

## What is blah blah?

A critique I sometimes get is that there is too much “blah blah” in the email writing style I promote. “I just want to get straight to the point” or “I don’t have time for this hot air”. The “blah blah” being referred to is normally the use of expressions such as “I hope your week is going well” and to a lesser extent “If you have any questions do let me know”.

This raises an existential point! What is the purpose of communication? Is it simply to convey your message in the most efficient way?

If it is, then short, direct commands, utilising the imperative would be the way to go. “Send me the report”, “Email me the client profile”. Would you want to just receive emails like that?!

Communication is much more than conveying actions. We work on the principle that powerful communication in business is **simple** and **generous** to your audience.

If you break this principle down, simple communication involves a commitment to clarity especially to non-native speakers of English. We advocate avoiding jargon, unnecessary complexity, abbreviations, crazy idiomatic expressions, in short anything that could block the understanding of the audience.

The second clause “generosity” requires both making the commitment above but something more as well. It involves being sensitive to your audience. This takes different forms in different contexts. When contacting a particular senior manager, your instincts might guide you to add a sentence such as “I hope your

week is going well”. When emailing your busy colleague – who sees you all the time – you can simply get straight to the point. If emailing about a complex issue, highlighting that you are open for follow up questions can be reassuring. You might have a good customer and you want to be friendly and highlight you hope things are good for them.

None of this constitutes “blah blah”, just good professional practice!! The key is when you do use a polite opening expression in your email writing, avoid using the same expression time and time again. If you always say “I hope this email finds you well” your customer might start to question your sincerity. Keep it fresh and mix up your expressions, but don’t feel defensive about adding more to your communication than the simple action!

I would welcome your thoughts on any of this and wish you power for the week.

---