

What message is your email signature sending?

Contributed by By Gregg McLachlan
Wednesday, 26 May 2010

How many emails do you send in a day? How many emails do you reply to in a day? Your answer is probably dozens. Followed by dozens more. Now, think of the lost opportunities for marketing yourself. If you've just had a Doh! moment, you're in good company. Email signatures remain one of the easiest yet most overlooked marketing opportunities for job seekers and professionals.

Don't think you need an email signature? How often do emails get forwarded? Here's one huge fact we all know: emails are circulated. It's another reason to make sure your signature is there and goes along with every press of someone's send button.

Now, before we go any further, remember that not every email requires your signature. If it's between friends, and you're planning a party, you might want to leave out the signature. But if it's for work, school, inquiries, business communication, interview followups, etc., you'll want your signature included.

So, how do you begin creating an email signature that is powerful? It starts with realizing that this is the digital age. It's not the 1980s. You don't need your street address and postal code in your email signature. Like it or not, digital communication is how we connect, so email addresses and social media are vastly more important addresses than streets and postal codes.

Most importantly, an effective email signature steers people to where you want them to go online to see your professional identity. It doesn't mean an employer won't Google you and look elsewhere, but you can have some control. And remember, you've got a captive audience, even if it's for 15 seconds or less, every time your email is opened and your signature is visible.

Here's a starter's kit to building an effective and useful email signature:

1. Social media accounts. In your signature, include and link to your LinkedIn and Twitter profiles. Make sure both are professional accounts where you engage in intelligent conversation, not an account where you talk about how many beers you had at last night's party.
2. Your domain.com. If you don't have a personal website, get one. If your name is John Public, find out if JohnPublic.com is available. If so, buy out. Have a professional one or two page website created. And be sure to provide a link to it in your email signature.
3. Professional affiliations. Don't belong to a professional organization related to your field of interest? It's time you did. Start researching organizations. Usually memberships fees are reasonable, and you get instant access to message boards and article databases that can help you. Plus, of course, you'll include your membership affiliation in your email signature and link to the organization.
4. Testimonial. If you're on LinkedIn, you'll be familiar with recommendations. It's where colleagues write simple, short testimonials/recommendations about you and your work ethic. These can be invaluable taglines for your email signature.
5. Create your own signature intro. Toss out the standard 'yours truly' or 'sincerely' or 'all the best'. Get creative. Stand out. Have a line that's unique to you. (I always use 'Yours in conservation', because it reflects who I am and what I'm

passionate about.)

Here's hoping you have fun creating your email signature and circulating your digital business card!

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Yours in conservation

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