
“Sorry, but I must take issue with the idea that we ‘don’t get it’.”

Ouch. This isn’t a friendly start to an email from a team member. Not like these . . .

“Howzit going at your end?”

“Thought your project management section was spot-on.”

*“Can we get a hand with something?
We have a problem.”*

Any of these would have been a less alarming start. Or, for comic effect . . .

*“Happy to report
we’re ahead of schedule.”*

As I read the computer screen over the shoulder of the proposal’s technical manager, though, it gets worse, although it stays polite. Am I imagining that it’s sorta clenched-teeth polite?

*“The mandate I was given
was writing 7.b,
NOT figuring out
how 7.b jives with other sections
or how they are supposed to connect.”*

No, I’m pretty sure this formal tone and careful phrasing is meant to communicate a high degree of annoyance.

*“It seems to me that whoever is
writing the logistics plan should be
looking at our sections that deal
with that topic and aligning them,
not the other way around.
Can someone please clarify
how this is supposed to work?”*

Yeah, now I’m sure: He’s pissed-off, all right. I wonder what happened.

*“Even some specific comments on
what we’re missing would help,
rather than just saying
we Don’t Get the Message.
Thank you.”*

No, no, thank you. Yikes.

I look up, my baffled face the question. The production lead coughs apologetically.

*“Well, do you remember
that we realized
we’d missed sending
the last email—
the one with the updated
instructions—
to one of the teams working on the
logistics plan?”*

The technical manager and I nod, remembering.

*“Well, I sent a general email
saying that one team
'didn't get the message'
about what we were planning—
like, literally.”*

Oh. My. God.

Buddy checks the time-zone difference and reaches for his phone. Not that he asked, but I agree. We've had enough email traffic today.