

## Communication Channels

### ***Communicate Effectively by Adapting to Your Audience and Communication Channel***

We have endless communication channels, and which channel you choose to relay your message makes an impact on how your message is interpreted. Channels include face-to-face communication such as formal meetings, scheduled conversations, unscheduled conversations, and videoconferencing. Written communication includes emails, memos, text messages, interoffice messaging, and physical mail. Channels also include phone calls, web postings, newsletters, and social media.

What should you consider to determine the best channel? Think about these:

1) Be familiar with the expectations of your corporate culture.

How does your company communicate? Email and interoffice messaging are two of the most common communication channels found in the workplace – but some companies still use faxes and memos. Learn the expectations and rules that come with the communication channels in your workplace and adapt to fit the company norms.

2) Consider the most appropriate communication channel.

In addition to the corporate culture, you need to consider other factors when choosing an appropriate communication channel. For example

- Should you communicate at all?
- Who should receive the message and why?
- What information do you need to share?
- Should you organize it directly or indirectly?
- How formal is this interaction?
- What time is it now?
- How quickly do you need a response?

If you need to make a request of someone of high status whom you don't know and you don't need an immediate response, the best channel might be to send a letter. If you need to ask a quick question of a coworker, you might pop into his office to chat face to face. You could choose an email that you can send when convenient for you, and your reader can read when convenient for her. You might not text your boss, but you might text a coworker.

3) Consider following up using a different channel.

If you first communicated through email, consider following up with a telephone call. Changing channels can make your communication more effective and efficient.

Also, consider changing the channel if you realize the back-and-forth emails are becoming confusing or contentious. A phone call or a face-to-face conversation can help overcome that email message's confusion and concern.

When communicating in the workplace, keep in mind with whom you are communicating and why, what information you need to include, how to organize it, and the best channel choice to communicate clearly and persuasively. Careful analysis of your audience and context will go a long way to help you achieve your goals at work.