

# Email tip: Lay off the massive email signatures

 [devblogs.microsoft.com/oldnewthing/20070606-00](http://devblogs.microsoft.com/oldnewthing/20070606-00)

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Raymond Chen

All too often I see email like this:

**From:** X

Is there a way to turn off Q?

Thanks,

X

***Support Professional***

Microsoft Product Support Services

Tel: +123 456 7890 Extension 1234

Email: [X@microsoft.com](mailto:X@microsoft.com)

In case I am unavailable and you need urgent assistance, you can contact the following people:

My Backup: Y, Phone: +123 456 7890 Extension 1235 or Email: [Y@microsoft.com](mailto:Y@microsoft.com)

My Manager: Z, Phone: +123 456 7890 Extension 1236 or Email: [Z@microsoft.com](mailto:Z@microsoft.com)

**Note:** If you are a customer of Microsoft, Please refer to the terms and conditions which cover the provision of support and consulting services to you/your organization. If you are not a corresponding in the course of, or in connection with a Microsoft contract or program with its own terms and conditions, Please note that no liability is accepted by Microsoft for the contents of this email.

Not only is your email signature is longer than your message, it's also more colorful and makes greater use of boldface, so the reader's eye is going to be attracted to the signature and miss your question entirely. (This is actually a rather subdued version. I've seen much worse, with animated images in the signature.) Don't let your message get lost in the medium. The email signature should not draw attention away from your message. What's more, it shouldn't convey information that the reader doesn't need to know. First of all, we already know your name and email address since it's in the message header. And since this message

was sent internally, we can easily look up your job title, division, telephone number, and manager's name, and the huge disclaimer at the bottom is completely unnecessary since the message is internal and wasn't sent to any of your support customers. The only information in the signature that we didn't already know (or couldn't already find out) is your backup, and I suspect this question could have gotten by without even that. **Sidebar**

Some time ago, I had a hobby of collecting hideous email signatures and organized nearly 200 of them into an online "email signature museum". If things get slow, I could trot those out.

Raymond Chen

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