

# E-Communication Mania

Are you using e-communication for your *benefit* or for your *demise*?

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It's approximately 2pm on a Sunday and I have probably sent 50 e-messages today. This includes Facebook®, LinkedIn®, text messaging and email. *In comparison to other people, that is more than likely a very low number.* Yet, it made me think about the high percentage of communication that is conducted electronically.

## Instant Response Gratification

If I need to connect with a friend my preferred method of contact is always text. Calling is such a bother and once you get into a conversation the entire process is prolonged. Who has time for that? Plus, I usually get an instant response. Perfect. Sounds cold but this is true for most people. We talk when we meet – hopefully. None of us want to be one of those people constantly consulting their phone when meeting with friends or worse clients!

For business, my first choice is always email. Less of an instant response but the percentage is high that a response will be provided quickly. This is a bit more stressful because instant response gratification has become somewhat of a norm.

Facebook® is another good resource for “instant response gratification”. A post almost always gets an instant like from someone. LinkedIn® is hit or miss but it is more of a supplementary communication tool so it's forgivable.

## Still Writing Letters, but Watch your Etiquette!

Ok so now that we have established that e-communication is hot, how do we apply that favorably in order to streamline our work but avoid becoming robotic and impersonal? Everyone likes to get immediate feedback. Customers and candidates do not want to wait for an answer. That is the plus to communicating electronically. Everyone always seems to be available. The drawback is that it can lead to some confusion and lack of clarity. The positive is that it can lead to less confusion and more clarity. Huh?

Let's break this apart. With the steady stream of messages, especially emails, many messages are missed just because everyone is dealing with high volume or they read between the lines of what is sent. The other caveat is that you always have to be careful of what you put in writing.

Everyone is not especially talented in the written word and how you communicate is always an indication of your professionalism or lack of. Grammar, spelling, and content should always be checked for correctness. In this hurried world, which is why we are communicating in this way to begin with, some of the basic rules of written communication are often violated.

It's interesting because in days of old everyone wrote letters. Today we are back to writing letters it is simply that the delivery is much quicker. That being said, written communication is nothing new. **The rules have not changed.**

Have you ever sent an email to someone that should not have been on the recipient list because you mis-keyed and accidentally included them? This has happened to most of us and it's not something that we are proud of. Apologies are usually in order but once the "send" button is pressed there is not much that can be done.

It is the same story with attachments. How many times has this happened? You boast a litany of reasons why the recipients need to check out the document as soon as possible only to have someone send you that dreaded message, "No attachment". Ughh. Painful every time! **Always attach before writing your message** to help avoid this issue.

The problem with all electronic communication is that you cannot take it back, just like that letter or card you popped into the mailbox. That is why it is very important that you do some planning with every message that you write. Yes, every message. Even your personal Facebook® posts can have an impact on your business life.

## **Rules for Social Posts**

**What are some simple rules for social posts?** Never post something that you would not be ok with "everyone" seeing. That includes your mom, your boss, your work colleagues, customers, etc. Everything is open game today. You may even be connected with some of your customers on your personal social media platforms. Pretty much it never goes away and there is opportunity for anyone to view. BCWYP – Be Careful What You Post!

**Also be careful of what you share on social media.** Some people share posts without even reading them. Read what you are sharing before you post to make sure it represents you and your company well. You would not want to share something that is not part of your belief and passion, therefore reading everything first is essential.

Although every company should have a written document on social media posting and make it clear to employees what is ok to post, some companies are lacking in this area. If you are unaware of what the posting policy is for your company, do not post on behalf of your company. It is very important that you are informed on what your company allows you to post when you are representing your company on social media or otherwise.

## **Keep it Beneficial and Interesting!**

It is very plausible and even necessary to text and email with customers and candidates regularly. If you are not doing this you are missing out on a **huge relationship-building medium**. Keeping in touch electronically to make customers and candidates aware of opportunities and information that could benefit them is crucial. It is important to allow them to “opt out” and if they do, you should not message them again without first receiving permission.

With e-communication, keep people informed about your company and your products, but don't overkill with a bunch of boring messages that are saying the same thing. Also, remember your social media and email etiquette. Don't hound people that connect with you with constant and intrusive sales messages unless you want to be disconnected.

In closing, written communication, albeit electronic, is a way of life. It is a very important element in our business and personal lives. As with everything, we can use it for our benefit or for our demise. It's up to us.