



These Company Emails Show Exactly How Brilliant and Bossy Elon Musk Really Is

Description

In the past, great and brilliant minds were memorialized through their private correspondences. Winston Churchill and Franklin D. Roosevelt, Edith Wharton and Henry James, Ernest Hemingway and Georgia O’Keeffe: there’s something irresistibly pleasing about reading famous people’s private letters to each other, even if you’re basically snuffing through someone else’s mail.

A hundred years from now, however, when future generations look back at the early 21st century, they won’t be reading our mail. More than likely, they’ll be reading *emails*. And when it comes to the most irresistible emails to read, Elon Musk will top the list.

Musk has been known to send spontaneous, often controversial, emails to his entire staff at **Tesla**. Self-dubbed a “nano” manager (as opposed to a micro one), Musk’s emails can be extremely bossy, though not without a touch of brilliance. Here are just a few of his best (and most bossy) emails to his staff.

1. Avoid large and unnecessary meetings

Does anyone *like* meetings? I’ve been at companies where it seems like the only person enjoying a big meeting is the person talking. It seems like Musk shares the same opinion:

Excessive meetings are the blight of big companies and almost always get worse over time. Please get (rid) of all large meetings, unless you’re certain they are providing value to the whole audience in which case keep them very short.

I couldn’t agree more. Give your meeting a purpose that everyone agrees on, or else cut it from your employees’ day.

2. Walk out of meetings

But hey — if your boss or company insists on having large and unnecessary meetings, Musk has more (email) advice for you: just walk out. As he says in an email to his staff:

Walk out of a meeting or drop off a call as soon as it is obvious you aren't adding value. It is not rude to leave, it is rude to make someone stay and waste their time.

Imagine getting this email from the CEO of your company. Yeah — talk about a liberating feeling.

3. Email Musk the way Musk wants to be emailed — or resign

Okay, okay, admittedly this email has gotten a bit out of hand. Last week, Musk emailed his managers with clear instructions on how to communicate to him via email. It comes off as a little bossy, sure, but it more or less communicates how Musk wants to receive information.

If an email is sent from me with explicit directions, there are only three actions allowed by managers:

1. Email me back to explain why what I said was incorrect. Sometimes I'm just plain wrong!
2. Request further clarification if what I said was ambiguous.
3. Execute the directions.

If none of the above are done, that manager will be asked to resign immediately.

So, email Musk back explaining how he's wrong, request clarification, or just do as he says. It's a little blunt and bossy, but let's be real: would you rather have an email that's to the point, or an email that belabours in as many words as a short story?

4. Drop the acronyms

This one is hilarious. As someone who has worked at companies with more acronyms than employees I couldn't agree more with Musk:

There is a creeping tendency to use made up acronyms at SpaceX. Excessive use of made up acronyms is a significant impediment to communication and keeping communication good as we grow is incredibly important. Individually, a few acronyms here and there may not seem so bad, but if a thousand people are making these up, over time the result will be a huge glossary that we have to issue to new employees. No one can actually remember all these acronyms and people don't want to seem dumb in a meeting, so they just sit there in ignorance. This is particularly tough on new employees.

That needs to stop immediately or I will take drastic action – I have given enough warning over the years. Unless an acronym is approved by me, it should not enter the SpaceX glossary.

This is only a portion of a much larger email, but you get the point. Acronyms hinder effective communication, rather than accelerate it.

Bottom line

Don't underestimate Musk's emails. The guy has a lot of wisdom to share, and often he does it through electronic mail. Whenever a new email is posted publicly, see what advice you can garner. Who knows? You might get a laugh or two out of them, too.

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