

Guidelines for Appropriate List Behaviour

The following guidelines are offered as advice for how to best participate in this discussion list in a manner that will both contribute to the experience of all readers and also reflect well on you.

Please avoid spamming the list with unwanted messages especially those of a commercial nature. If in doubt, check with a Board member first.

Specific technical questions are, however, quite appropriate, as are brief answers to such questions.

Say something substantial. Simply saying "I agree" (in so many words) or "I disagree" (in so many words) does not meet this guideline.

Say something new. Mere redundancy will not convince an opponent of their error. Explaining the same argument differently in an attempt to make them see the light has not been proven to be an effective strategy.

"Getting the last word" is for children. We're all beyond the age when we should be concerned with being the one to end the argument. Just because you are the last to speak doesn't mean you won the argument.

Agree to disagree. The likelihood of convincing someone to change a strongly held opinion is nil. State your case, but give up on the idea of converting the unconvertible.

Take "conversations" off the list. When list interaction becomes two-sided (two individuals trading comments or arguments) it is a sign that you should take the discussion off the list and correspond with that person directly. If the discussion was of interest to the general membership you will see others posting on the topic as well.

Remember that you are being judged by the quality of your contributions. No matter whether you are employed or not, or a certain age, or have a certain education, you can create a good professional reputation by how you contribute to an electronic discussion like this. On the other hand, you can ruin your reputation even faster and easier.

NEVER send email in anger. Go ahead and compose a message in anger, since that may help you work through what you're angry about, but don't send it. Sleep on it. You will nearly always decide to not send it or to recompose it. There's a reason for that.

Be civil. Treat others how you wish to be treated. No matter how insulting someone is to you, you will always look better to the bystanders by responding politely.

Respect the rights of others. An electronic discussion is a 'commons'. Your right to post ends at the right of others to not be insulted, badgered, or to have their time needlessly wasted.