Digital Communication in the Workplace

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Topic Overview

- Challenges in Digital Communication
- Phone & Other Modes Review
- Electronic Mail
- Social Networks and Blogs
- Other Issues
The Challenge of Technology

“The Numbers of Meaning”

- Dr. Albert Mehrabian (1967)

When perceiving feelings and attitudes:

- **55 percent** of meaning is based on what people see
- **38 percent** is based on how it sounds
- **7 percent** is based on the actual words
Richness and Presence

- **Face-to-Face**
  - Telephone
  - Email

INCREASES

DECREASES

**Media Richness:** The ability of information to change meaning within a span of time

**Social Presence:** The degree to which the physical presence of participants is conveyed
Less Rich and Present Communication Decrease:

1. Self-awareness
2. Inhibition
3. Responsiveness
An Ombuds Perspective

Digital Communication Issues

- Multitude of Tools
- Mode Assumption
- Disrupted Chain of Communication
- Business Manners and Etiquette
- Perception and Intent
Famous Slip-Ups

- Jimmy Wales, the co-founder of the web encyclopedia, Wikipedia, ended his relationship by updating his webpage with the words: “I am no longer involved with Rachel Marsden”.

- Singer Phil Collins famously faxed his wife when he wanted a divorce.

- In 2005, it was reported that dozens of staff from the Accident Group were sacked by text message.

(Liz Brewer, author of The Party Bible)
Phone & Other Modes

Guideline Review
Phone Use Guidelines

Phone Etiquette:
Use social niceties
Take thorough messages
Leave concise messages
Close with clarifying points
Verify follow-up actions

Cell phone issues:
Use ringer off/ silence mode as needed
Be aware of restricted areas
Never use while driving

Tone and Language
• Voice tone says it all
• You can hear a smile
• You can get more cooperation with an attractive voice tone
  - warmth
  - energy
  - authenticity
# Texting Guidelines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do…</th>
<th>Do Not…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Keep short and sweet</td>
<td>Replace communication with texts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use texts for messages that can not be misinterpreted</td>
<td>Text bad news</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use texting for casual exchanges only</td>
<td>Expect to have the text read immediately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ok to use abbreviations, emoticons, etc. 😊</td>
<td>Text someone who is not text savvy or does not like to use it</td>
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Paging Guidelines

When Using Pager

- Place the pager on vibrate mode when appropriate
- Do not respond to a page if you are in the middle of an important matter
- If you must respond to an urgent page, excuse yourself
- Let people know if you expecting a page

When Paging Someone

- Try to make sure that the person is not occupied with a more important matter
- Only page as necessary or when urgent
- Leave an accessible number or a concise text with relevant information
Faxing Guidelines

**Do**

- Use a cover page
- Consider privacy and confidentiality
- Confirm faxes
- Save paper
- Consider length of fax
- Consider online faxing, e-fax, if appropriate

**Do Not**

- Reveal too much information
- Fax and forget it
- Use fax if able to relate information in a more tree-friendly manner

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Electronic Mail and Netiquette
General E-Mail Rules

- Use good email structure
- Professional vs. casual
- Use “Netiquette” guidelines
- Remember to email others…

… as you would like to be emailed
- The Golden Rule

… as they would like to be emailed
- The Platinum Rule
P.A.S.S. E-mail Structure

P What is the **purpose** of this communication, and does the purpose relate to an objective?

A What **action** is required, is there a due date, and who owns the action?

S What **supporting documentation** does the recipient need?

S Does the **subject line** effectively summarize the message?

(Source: McGhee Productivity Solutions)
Re: Project meeting 3/3

Joe,

I’d like to meet with you regarding the ABC project to discuss cost and schedule. I have proposed that we meet at my office on Wednesday, March 3rd from 1-2 pm to your outlook calendar. Please bring February’s work order changes.

Thanks,
Barb
Formal vs. Informal

Professional

- Use social niceties
- Use appropriate salutation
- Do not abbreviate
- Be clear and concise
- Check spelling and grammar
- Don’t get too “attached”
- Watch demanding/curt tone
- Use the subject line
- Type of signature
- Letter closing/ending

Casual

- May use Emoticons 😊
- May add funny or unrelated attachments
- May use abbreviations:
  - btw (by the way)
  - fyi (for your info.)
  - imo (in my opinion)
  - lol (laugh out loud)
What is ‘Netiquette’?

Network etiquette or the etiquette of cyberspace
“Netiquette” Guidelines

▷ Be clear and concise
▷ Recognize formal versus informal
▷ Use good structure (subject line, purpose, etc.)
▷ Be selective of information and attachments
▷ Forward only with permission and/or as warranted
▷ Check spelling and grammar
▷ Consider others’ privacy (i.e. don’t use PII, use of bcc, etc.)
▷ Obey copyright law and cite other’s work
▷ Use distribution lists appropriately
▷ Do not send SPAM/ Don’t forward chain letters
▷ Respond within an appropriate time frame, use a ‘holding’ email, EOM (end of message), or automatic reply
▷ Use care if responding to “flames” or attacks
“Flame” Response Tips

- No need to get defensive
- Try to clarify, not react
- ‘Vent’ but not ‘Send’
- Pay attention to the positive, not just the negative
- Acknowledge the others concerns
- Ask for help

- Respond to the facts only, not to the attack
- Only respond to specific action items and as necessary
- Apologize if appropriate
- Vent it, but don’t send it
- Get a second opinion
- If ‘flames’ persist, get some outside help
Subject: Meeting on 2/24

Hi Sally,
Thank you for reminding me of the need to have the data completed for the meeting on 2/24. I will be there.

Roy
Social Networking Sites and Blogs
Social Networking

**TYPES**
- Facebook
- LinkedIn
- Twitter
- Flickr

**CATEGORIES**
- Social Connections
- Multimedia Sharing
- Professional
- Informational
- Academic
WEB log: Blog

A type of website, maintained by an individual or organization with regular entries of information, commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics or video.

What are some types of Blogs?

- Organizational
- Business
- Personal
Reasons for Social Networking and Blogging

To enhance knowledge
Instantaneous Information
Human need to connect
Human need to share
Other Relevant Issues

Loss of productivity

Impact on network resources

Social engineering and phishing

Hackers and spammers

Cyber bullying or textual harassment

Policies and procedures
Q and A
Sources and Resources

- **Books**
  - Dealing With People You Can’t Stand; R. Brinkman and R. Kirschner (1994).
  - How to Speak and Listen Effectively (A WorkSmart Book); H. Robbins (1993).
  - The Telephone and Time Management; D. Scott (1988).

- **Web Articles**

- **Websites**
  - www.selfhelpmagazine.com
  - www.emailreplies.com
  - www.businessemailetiquette.com
  - www.roberthalf.com
  - www.albion.com/netiquette
  - www.telephonedoctor.com

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