SAMPLE NO. 5

Handling the signature

In email, your "signature" is the information you append at the end of each message. In most email software, you can define a default signature that is automatically appended to every message.

Most common blunders

- Providing too little contact information.
- Using fancy fonts, colors, or graphics.
- Appending inspirational quotations.

Key ideas

- Give priority to your reader's needs and convenience.
- The reader often needs your complete contact information, so provide it always. (See rationale at right.)

DON'T SEE THE RATIONALE?

Consider the plight of someone outside your company—a customer or a vendor: To follow up on your message, she may prefer to call you, or send you a fax, or send you an overnight envelope, or look something up on your website. With the original signature (far left), she could do none of these things.

Worried about the fact that your colleagues already know your full name and title? Don't be. People don't actually *read* your signature—until they need to.

ORIGINAL SIGNATURE

... I hope this message has been helpful. If you have any additional questions, please contact eBilling Support at 888-555-9665.

James
x6240

For anyone outside your company, offering only your four-digit extension is not just a profound discourtesy; you risk seeming clueless.

RECOMMENDED APPROACH

... I hope this message has been helpful. If you have any additional questions, please contact eBilling Support at 888-555-9665.

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Automate your email signature. Use your email software to create a standard signature with complete contact information. Append it to every message.

With your formatting, keep it simple—no fancy fonts, colors, or images. Remember: For the reader, your signature is about the information it contains, not your flair for visual effects.

It's fine to make your website a hyperlink.
(Remember: It's about your readers' convenience.)

TWO MORE POINTS

- **Social.** If social tools and interactions are an integral part of your work — e.g., a Twitter account — include them in your signature.
- **vCards.** Do not try to substitute a vCard for your signature. —Send one if you think the person will know what to do with it, but in the email itself, use your standard signature.