



INTRODUCE workshop by explaining:

- Email has evolved in the last 10 years as the prime written communication tool as opposed to the letter or internal memo
- If you talk to colleagues about the things they least enjoy about their jobs, using email tends to figure amongst the top aspects
- The bite sized workshop is about understanding communication methodology, the dos and don'ts of email and will give an opportunity to identify their strengths and development areas in own emailing style

GAUGE reaction from the delegates on the use of email in your organisation. Don't spend too much time on this as the workshop will develop some of the themes they will mention.

EXPLAIN that there will be a handout at the end however encourage delegates to make their own notes throughout the session.

ENCOURAGE thoughts amongst the delegates about action planning throughout this bite sized session. **MENTION** the Start - Stop - Continue method of capturing action planning i.e.:


What have they learnt they need to:

- **Start** doing?
- **Stop** doing?
- **Continue** doing, but more often?

Written Communication

✓ **Information Confirmation**

X **Emotion Discussion**



DISCUSS the advantages and disadvantages of written (e.g. letters and emails) and spoken (e.g. face-to-face; on the telephone) communication.

POINT OUT:

- Written communication (e.g. email; memo; notice board item) is good for conveying facts, figures, procedures and instructions. It is also good when you want to confirm agreement of a previous conversation. For example, you may write stating: *“Thanks for the meeting yesterday. Just to confirm, we agreed the following actions with timescales.....”*
- Written communication is *not* good for situations where we need to convince, persuade, empathise or deliver news that won't be welcome. All of these require a degree of emotion in the way we use our voice and body language. These are the two things that are absent from written communication. Words on a page are flat and virtually bereft of emotion
- The golden rule is never to send bad news via email if it can be avoided. It might avoid a difficult situation however it leaves the Receiver feeling cold, not respected and uncared for. One key customer of a major service company described it as 'a coward's way out'. The company lost £200,000 of business per year as a result of delivering bad news via email
- Written communication is also not good when we need to discuss a problem and gain agreement. Using email for example, prolongs the process and wastes time as we have to wade through reams of forwarded messages with other people's opinions, reactions and potential solutions
- However one key advantage of written communication is where numbers of recipients are involved. With high numbers written communication can speed up the process of getting the message out and reduce the instances of 'chinese whispers' where the message can get distorted when passed on. At least everybody gets exactly the same message

SUMMARISE by **SHOWING** above slide. This is not a 'golden rule' but a guideline to consider.

DOs (continued):

- Set the automated 'out of office reply' when out of the office, giving an alternative person's name who may be able to help. Make sure it states when you will be returning
- Consider posting written material on the intranet/ shared drives/ internet rather than email as an attachment. These can slow down systems (typically anything more than 1Mb). Perhaps consider taking out pictures to reduce the size. Make it convenient and speedy for your customer!
- Give meaningful names to your attachments. If sending more than one attachment, make sure the recipient is aware of what the files are and, if appropriate, what order they should be read in
- Have a professional signature block for external emails. As a minimum, state
 - Your full name
 - Company name
 - Company registration number
 - Telephone number (direct & mobile)
 - Fax number
 - Website address

DON'T:

- Use email as an excuse not to talk to somebody. Remember customer service is about relationships/ rapport building
- E-mail in anger. Calm down first, or consider an alternative method. email isn't good with emotion. Face to face (or at least on the telephone) can be a more effective way of getting how you feel across to an individual
- Classify all your emails as urgent. People may gradually stop treating them as such
- Use slang or abbreviations (unless you are confident that the customer recipient, and anyone else they may forward the email to, will understand)
- Use careless writing (email can be kept as a permanent record and have the same legal status as letters)
- Use too many exclamation marks
- Put words in capital letters (equivalent of shouting)
- Forget pleasantries at the start e.g. *"Hi Jane"*; *"Dear Mr Customer"* and consider a quick socialising comment e.g. *"Hope you're having a good week"*; *"I trust you're enjoying the nice weather"*
- Gossip. Your customer will wonder if you'll gossip about them later
- Use humour or sarcasm – unless you know the customer well