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Modes of communication in a busy world

By Lee Hopkins

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Technology is wonderful — it allows us to communicate with others in all sorts of different ways.

However, sometimes the way we or others choose is not the most appropriate for the recipient or the message. We are all incredibly busy, after all.

So here's my quick'n'dirty philosophy for how I communicate with others in business, in descending order of use and ascending order of priority or urgency. Please feel free to adapt or ridicule it at your leisure...

1. Email

Used for transferring files before a face-to-face meeting. For example, I want my client to see the latest additions to the manual we're working on, or changes to a newsletter.

It's also great for non-urgent communication, as it allows the recipient to get on with the work that is currently occupying them without disturbing them. If I phone them, I break their train of thought and interrupt their work. Or I get frustrated because 'they are in a meeting'. It's a great way of allowing them to attend to my email and its demands at a more suitable and convenient time.

Using email is a great way of neither interrupting my recipient nor getting into that horribly wasteful game of 'phone tag'.

Yes, there is the risk that my email gets lost in the dozens my recipient might get in a day, but I figure that if our work is important they will pay attention to it. If it's not important to them, then either their own boss or client will help them reprioritise when an important deadline is missed, or else I am focusing more on my own needs than the needs of my recipient --- in which case I deserve to have my email ignored.

Of course, spam filtering software is not perfect and sometimes emails genuinely don't get through, but in genuine business relationships such instances are rare. There are exceptions, of course --- one of my clients **never** gets my emailed invoices, even when I send them back via 'reply' to an email they send me.

But she gets every other email I send. And yes, I **do** track those errant emails via delivery and read receipts. Bizarre, huh?

If you find that you are having repeated problems with undelivered emails and 'blacklisting', you may want to take advantage of Ken Evoy's "Deliver My Mail" campaign. Details are at <http://deliver-my-mail.sitesell.com/hsis.html>.

2. SMS

Similar to email, but slightly more intrusive (because many of us find it hard to ignore our mobile phones, even if it is just a txt message coming in). I don't want to interrupt my recipient, but I do want them to be aware of an upcoming requirement or request. Or I just want to wish them 'bon voyage' without interrupting them from packing.

3. Phone call

Only used if I have an urgent need to resolve an issue.

I have found that even highly personal matters can be first discussed using non-intrusive technology like email. I don't have to go into detail, but I can let my recipient know that there is something I would like to discuss when they have a free moment. It gives them a chance to collect their thoughts before we talk over the phone or, preferably, in person.

When you match consumer psychology with effective communication styles you get a powerful combination. At Hopkins-Business-Communication-Training.com you can find the secrets to communication success. At Hopkins we show you how to communicate better for better business results.

Of Web Shops And Clicking

By Peter Valentine

With the influx of modern technology into our lives, more services are made easier. New gadgets, tools, and modes of transportation make essential human functions like communication and transportation a breeze. Of these developments, none has made as much impact as the Internet. Communication, access to government service, and even business transactions are made possible through its use. And with the rise of internet merchants and online payment processors, the most basic human function of consumerist ethos (a.k.a. shopping) is clicks away.

What are internet merchants and online payment processors? Internet merchants are simply business people who sell their products or services through the internet. Internet merchant sites function as virtual shops wherein online shoppers can browse through pages of products or catalogs. These sites usually feature the prices of each service or product, sales promos, virtual shopping carts, and most importantly, several payment schemes. These payment schemes are modes of online payment processors. Online payment processors are institutions who offer companies or businesses a system to accept and process debit and credit cards minus the hassle of dealing with the different banks or issuers directly. They basically work as a middle-man between the card holder and the `Net merchants. The merchants pass credit card details to the processing website, or the merchant page could jump directly to the processor's site. The processors then validate the card details and account. After validation, card details are sent back through `Net merchants' page for confirmation or rejection. If confirmed, the purchase is done and the shopper only needs to wait for the delivery.

Despite the efficiency of internet merchants and online payment processors, the pros and cons still needs to be clarified. Customer convenience, added sales channels, automated authorization, and a streamlined payment system count as the advantages of availing the services of internet merchants and online payment processors. However, there are still risks in using the system. Charge or fees for online purchases are usually higher. Security risks are also issues. Unless you are sure of the security measures provided by the merchant and processing sites, this risk is real. Sensitive information like account information can be hacked into, altered, or stolen.

To avoid or minimize these risks and to fully enjoy the services of internet merchants and online payment processors, vigilance and information is key. Read the fine print on the account and conditions set by the `Net merchants. You may miss other conditions or extra charges if you just read the top half or click the Agree button. It'll also help to check the integrity or status of the processing site the `Net merchant uses. After all, it's your money that's at risk. If you're finally sure then, click on and enjoy shopping. A reminder though, you may need to exercise serious self-control.

For more valuable information on Internet Merchants and Online Payment Processors see



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