

The Significance of E-mail Signature Lines

by Maggie Flynn, National Federation of Independent Business.

Sending e-mail inevitably takes up a portion of your workday. But rather than seeing it as a chore, think of your e-mail correspondence as yet another way you can promote your small business. Promptly answering customer inquiries, sending e-newsletters and following up on recent leads are all ways that you may already be using e-mail to keep your company growing. One of the most basic ways to advance your business through e-mail, however, is also one often overlooked. A signature line attached to your outgoing mail can serve as an electronic business card, not to mention help you better brand your business and inform your customers. So before you hit send one more time, make sure your signature line says all it needs to about you and your business.

What is it?

To create a signature line, open your e-mail and click on your mail preference options. Depending on your e-mail provider, one of your choices should be attaching a custom signature. If your e-mail doesn't include this as an option, and you can't figure out how to create your signature line, contact your provider's customer service personnel.

What should your signature include?

At the very minimum, your signature line should include your job title, the name of your business and

your direct phone line. If you have a Web site, include its address as well. Ask your employees to also include this information in their signature lines. That way, all of your contacts have easy access to the information they need.

Promote yourself.

Many people choose to go beyond the basics and get creative with their signatures. It is common practice to include amusing or inspirational quotes, for example. As the quote you use will follow your business information, customers will automatically associate the quote with your company. So pick one having to do with integrity, hard work or any of the other qualities you'd like people to think of when they see your name.

Instead of a quote, you might like to use slogans or tag lines featured in your advertisements. If you don't have a slogan for your business, this would give you a chance to try a few out and see if any stick with customers.

Promote upcoming events.

You can also think of your signature line as ad space. If you have a sale or any other special event coming up, mentioning it in your signature line is a good way to build interest. Just be sure to keep it short and sweet—two lines or under. A signature line shouldn't be

continued on page 10

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