

# Email Etiquette and Management



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Columbia University  
MAILMAN SCHOOL  
OF PUBLIC HEALTH

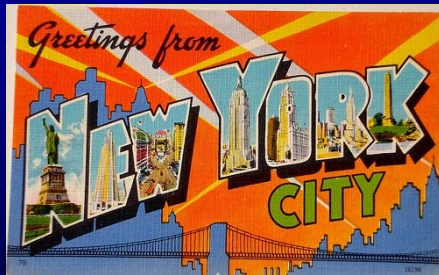
# Lecture Outline

- Basics
- Columbia University Policies
- Email Etiquette
  - How to write emails
  - How to present a professional image
- How to manage your email
- FATAL FLAWS



# Basics

- Email is written communication
- Determine why you are writing this email
  - Is this an appropriate medium?
- Email is like a letter...



and even more like a postcard.

# Basics, continued...

Email is the wrong medium for:

- Sensitive Topics
  - These deserve face-to-face conversation
- Anything funny or possibly inappropriate
- Complex Information
  - Send this as an attachment
  - Or make a phone call

# Basics, continued...

- Email is public information
- ?? ...Ask yourself the test question...??



# Columbia University Policies

- Each user is responsible for his or her account
- No sharing of passwords or accounts
- Reading others' e-mail is forbidden
- For business purposes only
- Gratuitous files (large photo files) are not acceptable
- Nuisances (chain letters), obscene, harassing or unwelcome emails are prohibited and prosecutable
- Emails are almost never truly deleted from CU system

# Columbia University Policies, continued...


- Do not use for private commercial purposes
- No computer games
- Unlawful use can be a criminal offense
- Violators will have accounts suspended
  - Can be revoked
  - Penalties include termination of employment

# Columbia University Policies, continued...

- Go to: <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/policy/index.html>



CU Home Help

 **COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY**  
IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Search & Directories  
   
 web  people

Academic Programs  
Research  
Libraries  
Medical Center  
Athletics  
Events Calendar

Prospective Students  
Students  
Faculty & Staff  
Alumni  
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About Columbia  
A-Z Index  
E-mail & Computing

**COMPUTING, NETWORK, AND INFORMATION POLICIES**

Columbia University maintains certain policies with regard to the use and security of its computer systems, networks and information resources. All users of these facilities are expected to be familiar with these policies and the consequences of violation.

**Computer and Acceptable Use Policy**  
The University's underlying computing and network policy. The links below expand on particular facets of policy.

**Personal Responsibility**  
You are personally responsible for what you do on the network as a member of the Columbia community—from respecting copyright to securing your computer against viruses and worms.

**Copyright Policy**  
You must respect copyright. Copyright protection covers any original work of authorship. Even ordinary e-mail messages, in fact, just about any work you come across online is likely to be protected by copyright.

**Network Bandwidth**  
Quotas are imposed on network use to ensure proper

**QUICK LINKS**  
[Announcements](#)  
[Computer Security](#)  
[E-mail & Computing](#)



# How to Present a Professional Image

- Don't be sloppy:
  - Use abbrvs only w/cls frnds and clgues
  - Always profread an spell checkk
  - Use correct punctuation!
- Keep messages brief and to the point:
  - Do not double space between paragraphs
- Do not use ~~ALL CAPS~~
  - **Bold** important words
- Summarize long emails at the front end
- Always put explicit info in the subject line

# Professional Image Salutations

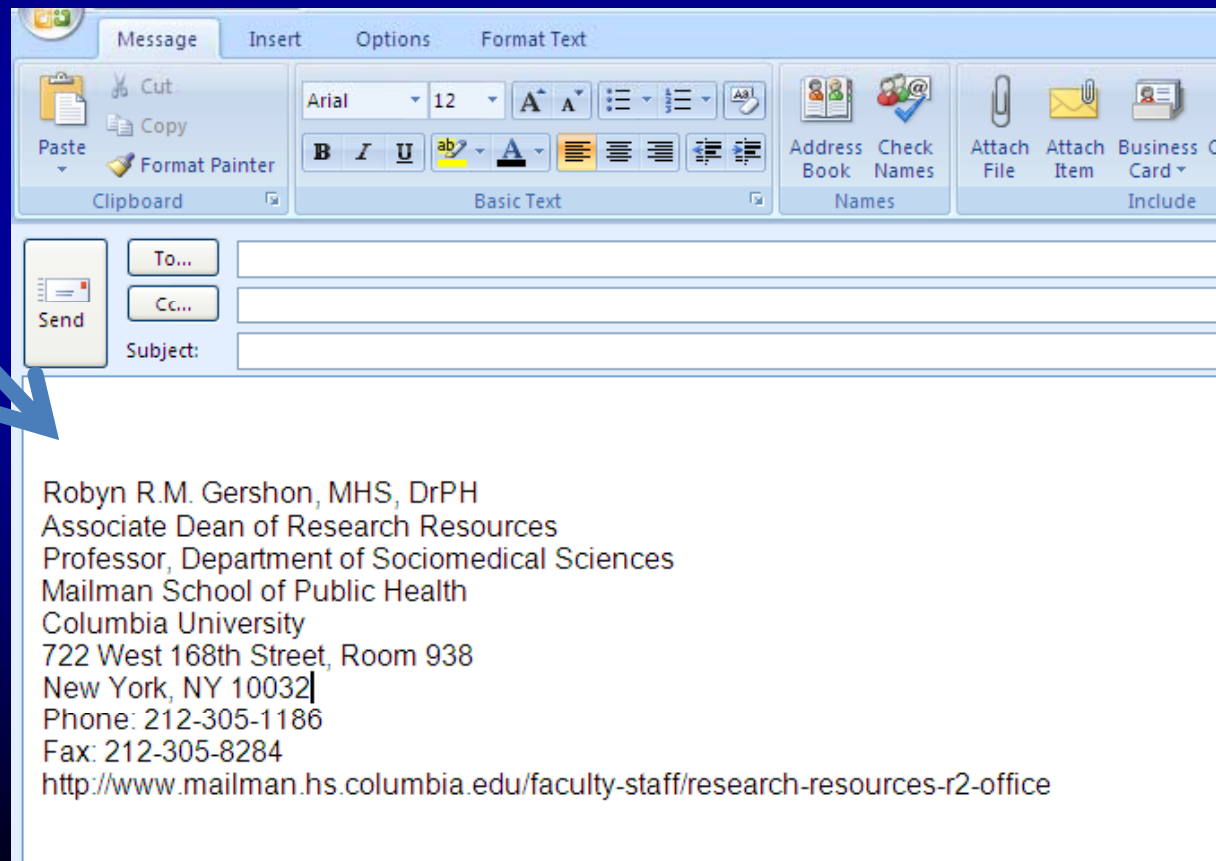
- Formal: Dear Mr. XX,  
Dear Bob,
- Informal: Hi Bob,  
Hello Bob,  
Bob,
- To a Group: Dear All,  
Dear Team,  
To Team Members,  
Dear Faculty,

# Professional Image Closings

- Every email deserves a closing:
  - Thank you,
  - Sincerely,
  - Warm Regards,
  - Thanks,
  - Best,
- Make sure you complete the signature line
  - Add all contact info– including websites

# Professional Image Closings, continued...

Signatures should have contact info:



# Professional Image, continued...

- Never forward chain letters, junk mail, or jokes
- Don't send virus warnings
  - Check with CUIT first before sending out an alarm
  - Alarm should come from them
- Leave out smiley faces...

except for friends :)
- Know when to let go
  - (e.g., Thank You, You're Welcome, Good Bye)<sub>3</sub>

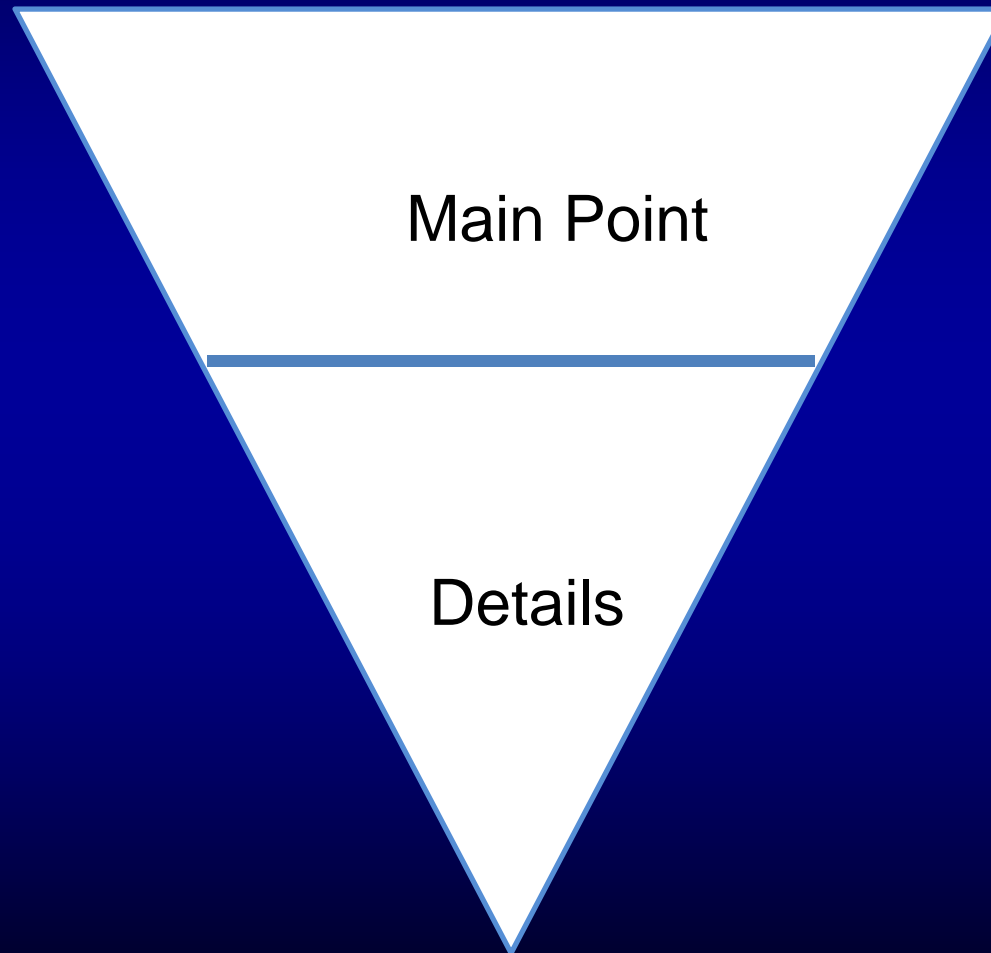
# Professional Image, continued...

- Copy (cc):
  - Only when absolutely necessary
- Blind Copy (bcc):
  - Only when you have a long list of names
- Use caution when sending group emails:
  - Almost no reason to “Reply All”
  - Only for something of high importance needing collective input
  - Not for: “Me too!”

# How to Write Emails

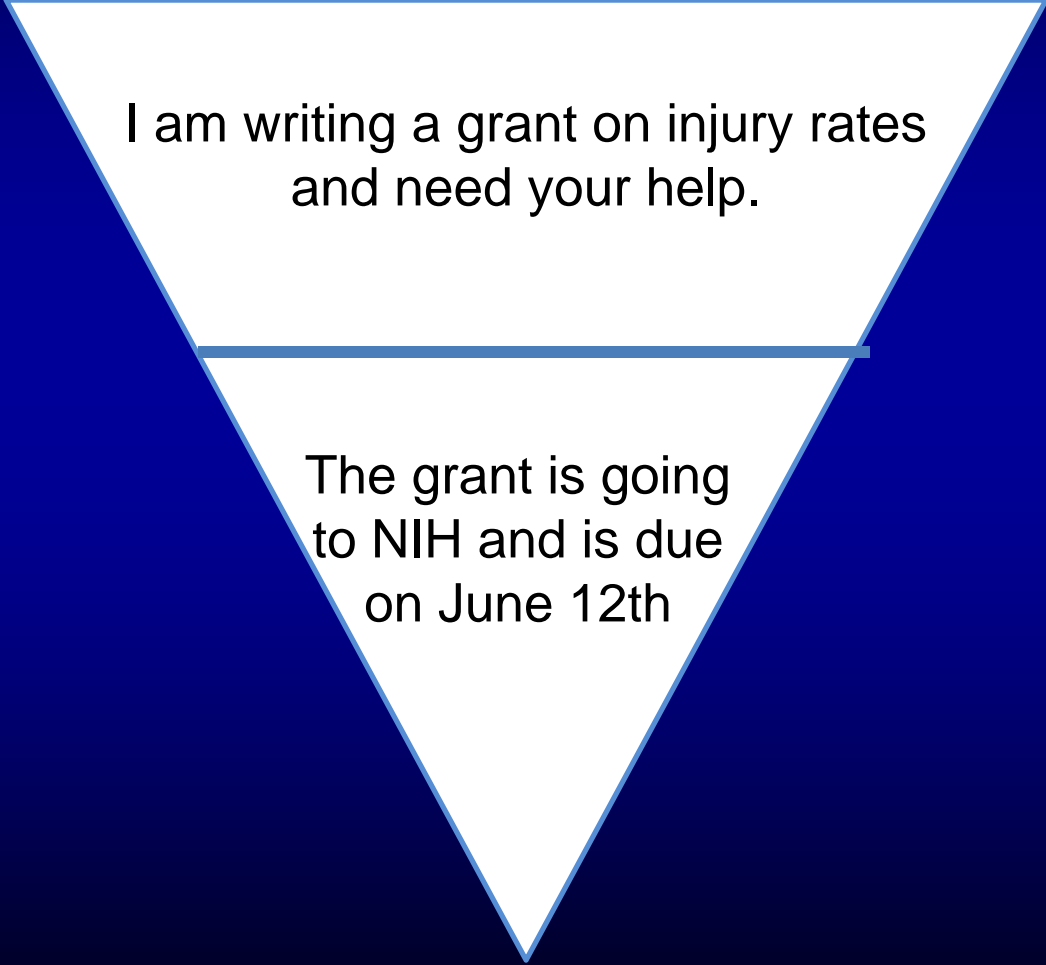
- Determine the purpose
  - Answer or ask a question
  - Verify information
  - Send a document
  - Get action
  - Schedule a meeting
- Put purpose in the subject line
  - Quick query
  - Schedule a Meeting
  - Did you get Info I sent?

# Use Journalistic Triangle






# Journalistic Triangle Sample #1



I am writing a grant on injury rates  
and need your help.

The grant is going  
to NIH and is due  
on June 12th

# Journalistic Triangle Sample #2



We need to improve email skills  
among faculty.

The date of  
training is May  
28<sup>th</sup>.

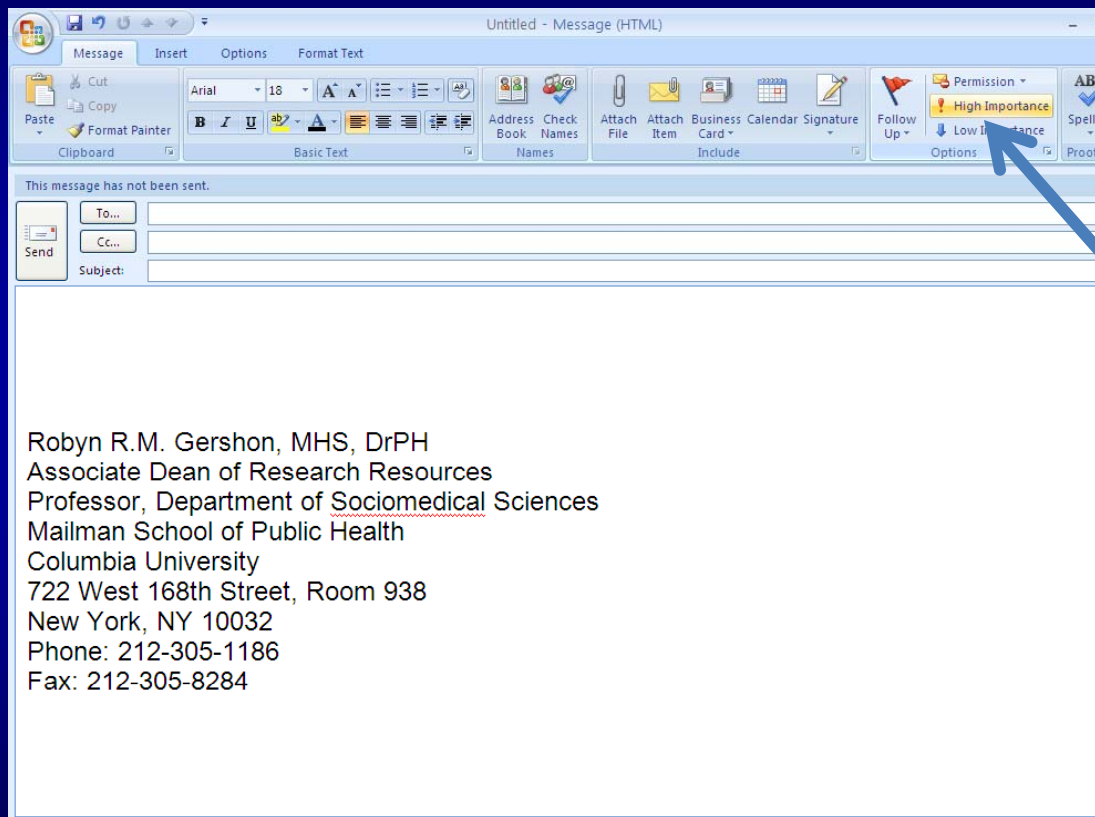
# Email Etiquette

- Make it easy on your reader; get to the point
- Keep it brief
- Use short paragraphs (1 sentence is fine)
  - blank line between them
- Use lists where possible
  - Bullet them
- Use alerts to save time

# How to Write Emails

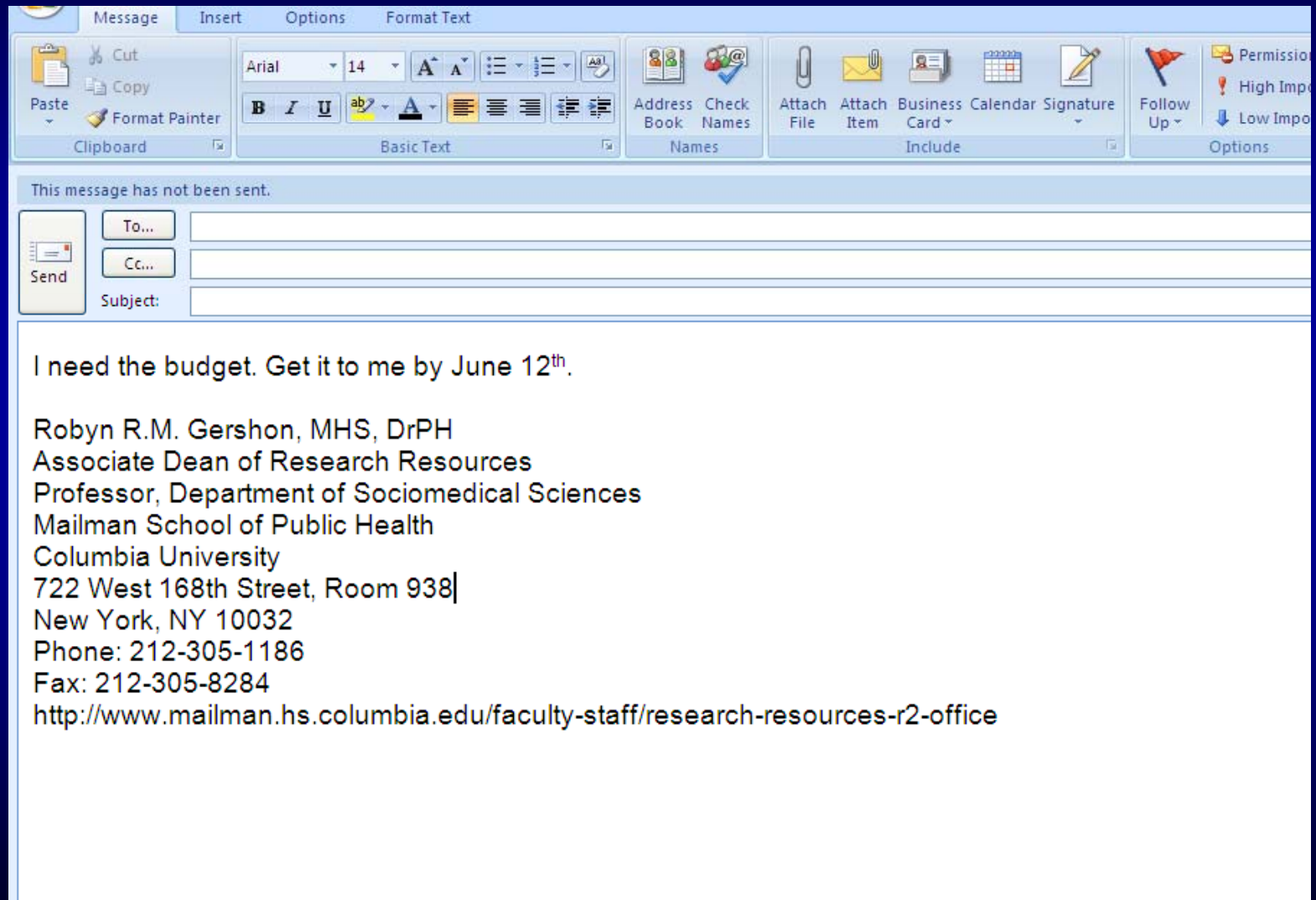
- Be careful of tone
  - Abrupt → Rude
  - Casual → Unprofessional
  - Polite → Professional

# Setting High Importance



Only use when  
messages are  
actually of high  
priority!

# Abrupt



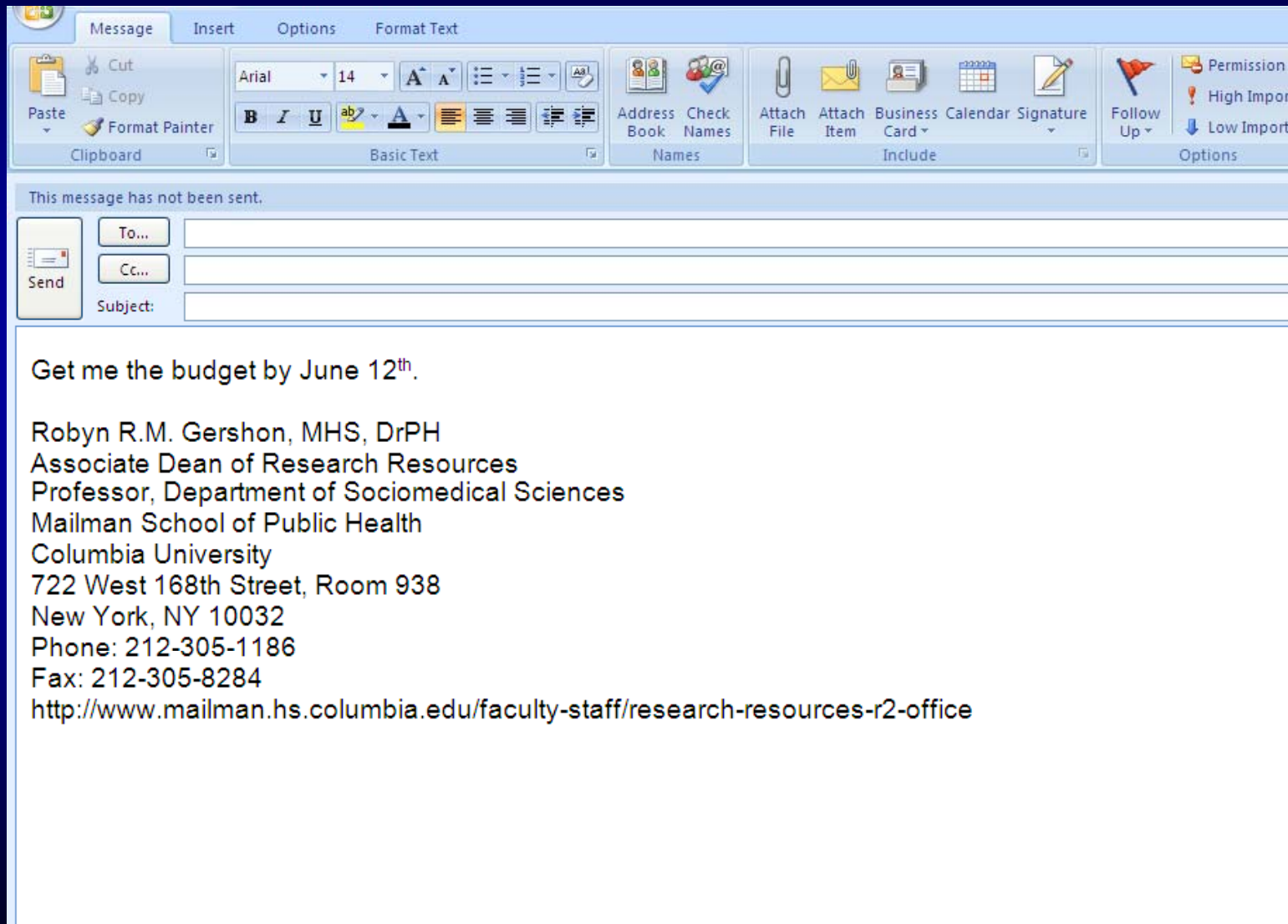
The screenshot shows an email client window with a toolbar at the top containing various icons for editing and sending. Below the toolbar, a status bar indicates "This message has not been sent." The main content area contains the following text:

To...  
Cc...  
Subject:

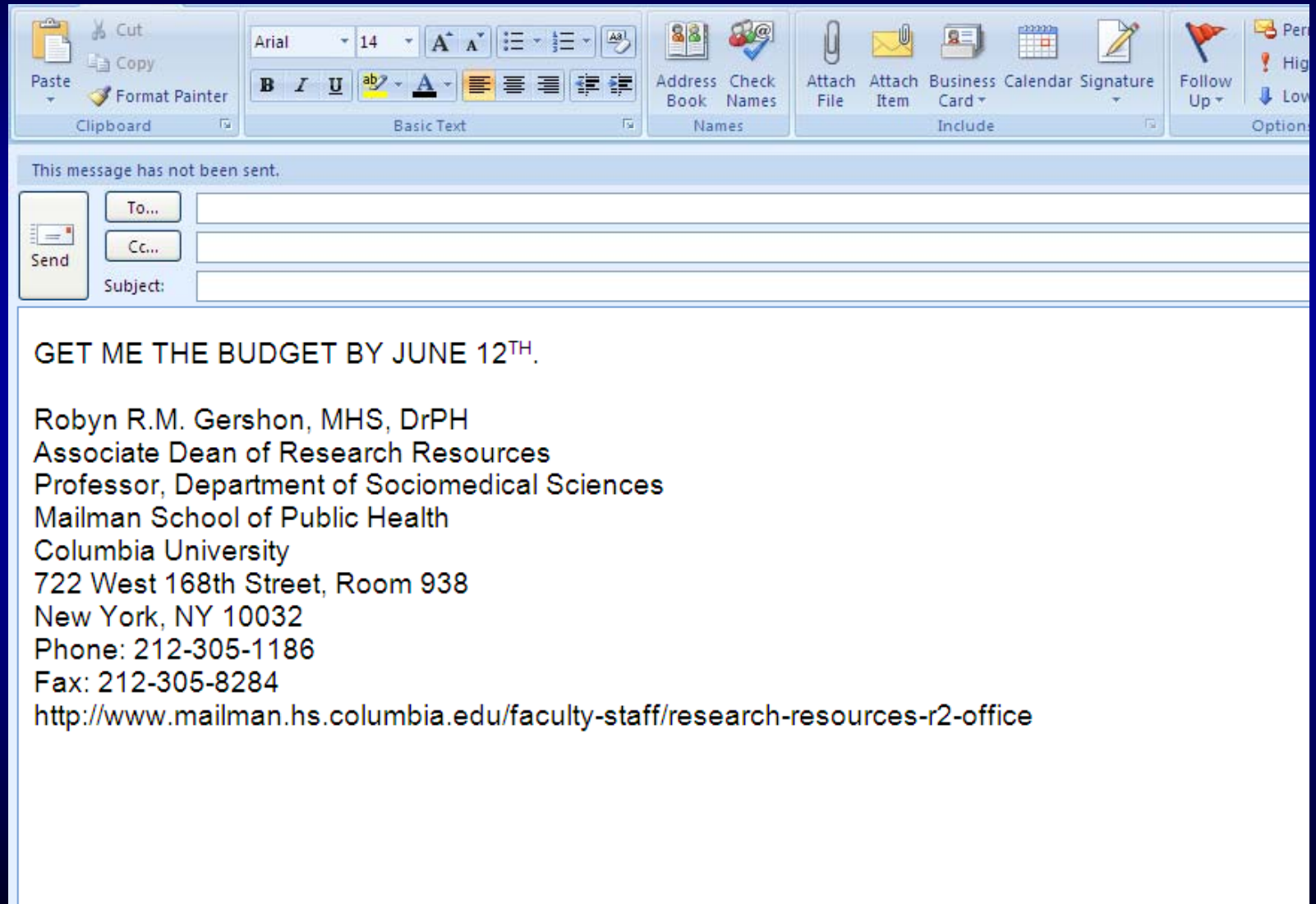
I need the budget. Get it to me by June 12<sup>th</sup>.

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Phone: 212-305-1186  
Fax: 212-305-8284  
<http://www.mailman.hs.columbia.edu/faculty-staff/research-resources-r2-office>

# Rude

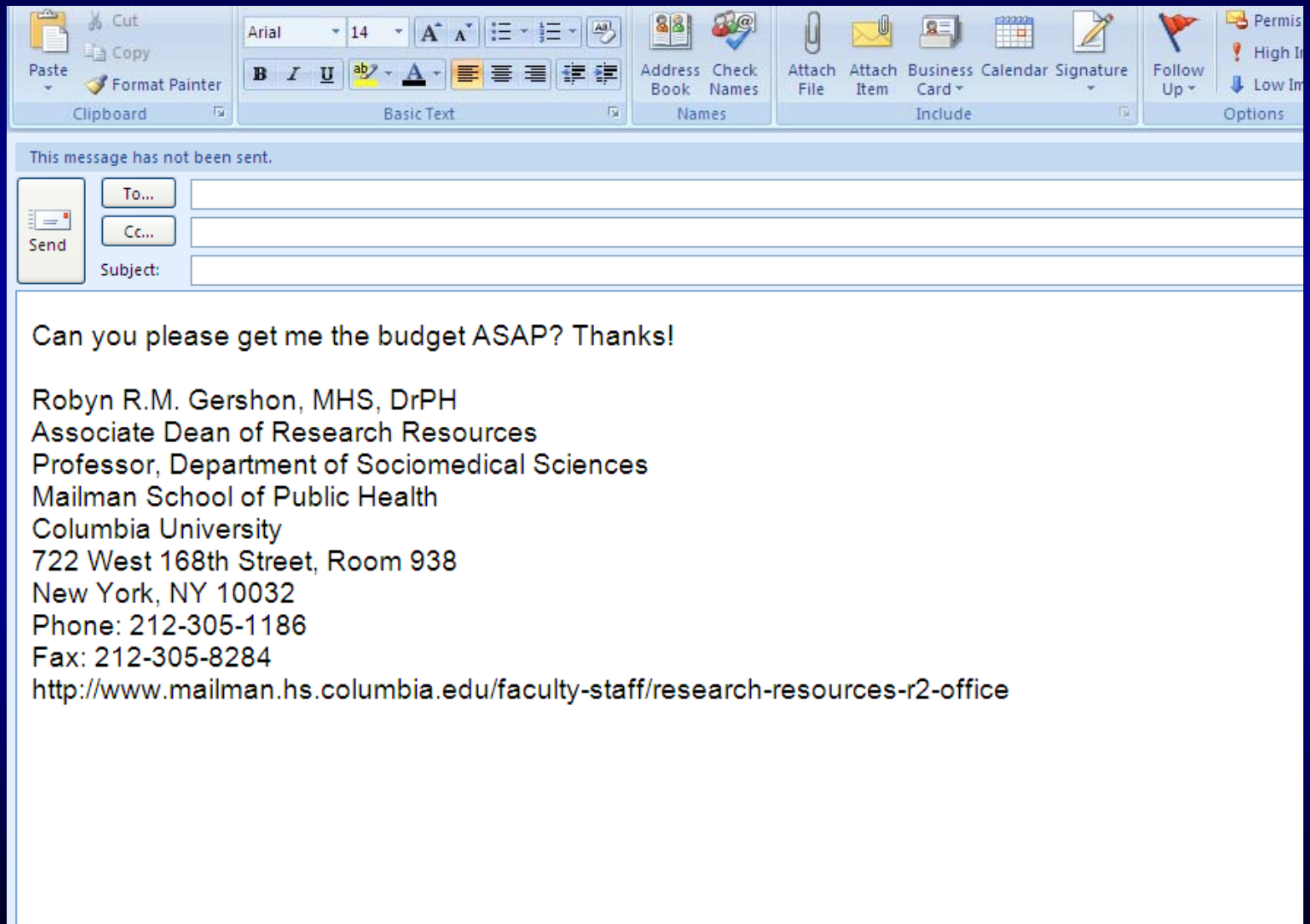


# Really Rude

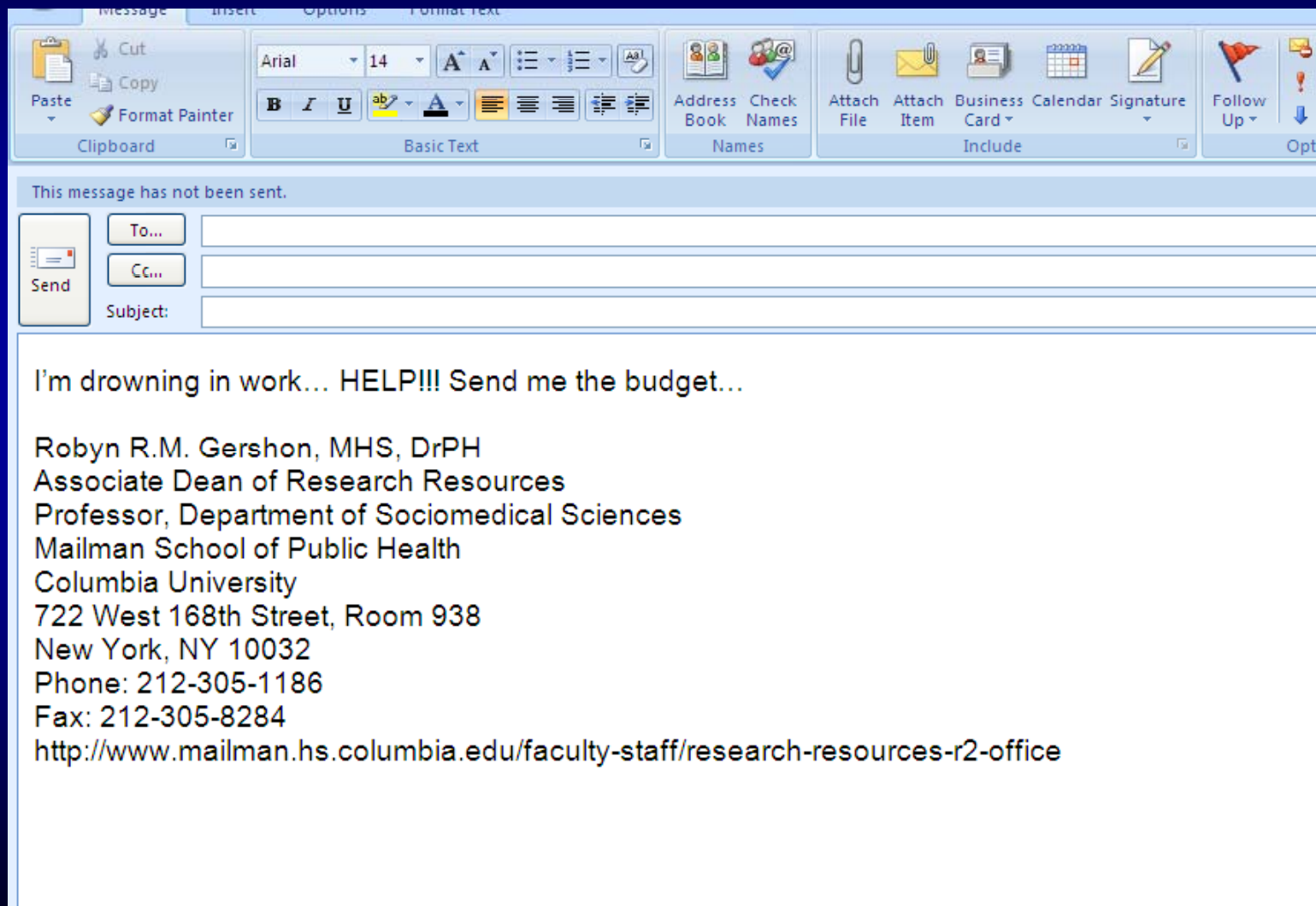




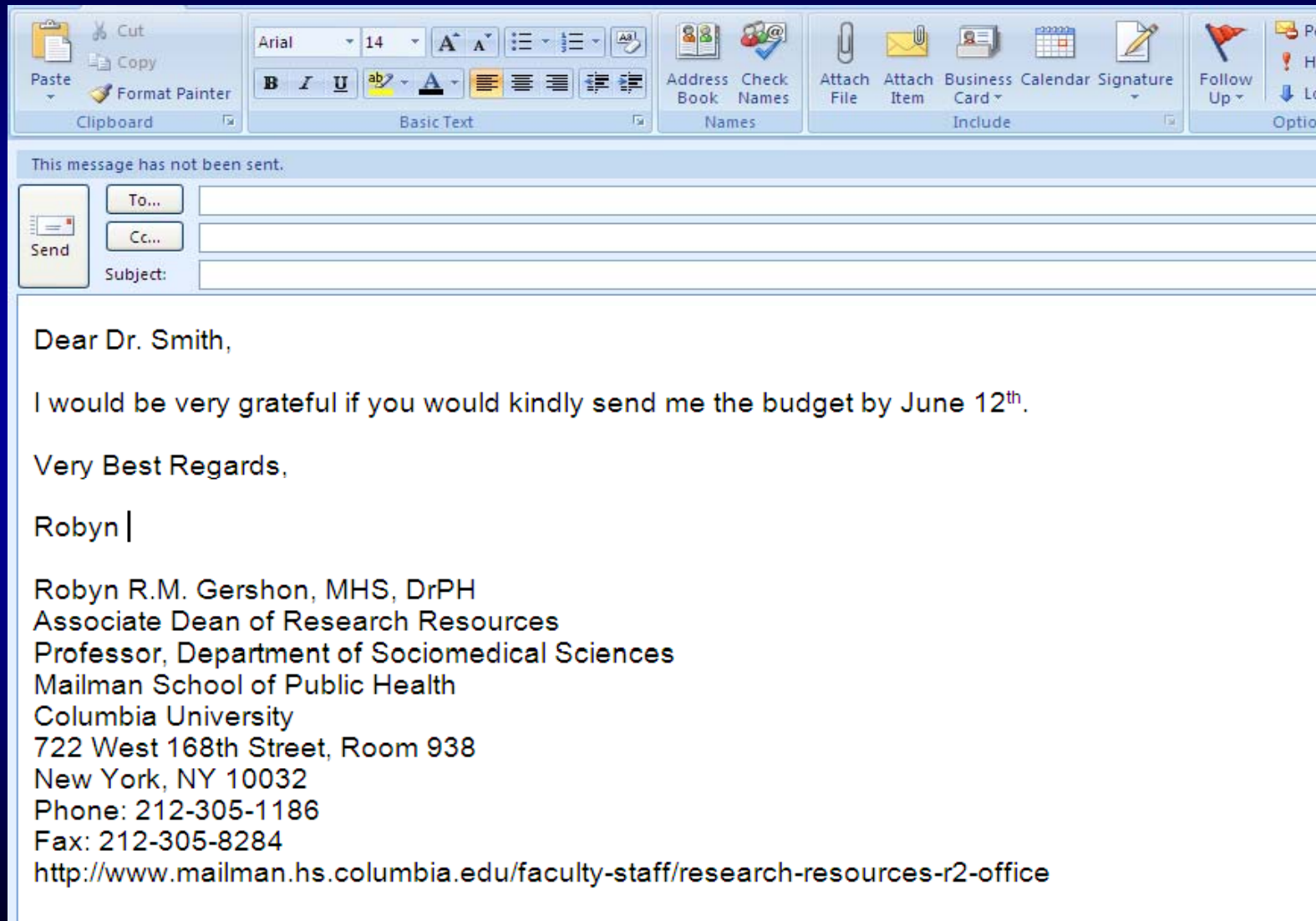
# Casual



# Unprofessional



# Polite



This message has not been sent.

Send

To...

Cc...

Subject:

Dear Dr. Smith,

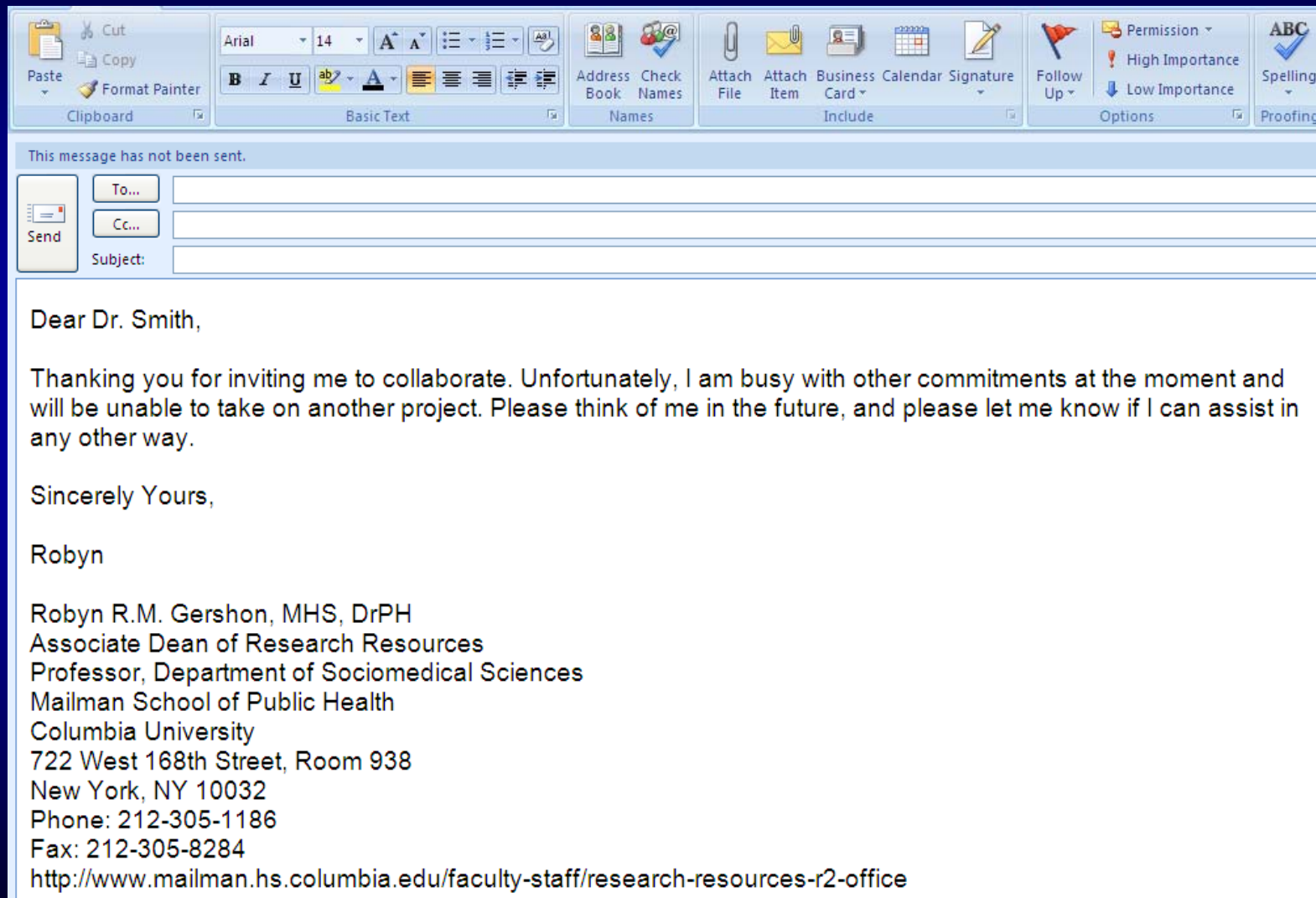
I would be very grateful if you would kindly send me the budget by June 12<sup>th</sup>.

Very Best Regards,

Robyn |

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<http://www.mailman.hs.columbia.edu/faculty-staff/research-resources-r2-office>

# Polite and Professional



This message has not been sent.

Send

To...

Cc...

Subject:

Dear Dr. Smith,

Thanking you for inviting me to collaborate. Unfortunately, I am busy with other commitments at the moment and will be unable to take on another project. Please think of me in the future, and please let me know if I can assist in any other way.

Sincerely Yours,

Robyn

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# Email Management

- Power Emailers: > 50+ emails per day

➔ Approximately 2 hours a day

- Super Power: >100 + emails per day

➔ Approximately 4 hours a day

# Email Management, continued...

- Designated Times to handle email:



## Schedule A

10 AM

4 PM

8 PM

## Schedule B

8 AM

Noon

4 PM

- Power emailer— can add early AM and late PM times

# Email Management, continued...

- Set designated times
- Keep email alarm off
- Process emails daily
- Every Friday, clean out inbox and empty trash
- Clean out Folders/Trash/Junk/ Sent Files monthly
- Add junk mail to block sender list
- Clean out address books and update weekly or monthly

# Email Triage

- Newest on top, no skipping around
- Sort by name for quick clean-up
- Does it have any value?

Yes

No → Delete





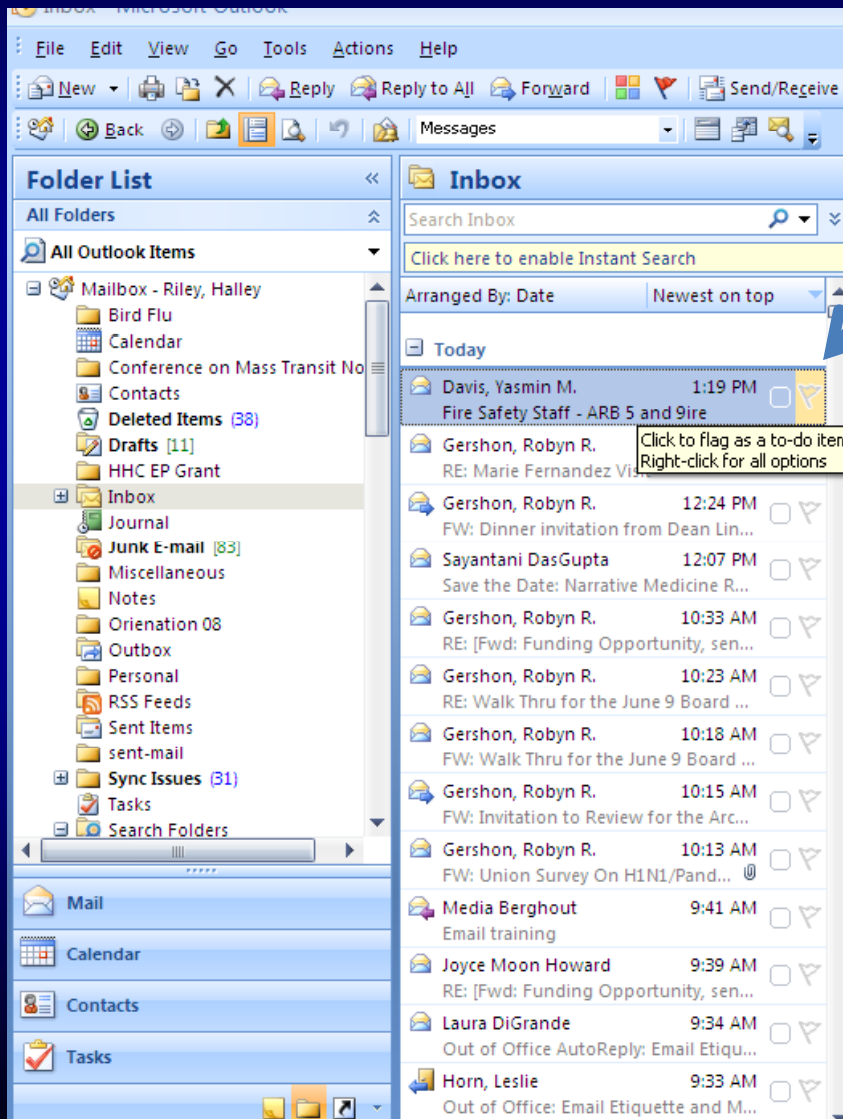
# To Eliminate “No’s”

- Unsubscribe- **BUT ONLY FOR TRUSTED SOURCES**-otherwise it can actually be used for spam
- Block sender
- Set up personal email account
- Gmail is virtually unlimited
  - BUT– having more than 1 email address is NOT recommended

# Triage of “Yes” Email












- **4 D’s**
  - **Do it** (2 minutes or less)
  - **Delegate it** (forward function)
  - **Defer it** (Flag it, e.g., all scheduling requests)
  - **Deposit it** (Into a file folder)

# Flagging Email



Flag as a reminder to follow up

# File Folders/Categories

- Examples:
  -  To Do Today
  -  Follow Up: Short Term
  -  Follow Up: Long Term
  -  Important
  -  Project X
  -  Budget-Related
  -  Travel-Related
  -  Reviews
  -  Students
  -  Teaching
  -  Personal



# FATAL FLAWS



- Anything illegal
- Hitting “Reply All”
- Sending to the wrong person
- Writing “in passion” of the moment...  
and sending
- Prevent-- using the 10 second delay
- If in doubt, don't send it out.

# References

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