

# CHAT ETIQUETTE CHEAT SHEET

How to make instant messaging work to your advantage?

## Do

### **Read before replying.**

Due to the dynamic nature of instant messaging, we might be fast on hitting the reply button. Instead of replying hastily, make sure to re-read the message, to provide the most accurate answer.

### **Discuss one thing at a time.**

Since everything happens in real time, it might happen that you and the person you're talking with open several subjects in a short amount of time. To make instant messaging as effective as possible, try to discuss one thing at a time, and wait before you write a response to ensure a good communication flow.

### **Make yourself unavailable.**

Instant messaging at work can be a distraction sometimes. That said, make sure to use your offline status feature to let your team members know you're off limits.

### **Start your message with a greeting.**

Common courtesy is valued in instant messaging. Start with a simple "hello" or "hi".

### **Be direct.**

The first rule of instant messaging is to be precise. Don't write long messages. Instead, be direct, ensuring your team member will understand what you need right away.

### **Check availability.**

Before starting with a question, make sure the person you're messaging is available.

## Don't

### **Respond without thinking.**

Instant messaging happens in real time. We might be tempted to respond quickly, however, we might fail to understand what the other person is telling/asking us.

### **Clump up the messages.**

To avoid the confusion and miscommunication, make sure to discuss one thing at a time and avoid sending messages in excess. Wait until you're sure the other person is finished.

### **Stop your work to answer the message.**

Since instant messaging happens in real time, some of your co-workers might expect an immediate answer. Don't put your focus at risk by replying to their messages when it's not convenient for you.

### **Jump straight to the thing you need.**

Although you shouldn't write long messages, you should still be nice to your coworkers. Instead of demanding something from them right away, make sure to tell them hello first.

### **Beat around the bush.**

Instant messages should be on point and short, to ensure a proper communication flow.

### **Expect 24/7 availability.**

People won't always be available when you need them to be. Before writing anything, check with them whether they can talk with you.

## When to use instant messaging and when to use other forms of communication?

### Instant messaging



When you need something urgently.

When you can craft a short and concise message.

When time is a key factor. *(For instance, when you're in a meeting and you need to tell your coworker something without interrupting it.)*

When you already established a relationship with someone.

### Other forms



When you need to discuss something in-detail.

When you need a longer explanation.

When you need to document something. Email is a more formal way of communication, and it's much more natural to lead a conversation that needs to stay documented there.

Where you're meeting someone for the first time.