

Why Video is More Effective Than Email

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In most organizations, email is the hub of primary communication. It's simple, easy and can be accessed from almost any device. Email is great for communicating across large distances. But the fact that someone can easily fire off an email, doesn't necessarily mean it's the best and most effective means to communicate. Let me explain.

Have you ever tried to communicate a seemingly simple message via email that somehow turns into 15 back and forth emails and morphs into a contentious misunderstanding between colleagues or clients? Sure, this has all happened to us and with the increase in the adoption of teleworking practices, this is bound to happen more. It is estimated that by 2015, 1.3 billion people will be working remotely, or almost 40% of the workforce and they will all be sending emails. That's a lot of unnecessary confusion and precious cycles lost.

For the legal profession specifically, email communication has significant limitations during often complex and intense cases. For example, out of state witnesses who aren't able to testify in person can be patched in via video straight into the courtroom. Alternatively, video is also a great way to keep in touch with clients who may be out of the country and unable to come into the office. It's also a great way to sync up with your internal team and make sure you're on the same page when key proceedings are about to be underway.

Naturally, picking up the phone is the alternative to reducing this angst. But even then, phone calls can't entirely bridge the gap of creating and maintaining an authentic relationship with colleagues and clients. It is said that over 90% of how we communicate is through nonverbal cues. In picking up the phone, you're missing the opportunity to glean valuable information on how to steer the conversation or how to react to that person's needs.

Moreover, a study from Scientific American has found that having eye contact also reduces hostility. One group of debate students was given an opportunity to see their opponents via webcam versus another group who was using instant messaging to debate an issue. The study found that those who weren't able to see their opponents face to face were twice as likely to be more hostile.

Eye contact is literally the way we're able to see someone's thoughts and emotions first-hand, it fosters empathy and communication so it makes it harder to be contentious. As the adage goes, seeing is believing. When it comes to sensitive and complex matters, video makes it easier to effectively communicate.

The good news is that video is the fastest growing medium ever and that video tools are on the rise, with video being one of the fastest growing App categories. Here are a few tips to incorporate video in order to improve communication, collaboration and negotiation.

- All Hands on Deck: Connect with clients and people across your organization no matter where they are located and gather everyone around the virtual boardroom.
- From the Boardroom to the Courtroom: Video conferencing allows people to put a voice to a face and with the rise of mobile devices even more collaboration is possible, even if people are on-the-go using their iPhone or iPad.
- Submit the Evidence: Video conferencing doesn't mean content sharing stops. With Blue Jeans Network multiple people are able to see each other and share presentations and documents, enabling maximum collaboration.

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