

Topic | The basics

Tutorial 7

Email Best Practices

Responding to enquiries is essential but time consuming when you are running a small business and need to balance all your other daily activities. Following the key points in this tutorial will ensure your responses to emails meet the expectations of today's traveller.

Reading time: 10 minutes

Prerequisite: None



This tutorial is part of the complete online education program, the Tourism e-kit.



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1. Background

Research shows that travellers shop around via email: when you receive an email there is a good chance that your direct competitors have also received the same email. Moreover, travellers expect an answer within their working day. Therefore, time is of the essence when dealing with emails. As a rule of thumb you have maximum 24 hours to respond to emails before credibility is questioned or the client will give up.

a) When should I check my emails?

- Check your emails at breakfast, lunch and dinner.
- If you cannot respond there and then, make a point of sending an acknowledgement to confirm you received the email and inform the client when you will get back to them.

Hi John, this is Emma from 4WD adventure tours. I am just in the middle of changing the tyres on the 4WD but I will get back to you with availabilities before 5pm tonight. Cheers for contacting us!



- Book one hour of your time every day (early to mid afternoon is best) to answer all daily emails you haven't yet responded to. If you leave it too late people will look elsewhere. If you can, also try and answer overnight emails first thing in the morning.

b) How shall I respond?

- Include the original message as a reference. If it was a form from your website, use the email your website sent you as reference and include it in the response to the client.
- What type of person are you writing to? Their initial email will give you an idea of what type of person the sender is. Use similar language they used. Did they ask for examples? Then use examples. Do they want facts only? Then be brief.
- Structure your response, aim for a great one instead of a good one. Use headlines, bold important words. Your competitors might not!
- Have a call-to-action that will entice the sender to act and respond to your email

If you book this week I will make sure I give you priority for a room upgrade

- Direct the client to your page on TripAdvisor where they will be able to read past client's recommendations.
- Avoid adding attachments other than PDFs or images as email servers could consider them as spam and block them. Direct the potential client to a document they can download from your website.

Check out our breakfast menu www.4wdadventures.com.au/breakfast on our website

- Ensure you answered **all** questions and offered a solution or options to address all concerns the customer might have.

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- Ask the sender how they found you. Was it through Google? A link from another website? Word of mouth? Make a list of how everyone found you and use that information to fine-tune your marketing.
- Thank the sender.
- Have an email signature that highlights upcoming local events or special deals.

2. Case study: example of a great email response

To: emma.wits@anz.com
 Cc:
 Bcc:
 Subject: Re: Accommodation enquiry for May

From: Signature: Signature #1

Dear Emma,

Thank you for your email this morning! What a beautiful sunny day it was here in south east Queensland, I hope that Melbourne has warmed up a little!

I am glad you found our website and contacted us to organise your anniversary's accommodation and romantic dinner on the beach. Our chef Pierre is experienced at catering for special diets and he proposed we did a seafood dinner and even thought of a mango parfait for dessert. **All gluten free** is this something that you would like? If seafood isn't your favourite, have a look at **our menu on our website**, let me know the ingredients you prefer and I will send you a few samples of menus that Pierre proposes!

It shouldn't be too cold here in May however we always have outdoor heaters set up just in case, if you find it too cold or windy we can move you on the terrace of the cottage where it is more sheltered. The view will still be delightful as you will only be 50m away from the water.

Our beach side cottage is available on the 8th-9th and 22nd-23rd of May and I would like to offer you our special weekend packages with breakfast for \$220 a night per couple. The 3-course romantic dinner is \$70 per person, including a bottle of red or white wine from renowned Siemet estate.

I look forward to hearing from you soon with your menu preference and I have tentatively booked the cottage for both weekends for you, if you could get back to me within 5 days with your preferred date I would very much appreciate.

In the meantime, have a look at our customer reviews on our [Ipadvisor page](#). We have also posted a [new video on Youtube today](#) about the whales season which has just started!

Sunny regards from Caloundra.

Joan

CALOUNDRA COTTAGES PTY LTD :: ROMANTIC ACCOMMODATION IN SUNNY CALOUNDRA IN QUEENSLAND. [Check out the Things to do in Caloundra in 2009](#)

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On 29/06/2009, at 11:26 AM, Emma Wits (emma.wits@anz.com) wrote:

Dear Caloundra Cottage,

I have seen your website and I saw that you offered great accommodation as well as romantic dinners on the beach, I would like to surprise my husband for our anniversary in May 2009 and was wondering if your **beach side cottage** was available. Would you be able to organise a candle-lit dinner for us? My husband is allergic to gluten though. Could you do a **gluten-free menu**?

Also, isn't May going to be a little **cold** for a beach dinner?

Looking forward to hearing from you soon.

Kind regards,

Emma Wits from **Chilly Melbourne**

In the example above, Joan provided a great, enticing response to Emma. She has also:

- Adopted the same language and tone as Emma, the potential customer
- Answered all her questions and gave her options

- Realised, thanks to Emma's email, that Emma works in an office at ANZ. Joan therefore knows that Emma is used to dealing with emails and will expect a quick response
- Given Emma some references to activities she could be doing (whale watching, link to the things to do in Caloundra)
- Made a tentative booking and given a call-to-action to Emma
- Recommended Emma checks Caloundra Cottages TripAdvisor reviews by providing the link

3. Saving time

Even though each email is personalised, they follow a similar format.

You will save time by **creating some draft emails** that you can save in your draft folder (in your Outlook or email program).

To create a draft email, do as if you were going to write a new email but instead of sending it, save it as a draft. Use the subject field to name them so you can quickly pick the appropriate one, copy it and paste it into your response email.

4. Key learning outcomes

- Check your emails regularly as it is one of the preferred form of communication of your target market
- Do not delay your response. People expect a 2-3h turnaround
- Offer alternatives and information about the region to the sender
- Provide a link to book online in your email response

5. Related material

a) *Related tutorials*

- Target market 101
- Bringing people to my site with e-marketing
- Email marketing