

THE ART OF THE EMOTICON: EFFECTIVE ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION FOR TEAMS

Communicating person-to-person can be challenging, even when a team member or team leader is well-versed in the 3 V's of Communication (Verbal, Vocal, Visual). These days, many employees communicate between departments and divisions exclusively through email or instant messaging (IM). In some cases, teams communicate with each other electronically – especially those whose ranks include teleworkers.

Teleworkers are taking up an increasing percentage of the workforce. As of 2017, about 1 in 5 workers worldwide and 43 percent of U.S. workers telecommute either part or all of the time. In the U.S., 89 percent of companies offered some form of teleworking to their employees in the past couple of years, according to a Mercer report.

While most employees love having this perk, it does have its challenges. One big barrier to being effective while teleworking is communication. Electronic communication just doesn't replace face-to-face communication. When teams communicate with each other largely by email, IM, and phone calls, the risk is that the company culture may "transform into an online chat forum, become faceless or culture-less, or miss out on human emotion," according to an article in Human Resource Executive.

This one-time perk is most likely here to stay. Therefore, it's imperative to make sure the team communicates regularly with each other, understands what they're trying to tell each other about the task at hand, and are able to resolve issues despite the electronic barrier.

Tips for effective communication over email or IM:

- Establish guidelines for communicating electronically, if the company hasn't yet done so. Make sure team members know what they can and can't discuss over email or IM.
- Write as neutrally as possible, as the intent of certain words or phrases can be misconstrued by recipients.
- Use bold or italic fonts to emphasize specific words.
- Stick to the topic at hand. Avoid addressing in an e-mail or IM any emotion or anger around a specific issue that the team is dealing with – it's better to deal with an emotional situation in a meeting or with the team leader present, to avoid misunderstandings.
- Schedule a regular weekly meeting with all team members, ideally in person, to go over the week's accomplishments, future objectives, and any problems that need to be addressed.

These plus other teleworking best practices can help a team maintain trust in each other even when they're not in earshot or eyesight.

Copyright © 2018, Gregg Gregory & Teams Rock. First published July 25, 2018.

#####

A diverse, twenty-year background in real estate, mortgage banking, event planning, and production, as well as radio and television broadcasting, created a perfect storm that put Gregg Gregory where he is today. Gregg works hard to ensure that different personalities can work together successfully to accomplish your organization's mission, goals, and objectives.

For more information, call Gregg at (301) 564-0908 or visit Gregg's website at www.teamsrock.com.

Permission to Reprint

Gregg Gregory, CSP
4505 Clearbrook Lane, Suite B
Kensington, MD 20895

1. Permission to reprint articles by Gregg Gregory, at no charge is granted with the agreement that:
 - The article bio be included following each article used.
 - One copy of the publication in which the article is published be provided to Gregg Gregory.
 - A fee per article will be expected for articles published without the closing bio and contact information; \$300.
2. Permission is also granted for reasonable:
 - Editing content and industry specific example exchange.
 - Length.
 - Article title change.
3. Electronic publishing of articles must include a live, click-able link to <http://www.teamsrock.com>

Any questions, please call Gregg at (301) 564-0908 or email to gregg@teamsrock.com.