DIGITAL BODY LANGUAGE STYLE GUIDE

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Email

The Audience

Hierarchy may matter. In certain corporate cultures, people can read a lot into where they're placed in the order of recipients. Think of the To, Cc, and Bcc lines as the old-school order you would sit in a meeting or at the family dinner table. The boss goes at the head, and everyone else falls in line after that depending on their importance.

Mirror the culture. In general, this channel is the appropriate one for the more formal digital communications in your workplace. If you work in a staid, conservative culture, remember to include the appropriate formal greetings, closings, and signatures. If you work in a more informal culture, use your best judgement but make sure to mirror the formality of the other party appropriately.

> *Do: Dear Mr. Robinson, ... Sincerely, Erica Dhawan, CEO*
> *Don't: Mr.Robinson, ... Erica*

The Timing

Email is getting faster. A 2015 study by the USC Vertebi School of Engineering found that 50% of email responses were sent within an hour. For those between the ages of 20 and 35, that number went down to a mere 16 minutes. Participants between ages 35 and 50 typically answered within 24 minutes; and those above the age of 50 took about 47 minutes to reply. In the time since that study, I would argue that we are only getting faster. More of us are responding using our mobile phones, leading to a halved response time.

Value others with a "read receipt." Because email is becoming a faster paced channel, try to let the other party know if you've received their email but need more than a few hours to respond. It's better to reply with a quick "Got it! I'll get back to you by Tuesday," than to leave the recipient waiting and potentially getting anxious or feeling disrespected.

The Structure

Use the subject line to set the tone. Leaving it blank is a wasted opportunity. In addition, it can be interpreted as informal and maybe even disrespectful, especially by an older recipient. Consider this: how do email marketers get you to click on their message? Why do you click on a specific marketing or ad email over the flurry of other emails flooding your inbox? Hint: it's the catchy subject line that draws you in. At work, you're marketing yourself. You want others to prioritize your requests. Think like a marketer selling those requests, starting with a specific and action-oriented subject line.

> *Do: Roadside Inc Project Report Final Edits / Review by EOD 4/10*
> *Don't: Project Report*

Be direct. There's no need to restate the subject line right away, but skip the pleasantries. For the most part, business emails don't necessitate asking questions like, "How's your day?" or wondering how the kids are doing. Get to the point.

Proofread for clarity, not just grammar. Just because you're writing to coworkers who see you every day doesn't mean they will automatically understand you. Don't be cryptic. Reread your email and ask yourself, If I wasn't in my own head, would I understand my message? This can be a difficult skill to develop, so ask for feedback from the receiver or another proofreader and take note of when your recipient responds with something other than what you wanted or asks for clarification.

> <u>Do</u>: Let's remove the last page and reduce the total number of pages to 20
> <u>Don't</u>: This document is too long

Pro Tips

1) Use "Reply All" sparingly. Generally, this is only necessary if it's a one-time team announcement or notification.

2) Clear the deck. If your email chain has gone on for more than three or four rounds of back-and-forth, your entire subject line is likely now a row of Re: and Fwd:. Replace those with a relevant, concise, action-oriented subject line for the email you're about to send.

3) Avoid anxiety-inducing subject lines like "Please call me" or "See CEO in his office." They're the workplace equivalent of "we need to talk" and are never necessary. This is not what we mean by "action-oriented." Brief does not mean lacking context.

4) If you need to add a link, embed it into text by highlighting the relevant words and using the Insert Link function available in most popular email programs. If your company works on an internal server, you can highlight the location of a document and embed that into the text in the same way.

When should an email conversation switch to a different medium?

Emails longer than 5 sentences tend to get skimmed over! For more complex topics and assignments, either opt for a phone call or meeting or make sure you're using bullet points, bold and italic text, and highlighting the action points at the close of the email. Do I or the other person need more context outside of email? If so, then the discussion requires a face-to-face or phone meeting.

Text and Instant Messaging

The Audience

It's casual. In general, your audience for these channels should be informal. The shorthand, emojis, and exaggerated punctuation we use to create tone in texts and IMs are not generally appropriate for formal discussions. In a professional setting, try to write in complete sentences, but don't feel the need to write out every word. Common abbreviations are okay.

The Timing

These channels are meant to be, you guessed it, instant. For the most part, responses are expected within the hour, although most come within 3 minutes or less! If you receive a text during a meeting and are unable to respond within that hour-long timeframe, it's best to let the recipient know the reason for the delay in your response. It may seem unnecessary, but it can help to diffuse any anger or annoyance that started to develop as they waited for a response.

Create boundaries. Unfortunately, the instant nature of these channels can be misleading. People are often tempted to use text and IM outside of work hours and still expect a quick response. It's perfectly reasonable to set boundaries if you wish to do so. If it's the first time, respond to the off-hour text with a quick message alerting the sender to the fact that you won't be responding until work hours. That way, you show that you received the message while avoiding frantic follow-ups and sticking to your own boundaries.

The Structure

Less structure is better. Because these are informal channels, there is no reason to include a subject line, formal greeting, or signature. Doing so demands an awkward increase in formality that has no place in this shorthand medium.

> Do: Hey, so nice to connect! Just wanted to shoot you a text so that you have my number. - Erica
>
> Don't: Hello Stephanie, This is Erica. We met at the 2020 World Leadership Conference Dinner. I enjoyed connecting with you! Here is my phone number. Best, Erica

Choose your shorthand wisely. Only use abbreviations that are widely known and that you would say aloud. For example, "LMFAO" is widely known, but you probably wouldn't say that aloud in a professional context. On the other hand, "np" (no problem) is both widely known and something that you could say in the office.

> Do: np, talk soon
> Don't: LMFAO ya sure man, cya

Get to the point. Even more so than emails, texts and instant messages should only be used for information that doesn't necessitate an in-person conversation or a phone call. Keep texts to 2-3 sentences max.

> *Do: Hey Erica, are you available to meet to discuss a new project this week? Would anytime Tuesday and Thursday 1-5pm work for a 30 min call?*
>
> *Don't: Dear Erica, How have you been? I'm starting a new project around collaboration in our office and thought of you. I would love to catch up.*

Pro Tips

1) Create a standard acronym list for common phrases. (NNTR = no need to respond; SOS = urgent)

2) Don't send confidential information via text and IM! Remember even encrypted texts can be recorded by a screenshot.

When should a text or IM conversation switch to a different medium?

1. Don't text or IM someone "hey, do you have a minute" and then go on to explain an entire task in a follow-up paragraph. In that case, just call them.
2. If it's enough of an emergency to warrant a text outside of reasonable work hours (7am-7pm), it probably warrants a phone call. If it doesn't, it can wait.
3. If you need a record of the conversation, switch to email.

Video Meetings and Conference Calls

The Audience

Make introductions, if necessary. Virtual meetings, especially when tuning in from home, have the potential to feel more personal and uncomfortable than in-person meetings. If you're chatting with people you don't work with on a daily basis, it can be awkward or intrusive to have them looking into your home office. Ensure that everyone is identified, with their position, at the start of the meeting and give some time for a bit of social chatter before beginning.

The Timing

Keep it short and sweet. We're used to face-to-face meetings and conference sessions that last over an hour. In that kind of three-dimensional environment, participants have a full range of stimuli, fewer outside distractions, and are generally more easily engaged for longer periods of time. Virtual events leave much more room for distractions and multitasking, but a planned structure and a ticking clock can help. Productive virtual meetings have a predetermined time frame and perhaps also a predetermined number of ideas that each member will bring.

> <u>Do</u>: *Ask your team to bring 3 solutions to a Zoom meeting that will be capped at 60-minutes.*
>
> <u>Don't</u>: *Schedule a 3-hour Zoom meeting and forget to send out an agenda that your team can use to prepare.*

The Structure

Raise your hand. A great advantage of a video chat is that there are often built-in mechanisms for hand-raising (the space bar can generate hand-raising on Zoom). This can help avoid the issues common with phone calls, namely, people speaking over each other or cutting each other off. If your software doesn't have a "hand raise" feature, it's easy to establish one in a side chat box. Designate a signal—perhaps an asterisk—that will allow your team members to ask for their turn in the conversation. This does require careful moderating and good leadership. Make sure you aren't skipping anyone's hand raise, and try to ask for opinions from those who haven't volunteered.

Require that all participants be on camera. As a rule, if their camera is on, yours should be too. The camera gives us back some of the body language cues that are usually stripped from digital communication. It also allows your team members to see that everyone is fully engaged in the conversation. If you're scrolling Instagram or having a snack, everyone in the room can see you.

Always have a moderator or MC. Having a consistent face and voice that "stitches together" the virtual sessions for participants adds much-needed familiarity and helps alleviate the isolated feeling that online events can sometimes produce. The best way to implement this is to have the event moderator open up the conference or meeting and then take charge of staying on the agenda and moderating questions for speakers as they pop up in the sideline chat.

Pro Tips

1) Test your technology. Especially if you haven't used it in more than a few days, open your software before the scheduled time and test both your video and microphone quality. This will save the entire team time and will allow you to skip the "CAN YOU HEAR ME?" section of the schedule.

2) Insist that everyone use the mute button to help prevent audio feedback and keep breathing, writing, and fidgeting noises (aka distractions) to a minimum.

3) Slow down. Practice the 5-second rule and wait 5 seconds before speaking after you ask a question. This gap allows your team to process and accounts for the few seconds that an individual may wonder "Is someone else going to speak up first?" before speaking up themselves.

When should a video call switch to a different medium?

Just like in-person meetings, ask yourself the 5 P's and cut out any digital meetings that don't have a clear purpose or are missing a key factor for success.

Purpose: Does the meeting have a clearly defined purpose?
Participants: Are all of the relevant parties (and only the relevant parties) invited and able to attend?
Probable Issues: What are the concerns that could likely arise?
Product: What do we want to have produced when we are done?
Process: What steps should we take during the meeting to achieve the purpose, given the product desired and potential issues we may face?

About the Author

Erica Dhawan is the world's leading authority on 21st century Collaboration and Connectional Intelligence.

She challenges audiences and organizations to innovate further and faster, together. Her newest book – Digital Body Language – decodes the new signals and cues of effective collaboration and teamwork in a digital-first human workplace.

Erica Dhawan is the Founder & CEO of Cotential, a global organization that helps companies, leaders, and managers leverage 21st century collaboration skills and behaviors to improve game changing performance.

She is the co-author of the bestselling book Get Big Things Done: The Power of Connectional Intelligence, named #1 on What Corporate America is Reading. Dhawan was named by Thinkers50 as "The Oprah of Management Ideas" and featured as one of the Top 20 Management Experts around the world by GlobalGurus. She hosts the award-winning podcast 'Masters of Leadership.'

Erica speaks on global stages ranging from the World Economic Forum at Davos and TED to companies such as Coca-Cola, Fedex, Goldman Sachs, Walmart, SAP, and Cisco. Erica writes for Harvard Business Review, Forbes, Fast Company. She has degrees from Harvard University, MIT Sloan, and The Wharton School.

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Value Visibly Assessment

The goal of the Value Visibly pillar is simple – making everyone feel appreciated in the workplace. Use the techniques in this module to ensure that you are consciously valuing your team in digital spaces. Use the following assessment to analyze whether Value Visibly is present on your team. Check one box next to each statement. The more you 'Strongly Agree,' the higher the level of Value Visibly in your organization.

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Excellent work is acknowledged and rewarded in your organization.				
Your expertise and skills are valued and deployed.				
Your time is respected.				
You are not overworked or burnt out.				

Communicate Carefully Assessment

Use the following assessment to analyze whether Communicate Carefully is present on your team. Simply check the box beside each statement that most closely resembles your level of agreement with the statement. The more "Strongly Agree" boxes are checked, the higher the level of Communicating Carefully in your organization.

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
You understand the specific goals and objectives of each team project.				
After each meeting, you are clear on next steps and have minutes to look back on just in case.				
Your team has a clear set of norms regarding channel selection and response time.				
You understand what is being asked of you in the messages you receive.				

Collaborate Confidently Assessment

Use the following assessment to analyze whether Collaborate Confidently is present in your workplace. Simply check the box beside each statement that most closely resembles your level of agreement with the statement. The more "Strongly Agree" boxes are checked, the higher the level of Collaborating Confidently is in your organization.

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Teams update one another regularly and follow up appropriately.				
Your manager or team leader is readily available for questions and support.				
Deadlines are honored and valued.				
Members of your team always feel welcome to speak up if they disagree with a majority opinion.				

Trust Totally Audit

Value Visibly

- Do we feel that our time is respected?
- Do we feel like our best work is acknowledged and celebrated?
- Do we feel comfortable voicing concerns?

Communicate Carefully

- Do we feel there is a common understanding of priorities and next steps?
- Do we have a clear understanding of which channels to use and when?
- Do we use clear language and word choice to foster understanding?

Collaborate Confidently

- Are all of the appropriate stakeholders identified and aligned?
- Do we feel that the correct people are informed and cascading the messages appropriately?
- Is there consistency in communications across teams?

Trust Totally

- Do we give each other the benefit of the doubt when facing uncertainty?
- Do we show vulnerability?
- Do we create moments for informal social connections?

Getting to Trust Totally

In this course, you have learned practices that help build the foundations necessary to achieve a culture of optimal clarity and supercharged collaboration –– a Trust Totally culture. The questions below are divided into four categories: General Digital Communication, Collaboration Tools, Team Spirit, and Meeting Culture. In each section, consider the four pillars we've discussed: Value Visibly, Communicate Carefully, Collaborate Confidently, and Trust Totally.

General Digital Communication

- Value Visibly: Slow down and proofread your communications as though they were presentations. Re-read what you've written, making sure your message is free of typos and confusing language. Simultaneously check for clarity, and make sure your recipient knows what you expect in response.

- Communicate Carefully: Don't rely too much on shorthand or send messages that are too general. If you want to be brief, agree on, and adopt a team-wide set of acronyms to increase efficiency and clarity in digital communications.
  - E.g.: WINFY: What I Need From You
  - E.g.: NNTR: No Need to Respond????
  - E.g.: 4H: I need this in 4 hours

- Collaborate Confidently: Assume the best intentions when you read digital communications. Remember: you are missing body language and tone cues from others, which can cause us to misinterpret directness or speed with rudeness.

Questions for Reflection

- What are some of the recent digital communication mishaps that have happened among your team?
- Is your team made up of more digital adapters, more digital natives, or a combo?
- How is this reflected in your digital communications?
- Think of the last time that team communications made you anxious, confused, or angry. Why? Were your feelings confirmed, or was the situation a misunderstanding?
- What is the biggest hindrance or annoyance you encounter on a daily basis when communicating digitally across the team?

Collaboration Tools

- Communicate Carefully: Create guidelines for channel selection based on message length, expected response time, and the amount of information being transmitted. Make sure these guidelines are easily available to the entire team, especially new hires.
    - E.g.: When digitally discussing sensitive client information, we only use our corporate email accounts. We do not share this type of information with each other using text messaging, IMs, or any other digital channels.

- Collaborate Confidently: Establish expectations for the appropriate timing involved in each tool, including response time, and whether certain tools are off-limits during nonworking hours.
    - E.g.: Please respond to all work emails within 24 hours. If you have not received a response during that time, reach out to the recipient by phone or text.
    - E.g.: Please do not send text messages regarding work tasks between the hours of 8:00 p.m. and 5:00 a.m. on any day of the week. Use your best judgment in determining whether a message is urgent enough to sidestep this guideline.

- Value Visibly: Find a handful of people who are most adept at each channel. These people can help you create guidelines and expectations, and also function as channel advocates, gently course-correcting team members who fall outside of the appropriate usage.

Questions for Reflection

- How many collaboration tools does your team use on a daily basis?
- Personally speaking, which collaboration tools personally help you thrive? Consider the potential reasons why (we've discussed many of them in this book), which can range from sheer familiarity to your preference for formality.
- Alternately, which collaboration tools do you find yourself avoiding? Is there someone in your organization who uses X or Y collaboration tool especially well?
- What are they doing that you are not?
- Does your team have an established set of norms for when each tool is to be used?
- Which channels do you use most often as a team, and what does this say about your team culture?

Team Spirit

- Trust Totally: Create digital watercooler moments. Allow for social chatter before meetings, or create group messaging chains specifically designed for conversations that go beyond work tasks.

- Value Visibly: Create spaces for celebration. Share inspiration with your team in the form of interesting articles, podcasts, or books.

- Value Visibly: Encourage your team to show appreciation by giving each other shout-outs or starting meetings with MVP awards or "Wins of the Week." One company I worked with celebrated new talent by creating a personal emoji for each employee who had been there for six months. You can find your own unique way to create team spaces for social connection. How you do it is less important than whether or not you do it.

Questions for Reflection

- Are there "cliques" among your team members? How can you bridge the gap between those groups and form a stronger bond as an entire team?
- Is there one team member who almost always speaks the loudest? Is this person helpful or annoying? What are some of the ways you can get other voices to join in?
- Is there one team member who is almost always the quietest? How can you encourage that person to join in?
- How does your team deal with conflict? Are there any issues with passive-aggressive behavior? What are some tips you've learned in this book to help diffuse bad behavior and/or negative team dynamics?

Meeting Culture

- Communicate Carefully: Each meeting should be analyzed using the **5 Ps**:
  - **Purpose**: Does the meeting have a clearly defined purpose?
  - **Participants**: Are all the relevant parties (and only the relevant parties) invited and able to attend?
  - **Probable issue**s: What are the concerns that could likely arise?
  - **Product**: What do we want to have produced when we are done?
  - **Process**: What steps should we take during the meeting to achieve our purpose, given the product desired and potential issues we may face?

- Value Visibly: Audit your recurring meetings regularly. Every other meeting or so, ask yourself if these meetings are still necessary if all of the appropriate players are present, and how you can improve the next one.

- Communicate Carefully: Make sure that someone on the team is responsible for sending out notes and action items in an email after the meeting.

- Collaborate Confidently: Begin each meeting with five minutes of non-task-related conversation, where participants ask about one another's days or goals or discuss with each other if and where help is needed.

- Trust Totally: Leaders should ensure that quieter voices are contributing to meetings by rotating leadership, asking questions, and soliciting input across various mediums.

Questions for Reflection

- Think about your most recent meeting. Ask yourself the questions behind the 5 Ps. Are any of the answers "no"?
- In that most recent meeting, did you feel heard and respected?
- If not, identify the specific moments in which you felt silenced or disrespected. Can these be blamed on communication mishaps? Were you assuming the best intentions? Is it necessary to speak up on a different platform?
- How are your meetings generally scheduled? Peer-to-peer or using assistants? Do you tend to have conversations about the need for a meeting, or do you skip ahead to simply sending a meeting request without context?
- How can you change your scheduling process to make sure that everyone knows why the meeting exists and that the best time for everyone is chosen?

Trust Totally Quiz

This group exercise can be a great starting point for identifying your strengths and weaknesses during team meetings or retreats. Answer the following questions based on your individual responses within your team workplace.

1. You get a calendar reminder for a meeting scheduled to begin in an hour. You are . . .

> A. Clear on why you're invited and understand what's on the agenda, and you're happy to participate.

> B. Not totally sure of why you've been invited.

> C. Befuddled why you are still on this meeting invite, and you consider skipping it or canceling at the last minute.

2. During a typical meeting, the participants . . .

> A. Are all contributing equally, following the agenda, and sharing the lead based on their areas of expertise.

> B. Are generally engaged and following the agenda if there is one. The usual loud voices take up most of the time, and their ideas are good. The manager or team lead takes charge of the entire meeting.

> C. Are getting distracted, checking emails, or answering texts. No one is following the agenda, or there isn't one. The usual loud voices are forcibly interrupting others when they speak. There's tension in the air.

3. When your manager or team lead gives out deadlines, they . . .

> A. Crowd-source your team for what's realistic by considering overall workloads and outside forces that may create delays.

> B. Set the deadline on their own, or base it on the needs of clients (or other outside forces), and present it along with the task. Usually the deadlines are realistic, but sometimes they create a time crunch. It's okay with you since you can't really control clients or suppliers.

> C. They set completely arbitrary and unrealistic deadlines. They ask for days of work to be completed overnight. You are frustrated and overworked.

4. You're having a personal issue that is affecting your concentration, so you . . .

A. Let your team lead or manager know what's going on. You know that they will lend you support and understand any changes you may need to make to your workload.

B. Discuss it with a single trusted colleague but let no one else know. You do your best to get all of your work done and push through your day. You may have to move an important meeting to later in the week.

C. Don't tell anyone and make no changes to your workload or schedule.

5. You've been assigned a project, but you're not sure you have the expertise to complete it, so . . .

A. You decline the project or ask that a colleague with more expertise be assigned to work on it with you.

B. You don't share your concerns with the whole team, but you know where to find the resources you need to get the task done. You may enlist a trusted colleague to help you if they can spare the time.

C. You don't share your concerns with your team even though you have no idea where to find the resources you'll need to get the task done. You end up working a 60-hour week because you're turning your wheels and doing a lot of research.

6. Your team lead shares feedback . . .

A. Often. They include kudos in each meeting, along with regular feedback on individual projects that is both useful and specific. You're not afraid when they ask to meet with you to provide feedback. You have a system of scheduled, periodic evaluations, which you typically emerge from feeling equipped with actionable tips for improvement.

B. Sometimes. They provide feedback only at the end of large projects. You get concerned when they ask to meet to give you feedback, even if you know you haven't done anything wrong. You have periodic evaluations that are seldom useful.

C. Rarely or never. You only really hear feedback if something goes wrong. Your anxiety levels would soar if they asked you to meet for a feedback session.

7. Your organization's evaluations are . . .

    A. 360 degrees. Everyone on the team has an opportunity to hear from all levels. Leaders and executives get feedback from their subordinates. Peers are able to give each other feedback as well.

    B. A back-and-forth. Team leads get feedback from their subordinates. Subordinates get feedback from their team leads. Peers are not encouraged to share feedback with each other.

    C. One-sided. Team leads give feedback to their subordinates, but do not receive any. Peers are not encouraged to share feedback with one another.

8. When it comes to channel selection, your team . . .

    A. Has a clear set of norms regarding message length, expected response time, and the amount of information being transmitted. You never wonder which channel to use or get annoyed if another person uses the wrong one.

    B. Doesn't have a clear set of norms—but there isn't much confusion about it either. Usually, you're not concerned about which channel to use, but now and then you get annoyed by out-of-the-blue phone calls, confusing or cryptic emails, or inappropriate texts and IMs.

    C. Is a mess. You don't have any norms and there is often confusion. Messages are often chronically lost, or never get answered.

9. It's the night before a major presentation and your partner hasn't added their slides to the PowerPoint. You . . .

    A. Aren't too worried. You're sure they'll get it done. Just to be safe, you send a text that reads, "Hey, just checking in! My slides are all ready to be integrated with yours. Excited for tomorrow!"

    B. Are a bit worried that maybe they have the date wrong, or even forgot about it. You send them a text that says, "Hey, any idea when you'll be done with the project? Just wanted to be able to run through it before tomorrow's presentation . . ."

    C. Panic. You know they probably forgot, or else they expect you to do it yourself. You call them, and when they don't answer, you proceed to just do it yourself.

10. You feel like a valuable part of your team . . .

   A. All the time. You're asked to contribute regularly, and you feel comfortable sharing opinions and making suggestions. Your teammates and leaders often give you kudos for your contributions.

   B. When your area of expertise is front and center. You try to stay quiet when you're not 100 percent sure of your opinions. When you do speak up, your team acknowledges your good ideas.

   C. Rarely or never. You hold your tongue, and you complete your tasks narrowly. You seldom get recognition from the other members of your team for your work.

Results

Now, calculate your individual score with the following formula:

   (# of A x 3) + (# of B x 2) + (# of C x 1) = Total Score

Now, review the individual scores across the team (between 10 and 25). What you'll quickly notice is that team member experiences of clarity vary widely. Often, the leader of a team will have higher scores than their peers or some siloes will have higher scores than others. Identify the asymmetries in individual scores and discuss why they occur.

If score differences are between 10 and 15 points: Your team needs a lot of help. Jump to Getting to Trust Totally to get started.

If your score differences are between 3 and 10 points: Your team is doing fine, but you can do better. Focus on the Digital Body Language Style Guide.

If your score differences are below 3: Congratulations, you are close to being aligned across your team! Focus on the gaps identified in the questions.

Digital Styles Team Exercise

The questions below will help team members understand their own digital body language style, which they can then share with the group. Be on the lookout for similarities and differences. These can help you establish norms and avoid potential issues.

1. What's My Personal Digital Body Language Style?

2. What are the best channels for others to digitally communicate with me?

3. What are my digital body language pet peeves?

4. What do I value most when others communicate with me? (e.g., clarity, accountability, actionable-ness)

5. Am I a digital adapter or a digital native? How does this "demographic" affect how I perceive daily communications?

6. Is my digital style influenced by previous work cultures or bosses? How does this show up in my communications?

7. The best examples of positive digital body language I have experienced from others in each category:

   Emails:
   Group Chat:
   Meetings:

8. The worst examples of positive digital body language I have experienced from others in each category:

   Emails:
   Group Chat:
   Meetings:

9. When communicating with my team,

   I know they value my work. (Value Visibly)
strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐

   I understand exactly what others mean. (Communicate Carefully)
strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐

   I know what to do next and when it is due. (Collaborate Confidently)
strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐

   I assume the best intent. (Trust Totally)
strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐

10. What are norms we can set to improve our digital communications?

What Your Colleagues Can Tell You About Your Digital Body Language

This is a fun, quick, and incredibly useful way to get feedback, and it will help you assess the digital body language signals that you may or may not realize you're projecting.
Ask a colleague to identify which person best represents you: Alice, Betty, Charlie, or David.

Alice

The emails that Alice sends are short and to the point, but she always takes the time to craft a specific and useful subject line and proofread her emails for clarity. She may include a single pleasantry—"Have a great day!" or "Let me know if I can help further." She uses emojis as additions to texts and IMs. They don't take the place of words, but she'll usually add a smiley face or a thumbs-up to the end of a message to add some emotion. Generally, Alice answers emails within two or three hours, responds to texts within a few minutes, and answers calendar requests almost immediately. If she knows her response will be delayed, she always lets the other person know. In her team communication, she follows the norms in all communication guidelines, honoring issues around length, complexity, and familiarity.

Betty

Betty's emails are always polite. Even if she's apologetic about something, you'll never know it. Her most-used emoji is 😊. As for response times, it depends on the person who sent her the email. If it's her boss, she'll respond at once. If it's from someone she dislikes, she'll push against the boundaries of acceptable (but never too far).

Charlie

The emails Charlie sends always contain fewer than five sentences. It's like texting. You and Charlie tend to go back and forth using short emails. Charlie loves emojis, as a single image is much easier to type than a full sentence, and he easily substitutes emojis for words or even sentences. He is more than willing to sacrifice a few typos here and there for the sake of speed.

David

David sends lengthy emails that overflow with details, negating any need for a follow-up email or call. Sometimes his emails contain several paragraphs, bulleted lists, links, and attachments—whatever's necessary. He would never use emojis at work, as he sees them as unprofessional (plus, to be honest, he has no idea what some of them mean). He always triple-checks his messages before pressing *Send*.

Results

If you are mostly **Alice:**

Great job. The foundations of your communications are solid. How are you using it to propel your career forward?

If you are mostly **Betty:**

Depending on your work environment, your communications may come across as passive-aggressive or confusing. Work on these tips:

- Value Visibly: Remember to express appreciation with a simple "thanks" or letting someone know when they've done a good job.
- Communicate Carefully: Avoid sending messages when you're angry or frustrated.
- Collaborate Confidently: Be direct about what you need and what you are feeling.

If you are mostly **Charlie:**

You may be sacrificing clarity for speed and efficiency. Work on these tips:

- Communicate Carefully: Slow down. Ask yourself: Is it clear what the recipient needs to do, why, and by when?
- Collaborate Confidently: Avoid short, anxiety-inducing messages like "We need to talk" or "That might work."

If you are mostly **David:**

You may be sending messages that are too complex and, therefore, unclear: Try these tips:

- Communicate Carefully: Review when it's better to switch mediums. Bear in mind, too, that complexity is also a factor for channel selection.
- Collaborate Confidently: Get comfortable on phone and video calls! Sometimes we simply have too much to say, and it's easier to do so using a channel where the meaning of our words is enhanced by our tone and our ability to ask questions as they come up.