

Email Is Great But Face-to-Face Meetings Are 34 Times More Successful

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7-8 minutes

If your goal is to communicate, talking is a lot better than typing.

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We have all of the advances in communication technology -- Skype, FaceTime, Slack. etc. Yet, nothing beats a good, old fashioned email. It's quick, easy-to-use and, best of all, it's free.

Email remains one of the most effective and important marketing channels for brands. It's even popular among millennials since they don't enjoy talking to people on the phone. I love email but recent research has found that it may not as persuasive as talking to someone face-to-face.

The research was reported in [Harvard Business Review](#) and published in the [Journal of Experimental Social Psychology](#). It suggests the success of a face to face is due to the lack of personal connection we experience today. The lack of actual one-on-one connection to someone can ultimately cost us what we really want.

For the study researchers Mahdi Roghanizad and Vanessa K. Bohns instructed 45 participants to each ask 10 strangers to

complete a survey. Half of the volunteers sent their requests via email while the other half found people to ask in person. *The exact wording was used for both groups.*

The experiment found that the face-to-face requests were 34 times more likely to garner positive responses than the emails. As Bohns explained in the *Harvard Business Review*: “In our studies, participants were highly attuned to their own trustworthiness and the legitimacy of the action they were asking others to take when they sent their emails. Anchored on this information, they failed to anticipate what the recipients of their emails were likely to see: an untrustworthy email asking them to click on a suspicious link.”

However, the researchers did not look into how these results would have differed if the participants had contacted acquaintances instead. It’s possible that asking someone you know as opposed to a stranger through email would have better results.

There’s something about face-to-face communication that email, or any text-based communication for that matter, just can’t top.

Personal communication seems best - whether you know the person or not. You should never underestimate the power of face-to-face communication.

1. Nonverbal cues.

Body language is extremely important when it comes to communication. It’s not how you said something, but also your facial expressions and body posture. All of these cues are lost in emails.

In fact, around [93 percent of communication effectiveness](#) is determined by nonverbal cues. And, that’s not limited to

strangers. [Studies](#) have have found that even you closest friends can't interpret your emotions in emails.

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2. Authentic, trust building experience.

All people, even [millennials](#), still demand intimate and face-to-face encounters to build a more authentic and trustworthy relationship. At some point we should communicate with other people through a webcam, FaceTime, or conference tools like GoToMeeting.

3. The power of touch.

According to [Psychology Today](#), humans are wired to interpret the touch of our fellow humans. Touch can promote bonding and cooperation. Studies have found that seemingly insignificant touches yield bigger tips for waitresses. People shop and buy more if they're touched by a store greeter. Strangers are more likely to help someone if a touch accompanies the request.

4. Drives participation.

Maybe it has something to do with [mimicry and mirroring](#). When you're in the same room with someone else it encourages them to engage and participate in whatever action is going on. So, if you ask a colleague to do a task, there's a good chance that the person next to them is going to get moving instead of sitting there doing nothing.

5. More efficient.

Face-to-face meetings are usually shorter than conference calls. That's probably because when on the phone everyone sits there quietly with their phones on mute until the discussion is over. I've been guilty of this numerous times.

Since you can't pick-up on body language, you can't see how disengaged the audience is. This action can keep you rambling on while the attendees start to drift in and out. With face-to-face situations you can pick-up these non-verbal cues, which in turn pressures you to get directly to the point.

6. Easier to sell yourself.

It's much more difficult to sell yourself over an email. Take [Marie Forleo](#) and [Gary Vaynerchuk](#), for example. They're both extremely charismatic people who were born to be in front of the camera. No matter how knowledgeable they are, reading a piece of text from them is nowhere near as engaging as watching one of their videos.

The takeaway.

Make face-to-face communication a priority whether it's meeting a prospective client for the first time or scheduling semi-regular meetings with your team.

[If you can't do so in person](#), then at least use your webcam or apps like Skype. It's not exactly the same, but it's going to be more effective than only email communication - especially when you have a request. According to Bohns:

"If your office runs on email and text-based communication, it's worth considering whether you could be a more effective communicator by having conversations in person. It is often more

convenient and comfortable to use text-based communication than to approach someone in-person, but if you overestimate the effectiveness of such media, you may regularly--and unknowingly--choose inferior means of influence."

Getting rejected in-person sucks. But, is that fear of rejection really worth avoiding a face-to-face when it's *far* more likely that you're going to get a "yes" instead of a "no?"