

## **Newsletter February 1, 2009**

### **When do you use e-mail?**

Ninety percent of the workforce sends emails that don't have to be sent.

We're late for a meeting so we blackberry a quick "heads up!" Rather than walk over to the next cubicle to talk, we send not one, but hundreds of emails during the day. We could easily pick up the phone to call the boss, but we're told, repeatedly, "Put everything in writing!" So, we do.

Relying on email, though, can create havoc on personal relationships. If we misinterpret the message in an email, we might order the wrong product or miss an important meeting. We react to hidden messages that could easily be cleared up in a live one-on-person conversation, and then spend hours cleaning up our mistake.

And let's face, if the email drags on too long, we don't read it! That can lead to loss of hurt feelings, loss of business, revenue, not to mention communication failures that impact our career.

When do you use e-mail versus phone and voice mail?

### **Do E-mail**

- When multiple locations and time zones are involved.
- Meeting agendas in advance of a meeting to get feedback from attendees
- When you have no other alternative – can't contact the person by phone or in person...

### **Don't E-mail**

- Urgent communication. If you need an immediate response, call or page.

- If the message involves any kind of emotion that might be misinterpreted in words, make the phone call.
- Never send anything that you might regret afterwards: gossip, backstabbing, commentary, etc.
- Commentary on other employees, which could haunt you, should never go in writing.

Here's a quick exercise to see survey your email habits. Enjoy!

### **SELF SURVEY**

Directions: *Put a check next to the statement that seems to apply to you.*

- 1. At times I prefer sending e-mails or letters instead of face-to-face communication.
- 2. I spend too much time staring at the screen, trying to decide how to start.

- 3. I have sent e-mails out that I regret afterwards.
- 4. I often wonder if an e-mail or two of mine rubs my reader the wrong way.
- 5. Sometimes I send an e-mail that causes confusion and takes several more communications to straighten it out.
- 6. I could use help making the subject lines eye-grabbing.
- 7. I am not fully aware of the etiquette I should follow when writing e-mail.
- 8. I write in the way I want to be written to.
- 9. I tend to be too informal with my salutations and headers