**57 Ways to Sign Off on an Email**

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One day last fall, my colleague [Miguel Morales](http://www.forbes.com/sites/miguelmorales/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank) received an email with a sign-off that was so strange, it has stuck in his mind for the last year. It came from Melissa Geisler, who works in digital sports programming and production at Yahoo. Below Geisler’s title and above her cell phone number was this mystifying quote: “The Bird is equal to or greater than the Word,” attributed to someone named, simply, “scientist.”

With this and other strange sign-offs in mind, Miguel suggested I tackle the subject of how best to conclude an email. I polled colleagues, friends and four people I’d consider experts, including Cynthia Lett, 55, a business etiquette consultant in Silver Spring, MD. Below is their combined wisdom and some commentary of my own. I offer four rules and a long list of potential sign-offs.

But first, Geisler’s quote. She says it came from an episode of the animated cable TV show *Family Guy*, about a song from the 1960s. “That was me trying to have a little fun,” she says, adding that she has since changed her signature to add Yahoo’s new logo, and abandoning the quote, which she hoped recipients enjoyed while it lasted. Much as I respect Geisler’s attempt at levity, I think it’s a mistake to leave people guessing about what you want to say.

Here are my four rules for signing off on emails:

**1.**  **Don’t include quotes.
2. Avoid oversized corporate logos.** Sometimes we have no choice about this, because our companies insist we include these things, but if they are too big, they draw the eye away from the message.
**3. Include your title and contact info, but keep it short.** In most business emails, you’re doing the person a favor by sharing your vital information. But make it minimal. Mine just says, “Susan Adams, Senior Editor, Forbes  212-206-5571.” A short link to your website is fine but avoid a laundry list of links promoting your projects and publications.
**4.** **Do include some kind of sign-off.** Mark Hurst, 40, author of *Bit Literacy: Productivity in the Age of Information and E-mail Overload*, says the function of a sign-off is to signal the end of a message, so the recipient knows it didn’t get short-circuited. “To me the sign-off is not so much style as function in the service of clearly communicating your message,” he says.

Etiquette consultant Lett advocates a more formal approach. “I don’t believe emails are conversations,” she says. “They’re letters.” I disagree. Emails are their own form of communication and they’re evolving fast. Farhad Manjoo, 35, *Wall Street Journal* technology columnist and until recently, the voice behind a Slate podcast, “Manners for the Digital Age,” puts it well: “An email is both a letter and an instant message,” he observes.

All of that said, here is a list of common and not-so-common email sign-offs, with commentary and notes from the experts.

**Best** – This is the most ubiquitous; it’s totally safe. I recommend it highly and so do the experts. **My Best** – A little stilted. Etiquette consultant Lett likes it.  **My best to you** – Lett also likes this one. I think it’s old-fashioned. **All Best –** Harmless. **All the best** – This works too. **Best Wishes** –Seems too much like a greeting card but it’s not bad. **Bests** – I know people who like this but I find it fussy. Why do you need the extra “s?”  **Best Regards** – More formal than the ubiquitous “Best.” I use this when I want a note of formality. **Regards** – Fine, anodyne, helpfully brief. I use this. **Rgds** – I used to use this but stopped, because it’s trying too hard to be abbreviated. Why not type three more letters? OK if you’re sending it from your phone. **Warm Regards** – I like this for a personal email to someone you don’t know very well, or a business email that is meant as a thank-you. **Warmest Regards** – As good as Warm Regards, with a touch of added heat. **Warmest** – I use this often for personal emails, especially if I’m close to someone but not in regular touch. **Warmly** – This is a nice riff on the “warm” theme that can safely be used among colleagues. **Take care** – In the right instances, especially for personal emails, this works. **Thanks** - Lett says this is a no-no. “This is not a closing. It’s a thank-you,” she insists. I disagree. Forbes Leadership editor Fred Allen uses it regularly and I think it’s an appropriate, warm thing to say. I use it too. **Thanks so much** – I also like this and use it, especially when someone—a colleague, a source, someone with whom I have a business relationship—has put time and effort into a task or email. **Thanks!** – This rubs me the wrong way because I used to have a boss who ended every email this way. She was usually asking me to perform a task and it made her sign-off seem more like a stern order, with a forced note of appreciation, than a genuine expression of gratitude. But in the right context, it can be fine.
**Thank you** – More formal than “Thanks.” I use this sometimes. **Thank you!** – This doesn’t have the same grating quality as “Thanks!” The added “you” softens it.  **Many thanks** – I use this a lot, when I genuinely appreciate the effort the recipient has undertaken. **Thanks for your consideration** – A tad stilted with a note of servility, this can work in the business context, though it’s almost asking for a rejection. Steer clear of this when writing a note related to seeking employment. **Thx** – I predict this will gain in popularity as our emails become more like texts. Lett would not approve. **Hope this helps** – I like this in an email where you are trying to help the recipient. **Looking forward** – I use this too. I think it’s gracious and warm, and shows you are eager to meet with the recipient. **Rushing** – This works when you really are rushing. It expresses humility and regard for the recipient. **In haste** – Also good when you don’t have time to proofread**.
Be well** – Some people find this grating. Not appropriate for a business email.
**Peace** – Retro, this sign-off wears its politics on its sleeve. It doesn’t bother me but others might recoil. **Yours Truly** – I don’t like this. It makes me feel like I’m ten years old and getting a note from a pen pal in Sweden. **Yours** – Same problem as above. **Very Truly Yours** – Lett likes this for business emails but I find it stilted and it has the pen pal problem. **Sincerely** – Lett also likes this but to me, it signals that the writer is stuck in the past. Maybe OK for some formal business correspondence, like from the lawyer handling your dead mother’s estate. **Sincerely Yours** – Same problem as “Sincerely,” but hokier. Lett likes this for business correspondence. I don’t. **Cheers!** – I wonder how prevalent this is in the UK. I’ve only seen it from Americans who are trying for a British affectation. I know it shouldn’t grate on me but it does. I also don’t like people telling me to cheer up. **Ciao** – Pretentious for an English-speaker, though I can see using it in a personal, playful email. **-Your name** – Terse but just fine in many circumstances. Probably not a good idea for an initial email. **-Initial** – Good if you know the recipient and even fine in a business context if it’s someone with whom you correspond frequently. **Love** – This seems too informal, like over-sharing in the business context, but Farhad Manjoo points out that for some people, hugging is common, even at business meetings. For them, this sign-off may work. **XOXO** – I’ve heard of this being used in business emails but I don’t think it’s a good idea. **Lots of love** – I would only use this in a personal email. The “lots of” makes it even more inappropriately effusive than the simple, clean “Love.” **Hugs** – It’s hard to imagine this in a business email but it’s great when you’re writing to your granny. **Smiley face** - Emoticons are increasingly accepted, though some people find them grating. I wouldn’t sign off this way unless I were writing to my kid. **;-)** – I’ve gotten emails from colleagues with these symbols and I find they brighten my day. **[:-)** – I’m a sucker for variations on the smiley face made with punctuation marks, though I suspect most people don’t like them. **High five from down low** – A colleague shared this awful sign-off which is regularly used by a publicist who handles tech clients. An attempt to sound cool, which fails. **Take it easy bro** – Richie Frieman, 34, author of the new book *Reply All…And Other Ways to Tank Your Career*, says he regularly gets this from a web designer in Santa Cruz, CA. Though it might turn some people off, I would be fine receiving an email with this sign-off, knowing the sender lives in an informal milieu. **See you around** – Lett would cringe but this seems fine to me. **Have a wonderful bountiful lustful day** – Tim Ferguson, editor of Forbes Asia, regularly gets this sign-off from Joan Koh, a travel writer in southeast Asia. It’s weird and off-putting. **Sent from my iPhone** – This may be the most ubiquitous sign-off. It used to bother me but I realize that it explains brevity and typos. I’ve erased it from my iPhone signature because I don’t like to freight my emails with extra words, and in many instances I don’t want the recipient to know I’m not at my desk. But maybe I should restore it. The same goes for automated message on other devices. **Typos courtesy of my iPhone** – Slightly clever but it’s gotten old. Better to use the automated message. **Sent from a prehistoric stone tablet** – I laughed the first time I read it but then the joke wore thin. **Pardon my monkey thumbs** – Same problem here. **Please consider the environment before printing this e-mail.** – A preachy relic of the past. Who doesn’t know that printing uses paper? **vCards** – I think these are a great idea. At least they work well on my Dell desktop when I want to load a contact into Outlook. **This email is off the record unless otherwise indicated** – My colleague Jeff Bercovici, who covers media, says he gets this email from friends who are inviting him to birthday parties or other engagements and he finds it extremely annoying. I’m wondering what kind of paranoid people put this in their signatures. **Lengthy disclaimers** – We’ve all seen these and ignored them, though I understand that many companies require them. Forbes’ in-house legal counsel, Kai Falkenberg, says she knows of no cases that have relied on legal disclaimers, though she says they might serve as persuasive evidence in a trade secrets case where a party was attempting to keep information confidential.

What do you think of my list? What weird, funny, offensive or elegant sign-offs have I missed?