

# Email Signatures: Tips to stay on brand

For most of us, work days include emailing — and a lot of it. For many of us, email signatures act as a virtual business card.

UW–Madison doesn't have a required email signature format. So, how do we give necessary contact information — and maybe even show our own distinct personality — but still be professional, not too cute, and keep it accessible for all?

Here are some tips for how to craft email signatures that stay on brand.

- Yes, please!
- Proceed with caution
- Not recommended

## EXAMPLE OF AN ON BRAND EMAIL SIGNATURE

**Buckingham U. Badger**  
Official Mascot & Spreader of Goodwill  
[University of Wisconsin–Madison](#)  
Bascom Hall  
500 Lincoln Drive  
Madison, WI 53706  
608-867-5309  
[bubadger1@wisc.edu](mailto:bubadger1@wisc.edu)  
he/him/his



### ACCESSIBLE FONTS ●

Choose an appropriate font, font size, and style. Some sources argue the most accessible web-safe fonts are Arial, Tahoma, and Verdana. Also, consider using at least 12-point font size.

### ALT TEXT ●

Be sure to add alt text to all images, including logos. Alt text should be descriptive, but as short as possible. Using Outlook? Here's how to do that:

- On a PC, click *File > Options > Mail > Signatures* to open the signature editor. On a Mac, *New Message > Signature > Manage Signatures*
- When you click “edit,” and the signature is editable, right-click on the image in your signature and select *Picture*.
- Choose *Alt Text* tab and type in your alt text.

### PRONOUNS ●

Including your pronouns can make it easier for people to communicate with ease; on the other hand, whether to be out or not is complex. Ultimately, it's best left as a personal decision.

### LOGO OR IMAGE ●

Using [the UW logo](#) — or any other image? Make sure it's a high-res logo for readability.

If you use [your own departmental logo](#) as part of your signature, the alt text for that logo file should contain all of the text that appears in the logo to make it accessible. e.g., *Logo: College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, University of Wisconsin–Madison*

## EXAMPLE OF A PROBLEMATIC EMAIL SIGNATURE

*Buckingham U. Badger*

**Buckingham U. Badger**  
Official Mascot & Spreader of Goodwill  
[University of Wisconsin–Madison](#)  
Bascom Hall  
500 Lincoln Drive  
Madison, WI 53706  
Office phone: 608-867-5309  
Cell phone: 608-555-4102  
Email: [bubadger1@wisc.edu](mailto:bubadger1@wisc.edu)  
Fax: 608-555-5555  
he/him/his



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• **CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE:** This message and any accompanying documents contain information belonging to the sender which may be confidential and legally privileged. This information is only for the use of the individual or entity to which it was intended. If you are not the intended recipient, any disclosure, copying, distribution, or action taken in reliance on the contents of the information contained in this message and any accompanying documents is strictly prohibited. If you have received this message in error, please contact the sender immediately and delete the message. Thank you.

**“To infinity, and beyond!” –Buzz Lightyear**

### BULLET POINTS ●

Avoid bullet points in the signature. They render incorrectly in different email clients.

### QUOTES ●

We advise against including an inspirational or famous quote, for a few reasons: At best, people may not care. But you may run the risk of choosing a quote that some find silly or strange. Worse yet, you may inadvertently choose something some find offensive.

### SIGNATURE AND PERSONAL CONTACT INFO ●

Remember, you want to make yourself available, but don't put your personal info at risk: Don't include an image of your literal signature, and avoid including your personal address, personal phone number, or non-UW email address.

### BOILERPLATE LANGUAGE ●

Including “boilerplate language” like equal opportunity/affirmative action statements, diversity statements, land acknowledgements, etc. can seem like best practice, but make sure the statements you make aren't hollow or rote. In other words, you want to walk the talk, rather than make statements for appearance's sake.

### LEGAL STATEMENTS ●

We advise against including legal statements like confidentiality disclaimers. For the majority of UW employees, it's especially beside the point: remember, UW–Madison is a public institution, and as such all emails are publicly accessible through FOIA request.