



By Tasha Phelps

Communication Techniques in the 21st Century - Building a Bridge for Successful Professional Growth

In today's global economy, being able to connect with your coworkers, clients and family in a moment's notice is critical. Because technology has evolved so rapidly, staying on top of the new tools that allow you to do this, has proven to be a challenge for some professionals. Let's get back to the basics..... At the core, communication is simply the exchange of information. So how is this done today? Mobile Phone, Texting, Email, Instant Messaging, Blogging, and yes, Snail mail, Fax and Telephone still exist!

Because of the invention of the telephone in the late 1870s, it's no secret that technology has significantly played a role in the ways we communicate. Since then, development after development have hit the market that have left a few "mainstays" in today's business environment. Traditional LAN lines are certainly a significant part of the equation, but now, there are mobile devices like cell phones and smart phones that carry a lot of the market share. Texting, emailing, and blogging have become strategic ways for professionals to communicate with their clients and constituents beyond the traditional 8am – 5pm workday.

In the 1990s when web development was being introduced to the market, marketing professionals (me being one of them) were forced to consider HOW this new technology worked in conjunction with marketing plan development. I, like many others, quickly learned that websites and utilization of web technology would revolutionize the way businesses shared information with their clients. Today, the world wide web fully allows for businesses to convey information about services and products. This mode of communication is not by accident. It is an evolution of marketing communication that integrates technical tools to broadcast to the masses.

Unfortunately, what text DOESN'T do, is convey tone.

The first decade of the new millennium has certainly brought several "eye-opening" experiences along with identification of significant GAPS in communication efficiencies within the workplace. In one example, the success of our global economy is directly related to how well we are able to communicate with one another using tools like the internet and email.

Domestically, it is important for Americans to understand and respect that there *are* cultural differences that, at times, impact methods of communication. Undoubtedly, over the past 25 – 30 years, technology has played a key role in revolutionizing and transitioning the way that business is conducted. Aleta Mungal – President of Indiana Strategic Resource Group, LLC in Indianapolis – recently shared her perspective on strong communication as a woman of Asian / American Indian descent. *"Because of my heritage, I am taught to speak with reverence – and that is how I approach communication. I am FIRM, but I am not LOUD. I have found, that women who get emotional, are (often) negatively judged, and men, (more often) can get away with it."*

Mungal makes a good point. Knowing who YOU are and how YOU respond in difficult times of crisis or confusion could prove to be one of your most valued assets. She knows diversity because she has lived it – not only as a member of a minority group, but also as a woman in a professional field traditionally profiled by men. As a business owner, she agrees, that because businesses are driven to plan for business continuance in the event of an emergency, having a solid, communications plan would prove to be of value.

(continued on page 2)



(July 2008 - Continued from page 1 - "Communication Techniques in the 21st Century")

Moving forward, in order to build a bridge for successful communication in the workplace, consider these components:

- Understand and identify any outstanding GAPS of communication in the workplace – does everyone that needs to have access to email, or mobile phones, have it?
- Confirm that language congruencies are established – that everyone needing to read / hear the plan can understand it, and
- Execution of the plan when told to do so.

The personnel of an organization is one of the most critical components, therefore, it makes sense to fully equip the staff with sufficient access to communication and an executable plan. As a pair, they work together to (ultimately) drive the best results.

What might this same perspective mean for a stay-at-home mom?

First and foremost, let's not forget that being a mom IS a job! The mom who chooses to care for her children at home, doesn't mean that she is turning her back to the world. When asked this question, Mungal suggested that volunteering is a good way of "staying connected." Doing so, there are many intangible benefits as well as keep up with the latest 'lingo':

- Mingling with other adults and meeting some fabulous people,
- Understanding issues that are facing the local community,
- Absorbing information about the community's cultural environment (the growth, the changes, the evolution),
- Being positioned with organizations to "give back" to those in need.

Knowing that our children are our legacy, and knowing that our children are the future leaders of our nation, it is our duty to give them the most exposure to opportunity. As they grow, and as school becomes a part of their daily living, they reciprocate by feeding us with new information and change. THIS is the way of the world.

Both the career-minded business professional and the stay-at-home mom play significant roles in the 21st Century. Both, also, have learned to adapt to the changing methods of communication with coworkers and family members. It is exciting for some, and tolerable for others. At the end of the day, having the ability to "get back to the basics" and open our mouths to say what we need to say, to whom we need to say it, sometimes is the best strategy of them all.

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