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Communication - Then and Now

By Rosalyn Bronstein

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If you think about what life must have been like 150 years ago, when long distance communication meant putting pen to paper, it's astonishing to think about how far we've come. Today, many people will tell you they feel positively naked without a cell phone dangling from the hip, and a palm pilot or Blackberry in the pocket. Handbags are now specially designed with these and similar items in mind. These are "can't do withouts", and we haven't even touched on the computer.

The coming of electronic media was certainly revolutionary. People now had choices of how they were going to get - and give - their news. I remember growing up in a large house, with an entire room devoted to the telephone. There was a small desk, chair, lamp, and telephone. Nothing more.

In the 21st Century, this seems like a way to converse straight out of the Middle Ages, as we walk around with phone in hand. And by using voice over Internet Protocol, the computer is converted into an inexpensive phone. Voice sounds are compressed into data packets and sent without the need for traditional phone lines.

But what about those times when you want to send a written message, but don't fancy having to involve the post office. Well, that's covered, too, which is why e-mail has come of age. Although fairly new, e-mail is already experiencing massive problems - spam, unwanted advertising, and computer viruses - due to unscrupulous people whose aim is to hurt and/or profit unethically.

E-mail, as we currently know it, must evolve into another form. There are currently discussions about charging senders in order to stop the spam - but what about the poor soul whose computer is unknowingly "hijacked" by a spammer, to send out junk by the millions? Most of these spammers are not in the U.S., and therefore not subject to U.S. laws. Another consideration is charging to receive e-mail. But either way, there are additional things to contend with besides receiving the message itself - unwanted advertising and computer viruses.

The solution seems to be finding another way to get the written word and picture to recipients by finding a bypass that eliminates the problems. Legislation is slow and clumsy, and those intent on

causing harm seem to be one step ahead of the regulators.

Rosalyn Bronstein, for more than 20 years an author and consultant, has been an advisor to numerous multinational corporations and international organizations. Understanding the value of maintaining relationships, www.ntouchnrat.com was created. It's a unique and secure way to never lose touch again with the people who have brought meaning to your life without having to use e-mail.

Cross Cultural Communication needs...

By Neil Payne

Within the business context, cross cultural communication refers to interpersonal communication and interaction across different cultures. This has become an important issue in our age of globalisation and internationalisation. Effective cross cultural communication is concerned with overcoming cultural differences across nationality, religion, borders, culture and behaviour.

Cross cultural communication is critical to the business world. The diversity of people in cities and countries means an element of cross cultural communication will always be needed whether it is between staff, colleagues, customers or clients. Awareness of cultural differences can favourably impact the success of a business. Improved staff interaction, better customer relations and effective client management are all areas that will reap benefits through cross cultural understanding.

Although cross cultural communication competency can only be truly achieved through cross cultural awareness training, language acquisition, foreign travel and cultural immersion there are some guidelines that can enhance your cross cultural communication skills.

Cross Cultural Communication needs ...Listening Skills

Although emphasis usually lies on being a competent speaker, listening is a key skill that many business personnel do not exercise enough. For cross cultural communication, attentive listening is critical to be able to understand meanings, read between the lines and enable to empathise with the speaker.

Cross Cultural Communication needs...Speaking Skills

Listening and speaking must work in tandem for effective cross cultural communication. Speaking well is not about accent, use of grammar and vocabulary or having the gift of the gab. Rather, cross cultural communication is enhanced through positive speech such as encouragement, affirmation, recognition and phrasing requests clearly or expressing opinions sensitively.

Cross Cultural Communication needs... Observation

Large amounts of cross cultural information can be read in people's dress, body language, interaction and behaviour. Be aware of differences with your own culture and try to understand the roots of behaviours. Asking questions expands your cross cultural knowledge.

Cross Cultural Communication needs... Patience

Man has been created differently and we need to recognise and understand that sometimes cross cultural differences are annoying and frustrating. In these situations patience is definitely a virtue. Through patience respect is won and cross cultural understanding is enhanced.

Cross Cultural Communication needs ...Flexibility

Flexibility, adaptability and open-mindedness are the route to successful cross cultural communication. Understanding, embracing and addressing cross cultural differences leads to the breaking of cultural barriers which results in better lines of communication, mutual trust and creative thinking.

Following these five cross cultural communication needs will allow for improved lines of communication, better cross cultural awareness and more successful cross cultural relationships.

Neil Payne is Director of London based cross cultural communication consultancy

Cross Cultural Communication needs...

Linguaphone International Language

Good Communication Promotes Positive Feedback On Ebay

Persuasive Communication

Remembering to Listen: Making the Most of Communication

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