Short Workplace Messages and Digital Media

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Preparing Digital-Age E-Mail Messages and Memos

E-Mail: Love It or Hate It—But It's Not Going Away

E-mail has replaced paper memos for many messages inside organizations and some letters to external audiences. In addition to accessing e-mail in the office, increasing numbers of businesspeople check their e-mail on mobile devices. Because you can expect to use e-mail extensively to communicate at work, it's smart to learn how to do it expertly. You may have to adjust the writing practices you currently use for texting and Facebook, but turning out professional e-mails is an easily attainable goal.

Why People Complain About E-Mail

- E-Mail Overload
- E-Mail—Everlastng Evidence

Knowing When E-Mail Is Appropriate

E-mail is appropriate for short, informal messages that request information and respond to inquiries. It is especially effective for messages to multiple receivers and messages that must be archived (saved). An e-mail is also appropriate as a cover document when sending longer attachments.

Figure **5.2** Best Practices for Better E-Mail

Getting Started

- Don't write if another channel—such as IM, social media, or a phone call—might work better.
- Send only content you would want published.
- Write compelling subject lines, possibly with names and dates: *Jake: Can You Present at January 10 Staff Meeting?*

Replying

- Scan all e-mails, especially those from the same person. Answer within 24 hours or say when you will.
- Change the subject line if the topic changes. Check the threaded messages below yours.
- Practice down-editing; include only the parts from the incoming e-mail to which you are responding.
- Start with the main idea.
- Use headings and lists.

Observing Etiquette

- Obtain approval before forwarding.
- Soften the tone by including a friendly opening and closing.
- Resist humor and sarcasm. Absent facial expression and tone of voice, humor can be misunderstood.
- Avoid writing in all caps, which is like SHOUTING.

Closing Effectively

- End with due dates, next steps to be taken, or a friendly remark.
- Add your full contact information including social media addresses.
- Edit your text for readability. Proofread for typos or unwanted auto-corrections.
- Double-check before hitting **Send.**

Figure 5.4 Instant Messaging for Brief, Fast Communication

Brief instant messages or texts can provide quick answers to coworkers who need responses immediately. For security reasons, most large companies use proprietary communication systems behind firewalls. These enterprise-grade communication platforms—for example, Adobe's Unicom—combine functions such as IM, e-mail, voicemail, phone directory, videochat, and presence technology.

How to Use Instant Messaging and Textng on the Job

- Follow company policies: netiquette rules, code of conduct, ethics guidelines, as well as harassment and discrimination policies.[21]

- Don't disclose sensitive financial, company, customer, employee, or executive data.

- Don't forward or link to inappropriate photos, videos, and art.

- Don't text or IM while driving a car; pull over if you must read or send a message.

- Separate business contacts from family and friends.

- Avoid unnecessary chitchat and know when to say goodbye.

- Keep your presence status up-to-date, and make yourself unavailable when you need to meet a deadline.

- Use good grammar and correct spelling; shun jargon, slang, and abbreviations, which can be confusing and appear unprofessional.

Texting Etiquette

Addressing

- Check that you are texting to the correct phone number to avoid embarrassment. If you receive a message by mistake, alert the sender. No need to respond to the message itself.
- Avoid sending confidential, private, or potentially embarrassing texts. Someone might see your text at the recipient's end or the message might be sent to an unintended recipient.

Timing

- Don't text when calling would be inappropriate or rude; for example, at a performance, a restaurant, in a meeting, or a movie theater.
- Don't text or answer your phone during a face-to-face conversation. If others use their cell phones while talking to you, you may excuse yourself until they stop.

Responding

Don't expect an instant reply. As with e-mail, we don't know when the recipient will read the message.

Introducing

Identify yourself when texting a new contact who doesn't have your phone number: "Hi—it's Erica (Office World). Your desk has arrived. Please call 877-322-8989."

Expressing

Don't use text messages to notify others of sad news, sensitive business matters, or urgent meetings, unless you wish to set up a phone call about that subject.

Web 2.0: Social networking

Figure **5.11** Big Companies Rule on Facebook

Facebook has reached 1.15 billion users. For comparison, LinkedIn has 238 million members. Twitter claims more than 200 million active users, and Google Plus has 343 million active users. Facebook allows registered users to create individual home pages as well as group pages based on their interests. Large corporations seem to thrive on Facebook. The top three companies with the most fans after Facebook itself are Coca-Cola (71.6 million), Disney (45 million), and Starbucks (35.2 million).

Should Employers Curb Social Media, E-Mail, and Other Internet Use?

Most employees today work with computers and have Internet access. They also carry smartphones and tablets to work. Should they be able to use their own devices or work computers for social media posting, online shopping, private messages, and personal work, as well as to listen to music and play games?

But It's Harmless

Office workers have discovered that it is far easier to shop online than to race to malls and wait in line. To justify her Web shopping at work, one employee, a recent graduate, said, "Instead of standing at the water cooler gossiping, I shop online." She went on to say, "I'm not sapping company resources by doing this."[57]

What's Reasonable?

Some companies (e.g., Volkswagen and Porsche) impose a zero tolerance policy, prohibiting any personal use of company equipment. Ameritech Corporation tells employees that computers and other company equipment are to be used only for business purposes. Companies such as Boeing, however, have issued guidelines allowing some personal use of e-mail and the Internet. The company strictly prohibits chain letters, obscenity, and political and religious solicitation.

CAREER APPLICATION. As an administrative assistant at Lone Star Technologies in Austin, Texas, you have just received an e-mail from your boss asking for your opinion. Many employees have been accessing social media sites, shopping online, and using instant messaging. One person received four personal packages from UPS in one morning. Although reluctant to do so, management is considering installing monitoring software that not only tracks Internet use but also blocks social media, messaging, porn, hate, and game sites.

Your Task

- In teams or as a class, discuss the problem of workplace abuse of social media, e-mail, instant messaging, online shopping, and other Internet browsing. Should full personal use be allowed?

- Are computers and their Internet access similar to other equipment such as telephones?

- Should employees be allowed to access the Internet for personal use as long as they limit it to their own smart electronic devices?

- Should management be allowed to monitor all Internet use?

- Should employees be warned if Internet activities including e-mail are to be monitored?

- What reasons can you give to support an Internet crackdown by management?

- What reasons can you give to oppose a crackdown?

REFLEKSI

1. Informasi penting hari ini

2. Manfaat penting dari informasi penting hari ini

3. Tindak lanjut yang dapat saudara lakukan
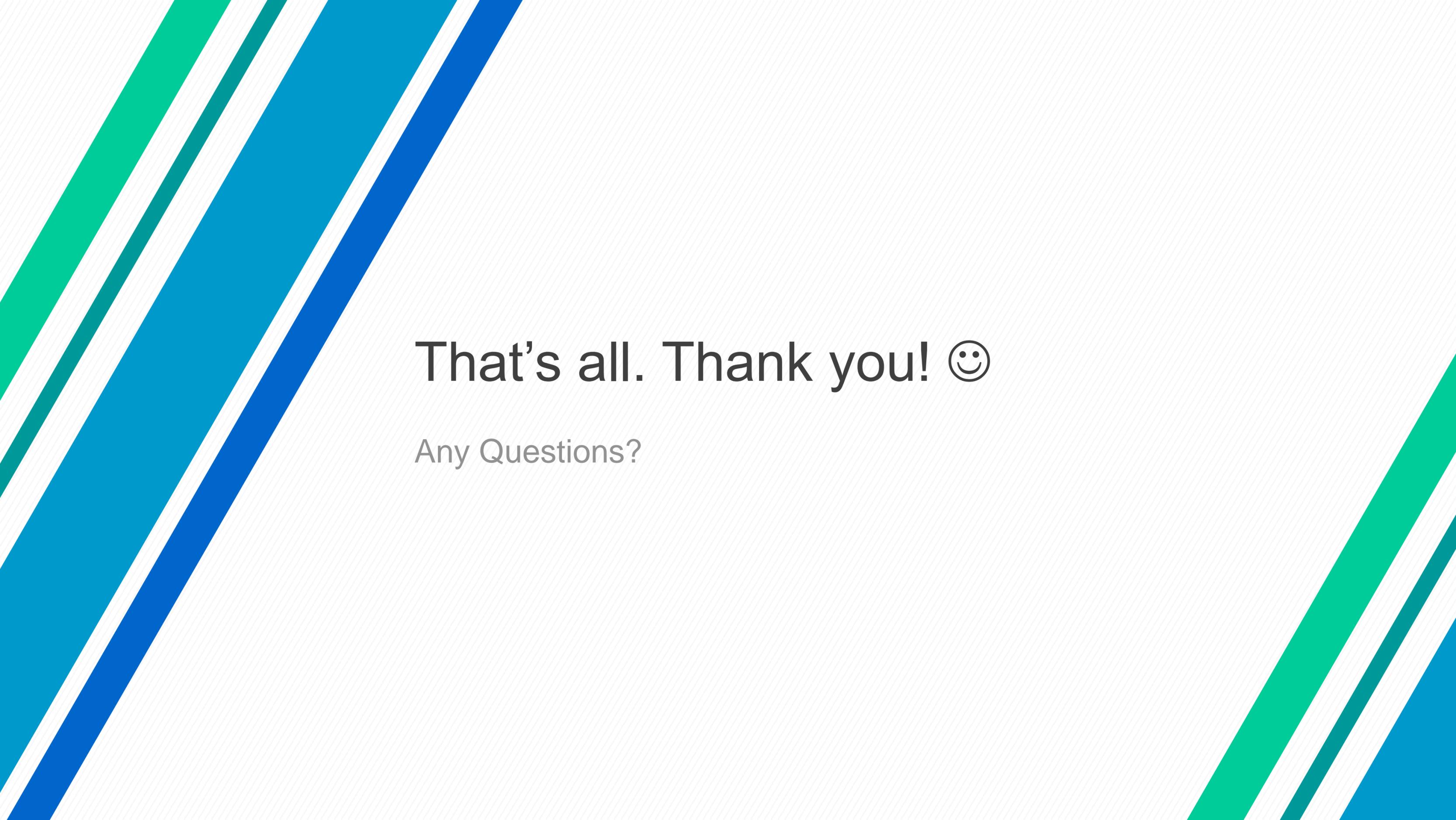
That's all. Thank you! ☺

Any Questions?