Email Etiquette

Here are a few pointers to help you communicate more effectively by email.

1) Clearly summarize your message in the subject line.
    a) Properly titled messages help people organize and prioritize their e-mail.

2) Don't use the CC (Carbon Copy) function to copy your message to everyone.
    a) This is particularly true at work. These days everyone receives too much e-mail. Unnecessary messages are annoying. If only a few people really need to receive your message, only direct it to them.
    b) Similarly, when responding to e-mail, do not respond to all recipients. By choosing Reply to All or a similar button when responding to a message, you may end up broadcasting your response to your entire company.
    c) 20 unnecessary emails per day will cost the diocese $208,333.33 annually in time and productivity lost alone. We are not talking about spam emails here. We are talking about emails we receive from various sources which are not essential to the ministry we are in. This cost estimate doesn't account for bandwidth cost, storage cost and stress related to dealing with high volumes of emails.

3) Think prior to sending an email. Ask the following questions.
    a) Is this email important to the mission of the diocese and to the parishes?
    b) Is email the right medium to communicate this message? Would a phone call or regular letter be more effective?
    c) Who needs to be included in the distribution list?
    d) Include only those people who require the information.
    e) Avoid sending e-mail to large numbers of people unless you have a serious reason to do it. It may be considered spam.
    f) These tips will cut down on the volume of emails sent and received and will improve our productivity.

4) Use BCCs (Blind Carbon Copies) when addressing a message that will go to a large group of people who don't necessarily know each other.
    a) Just as it's not polite to give out a person's telephone number without his or her knowledge, it's not polite to broadcast everyone's e-mail address.
    b) For instance, when you send a message to 30 people and use the To or CC fields to address the message, all 30 people see each other's address. By using BCC, each recipient sees only their address and yours.

5) Keep your messages short and focused.
    a) Few people enjoy reading on their computer screens; fewer still on the tiny screens in cell phones, PDAs and other mobile devices that are becoming increasingly popular. Recipients tend to ignore long messages.

6) Sending Attachments
    a) Users of many wireless devices don't have the software required to open an attachment such as a Word document or spreadsheet.

7) Avoid using all capital letters.
    a) IT MAKES IT LOOK LIKE YOU'RE SHOUTING! IT'S ALSO MORE DIFFICULT TO READ.

8) Don't write anything you wouldn't say in public.

a) Anyone can easily forward your message, even accidentally. This could leave you in an embarrassing position if you divulged personal or confidential information. If you don't want to potentially share something you write, consider using the telephone.

9) Nasty e-mail should also be avoided.
   a) These messages have their own term: flame. Flame e-mail is an insulting message designed to cause pain, as when someone "gets burned."

10) As a courtesy to your recipient, include your name at the bottom of the message.
    a) The message contains your e-mail address (in the header), but the recipient may not know that the return address belongs to you, especially if it's different from your real name.

11) Check Your Spelling
    a) To make sure your message isn't compromised by misspelled words, use your e-mail program's built-in spell checker.

12) E-mail etiquette may take a while to learn, but don't let your fear of making mistakes inhibit you. All Internet users were beginners once, so most people are quite forgiving.