

Calls or emails: which one is more productive?



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Which option is better? Which one is more productive? Which one has greater personal expression? Does a combination of both options work better? It all depends. But one thing is clear: calls (and personal meetings) allow you to establish stronger business and personal rapport. Yet the majority of us tend to stick with emails. Why this is so?

Think how your message
will be delivered

&

Think how people
will respond to it

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As I see it, in most cases, it comes down to two factors: corporate culture and an overall inability to communicate concisely over the phone or face to face. Let me explain exactly what I mean.

By corporate culture, I mean having to track what was said to avoid any internal and external complaints. I would agree, in a sense, that track record is necessary, but not to such an extent that someone spends 40 to 60 minutes writing an email. Let's be honest, it would be more efficient to draft bullet points on a piece of paper and then to speak with the person or to establish a conference call, instead of emailing them. If you speak with an internal colleague, talk with them and agree on key takeaways. If you speak with an external party again, agree on the terms of the conversation in bullet points or even through a schematic or timeline approach.

Regarding the inability to communicate concisely, it does not mean that a person (e.g. an employee or external consultant) cannot, for example, explain or pitch propositions. It rather means they have trouble staying focused and saying exactly what they need to say, especially under pressure and under time constraint (e.g. explaining matters to senior management). In other words, when we write we can think, analyse and rewrite, which is partially why we tend to stick with emails. This is why communication and presentation training may provide good added value.

As further proof to the benefits of speaking, top leaders prefer to listen and communicate – it creates a dialog. And in a 30-second discussion, more can be said and agreed upon than in a 5-paragraph written email.

When it is possible, think which way of communication is more efficient: emails or conversations. Do not stick with the option comfortable only to you. Think about how your message will be received and think about how people will respond to it. Do not spend your entire day writing long and complex emails. Pick up a phone, or approach a colleague, and talk through your business needs as much as possible.

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