Email Checklist

By Jason Conn

- ☐ Email Sender
  - ☐ Is it going to just one person? (If yes, jump to #10)
  - ☐ Since it's going to a group, have I thought about who is on my list?
  - ☐ Are they blind copied?
  - ☐ Did every person on the list really and truly opt in? Not like sort of, but really ask for it?
  - ☐ So that means that if I didn't send it to them, they'd complain about not getting it?
  - ☐ If they wouldn't complain, take them off!
  - ☐ That means, for example, that sending bulk email to a list of bloggers just cause they have blogs is not okay.
  - ☐ Is the email from a real person? If it is, will hitting reply get a note back to that person? (if not, change it please).
  - ☐ Have I corresponded with this person before?
  - ☐ Really? They've written back? (if no, reconsider email).
  - ☐ If it is a cold-call email, and I'm sure it's welcome, and I'm sure it's not spam, then don't apologize If I need to apologize, then yes, it's spam, and I'll get the brand-hurt I deserve.
  - ☐ Am I angry? (If so, save as draft and come back to the note in one hour).
  - ☐ Could I do this note better with a phone call?
  - ☐ Am I blind-CCing my boss? If so, what will happen if the recipient finds out?
  - ☐ Is there anything in this email I don't want the attorney general, the media or my boss seeing? (If so, hit delete).
  - ☐ Is any portion of the email in all caps? (If so, consider changing it.)
  - ☐ Is it in black type at a normal size?
  - ☐ Do I have my contact info at the bottom? (If not, consider adding it).
  - ☐ Have I included the line, "Please save the planet Don't print this email"? (If so, please delete the line and consider a job as a forest ranger or flight attendant).
  - ☐ Could this email be shorter?
  - ☐ Is there anyone copied on this email who could be left off the list?
  - ☐ Have I attached any files that are very big? (If so, Google something like 'send big files' and consider your options.)

- ☐ Have I attached any files that would work better in PDF format?
- ☐ Are there any :-) or other emoticons involved? (If so, reconsider).
- ☐ Am I forwarding someone else's mail? (If so, will they be happy when they find out?)
- ☐ Am I forwarding something about religion (mine or someone else's)? (If so, delete).
- ☐ Am I forwarding something about a virus or worldwide charity effort or other potential hoax? (If so, visit Snopes and check to see if it's actually true).
- ☐ Did I hit 'reply all'? If so, am I glad I did? Does every person on the list need to see it?
- ☐ Am I quoting back the original text in a helpful way? (Sending an email that says, in its entirety, "yes," is not helpful).
- ☐ If this email is to someone like Seth, did I check to make sure I know the difference between its and it's? Just wondering.
- ☐ If this is a press release, am I really sure that the recipient is going to be delighted to get it? Or am I taking advantage of the asymmetrical nature of email--free to send, expensive investment of time to read or delete?
- ☐ Are there any little animated creatures in the footer of this email? Adorable kittens? Endangered species of any kind?