THE POLISHED BUSINESS ENGLISH WORKBOOK

GIVE YOUR ENGLISH THAT EXTRA ZING, OOMPH, PIZZAZZ... IN SHORT, A LEG UP!

CHIARA
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PEDRETTI

the polished
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WELCOME, POLISHED ENGLISH SPEAKERS!

As you may already know, I'm Chiara, an English-Italalian technical translator and a business English tutor.

I've created the "POLISHED Business English Workbook" to share useful knowledge and information about the English language.

I've conceived this Workbook as a digital product and all its assignments to be fulfilled digitally. For the sake of our Planet, I invite you not to print these pages.

This first issue is all about e-mails. We all write, send, and receive tens or even hundreds of them every day. Now, let's learn to use them at best. Happy learning!

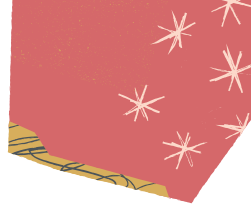Chiara Foppa Pedretti
The POLISHED Translator

WORKBOOK CONTENT

The anatomy of a perfect e-mail

Writing a good e-mail is no rocket science, but there are a few things to keep in mind if we want our messages to be:
- correct,
- effective,
- and, why not, interesting.

First things first: what's the anatomy of a perfect e-mail?

Let's look at a very simple, fake e-mail and identify all its parts. Then, I will point out a few key elements to bear in mind.

|	
From: Chiara Foppa Pedretti	Sender
To: Jane Doe	Recipient / Addressee
Subject: Details for starting [Project name]	Subject line
Hi Jane,	Salutation
Thank you so much for choosing us. We're looking forward to working with you. I'm going to set up a plan for this project now. We will set up a board for you there so you can monitor our progress.	
I have also attached a document that details all the login details I need from you.	E-mail body
And if you have any questions, you can email me at chiara@chiarafoppapedretti or call me at 0123456789.	
Thank you, Best regards,	Complimentary close
Chiara Foppa Pedretti The POLISHED Translator	Signature
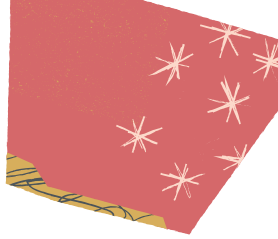
The 4 key elements of an e-mail

1) Subject line

The "headline" or "title" of your e-mail. An optimized subject line will help you capture the addressee's attention and convince him or her to open your e-mail.
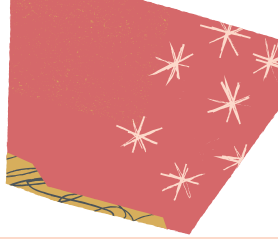
2) Salutation

When you're in doubt, "Dear xxx" and "Hello" are always two good solutions for your salutation. But what about "Hi", "Good morning", and so on? It all depends on the formality degree of your message. (See my tip here below.)

CHIARA'S WOW-FACTOR TIP
Check out this link to expand your salutations vocabulary.
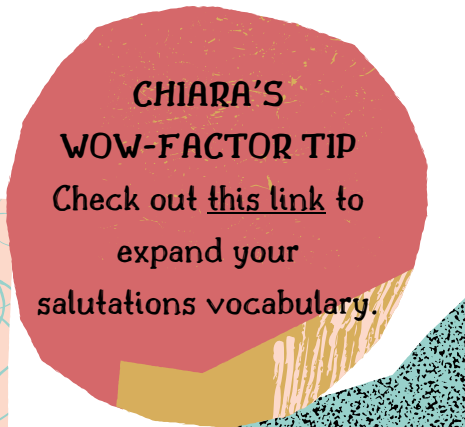
3) E-mail body

This should contain all the required information in a simple and clear format.

Use short and easy-to-read sentences. Organize the text into paragraphs, introducing one new concept in each one of them. If required, end with a "call to action" (examples: click here, call me, let me know, etc.)

4) Complimentary close

How do you end your e-mail?

"Best wishes" works well in almost every situation.

**CHIARA'S
WOW-FACTOR TIP**
Check out this link to expand your complimentary close vocabulary.

Let's read a post from the web about writing effective e-mails: it's an article focusing on photography businesses, but the ideas presented can be of interest to anyone.

Don't worry too much if you don't understand every single word, but focus on grasping the general meaning.

Watch out, I'm going to ask you a few questions at the end!

DIFFICULTY DEGREE: Easy

How to "Wow" your photography clients by writing excellent emails, by Becca Jean

GLOSSARY
Tip = a small piece of advice about something practical
Prospect = a potential customer
Upbeat = positive and enthusiastic
Vibe = a mood or an atmosphere
Inquire = to ask somebody for some information
Come up with = to find or produce something
Retainer = a sum of money that is paid to somebody to make sure they will be available to do work when they are needed
Pattern = the regular way in which something happens or is done
Misinterpret = to understand something/somebody wrongly
Come off as = to give a particular impression
Craft = make
Would rather (+ verb) = would prefer to

I've got some great tips for you today that will help with your email communication when you are writing to your photography clients and prospects.

Tip #1: Write Fun Email Subjects

I'll start this tip with an example. I used to send out emails to my clients with boring subject lines. And it's fine, people would still open them. But THEN I started experimenting with different subjects and I got such great responses back! **The subject lines start the tone of the email you are sending**, so if you want to create a fun and upbeat environment for your clients, then make the subject fun and upbeat! If you want to create a calm and caring environment, write a subject line that reflects that vibe.

Next time you go to write an email to a photography client, instead of writing boring subject lines... what if you made them fun? This is especially useful for that initial email you send after someone inquires about a session with you.

Which email do you think they are more likely to open?
Family Photography Info
 or one of these:
Your new bestie and family photographer
It's time for some fun family photos
Get ready for the best family photos ever! 😎

Yes, all of my subject lines are fun **because that's me and that's the vibe I want to create in my photography business.** If that's not you then don't use these examples, think of your own that have your personality in them. 😁

Sit down and try coming up with as many subject lines as you can think of for a few of the emails you send out. Some of your emails can still be generic, but I usually focus on the inquiry email, and also the booking email I send out that has the button for them to book their session, sign the contract, and pay the retainer. Because those are the two emails they are reading before they commit to booking their photo session.

Tip #2: Be Professional AND Friendly When Writing Emails

Write your emails in a way that sounds professional, but is also friendly and has your personality in there, too. If you are a fun type of person, then make your emails sound fun! Just make sure that you are keeping a nice balance between professional and fun. **Always use proper punctuation and spelling** (none of this "u" instead of "you" stuff). **You want people to respect you as well as like you.**

This goes for all the communication you have with your clients. Even if you are texting with them, don't fall into your regular texting patterns of abbreviating words and writing short messages that might get misinterpreted.

Before you send anything, read it over and think about it from different perspectives. **Ask yourself these questions:**

•   Does this get the point across in a professional, yet friendly way?
•   Could this be misinterpreted?
•   Do my punctuation and grammar look correct?
•   Have I added some of my personality in here if it's appropriate for the email?

When you are satisfied with what you have written after thinking about these things, that's the time to send it off.

Tip #3: Write the facts, then add the personality

A lot of times when I write an email in response to a client's question, I will start off by stating the facts and answering their question, and sometimes it may come off as sounding too abrupt. So after I write the response, I will go back and add something personal to the beginning.

For example, I once crafted a response to an email asking for a family session as a gift for her mom that started with, "I'm available on the 10th or 11th of that month, which works best for you?"

But then I went back in and reworded it to say, "What a sweet gift! Yes, I could totally do that on either the 10th or 11th! Let me know which works best for your family and I will get you set up with your contract and invoice for the retainer."

Which email would you rather get? I think I know the answer.

[Original post here.]

4 questions

Answer these questions in writing and/or orally, alone or with a colleague or friend.

1) What tip did you like the most and why?
2) What tip was the most unexpected for you and why?
3) Do you agree or disagree with the general ideas expressed in the article?
4) What suggestions are you going to apply to your daily writing tasks?
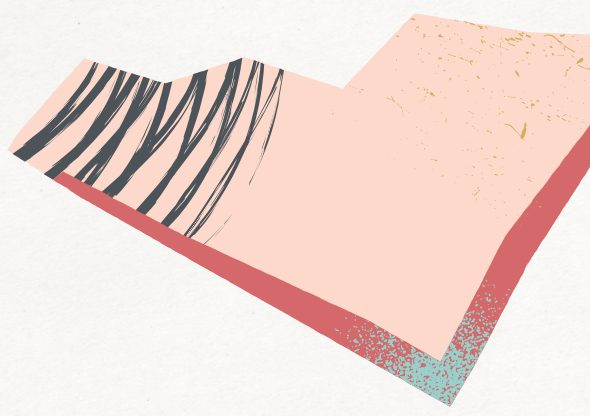
Examples

We'll now read 4 examples of excellent business e-mails. Take a look and try to identify what makes them so good!

DIFFICULTY DEGREE: Easy

Example 1: Sales e-mail

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Hi [Name],

I hope this email finds you well. Let me start by saying that
I am a big fan of your work and it has inspired me to push
myself beyond what I thought were my limits!

I am reaching out because [reason].

After taking a good look at [target company] I realize that
you could improve in [improvement area]. I have helped many
others improve in the same area and I'd be more than happy to
talk with you about it!

Would you be available for a quick call to discuss how our
[product/service] could help you?

Regards,

[Name]
```

[Source here]

Example 2: Invoice e-mail

Dear [Name],

Here is the invoice for the [industry] services we provided for the period of [date] until [date].

You can easily make the payment by clicking here [payment link].

You can use the following link to download a copy of your invoice in CSV or PDF: [insert link]

If you have any questions feel free to reach out.

Thank you for your trust,

[Company name]

[Source here]

Example 3: Customer service e-mail

Good morning [Name],
We are sorry to hear that you experienced [customer complaint].

Our team is already sorting out [customer issue]. In the meantime, feel free to let us know your suggestions for improvement.

We will update you within the next [time frame].

We appreciate the heads up.

Best,

[Your name]

[Source here]

Example 4: Event invite e-mail

Dear [name],
[Customer pain point #1]? [Customer pain point #2]? [Customer
pain point #3]?

If so, you won't want to miss our [event name] at [event
location]! On [Day, date, time], [brief description of the
overall value of the event. We can't wait to share with you:
* [Valuable takeaway from event #1]
* [Valuable takeaway from event #2]
* [Valuable takeaway from event #3]

It's time to start [desired outcome of your customers]. This
event is 100% free, but spots are limited — so sign up now!
[SIGN UP NOW BUTTON]

Hope to see you soon!

[company name]

[Source here]

It's time to practice our listening skills with a few videos and podcasts discussing topics related to the e-mail world!

CHIARA'S WOW-FACTOR TIP
After listening and understanding each video/audio file, try to implement the "shadowing" technique. To do so, listen again and repeat what the speaker says in real time – word for word, sound for sound, with as little delay as possible. This will especially improve your pronunciation and intonation.

1) <u>How to Write an Email (No, Really) | Victoria Turk | TEDxAthens</u>
DIFFICULTY DEGREE: Easy

2) <u>6 Steps for Writing Effective Emails</u>
DIFFICULTY DEGREE: Easy

3) <u>8 Email Etiquette Tips - How to Write Better Emails at Work</u>
DIFFICULTY DEGREE: Medium

4) <u>How to write professional emails</u>
DIFFICULTY DEGREE: Difficult

It may now be a good time to practice your writing skills!

Draw up a few model e-mails that you might use later as **templates** for actual messages to customers, suppliers, and partners. Some examples would be:

- Information request from a supplier
- Company/Product/Service presentation for a prospect who's requested information
- Meeting set-up
- Complaint about a defective product received from a supplier
- Response to a customer complaint

SPEAKING

Let's end this up with a speaking practice.

If possible, find a colleague or friend for this exercise. Otherwise, you can speak aloud on your own, maybe recording your voice and listening to it afterwards.

In your e-mail inbox, find some examples of particularly effective or ineffective e-mails you've sent or received and **discuss their features.**

If you've made it to this final page, great job! :)
I hope you've learned something interesting, gained new insights, and found at least one improvement area to boost your English e-mails' quality.

If you ask me, the main takeaway of this Workbook would be (as often happens with English) to keep it simple.

When writing an e-mail, your main goal should always be getting your point across and make sure the addressee will perfectly understand your message. Therefore, don't be afraid to apply the "less is more" rule whenever possible.

Secondly, always remember that English (especially American English) is often a little more informal than many other languages. Keep this in mind especially when writing your salutations and complimentary clauses.

As well as "The POLISHED Translator", working to build a bridge between English and Italian speakers especially through technical translations, I'm also a certified English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher.

Would you like to practice your speaking skills with me over a Skype call?
Would you like me to read the e-mails you've written for the assignment on page 17 and give you my feedback?

No worries, I can do that.
Just drop me an e-mail at chiara@chiarafoppapedretti.it.