

Email Dynamix™

Navigating the opportunities and challenges of email in the 21st century

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What will YOUR life be like when you and the people around you are able to communicate messages effectively every time?

You've been searching for what seems like forever for an answer to your communication challenges - but the answer isn't as elusive as you may think. It lies right here in this seminar, and it only takes two days to **become the master** of your communication for a lifetime.

This exceptional two-day seminar will give you the **critical communication skills** you must have to rise above today's challenges and **get what you want and need** out of every conversation and correspondence - both at work and at home.

[Click here now to visit the website.](#)

HOW MANY TIMES HAVE YOU THOUGHT THIS?

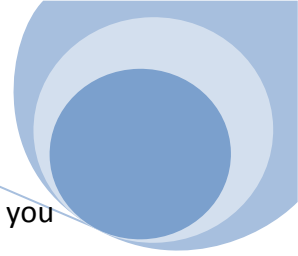
- "Why did *they* do *that*?"
- "I don't understand why they don't get what I'm trying to say."
- "I'm at my wits' end. I don't know how to get them to all work together."
- "I've run out of ideas here. My leadership toolbox is empty. I need help getting through to my people."
- "How in the world could they get *that* from this email? I clearly made my point but they got a whole different meaning from it. Good grief!"



WHY THIS SEMINAR WORKS.

During this seminar Paul will reveal exactly why people do what they do (this includes you too) by providing an easy-to-understand and easy-to-use **universal explanation** for human behavior that can be applied to every personal and business situation to understand motivations and outcomes.

The **great news** is that once you learn these principles and practice them during the interactive exercises under Paul's guidance, you will carry them through your everyday life because they become an unconscious part of you and everything you do.



Your communication automatically becomes **more fruitful** and more satisfying - and you become in control of yourself and the events and people that surround you.

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WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

- Master a **superior set of communication skills** that will give you a competitive advantage in the workplace and at home.
- Use these skills to smooth and improve professional and personal relationships, supercharge negotiating and mediation efforts, improve meetings and training sessions, revitalize interaction and morale among your staff, promote teamwork and enterprise-wide unity.
- Know how to read the nonverbal communication of other people and automatically adapt your message to **get what you want** from every conversation.
- Create powerful and **effective emails** that clearly convey your message and get results.
- Interact effectively with everyone in your company and at home, **resolve conflict** and work well with difficult people.
- Appreciate the differences in people of different generations and cultures and be able to use these differences to build stronger relationships.
- Be able to "persuade" others to your way of thinking, to "buy" your products or services, and "buy into" your ideas -- both at work and at home.
- Know how to **create instant rapport** with anyone, at any time, anywhere.
- **Plus 45 other learning outcomes!** This seminar is packed with life-changing information. [Click here](#) to review everything you will learn.

[Click here now for more reasons to attend.](#)

SEMINAR LOCATIONS

[Tysons Corner VA - Oct. 28 & 29, 2008](#)

[Denver CO – May 19 & 20, 2009](#)

[Los Angeles CA - Nov 18 & 19, 2008](#)

[Chicago IL – June 23 & 24, 2009](#)

[San Diego CA – Jan 21 & 22, 2009](#)

[New York NY – July 14-15, 2009](#)

[Miami FL – Feb. 18 & 19, 2008](#)

[Philadelphia PA – Sept. 15 & 16, 2009](#)

[Phoenix AZ – March 24 & 25, 2009](#)

[San Francisco CA – Oct 13 & 14, 2009](#)

[Atlanta GA – April 21 & 22, 2008](#)

[Dallas TX – Nov. 17 & 18, 2009](#)



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FORWARD

Welcome to Email Dynamix™!

This book is the result of requests from my clients for solid information about how to best use email to their advantage and how to avoid the very real challenges that email presents. From overflowing inboxes to career threatening misunderstandings, email has created a new set of problems to deal with on a daily basis.

The good news is that email also provides some very real advantages of which most people are unaware. The two biggest advantages are the ability to analyze the sender's message in ways that are not possible with face to face communication and the reduction of stereotypes and prejudices.

The last section of the book contains a collection of best practices that many people are already using, and you will find one or more tips that will make your email use more efficient, productive, and profitable.

I look forward to meeting you at one of my live events, but in the meantime feel free to drop me an email – I'd love to hear from you!



Paul Endress
President
Maximum Advantage

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www.communicationtrainingseminars.com

THE IMPACT OF EMAIL

“Email me...”

It’s easy to say and it’s easy to do!

For better or worse, email has revolutionized the nature of business and personal communication around the world. No longer is it necessary to place a long distance phone call, meet face to face, or write a letter to initiate a conversation. With email you simply press a button and your message can be sent to any number of people anywhere in the world.

If it seems like everyone has email, that’s probably because almost everyone does! According to the UCLA Internet report, 72 percent of Americans use the Internet and 88 percent of internet users use email. In business, these percentages are for all practical purposes 100 percent. I knew for sure that email had penetrated the last level of resistance when my eighty-five year old mother-in-law bought a laptop and started using email and IM to communicate with her extended family.

In its most recent report, IDCⁱ estimates that there will be 97 billion emails sent in 2008. This is up significantly from the 30 billion emails sent just a few years ago in 2004. While it seems like email has replaced standard postal mail, the US Post Office still delivered 212 billion pieces of mail in 2007, although I suspect that few of these pieces of mail were letters.

Of course, like most things in life, email has the potential to be very beneficial and useful and, at the same time, it has the potential for danger and harm. This book is dedicated to helping you maximize the opportunities of email and minimize the dangers.

Because email is so pervasive, it may seem like it should be used for everything, but this is not true. There are clearly some situations where email should be used and some situations where it is inappropriate and we will examine these throughout the book.

Let’s begin our discussion of the dynamics of email by finding out when it is best to use it and when another method of communication might work better. At the end of this chapter, you will find a list of other methods and a chart to help you decide when to use them if email is appropriate.

WHEN IS A GOOD TIME TO USE EMAIL?

- Email works great when you want to ask a question or deliver a message quickly and you don’t care how fast you get your answer – or even if you will get a reply. Email is a wonderful way to send a quick message, but it is not necessarily the best route to a quick

reply. Because your reader is under no obligation to read or act upon your message in a timely fashion, don't hold it against them if they don't respond immediately.

- If you want to communicate directly with a particular person in an organization rather than fight your way past a gatekeeper, email works great. As long as you have the correct email address, chances are your message will be read by your intended recipient. While I have met a few high level executives who have their assistants read their email, most still consider their email account to be private.
- Email is wonderful when you need to communicate with someone in a different time zone or country and you don't want to adjust your schedule to make a phone call. Thanks to email, both the sender and the receiver can conduct business during normal working hours. I once worked with a large law firm that had offices in both London and India and used email to communicate and work on documents twenty four hours per day. They even advertised in London that if you delivered a matter before five PM they would have it resolved by the next morning!
- Because email is electronic, you can easily deliver the same message to multiple readers. Whether it's a memo for the five other members of your team or an electronic newsletter with 10,000 subscribers, email makes it easy to deliver news quickly, easily, and at no cost.
- Email is valuable if you need to maintain a written record of your electronic conversation. Of course, you should NOT use email if you DON'T want a written record. Later, in the chapter on best practices, we will discuss the reality that emails have the potential to last forever.
- When it's urgent. If something is due at eight AM, you can work late at night and still deliver it on time using email. While it's possible that there will be technical problems in the transmission, most emails are delivered without problems. Many times my clients work on proposals until the last minute and deliver them on time using email.
- When you want to save money. Email is basically free and provides near instant delivery so it is far more economical than conventional mail or delivery services such as FedEx.
- Email is perfect when you are traveling because it can be accessed from anywhere as long as you can log onto the internet. Leaving email messages beats phone tag if the other person is also traveling, especially if other people are in different time zones. This is becoming even more of an advantage with the increasing availability of Blackberries and other cell phones with email capability.
- When you need to be unobtrusive. An email sent to someone takes far less of their attention than a phone call.
- Email is wonderful for providing factual information that doesn't require an answer. For example, a price quote or to tell someone what time a party starts.
- To introduce yourself or your company to someone who is unfamiliar with you. Email can be a great way to get information into someone's hands without having to make a sales call.

Many times people will not respond immediately, but will save email and retrieve it later if they need the information. We have experienced delayed response to emails sent as long as two years ago.

- To send requested documents. While it is not polite to send large unrequested attachments, email is perfect for quickly delivering requested items.

WHEN IS A BAD TIME TO USE EMAIL?

- The worst time to use email is when a message is extremely important or confidential and you cannot risk it falling into the wrong hands. Some people criticize the President of the United States for not using email, but I suspect that most of his communications need to be kept confidential! Remember never to use email to communicate proprietary corporate information because email is simply not secure.
- If you want to conduct negotiations or hold a give-and-take conversation, or you need to reach a consensus, email does not work very well. Whether you want to negotiate a price reduction with a supplier or persuade your supervisor to give you a pay raise, issues that call for back-and-forth discussion are best held on the phone or in person. This is especially true if you don't know the other person and have the benefit of having already established rapport.
- You need to conduct a lengthy interview with a long list of questions that call for detailed answers. Typing is much slower than talking, so the other person will appreciate not having to carefully write and proof the answers and you will benefit from being able to ask follow questions on the fly.
- Email doesn't work very well when you need to communicate bad news, complaints, criticism, or anything sensitive or controversial. Without the benefit of facial expressions, intonation, and body language, misunderstandings and hurt feelings could more easily result if you deliver bad news electronically without the benefit of paralanguage.
- You need an immediate response from someone who has a tendency to procrastinate. We have all been guilty of thinking "I'll get to it later" and later never comes.
- When you don't want a permanent record. Remember that once you send an email, you can never get it back and you lose all control of what happens to it. A good rule of thumb is never to write or include anything that you wouldn't want to see published on the front page of your local newspaper.
- Participants are located physically close together and can easily talk to each other thereby getting the benefits of [paralanguage](#).
- Complicated instructions that will generate questions and require further explanation are best left to other, more flexible, methods of communication.

- When your message is long enough to fill more than one page of text. Messages that are longer than a few paragraphs appear intimidating to the receiver and are less likely to be read. Long messages also take a long time for the sender to write and edit properly.

OTHER FORMS OF COMMUNICATION THAT MAY BE USEFUL

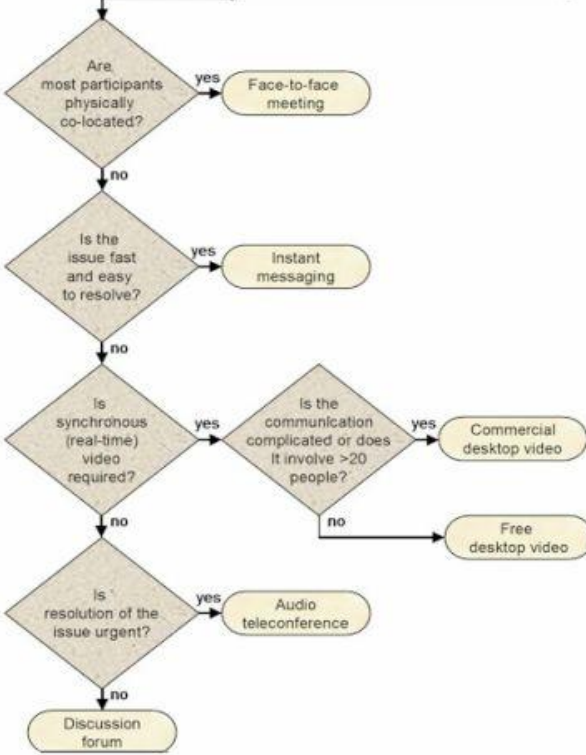
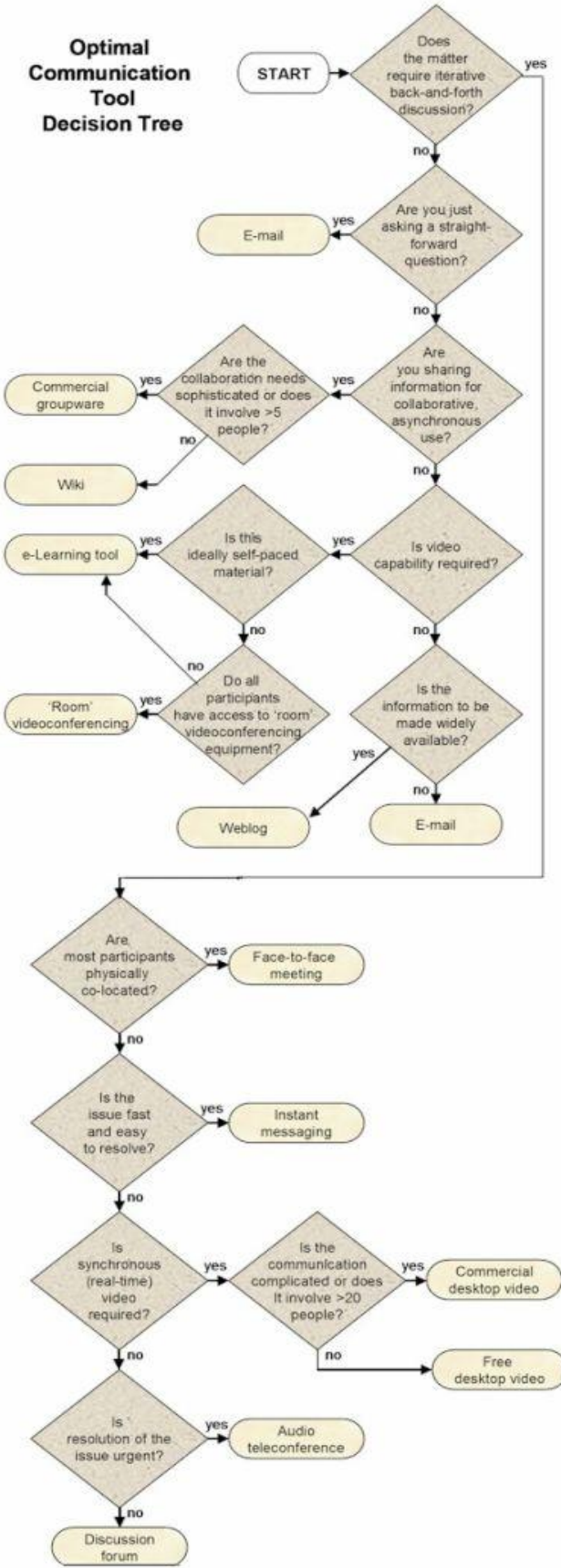
Sometimes it seems that email is the only way businesses communicate, but there are many alternatives. Here are some of them as well as a useful chart to help you decide which communication method will give you the best results.

- Groupware
- E-learning
- Telephone
- Webinar
- Face to face
- Wiki
- Weblog
- Instant message
- Discussion forum
- Conventional letter
- Video conferencing
- Face to face meeting
- Conference call
- Twitter

A USEFUL DECISION CHART

On the next page you will find a flow chart that provides a process for determining the optimum communication method for use in any given situation. This chart is provided courtesy of David Pollardⁱⁱ.

Optimal Communication Tool Decision Tree



WHY EMAIL GOES WRONG

When was the last time you sent an email to someone, only to have him or her extract a meaning that was totally different from the one that you intended?

When was the last time that you received an email and thought you had the message only to find out later that you completely misunderstood what that the sender was trying to say?

If you are like most people, the answer to both of these questions is “not very long ago!”

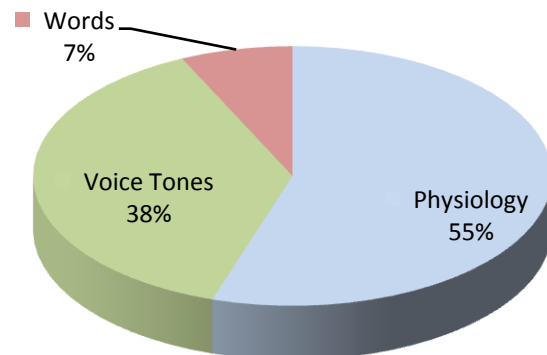
In this chapter, we will take a close look at the two major reasons why this happens and some ideas about how to prevent these potentially disastrous misunderstandings.

LACK OF PARALANGUAGE

Paralanguage is the combination of voice tones, inflections, facial expressions, body language and other clues that we get when we can see and hear someone. Research proves and you know from experience that these clues provide much of the meaning that we extract from a communication.

Because email is restricted to words only, the same statement can be read completely differently by different people. Factors that we depend on to understand the meanings of spoken communication such as tone, emphasis, and expressions are completely missing from email and these factors don't lead to misunderstandings, lack of them does.

Composition of Communication



[You can see a video demonstration of this phenomenon by clicking here.](#)

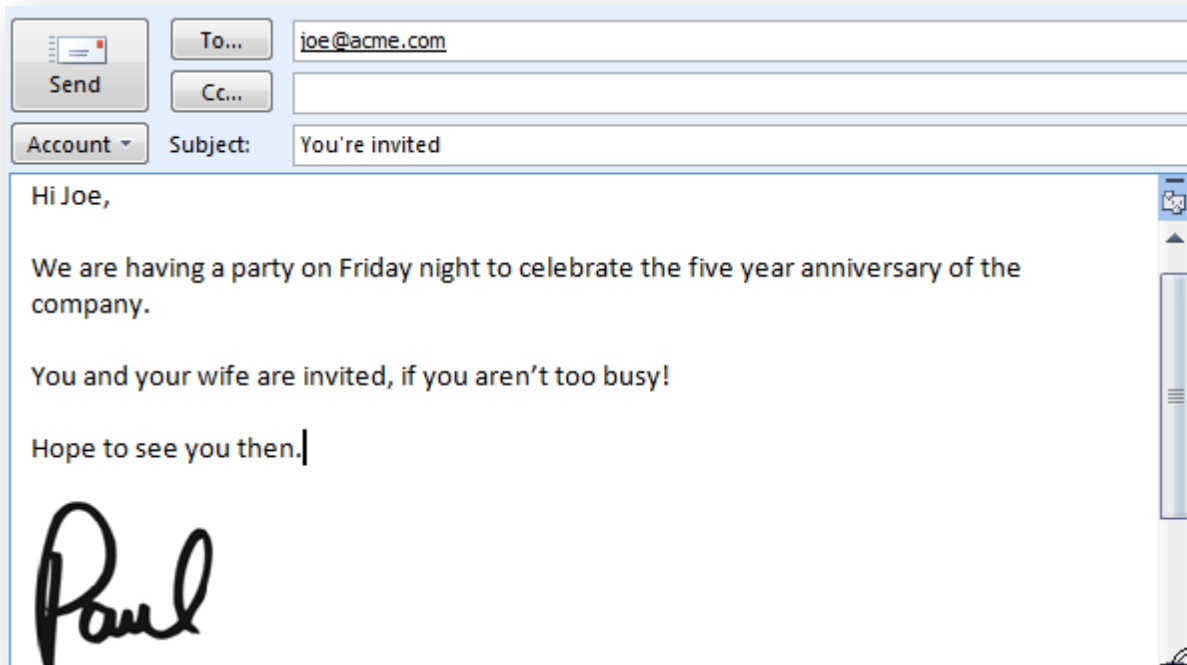
Similarly, people use inflection and gesture to soften the blow of negative communication, to reduce the impact of bad news, or lessen unfavorable feedback. While speech conveys not only what is said but also how it is said, email is limited to only words. Because of this, email contains less information than voice or face-to-face communication. Research has shown that of human communication, only 7% is the actual words that are spoken - 93% of communication is nonverbal (paralanguage).

[What if Martin Luther King, Jr., had sent an email? \(video link\)](#)

This drawback provides lots of opportunities for miscommunication and also a lack of awareness if a miscommunication occurs. The sender thinks that everything is fine until he receives a surprising response or no response at all. Of course, the sender knows what he meant to say but something went wrong and there is no feedback to tell him what it was or what to do about it.

HERE'S A SAMPLE EMAIL

Here's a sample email that I might send to invite someone to a party. Read it and consider what is meant by the phrase "if you aren't too busy."



This phrase can be read in several different ways: perhaps I am being sarcastic because I know Joe really well and know that he would never be too busy to come to the party. Perhaps I am genuinely concerned that he might be busy and want him to know that it is OK if he doesn't come. It has also been suggested to me that Joe might interpret this phrase as pressure to come, or that I will be offended if he doesn't show up.

If I called Joe on the phone or spoke to him in person, it would be much easier for Joe to know my intentions because he would be able to use the additional information that comes from my voice and/or facial expressions. Later in the book, I'll suggest some strategies to help to

compensate for this shortcoming. Obviously, we can't stop using email, but we do need to adopt some strategies to compensate for its weaknesses.

The second great weakness of email is the difficulty of separating our own experience from the experiences of the recipient(s). These life experiences provide a set of filters that will be used to interpret the message. Not understanding the impact of these filters can make your email message more ambiguous than you realize, so let's explore them now.

THE PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE

Recently, I was speaking at a human resources conference in Omaha, Nebraska, and afterward I met two different people who had shared a similar experience but had come away from the experience with completely different meanings. Both Susan and Deborah were at the conference to network and look for a new opportunity because they had had been laid off from their previous positions.

Deborah approached me after my presentation and told me that she had worked for the same company for almost seven years and had recently been laid off because the company had been acquired by another company and all human resource functions had been moved to the headquarters of the acquiring company. Susan told me that she had been with her company for over five years, but the company had recently gone out of business because of a dispute between the two partners who owned it.

The thing that struck me was that while both women had suffered a recent job loss under similar circumstances, their reaction to the loss was quite different.

Susan told me that for years she had wanted to start her own placement service but had never had the nerve to do it. She thought that it was fortunate that her company had closed and given her the push that she needed to start her own placement service and the opportunity to realize her dream. She told me that she had already hired one person for her fledgling company and hoped that she would be able to create good jobs for several more. At the end of the conversation, Susan gave me her card and asked me to pass it on to anyone I knew who could use her service.

My encounter with Deborah was completely different. Instead of being pleasant and upbeat, she was very down and depressed. During our conversation, she informed me several times that she didn't expect to be able to find a job because "there are no jobs for people like me." When I asked for clarification, she told me that she felt that she had too much experience for most available positions and that she wasn't willing to take a job that she considered to be below her abilities just to get a job.

The conversation stayed with me because the contrast between the two ladies was very clear. Each had encountered the same event of losing their well-paying job due to circumstances beyond their control, but had taken a different meaning from the event.

One was approaching the future with hope and optimism and the other with resignation and despair. Why was there this disparity and difference, I wondered?

The difference is their “Personal Perspective” on life. That is, we all have a unique set of values, beliefs, and memories that color how we interpret events. These three factors work together to create our “Personal Perspective.” No matter how similar a group of people may seem to be, their perspectives of the world can easily be very different. These differing perspectives will have an impact on how your email is interpreted by your reader.

[For more information about how the Personal Perspective works, click here for a twenty minute video.](#)

Because we filter messages through our own perspectives, we tend to write our emails from our point of view, not that of the receiver. When we are meeting face to face with someone, it is easy to ask a series of questions that will help us to understand his or her perspective. Unfortunately, when we are using email, there is no give and take that allows for this discovery and the opportunity to adapt our message to the listener.

In the story about Susan and Deborah, the same email offering a job interview would have been received completely differently. There is a good chance that Susan would have responded with a warm “thank you” and an offer of placement help if I ever needed it. Deborah might have not responded at all and I would never have known why.

REDUCING PREJUDICES AND MISCONCEPTIONS

By now, I know that you are convinced that the non-verbal nature of email presents many pitfalls - but these problems can actually be an advantage in some situations!

A long line of research suggests that spontaneous non-verbal cues can be used by people as a very reliable guide to an individual’s personality, abilities, and even sexual orientation. This research shows that even very brief or degraded exposures to non-verbal cues can lead to a significant increase in the reading of a person’s dispositions, traits, and abilities.ⁱⁱⁱ

The extent to which these stereotypes guide perception depends on the ambiguity of information being evaluated^{iv}. The more ambiguous the information, the more likely it is to be shaped by one’s stereotypes or expectancies.



The great advantage of email is that no one knows whether you are white or black, male or female, rich or poor. This anonymity allows people to express their “true selves” and increase the frequency of close relationships^v. Of course, this feeling of anonymity can lead people to say things in an email that they would never say to someone’s face.

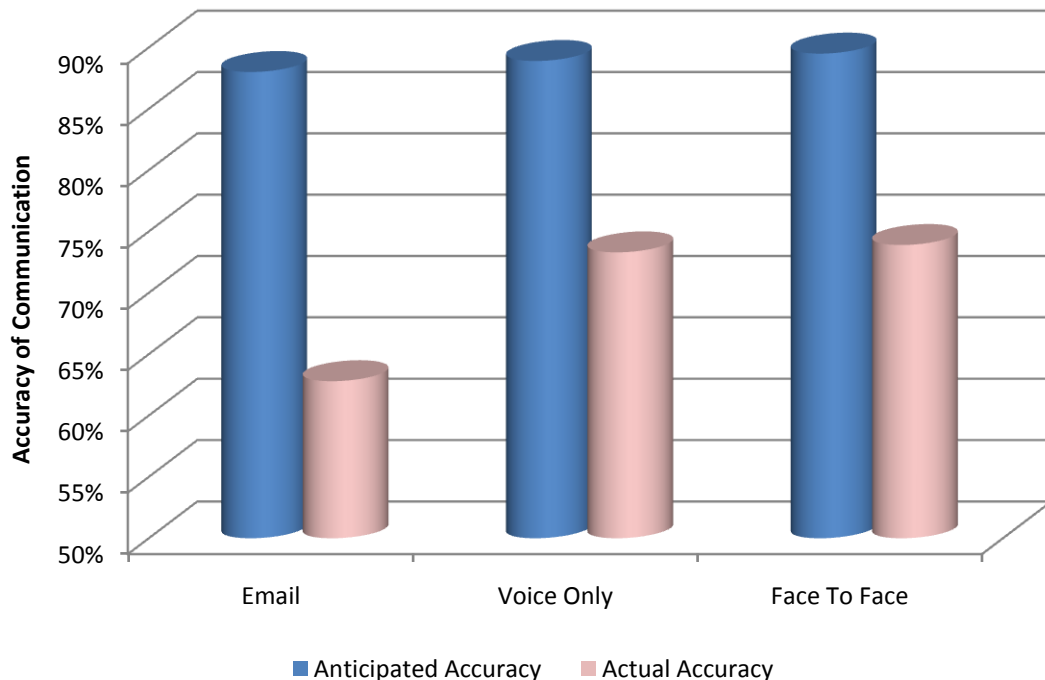
The elimination of prejudice and stereotypes is one of the great strengths of using email. The recipient can’t tell how young or old you are or any other factor that could work against you and prejudice them. This gives you an opportunity to get your message through unfiltered by any of these discriminatory factors.

THE BOTTOM LINE

What is the overall impact of all of these factors in the recipient accurately extracting the intended message from an email?

Research by Kruger and Eply^{vi} clearly shows that email is the least effective of the three primary communication methods and suggests that the intended message is received only about 62% of the time while the sender believes that it is being received almost 90% of the time!

Actual and Anticipated Ability to Communicate



Almost 40% of the time, the intention of an email message is misunderstood!

As you can see from this chart, there is a significant gap between the ability of the three methods to deliver a message in a way that the recipient will understand it.

Yet for many of us, email is our primary method of communication.

In the next chapter, I will outline some strategies you can use to overcome these limitations and even turn email to your advantage.

USING EMAIL TO YOUR ADVANTAGE

One of the great advantages of email (from the receiver's viewpoint) is that it provides you with a wealth of information about the sender that the sender is probably not aware that he is revealing. Because email is static and can be studied at your leisure after you receive it, you have the opportunity to dissect and analyze it in ways that are not possible with spoken words.

Of course, what is an advantage to the receiver is a disadvantage to the sender!

FINDING THE HIDDEN INFORMATION IN AN EMAIL

The best way to get insight into the sender is to understand what you are looking for and then carefully read the email using these methods to uncover what you need to know.

In business situations, the information hidden in an email can give you an advantage in persuading others and negotiating with them. In all situations, these clues can give you insight into the sender that helps to make up for the missing paralanguage and other advantages of in person communication.

In fact, in some situations, using these hidden clues may give you a sizable advantage. Let's explore how.

VALUES

Simply defined, values are certainty about what is important to a person. This definition can be expanded to include things that we think are important to us because our perceptions are the same as reality.

When you learn to uncover these values in yourself and others, you will have a powerful understanding of why people do what they do and how to motivate them.

Because we are driven to do those things that are most important to us, values are the most critical component of our personal perspective. People do what they do because of what is most important to them.

The easiest way to uncover values in an email is to look for the following words of necessity. Using the simple search or find feature of your email program will be sufficient to uncover them.

Look for the following words that will tell you what is important to a person:

Words	Example
Should/ should not	“We really should get this done by Friday” indicates that it important to the sender that the action is taken by a specific time.
Must / must not	“There must be a solution to this problem”
Right / not right	“That’s not right” tells us that the writer feels that the subject is important
Have to / must not	“We have to get this done by Friday.”
Need / don’t need	“You need to close this deal.”

The following words are also useful in determining a person’s motivations, but they indicate a lesser state than the words of necessity.

Words that indicate desire that is not quite as strong:

- Wish
- Want
- Hope

Once again, use the search or find feature of your email program to find these words and gain valuable insight into the person who sent you the email.

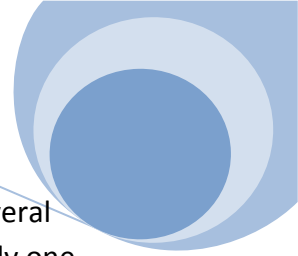
REPRESENTATIONAL SYSTEMS

Each person has a preferred sense that they use to absorb information.

- Some people are primarily *visual*, meaning that they absorb by seeing and store the information and experiences as pictures.
- Some people are *auditory* which means that they primarily absorb and store sounds and words.
- Some people are *kinesthetic* and tend to absorb and store information using feelings.
- There are also people who are primarily *digital* and they use different senses to absorb their information, but store information simply as facts.

The senses that people prefer to use is called their “representational system,” and in certain situations this can narrow down to mainly one sense.

Knowing a person's preferred representational system enables you to literally 'speak their language,' which, in turn, enhances rapport and makes what you are saying easier to understand and more appealing to them.



In face to face communication where there is interaction between people, there are several ways to determine which representational system a person is using. In email there is only one way and that is to examine the words that they are using.

Use the following chart to examine your sender’s email and find out what system he is using. You can then use that knowledge to respond in a way that will help him to understand your message.

Look for words and phrases like these:

Visual Words	Auditory Words	Kinesthetic Words	Digital Words
see	hear	grasp	sense
look	tell	feel	experience
bright	sound	hard	understand
clear	resonate	unfeeling	change
picture	listen	concrete	perceive
foggy	silence	scrape	question
view	deaf	solid	insensitive
clear	squeak	touch	distinct
focused	hush	get hold of	conceive
dawn	roar	catch on	know
reveal	melody	tap into	think
illuminate	make music	heated argument	learn
imagine	harmonize	pull some strings	process
hazy	tune in/out	sharp as a tack	decide
an eyeful	rings a bell	smooth operator	motivate
short sighted	quiet as a mouse	make contact	consider
sight for sore eyes	voiced an opinion	throw out	describe in detail
take a peek	clear as a bell	firm foundation	figure it out
tunnel vision	give me your ear	get a handle on	make sense of
bird’s eye view	loud and clear	get in touch with	pay attention to
naked eye	purrs like a kitten	hand in hand	word for word
paint a picture	on another note	hang in there	without a doubt

It is important to note that people do not always use the same representational system all of the time. Just because someone uses lots of visual words today, it does not mean that they will always be visual. You need to examine each email individually.

A QUICK QUIZ

Here are a couple of sentences to use for practice. In each sentence, underline the key words that provide the clues to the representational system being used. After the sentence, use V,A,K, or D to indicate the system used.

- You have shown me a bright idea and I would like to look into it further.

- That idea sounds good and I would like to hear more about it.
- This idea is on solid ground and I would like to get more of a feel for it.
- That idea makes sense and I would like have more details.

HOW TO USE THIS TO YOUR ADVANTAGE

Simply respond back to the sender using the same types of words that they are using. If someone is using visual words and says that it “looks good,” tell them that you “see what they mean.” With a little practice, you will be able to use this clever technique in face to face conversations as well as in email.

If you would like to order our software that automatically analyzes the sender’s representational system for you and gives you the most effective words and strategies to respond with, you can do so by [clicking here](#).

WORDS OF WARNING

When you are analyzing an email, be on the lookout for the words “only” and “just”. If your sender uses either of these two words, it is an indication that you have challenged one of their beliefs.

When you see one of these two words, it is a warning that you may have touched on a sensitive subject or possibly offended the person, so tread with care.

Here are some examples:

- “I was only trying to explain what happened.”
- “We were only adjusting the budget to be more fair”
- “Il just want to be fair.”

EMAIL BEST PRACTICES

So far, we have covered a lot of ground about the strengths, weaknesses, advantages, and disadvantages of email. To wrap up this book, here is my collection of email best practices that you can put to work for you right away.

Some of these are summaries or clarifications of ideas already presented, and some are new. You will find that all of them are useful.

WATCH OUT FOR JARGON

Remember that what you know and think is not what everyone else knows and thinks. Unless you are writing to recipients who are familiar with the same topics that you are, most people won't know what acronyms mean.

If you are going to use an acronym, define it the first time you use it and then you can refer to the term by its abbreviation. Ex: National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

USE CLOSED QUESTIONS

Use closed questions which leave only a few choices for an answer. These include questions that require a yes/no answer or a set of multiple choices that can be easily selected. Using this technique makes it clear to the reader what you want to know from them and prevents a long series of back and forth messages while they seek to clarify what you want.

LISTS ARE POWERFUL

Since reading from a screen is more difficult than reading from paper, the structure and layout is very important for email messages. Use short paragraphs and blank lines between each paragraph. When making points, number them or use bullet points to separate them and make them easy to read.

Using lists with bullet points makes the points that you want to make clear without the reader having to interpret long paragraphs. Email is much better at conveying short facts than it is long ideas that need a lot of explanation. Reducing the important points to bullets is a great way to give the reader a quick read and get the results you want quickly.

People are more likely to read an email that looks like it is easy to understand and bullet points go a long way to making your messages easy to understand.

If your email editor doesn't support bullets, you can use dashes or asterisks to simulate them.

KISS

Most people are incredibly busy and want to read one page or less, so...

Keep It Simple (or Short) Silly (or Stupid!) Make sure you limit your email to no more than one simple idea, facts or request that can fit easily into a browser window. If someone has to scroll down to see the entire message, it is probably too long. If you have multiple ideas to communicate, use separate emails.

People tend to read what they must, what they are interested in and what looks easy to read and dispose of. If your message doesn't fall into one of the first two categories, make sure it gets read by making sure that it is short and easy to read.

Reading an email is harder than reading printed communications. A long email can be very discouraging to read so it is likely to end up on the "later" pile. Once it is on the "later pile", there is a chance that later will never come and you will never get a response.

Unless you know your reader well, be sure to avoid big words and keep the text at the level of a newspaper (approx. 8th grade) reader.

When you use extensive formatting in your emails, the sender might not be able to view formatting, or might see different fonts than you had intended. Keep away from multiple fonts and colors to make sure your message looks attractive and is easy to read.

READ IT OUT LOUD BEFORE YOU SEND!

This is one of the best ways to make sure that your real message comes through and to detect sentences, words, and phrases that could have unintended meanings. To be extra sure, you can read it multiple times using different tones of voice. The more important the message, the more times you should read it out loud.

Make sure that you come across as respectful, friendly, and approachable. You don't want to sound curt, demanding or sarcastic by accident. Sometimes just rearranging your paragraphs or changing your punctuation makes a big difference.

YES, PUNCTUATION, GRAMMAR, AND SPELLING ARE IMPORTANT

Treat the text of an email the same way you would treat any letter or other important document. Include commas, question marks, periods and other punctuation so that the person who reads your message will be able to approximate the voice tones and other clues that are lost.

Punctuation, grammar, and spelling are also important because they give the reader an impression of you and your company. Remember, they can't see or hear you... all they have is the words in your email.

Be sure you proof, read, and spell check before you send.

PLZ DON'T ABBRVT

Avoid short cuts such as TTYL (talk to you later) if you are not absolutely sure that your reader will know what they mean. These may be necessary for instant messaging or texting, but they are inappropriate and lead to confusion in business emails.

The same goes for emoticons, such as the smiley :-). If you are not sure whether your recipient knows what it means, it is better not to use it. Emoticons are never appropriate for business email.

YOUR ADDRESS TELLS A LOT ABOUT YOU

FOR BUSINESS EMAIL

Never use Yahoo, Hotmail, Gmail, or other free email service addresses for business purposes because they make your business look small and cheap. After all, what kind of business would use a free address when a real address can be had for only about four dollars per month? You can easily get one at www.godaddy.com.

Avoid cute or suggestive addresses for business purposes. Ex: bigbear4u@yahoo.com may be fine for a personal account, but not for professional use.

FOR PERSONAL EMAIL

If you are not a business, it still looks good to have your own URL and an email address that might read paul@paulendress.com. Unless you have the most common of names you will probably find that your name is still available.

HOLD THE ATTACHMENTS

Avoid the temptation to include any attachments unless they have been specifically requested or are absolutely necessary to the message. Instead, provide a link for an optional download. As an example, [you can click here to view a two minute video](#) of me explaining why email goes wrong. It would be inappropriate to include even this short two minute video as an attachment, but including this link would be fine.

In particular, be careful when attaching video and sound files because they take up lots of server space and may cause your email to be blocked by the recipient's server.

PREVENT AN ACCIDENTAL SEND

Wait to fill in the "TO" email address until you have finished, proofed, and read the email out loud. This keeps you from accidentally sending the email before you are ready.

DON'T SHOUT

Avoid writing using all uppercase letters. IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE SHOUTING. Don't use all lower case letters either. Remember that proper punctuation gives a positive impression of you.

ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS

Email is not a good medium for complicated questions that require complex or lengthy answers, but if you do receive an email that has multiple questions be sure to answer all questions with answers which pre-empt further questions. If you don't answer all the questions in your original response, you can expect to receive further emails relating to the unanswered questions. These additional emails waste everyone's time and cause considerable frustration to everyone involved.

MAKE IT PERSONAL

Your email should be properly addressed.

Because it is always safer to err on the side of caution, if I am initiating an email exchange with someone I don't know I am usually fairly formal with "Good morning Joe", or "Good morning Mr. Smith". "Good morning" or "good afternoon" is a good way to start because "hello" and "hi" can seem too informal, while "dear" can be too formal.

Then I watch to see how he addresses me and signs his response. If he addresses me as "Paul", I will address him as "Joe" when I respond. This is especially true if he signed his email as "Joe." If he signed as "Joseph," I will address him as "Joseph," not "Joe".

ANSWER SWIFTLY - SOMETIMES

Many times, people send an email because they wish to receive a quick (immediate!) response, but it is not always wise to give it to them.

However, if you are going to purposely delay (see 'when to delay') you should send some type of reply within at least 24 hours, and preferably within the same working day. If the email is

complicated, just send a reply saying that you have received it and that you will get back to them. This will put the sender's mind at rest and usually he or she will then be very patient!

WHEN TO DELAY

I recommend waiting to respond if the email is even slightly complex or if challenges or offends you so that you can give yourself time to consider your response. There are many stories of relationships damaged by a quick reply sent without considering all of the implications of what is being said. If you feel your emotions rising, take a deep breath, put the email away and come back later.

Just because email is electronic and travels to you fast, it does not mean that you have to respond fast!

IS IT REALLY THAT IMPORTANT?

We all know the story of the boy who cried wolf. If you overuse the high priority option, it will lose its credibility when you really need it. Even if an email really is high priority, your message may be interpreted as aggressive if you flag it as 'high priority.'

Even more so than the high-priority option, avoid using words like URGENT or IMPORTANT in the subject line. If the person opens it and doesn't think that it is quite as urgent as you do, your entire message will lose credibility.

INCLUDE THE MESSAGE THREAD

Someone who receives a lot of email won't be able to remember what was said in your previous email (or their response), so when you reply to an email, be sure to include the original message in your reply. If you don't do this, the recipient will have to spend a frustratingly long time trying to find out the context of the email in order to deal with it.

You will find that the easiest way to include the message thread is to click 'Reply,' instead of 'New Mail.'

DON'T LIST EVERYONE'S EMAIL ADDRESS

When sending the same message to more than one person, don't place all of the addresses in the "To:" field because this shows the recipient that you sent the email to other people and also exposes the other peoples' email addresses.

The easiest way to prevent this is to place all addresses in the Bcc: field.

A mail merge is a great way to customize a message that is being sent to multiple people because it allows you to use fields in the message so that you can address each recipient personally. Since each email program operates differently, consult the Help file for specifics of how your program works.

STOP RIGHT THERE

Do not forward chain letters that promise incredible riches or ask you to help a charitable cause that you have never heard of. It's also a great idea to simply delete urban legends, surveys, cute pictures, jokes and emails that have been forwarded to dozens of other people. All of these are likely to irritate the recipient, so stop them at your desktop.

DO NOT REQUEST DELIVERY AND READ RECEIPTS

This will almost always annoy your recipient before he or she has even read your message. In addition, surveys show that most recipients have their read receipt function turned off and you will never know why you didn't get a response.

If you need confirmation that the message was received, ask the recipient to let you know in the message. If you don't hear from him or her within twenty four hours, follow up with a phone call. Sending another email to see if someone received previous email will only create more irritation if they are ignoring you on purpose.

DOES THIS BELONG IN THE NEWSPAPER?

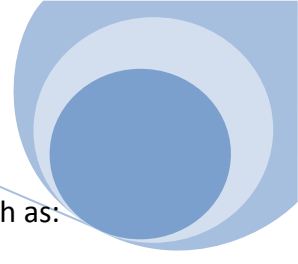
Remember, once you send an email you can never get it back and you lose all control of what happens to it's content. A good rule of thumb is never to write or include anything that you wouldn't want to see published on the front page of your local newspaper.

This includes confidential business information as well as any libelous, sexist or racially discriminating comments, even if they are meant to be a joke. Always remember that because of the lack of paralanguage, there is a high likelihood that anything that can be misunderstood or taken out of context will be.

USE A MEANINGFUL SUBJECT LINE

Use a subject that is meaningful to the recipient as well as to yourself.

With the overwhelming amount of email that most people receive, a descriptive subject line can make the difference between your email being read and being deleted or put on the "later" pile.



For instance, if you want information about the date of a meeting, use a subject line such as: “Dallas meeting date request.” This will let the reader know that you have a simple and important request that they can easily respond to and dispose of.

On a related subject, don’t continue to use the automatic “Re:” that is added to subject lines by most software. For example, if your initial question about the meeting date turns into the need for additional details and you have been going back and forth with someone, the subject line could end up looking like this: “Re: Re: Re: Re: Re: Dallas meeting date request.”

If what you want to know now is whether business casual dress is OK, say so in your subject line!

USE ACTIVE INSTEAD OF PASSIVE VOICE

Whenever possible, use the active voice of a verb. For instance, “We will process your order today”, sounds better than “Your order will be processed today”. The first sounds more personal, whereas the latter, especially when used frequently, sounds unnecessarily formal and stilted.

NEVER REPLY TO SPAM

By replying to spam or by using the unsubscribe option at the end of a spam email, you are confirming that your email address is valid. Confirming this will only generate even more spam. Therefore, just hit the delete button or use special software to remove spam automatically.

HOW TO GET A QUICK RESPONSE TO ANY EMAIL YOU SEND

Use these six principles to encourage a quick response to any email you send:

- *Brevity* - make it easy to read and understand. Use bullet points, short sentences and an attractive font.
- *Context* - make sure they understand any other information needed to respond. Remember to include any previous message threads so they don’t have to search for them.
- Give them *something to act on*. Tell your reader exactly what response you want so that they don’t have to guess or send you an email asking for clarification.
- Set *reasonable expectations* so it is easy to respond. Unless you are their supervisor, don’t ask for something that will take an hour of work to produce.
- *Give them a reason*. A simple explanation of the benefits of responding will do wonders.
- Use *a deadline* to keep your email from being put on the “later” pile. If you have made it easy to respond and have given them a deadline, you can expect a quick answer.

DEALING WITH YOUR INBOX

The typical corporate email user receives over thirty messages a day and spends between one and two hours dealing with these messages. Learning to manage your in-box efficiently will help you to better realize the benefits of email.

Broadband connections and Blackberries give us continuous email delivery throughout the day creating disruptions that distract your attention from your other work and reduce your productivity. Because email is delivered almost instantly, it seems to have a sense of urgency that demands an immediate response.

While it may seem that you have to respond immediately, you don't. Now is the time to take control.

TAKE CONTROL

- Control your email, don't let it control you. Rather than having continuous email delivery, set specific times to check and respond to whatever is accumulating in your inbox.
- Turn off your email alarm so that you are not distracted every time a new message arrives. If you don't, your curiosity will probably get the better of you.
- Before you open an email, check the subject line and delete obvious junk mail.
- Handle simple requests immediately and save others for a later time that you have set aside specifically for answering email.
- Use folders to organize the email messages that you are going to keep for later reference.
- Save a tree by printing only those emails for which you absolutely need to have a hard copy.
- Handle an email only once. You have five choices: delete, reply, act, forward, or save. Choose one instead of thinking "I'll get to it later."
- If your main inbox has more than 100 items in it, you need to take action now!

BACK UP NOW

Make sure that you have a current backup copy of the contents of all of your email folders at all times. As we grow more dependent on email, it is becoming a record keeping system for many people. Losing it through a technological glitch would be a disaster.

If you work for a company that has an information technology department, this is almost certainly taken care of for you. If you don't have this type of professional support, there are many quality automatic backup software programs on the market. Make sure that you get one and start using it now.

EMAIL CHECKLIST

Use this handy check list to verify the quality of any email before you send it.

- There are no jargon or acronyms that your reader will not understand.
- All questions are close ended or multiple choice.
- You have used bullet points to make it easy to read.
- Paragraphs are short and easy to read.
- Only one font and color are used. Bold or italics are used only to highlight key points.
- The entire message fits in one browser window.
- The message has been proofread and spell checked.
- Grammar and punctuation have been verified.
- There are no abbreviations or short cuts that the reader won't understand.
- You have used an appropriate email address.
- There are no unrequested or unnecessary attachments.
- You have used the proper mix of lower and upper case letters.
- You have personalized the message by using the recipient's name and other personal information.
- The message is not read receipt requested, high priority, or marked urgent or important.
- You have allowed proper time to think before replying.
- The message thread is included.
- You have included a disclaimer.
- You have used a descriptive subject line.
- Confidential information is not included.
- You are not forwarding junk email.
- The subject matter is not bad news, a complaint, criticism, or anything controversial.
- You used the active voice.
- If you are replying to another message, you have analyzed the senders' values and representational system and are using this information in your reply.
- This is not a subject for negotiation or back and forth responses.

MAKE AN ACTION LIST

Now that you've completed this book, it is an excellent time to make an action list of the items that you want to implement.

The list is broken down into three parts so that you can decide which actions you want to place into each category, when you will complete the action and if you will need any outside resources. Now is the best time to take action!

KEEP

What things are you already doing well and would like to enhance? Give yourself some acknowledgement for your current best practices.

Action Item	Date Due	Resources Needed
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

STOP

Based on what you have learned, what things are you going to stop doing?

Action Item	Date Due	Resources Needed
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

START

What ideas have come to you while reading this book? Which best practices are you going to implement?

Action Item	Date Due	Resources Needed
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

MURPHY'S LAWS OF EMAIL

Finally... just for fun, here are Murphy's laws for email:

1. If your message can be misunderstood, it probably will be.
2. Even if your message cannot be misunderstood, it will still probably be misunderstood.
3. If a message can be interpreted in several ways, it will be interpreted in a manner that maximizes damages.
4. There is always someone who knows better than you what you meant by your message.
5. The more we communicate, the worse communication succeeds.
6. The more we communicate, the faster misunderstandings propagate.
7. The importance of a message is inversely proportional to the square of the distance of the sender.
8. The more important the situation is, the more probably you forget to include something essential.

With care and practice, all of these can be avoided and you will use email as the wonderful modern communication tool that it is!

THAT'S ALL FOLKS!

Thanks for joining me for Email Dynamix™. Now is the best time to use your action list and get started.

I look forward to meeting you at one of my live events.

www.communicationtrainingseminars.com

This version: 9/22/2008

ⁱ Worldwide Email Usage 2007-2011 Forecast: Resurgence of Spam Takes Its Toll (IDC #206038)

ⁱⁱ Author, [How to Save the World weblog](#)

ⁱⁱⁱ Albright, Kenny, & Malloy, 1988; Ambady, Hallahan, & Rosenthal, 1995; Costanzo & Archer, 1989; Zebrowitz & Collins, 1997

^{iv} Higgins, 1996; Srull & Wyer, 1979,1980

^v Bargh, McKenna, & Fitzsimmons, 2002; McKenna, Green, & Gleason,2002

^{vi} Kruger & Eply, Egocentrism Over E-Mail: Can We Communicate as Well as We Think?, 2005