



# Shoreline

## THE EDUCATIONAL MOMENT

Attorney Michael Sweeney, Educational Coordinator  
March 24, 2020

**BUSINESS NETWORK INTERNATIONAL**  
The World's Leading Business Networking & Referral Organization

Belonging to **BNI** is like having a whole sales force working for you.

## Four Rules for Negotiation Through E-Mail

by Chris Voss\*

### 1. Less is More.

You write brilliantly crafted emails only to have the recipient pick out one small point and ignore everything else. The receiver frequently misses your main point or doesn't answer the question you posed at the end of your message. If you were playing chess via email, would you lay out your next seven moves in the same email? Any email more than five lines long is bordering on being too long.

**Land one point in an email – just one.**

### 2. Set it up. Don't catch them off guard.

You've seen the email that starts off with all sorts of flowery stuff only to be followed by "Oh, by the way ..." and then they lower the boom on you. This likely comes from a bad (but common) bit of advice called "The Sandwich Rule." This rule says that if you've got something negative to share, you should "sandwich" it between two positives. **If bad news is coming, don't encourage your counterpart to drop their guard with flowery nonsense.** Instead, be direct and warn them – using a little bit of tactical empathy: Labeling negative emotions defuses them. If negative emotions are imminent based on the news you are about to share, labels can help soften the blow – or even inoculate your audience from it altogether. Bottom line? Give your readers the opportunity to brace themselves for bad news by letting them know it's coming.

### 3. Land it. Take the time to soften the tone.

Your counterpart will never read the tone of the email the way you'd like them to. **Give your email a friendly and welcoming nature by taking the time to add in specific words and punctuation that support this effort.** "I'm sorry, but I'm afraid I just don't see it that way," is a thousand times better than "I don't see it that way."

### 4. Always end with encouragement or a positive note.

**The last impression is the lasting impression.** This applies to email as well. Use this law to your advantage in all your negotiations. Take the kind words I told you not to use in the beginning and use them in the end. Tell a positive yet indisputable truth like:

- "The reason we're reaching out is that we'd like to come to a resolution that everyone is happy with."
- "We have high regard for you as a company and as a person."
- "We have always enjoyed working together."
- "We'd love to have a long and beneficial relationship."

Whatever you do, the end of your email is not the place to get in an assertive last word, express your dismay, or score some other cheap shot.

\*Chris Voss: American businessman, professor, former FBI hostage negotiator, CEO & Founder of The Black Swan Group Ltd, co-author of *Never Split the Difference*  
Sourced from <https://blog.blackswanltd.com/the-edge/how-to-win-with-email-4-rules-for-success>