Preparing for the Modern Workplace

Agenda

- Triaging inflow

- Channel Selection

- Encoding effective messages

You have a message...

- To Respond or Not Respond that is the question......

- And how

- And when

> Not responding is a response
>
> ~ Jonathan Carroll

OODA Loop

- Observe, Orient, Decide, and Act

- Developed by the US Military

- OODA loop is a decision process for assessing incoming information and making decisions

Message Triage

MANAGE
Crises & Pressing Problems

1

DEMAND + NECESSITY
DAILY FIRE-FIGHTING
BE QUICK TO DELEGATE

IMPORTANT AND URGENT

Message Triage

- Scan for messages

  - from clients, boss, or coworkers needing immediate attention

  - subjects you have been tracking

  - unusual/unexpected needing attention

Message Triage

- React with care

- Pause for emotional reactions

- Reread/Listen for key points

- Act or Delegate

Message Triage

- Automation doesn't eliminate need for actively reviewing message inflow

- Rules for deciding and acting

  - David Allen 2 minute rule

- Rules for filtering

  - Sort by projects, people, and priorities

FOCUS
On Strategies & Values
2
OPPORTUNITY + PLANNING
KEEP CRITICAL THINKING
CONSIDER THE MACRO
IMPORTANT NOT URGENT

Message Triage

Handled

Read Later

Pending Requests

Requiring Response

Message Triage

- Don't become a slave to your incoming messages

- Set time aside for message checking

- Illusion of productivity when only responding to messages

AVOID
Interruptions & Busy Work

3

ILLUSION + DECEPTION
NOT YOUR EMERGENCY
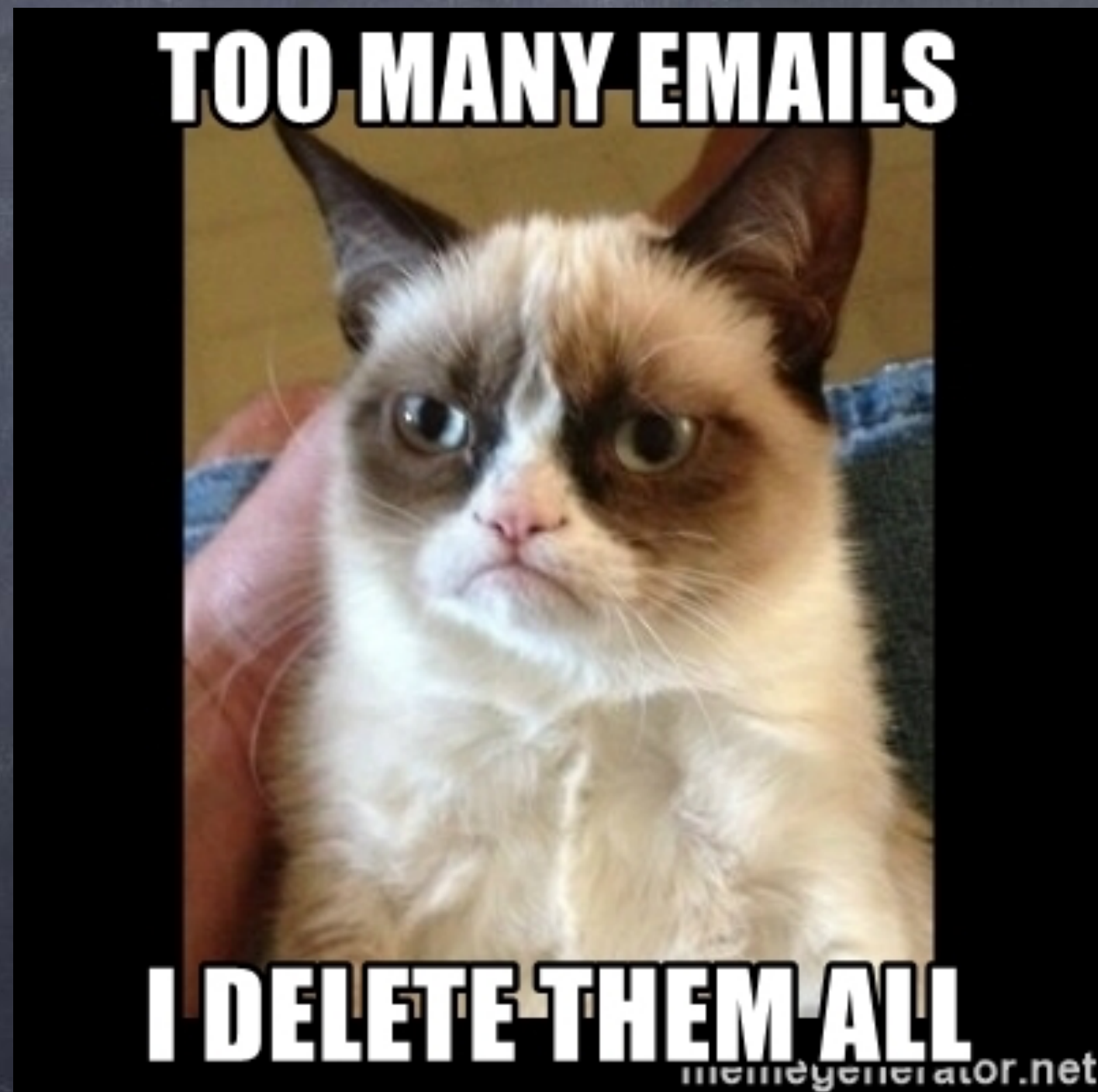MINIMIZE INVESTMENT

URGENT NOT IMPORTANT

Message Triage

- Don't be distracted by incoming alerts (badge icons, sound prompts, etc)

- Avoid checking messages in non-work hours

  - Setup rules to elevate priority messages to get your attention without regularly checking

Message Triage

LIMIT
The Trivial & Wasteful
4
ESCAPE + WASTE
ENTERTAINMENT ONLY
USE TO MINIMIZE STRESS

NOT IMPORTANT OR URGENT

- Limit time sucking messages

- Beware of messages masking themselves as 'urgent'

- Route non-important messages to accounts and folders you check less frequently

- Don't use work channels for non-work related mailing lists, etc

What is inbox zero?

A process system to manage your inflows from ridiculous to zero

Principles

- Process to zero

- Convert to actions

- More than checking, less than responding

Cost-Benefit

- Up front costs to regain control of your inbox

- Long term benefit to better inflow management

- Increased productivity

- Less difficulty finding important messages

Processing

- 🗑 Delete
- ➡ Delegate
- ✉ Respond
- 🕐 Defer
- ✓ Do

Delete

- Read/Listen once and if you don't need it delete it
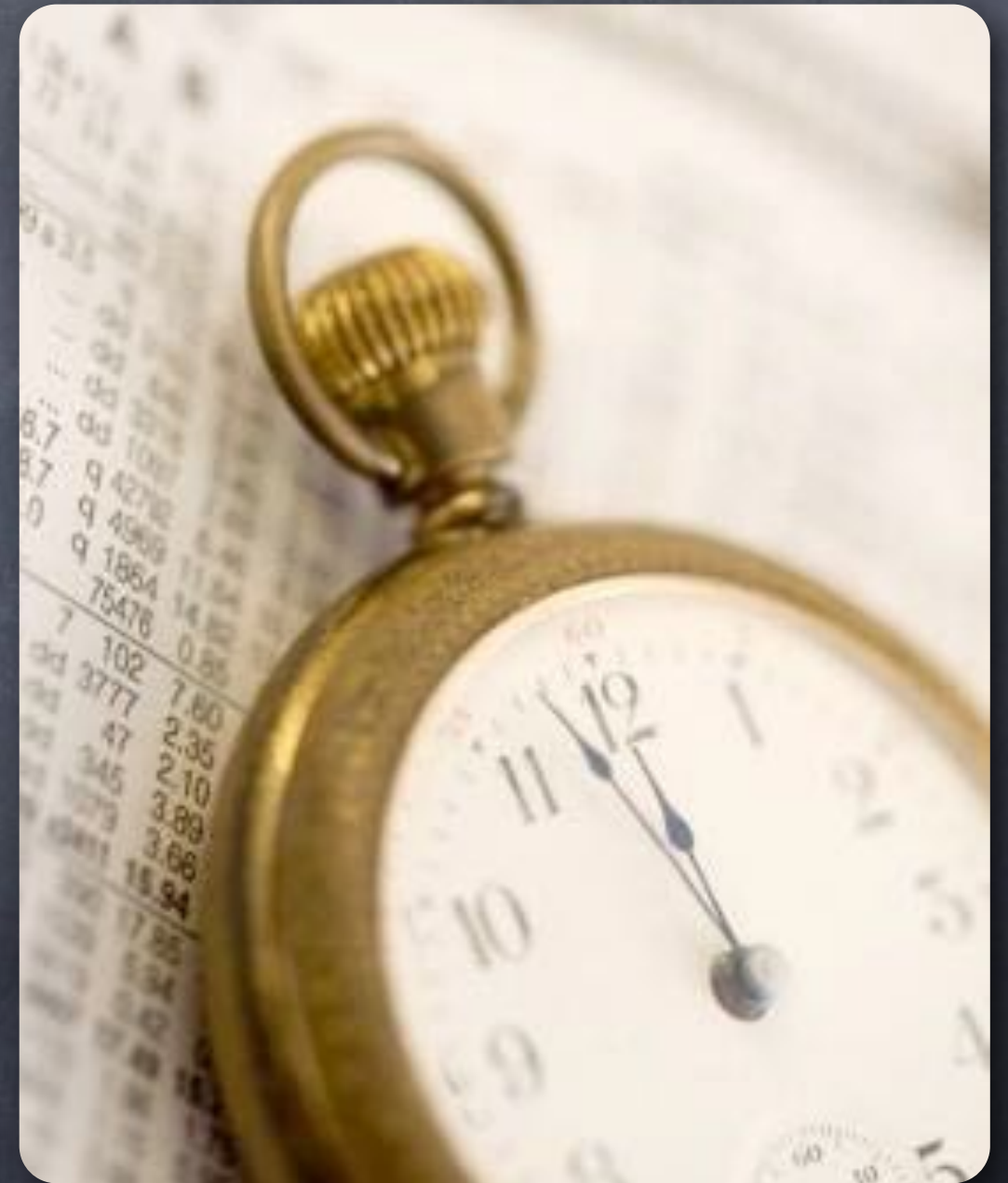
- Such as

    - Thank you

    - Acknowledgements

    - Mass Messages

Delegate

- Delegate anything that shouldn't be requiring attention

- If needed, file the message in a folder to follow-up on with whoever you delegated the action

Respond

- If you can respond quickly, do so

   - Merlin Mann defines quickly as less than 5 minutes

    - David Allen 2 minute rule

Defer

- Create a folder called Requiring Response to store messages you need to respond at a later date

- This way all those messages are in the same place rather than a long list in your inbox

- After responding, you can move them out of the Requiring Response folder to Handled

Do

- A mantra of In Box Zero is *Do and Move on*. Convert an message into action, process and do what is needed. Then move onto the next message.

- This could be Read/Listen
  - and File
  - and Delete
  - and Reply
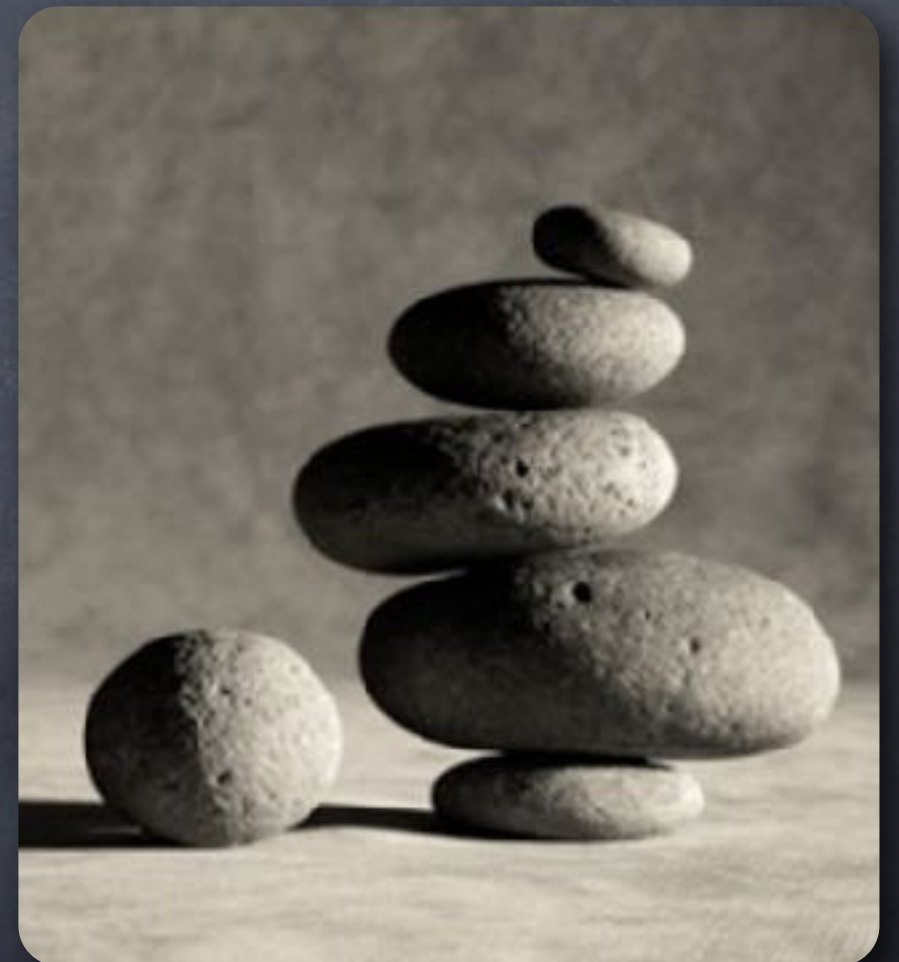
Channel Selection

Channel Selection

- Channel switching versus maintaining

- Recipient preferences

- Generational differences

- Possibility for misunderstandings

- Need for documentation/record keeping

- Channel advantages/disadvantages

Face to Face

Physical co-presence facilitates more nonverbal channels for feedback

Possibility for clarification and reducing uncertainty

Channel overload

Environmental distractions

Does not eliminate possibility for misunderstandings

Email

👍	👎
• Message planning capacity	• Delayed receiver processing
• Degree of formality/ informality	• Message reception not guaranteed
• Record keeping	• Poor wording -> misunderstandings

Phone

Real time feedback

Less nonverbal "noise" compared to FtF and Video-Mediated channels

Voice cues are information rich in addition to message text

Turn-taking cues

Local sensory distractions

More onerous record keeping

Video Mediated

- Appearance cues useful for non-acquainted communicators

- Information sharing not possible by words alone

- Possibility for clarification and reducing uncertainty

- Cognitive distractions from technology

- Technical issues/ quality

Text-based

Between synchronous and asynchronous

Short messages and possible misunderstandings

Wording conventions not universally known

Degree of formality

Sending not equal Read

Channel Selection

- Legal issues

  - Discovery

  - Privacy

  - Termination

Channel Selection

- **Project Management**

  - **Internal v External**

  - **Record keeping requirements**

  - **Messaging purpose**

  - **Timing requirements**

Message Encoding

Formulating messages

- **Encoding** is an internal activity in which verbal and nonverbal behaviors are selected and arranged according to rules of grammar and syntax applicable to the language being used to create a message
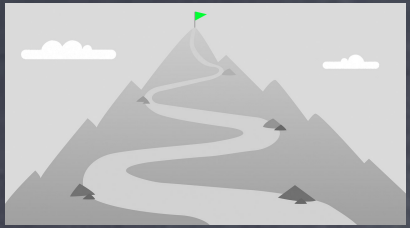
Effective Encoding

Lacks Ambiguity
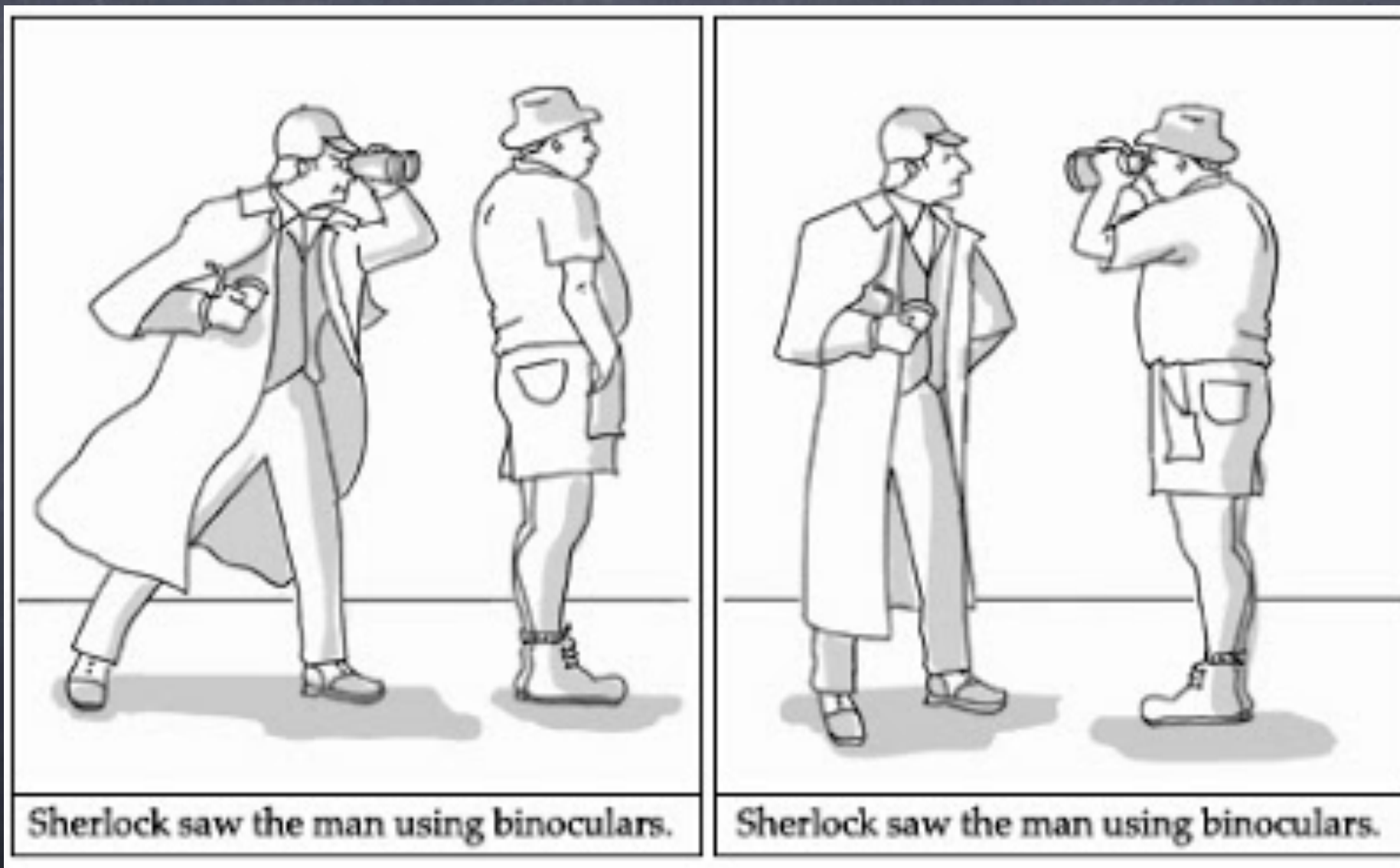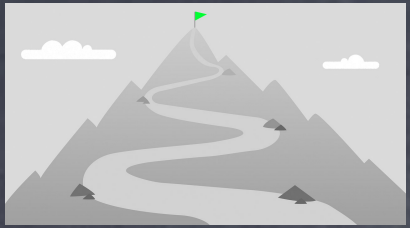
Effective Encoding

Lacks Ambiguity

- **Business communication is not flirting***
  (*side note, directness might be more effective than flirting in social situations*)

- **Be direct, not nuanced**

- **Word/Language selection**

- **Active voice, not passive voice**

Effective Encoding
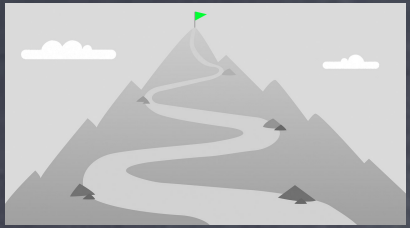
Tailored for recipient

- Recipients are not universally the same (age, communication styles, channel preferences)

- Not all recipients have the same background knowledge on a topic

- Individual versus Mass distributed messages

Effective Encoding

Conveys intentions

- Seek to minimize decoding errors

- Articulate idea/goal/proposal assertively

- Minimize noise with too much wordiness/non-important information

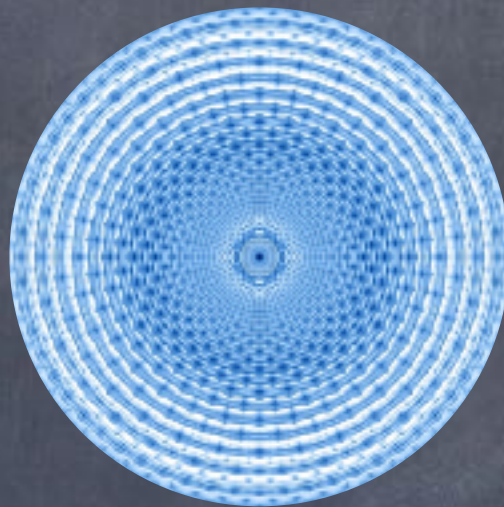# Effective Encoding

Channel Selection

- Channel switching versus maintaining based on

  - Topic (project update v HR issue)

  - Recipient/s

  - Channel options

  - Channel structural affordances

Channel Structural Affordances

Richness

Synchronous

Immediacy

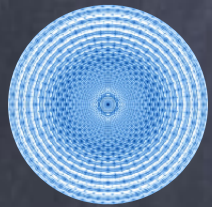Proximity

Mutuality

Channel Structural Affordances
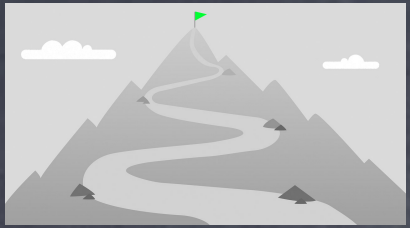
	Ftf	Phone	Video	Text	Email
Richness					
Synchronous					
Immediacy					
Proximity					
Mutuality					

Effective Encoding

Channel Selection

- Take away - communication channels all have advantages and disadvantages for their selection and use. The key is to be aware of their differences and make encoding decisions on the channel to best help you to achieve your purpose without ambiguity.