
We Save Time Using Email, Don't We?

The curse for many business professionals is a dependence on email instead of talking to customers by phone or face-to-face. I recently experienced a volley of frustrating emails with a dealer's service manager. He prefers email to talking.

Email use is encouraged as a time saver.

People believe two email myths:

1. Email saves time.
2. Email allows communication with many people quickly and efficiently.

Here's an example of an email exchange that probably sounds familiar. Change the subject matter and it fits for every business owner and salesperson.

The Email Eternity Circle

Dealer: "You must sign by Friday for the discount."

Customer: "Cash flow is tight."

Dealer: "How about leasing?"

Customer: "You offer leasing?"

Dealer: "Are you interested in a lease?"

Customer: "Maybe."

Dealer: "What kind of lease do you want?"

Customer: "What kind of lease do you have?"

Dealer: "That depends."

Customer: "On what?"

Did either party think about picking up the phone and breaking the mindless exchange?

Myth #1 Email Saves Time – You can break The Email Eternity Circle!

1. Don't use email if the subject matter is complex. Pick up the phone instead.
2. Never try to close a sale with email.
3. Emails are to be short and succinct, not three-page epistles.

FearLess Negotiator

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4. If the customer is upset, do not choose email to convey negative information.
5. If the message is long, include a well-crafted attachment.
6. Some spam filters block emails with attachments. Make sure your email is received and opened.
7. Email can't convey passion, concern, caring or warmth. Email is flat and one-dimensional.

Myth #2 Communicates with many quickly.

1. Who do you really need to copy in your email?
2. If you copy "everyone" more people know if you screw up.
3. Does everyone want more email? Employ the "need to know basis" guideline.
4. People seldom read email message completely. No examples needed. You know I'm right.
5. Some emails seem to be an attempt to share blame or pass the buck? Consider motivation and potential outcomes.
6. Emails, once sent, cannot be deleted. They could end up in court as evidence. Before hitting send, think. Is this what you want to appear in a court transcript?
7. Watch out for selecting "Reply All." There are times when some people should be excluded from an email chain for a variety of reasons. One of those mistakes ended a friend's career at a great company. In making a snide comment via email regarding a recent promotion, the individual chose reply all and copied the entire company email distribution list.

Restraint of pen and tongue is a virtue that should be employed daily in business. It saves money, pain and relationships.

Mary A. Redmond

Mary A. Redmond, The FearLess Negotiator, works with business professionals who want to become stronger negotiators. After attending one of her workshops or coaching sessions, clients feel more confident in stressful business situation whether they need to close bigger and more complex sales, secure the perfect new job, ask for that well-deserved raise or improve communication with their colleagues, bosses or families.