

# Using abbreviations in Business communication Part 1

Where possible we advocate not using abbreviations in your Business communication. For your reference we are using abbreviations as a blanket term that includes acronyms.

## There are four reasons for this:

- Firstly, it can block understanding. If you don't know what a KIT meeting is or BTW just does not make sense to you, communication is undermined (KIT - keep in touch, BTW - by the way).
- Secondly, it can look casual. If you see someone sign off their email with BR (Best regards) or KR (Kind regards) it gives the impression of not giving the time to properly finish the mail. It feels rushed and a little self-important.
- Thirdly, abbreviations can come across as rude and too direct. If you said to a customer, can you please send your confirmation ASAP (as soon as possible), you would be asking for trouble!
- Finally, it can make your business writing style seem cheesy. It can also look like you are showing off with a newly discovered piece of language - look at me using all these abbreviations!

There are certain situations where it might make sense to use abbreviations. A technical process in your company or sector (often with a long name) is known by an abbreviation for ease of communication. This can save time and be easier to write. However, even here you need to be careful. When communicating to a new joiner in your team, it can be really helpful to write out the term in full, with the abbreviation in brackets, the first time you refer to it.

Another exception is the group of Latin-based abbreviations that are commonly used in English communication (e.g., i.e., etc...). Again be careful, as while **e.g.**, (for example) and **etc...**, (other similar things) are widely understood, **i.e.**, often gets mixed up with **e.g.** For your reference, **i.e.**, is best used in front of a word or phrase that restates the meaning of something already said.

Good communication is simply understood and generous to its audience. So our mantra is don't go there with abbreviations!

*Part 2 will give you the meaning of the most common abbreviations in Business English to aid your understanding but not your practice!*

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