



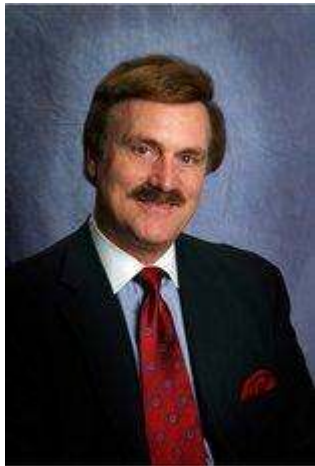
Opinion: Communicating in the modern office

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By



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An emerging leadership challenge is effectively managing communications in the workplace. Organizations today require ubiquitous access to their data and critical applications — anytime, anywhere, from any device.

Employees have a broad variety of communication tools at their disposal. Technological options available in the virtual, modern office environment, such as smart phones, iPads and laptops, provide unprecedented convenience and facilitate business collaboration. Leaders must continually motivate their staff to adapt to advances in technologies and develop policies to improve use while maintaining productivity.

Thanks to the ability to access “the cloud” via mobile devices, we are constantly connected to our colleagues, clients and the world at large. Tools such as e-mail, text messaging, voice, instant messaging and social networking sites (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, etc.) enable direct, instantaneous communication. Leaders are faced with deciding which communication medium is most appropriate for the organization and how to monitor usage.

Employees, clients and prospects are all accustomed to leveraging these technologies to interact. Given the nature of these tools, users tend to communicate with others in a relatively casual and informal manner.

In the work environment, this is not always appropriate. Business leaders should establish guidelines and protocols to ensure that communication methods are utilized properly in a professional setting.

While the means of communication have changed with evolving technology, the foundation of good communication remains the same. Practicing proper etiquette in workplace communications is essential. At Trivalent, we require our team to abide by a set of communication commandments regardless of the mode of communication. Some of these guidelines include:

- Communicate the work planned before commencing.
- Include the appropriate team members on all client correspondence.
- Over communicate.

- Do not assume or attribute motives to anyone.
- Recap the work performed in writing upon completion.
- Inspect what you expect — never assume it's correct.
- Do not assume that your client or colleague knows the who, what, when, where, why and how of your plans.
- Communicate directly and not through third parties.
- Maintain or communicate transfer of ownership of a task until completion.

Establishing these types of guidelines supersede the nuances of new technologies and provide users with clear instructions on how to manage their communication. Creating basic communication policies will allow you to easily adapt the core principles to the various types of communication tools. No matter how great the effort to facilitate concise communication using the most expedient method, there are always modes that are underutilized.

Sometimes, the best approach may simply be talking face-to-face with someone.

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