communication method, consider:

- Urgency: Use chat, text, or phone for time-sensitive matters.
- Formality: Use email or meetings for formal or complex topics.
- Documentation: Use email or project tools to ensure a record is kept.
- Collaboration: Use Teams or meetings for interactive discussions.

Maintaining professionalism and clarity across all platforms is essential. When in doubt, default to the more formal channel and follow up with documentation as needed.

Summary: Quick Dos & Don’ts

DO:

- Foster a culture of accountability and respect
- Assume positive intent when working with others
- Be thoughtful and express gratitude; use ‘please’ and ‘thank you’
- State ‘asks’ and requests clearly, addressing them by name
- Include due dates and time zones
- Give advance notice when requesting deliverables
- Use subject lines that summarize the required action
- Use TO for action owners, CC for awareness
- Confirm you can meet deadlines—or realign early if needed
- If you’re blocked from accessing a file or completing a task, communicate early
- Follow up with a phone call for urgent matters
- Ensure clear, consistent communication throughout
- Be mindful of others’ workloads and competing priorities; allow reasonable time for a response

DON’T:

- Use URGENT in the subject line without explaining the business impact in email body
- Send vague or passive group emails
- Assume someone will take ownership unless directly asked
- Miss deadlines without communication
- Leave emails unacknowledged beyond indicated timeframes

Effective communication is a shared responsibility. By following these guidelines, both the sender and receiver contribute to becoming more proactive and engaging communicators.

Your business communications are a direct reflection of your personal brand. Being responsive, clear, and warm in your approach goes a long way in building a positive professional reputation, relationships, and trust.

Internal Communication Guidelines
DOs and DON'Ts

- **Be courteous and respectful:** use 'please' and 'thank you'
- **Directly state 'asks'/requests:** include action, due date/time zone in email subject and body
- **Promote accountability:** use TO for action owners, CC for awareness
- **Plan ahead:** Give advance notice; confirm or realign deadlines early
- **Reply promptly:** within 3 hours max if urgent, 24 hours as a standard acknowledgement
- **Assume positive intent:** follow up once before escalating

- Use URGENT in the subject line without explaining the business impact in email body
- Assume someone will take ownership unless directly asked
- Miss deadlines without communication
- Leave emails unacknowledged beyond indicated timeframes
- Send vague or passive group emails

Writing a Clear and Actionable Email

A

A = ACTION

State what you need the recipient to do and by when, with specific date/time

B

B = BACKGROUND

Ensure recipient has all the information/context they need in the first communication

C

C = CLARIFY

Clarify expectations and ensure that a clear timeframe is agreed upon