

Stop using !!!! so much

You might not think a simple punctuation mark matters. However, if you overuse exclamation points, you can undermine your professionalism—and even make you look a little unhinged.

Here are some basic rules to follow:

Use them sparingly. Exclamation points express emotion, but in writing, emotions aren't always clear. The use of the exclamation point can be interpreted differently, for example, some might see it as an expression of excitement, while others read it as anger.

Consider your audience. An email littered with exclamation points might be appropriate for a close work colleague, not so much for a customer or department head.

Keep it in context. Sending praise, well wishes or congratulations warrant an exclamation point. However, tacking one on to phrases, such as “Come to my office as soon as possible!” or “Call me back!” hint at frustration.

Don't use more than one. It's unnecessary and can look a bit childish.

— Adapted from [“Are You Overusing Exclamation Points in Work Emails?”](#) Cory Fernandez, Fast Company, www.fastcompany.com.