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# Email Isn't Enough

Live conversation is superior to email or text for making sales

By Jim Peduto

During a recent coaching session for a large client, the room was filled with salespeople of various levels of experience and industry knowledge. Some were relatively new to sales; others were seasoned veterans. Some were just finding their way; others were wildly successful having built a career in sales. Even with all of the diversity, they shared one thing in common: the same response in our role play.

The role play challenged salespeople to develop action steps to advance the sales process forward. One activity was chosen far more than any other — “send the prospect an email.”

Online ordering, artificial intelligence, social media, texting, email and the internet’s search capabilities have and continue to change the role of salespeople by offering the prospect of dramatically increasing sales productivity. Although these tools are profoundly powerful, they frequently become a crutch, or worse, an obstacle to success.

*“The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that has taken place.”*

— George Bernard Shaw

- Email is your third choice after face-to-face and the telephone.

The research is unequivocal. Live communication is 34 times more effective than email. Multiple studies have found that most people overestimate the effectiveness of email and underestimate the persuasiveness of a live conversation. As a result, far too many salespeople mistakenly resort to email and text when they should be speaking to customers.

If your sales team relies on text and/or email as their “go to” communication tools, it is very likely that they will dramatically improve their effectiveness by having more live conversations.

Email and texting are easy to use, convenient and, for many salespeople, more comfortable to use than a live conversation and give the illusion of activity (“I just sent her an email”). Unfortunately, this is one case where activity and effectiveness are clearly not the same thing. The best salespeople engage in live conversations whenever they can and understand speaking with a customer is always superior to email. **SM**

Email is a perfect example. Businesses send more than 128 billion emails per day and the average office worker receives 121 emails per day. Yet, a remarkably large percentage of business emails are either never opened or ignored. Why?

Simply stated: email is not a replacement for human interaction.

- Email does not convey tonality or inflection that are a large part of the meaning behind verbal communication. When you email or text, you lose the 93 percent of all communication that is non-verbal.

- Email is asynchronous communication. You write, they respond. Time lags are not conducive to collaboration.

- Email is best for short, direct messages.