Seek the positive
Expect to be part of the solution
Respect all people and their opinions
Value collaboration
Evaluate effectiveness of processes
Methods of Communication

Face to Face

Face-to-face communication? How old-fashioned!

Face-to-face communication remains the most powerful human interaction. As wonderful as electronic devices are, they can never fully replace the intimacy and immediacy of people conversing in the same room.

Eye contact, facial expressions, body movements, space, time, distance, appearance – all of these nonverbal clues influence the way the message is interpreted, or decoded by the receiver.

Unconvinced? Just think about how often English speakers allude to the word face in every day conversation. In dozens of ways, people use this term to convey a variety of important ideas. Face it: Face-to-face communication is here to stay, despite our ability to circumvent it with a wide variety of electronic methods. How many times have you heard these phrases today, this week or this month?

- The nose on your face
- Face time
- Poker face
- Straight face
- Flat on his/her face
- Face-to-face
- Put on your best face

- Get out of my face
- Face value
- About face
- Saving face
- Facial expressions
- Face the music
- Two-faced

Simply put, face-to-face communication means the exchange of information, thoughts, and feeling when the participants are in the same physical space.

Face-to-face communication occurs in a wide range of business activities, including formal meetings, coffee room chitchat, hallway encounters, one-on-one coaching, evaluations, interviews, and more.

Face-to-face communication is, in effect, a relationship. When you are communicating with another individual, you are in a short-term partnership with that person.
Although electronic communication is nearly miraculous for many types of business interchange, it fails miserably in situations involving high levels of the following:

- **Conflict:** When people are extremely upset, it is almost impossible to cool down the situation from long distance.

- **Emotion:** Employees in great emotional distress respond more positively to in-person contact than to electronically transmitted messages.

- **Priority:** The situation involves the rollout of a plan, product, or idea essential to the success of the organization and the team—which needs to get together in the same room.

- **Title:** Sometimes, for whatever reason, it is wise to concede to the request of a higher level person to get together.

- **Money:** Issues involving money, often large amounts of money, are often settled more amicably face-to-face.

Like all communication, face-to-face involves a sender and a receiver. There usually is a give and take of roles. You take turns *talking*, which is sending, and *listening* which is receiving.

Face-to-face behaviors have two important elements: verbal and nonverbal. To get your point across the best, you need to master both.

Nonverbal communication includes these five factors:

- Body language
- Physical Appearance
- Voice
- Your respect for time
- Spatial arrangements

Verbal communication includes these three elements:

- Vocabulary
- Organization and structure of words into sentences
- Overall use of grammar

Despite all evidence of the value of having senders and receivers of important messages in the same room, many people often resist getting face-to-face with managers, co-workers, and customers.

Many excuses are offered, but the bigger truth is that face-to-face communication takes courage. It is not easy to confront an angry manager, speak to a large group, or get the attention of an executive in the hallway.
Face to Face, cont.

It is essential for you to acknowledge anxiety when you are deciding whether to deal with an interpersonal action face-to-face. It may be helpful to think of the following FACE acronym in these situations:

- **F** ace your fear about communicating with people in the same room rather than on the same intranet.
- **A** ct in the manner that will produce the best results—not necessarily the fastest or easiest.
- **C** hoose face-to-face communication if you are torn between two channels; think of in-person contact as your default.
- **E** ngage the receiver through your effective use of non-verbal and verbal techniques.
**Telephone**

The telephone is one of the most important tools in the communication process today. Carrying out a business conversation to get the desired results is an art. It is important for any organization to have well mannered employees with proper telephone etiquette. The telephone is our link to the outside world. Unfortunately, we do not always realize what kind of message we are sending to our callers. Here are some tips for business telephone etiquette.

1. If they do not identify themselves, ask the caller, “To whom am I speaking?”
2. Avoid unnecessary jargon and acronyms in your conversations.
3. Use the caller’s name in your conversation.
4. Practice good listening skills.
5. Make sure you speak clearly and are smiling as you answer the phone. Even though the caller can’t see your smile they will hear the smile in your voice. Also identify yourself.
6. Before placing a caller on hold, ask their permission first and thank them.
7. It is better to return a call than to keep someone on hold too long. If the phone rings back to you, you’ve kept them on hold too long.
8. Do not forget to return the call as you promised.
9. Do not permit the phone to ring into the office more than three times.
10. Always use a pleasant, congenial and friendly tone.
11. Never interrupt the person while he/she is talking to you.
13. Do not handle an unhappy caller’s concern loudly or in a public area.
14. Do not make it a habit of receiving personal calls at work.
15. Do not answer the phone if you are eating or chewing gum.
16. Do not give the perception that you are rushed. It is better to return the call when you can give the person the time they need to handle the reason for their call.
17. Learn how to handle several callers simultaneously with ease and grace.
18. Return calls promptly that have been left on your voicemail.
19. Always get the best number (and an alternate) and the best time to have a call returned to the caller, especially if a manager or another team member must return the call.
20. Always make confidential or sensitive call in private areas away from traffic flow or public areas.
21. Be considerate. Do not call a customer’s home before 8:00 AM or after 9:00 PM, unless they have given you permission to do so.
22. When hanging up the phone make sure you always hang it up gently. Never slam the phone on the receiver.
23. When you make a call, turn away from the computer, desk, and other work. Don’t allow other distractions to take your attention away from the caller.
24. Always have something available to write with.
25. Use a telephone voice in which you control your volume and the speed with which you speak. Always speak clearly.
26. Be enthusiastic and respectful.
27. If there is a problem, be concerned, empathetic, and apologetic.
28. Thank the caller for calling.
Voicemail

In our increasingly busy and complicated lives, it is nearly impossible to answer every phone call received. Voicemail has largely solved this problem in both personal and professional capacities, and as with general telephone etiquette there are several simple rules to remember when communicating through voicemail in a professional manner.

**Outgoing Messages:** A professional outgoing voicemail message should be recorded clearly and include several important pieces of information.

1. Your full name and phone number.
2. That you are unavailable to answer the phone at the moment.
3. How to leave an appropriate message. If you have an alternate phone number, a fax number or an email address include those here as necessary.
4. When you will return the call. Generally, all calls should be returned within 24 hours whenever possible. If you are planning on going out of town on vacation and will not be able to answer the call, update your outgoing message to reflect this. Do not forget to change this when you return. (TIP: Call your number and leave yourself a reminder to change your voicemail message when you return).

**Incoming messages:** Establishing a professional outgoing message is important, but the majority of your experience with using voicemail will generally center on leaving effective messages. Many of the previous rules of telephone and outgoing messages also apply here, in addition to a few additional rules.

1. Speak slowly and clearly. Leave your name and phone number at both the beginning and the end of the message. If necessary, include your email address or fax number.
2. Be concise. Do not ramble and limit comments to one or two topics. Keep messages short in order to maintain listener focus and concentration.
3. If you require a specific action be taken, state it clearly. Do not simply leave a message telling the person to call you back.
4. Avoid playing tag by suggesting that the receiver leave a voicemail with any comments, concerns or questions should you not be able to answer their call.
5. Do not include the date and time when recording your message, most voicemail systems automatically record them.
6. If necessary, write out a script in advance.

Voicemail and email has given us the opportunity to respond to questions and inquiries at our convenience. A mastery of both common means of communication is essential for success in the professional world. As with all skills, effective communication must be practiced and prepared for. By being cognizant of these simple rules and applying them to your future conversations, you will appear more professional, intelligent, prepared and confident.
Email

Since email is part of the virtual world of communication, many people communicate in their email messages the same way they do in virtual chat rooms: with much less formality and sometimes too aggressively. Email etiquette offers some guidelines that everyone can use to facilitate better communication between themselves and their readers.

What is email etiquette? Email etiquette refers to a set of dos and don’ts that are recommended in response to the growing concern that people are not using their email effectively or appropriately.

One overall point to remember is that an email message does not have non-verbal expression to supplement what we are “saying.” Most of the time we make judgments about a person’s motives and intentions based on their tone of voice, gestures, and their proximity to us. When those are absent it becomes more difficult to figure out what the message sender means. It is much easier to offend or hurt someone in email and that is why it is important to be as clear and concise as possible.

How do I know if I am using the correct etiquette?

There are a number of things to consider before clicking the “send” button on your email.

- How should I format my email?
- To whom am I sending my email?
- Can I send attachments?
- How long should my email be?
- Am I flaming someone? (And what does “flaming” mean?)
- When should I not send an email?

How should I format my email?

You are most likely familiar with the general rules about formatting email but here are some tips to keep in mind.

Be sure that your email is formatted to wrap text after about 70 characters. This keeps the email from looking disjointed. When you do not have a wrap around option for 70-80 characters then your email will most likely look like this:

Dear John,

I am really interested in renting your apartment but I need just a little bit more information. Do you have time to meet with me tomorrow afternoon around three or so?
Email, cont.

Usually settings for character length, in Outlook, will be found in the “tools” option on the tool bar. You can consult the help menu or give our IT Department a call.

Hear are some additional formatting tips to consider:

- Try to keep email brief (preferably to one page) so that readers do not have to scroll.
- Return emails in the same day.
- Use capitalization and punctuation in the same way you would in any other document. THERE’S NOTHING WORSE THAN AN EMAIL SCREAMING A MESSAGE IN ALL CAPS.
- Format your email to be sent in plain text rather than HTML because some email clients may not read HTML. (Note: Your email should already have been set to plain text).
- Write a salutation or greeting for each new subject email. However, if you exchange several emails over the same topic (for example, a meeting day and time) it is not necessary to include a greeting because it is as though you are carrying on a conversation. When we carry on conversations, we do not say hello each time we speak.
- Be sure to write an appropriate and specific subject in the subject line so that the recipient knows what to expect. For example: “April 22 staff meeting agenda” instead of “meeting.”

To whom am I sending my email?

It is always important to know who will receive your email, including the number of people who you have on the mailing list. This helps you in two ways. First, it helps you think about the tone of your writing. For example, while you still want to follow the traditional rules of writing, emails that you send to a department head may be more formal and brief than to a colleague. You will need to decide whether you need to use a person’s title or if writing the first name is appropriate.

Second, if you send an email to more than four people regularly you should create mailing groups so that the recipients do not need to scroll through names before they can get to the content of the email. It also helps to keep some email addresses anonymous, as some perceive it as rude for their names and email addresses to be posted for strangers to see.

You will need to talk with our IT Department if you do not know how to create a mailing group. A mailing group is a list of email addresses assigned to one name (like, University_Community@Wilmu.edu). You want to use names that make sense to you so that you can remember them. This is especially helpful when you are managing several mailing group lists.
Email, cont.

Emails are public documents, despite the fact that you may send an email to someone privately. Therefore, only include those statements in email that you can openly defend should your message be circulated to other parties. Remember emails can be subpoenaed in a legal action. Using emoticons (smiley faces, winks, etc.) and other virtual gestures is inappropriate and should not be used. Personal and/or religious phrases or quotes are also not appropriate in a business setting and should not be used.

Additionally, avoid sensitive information that could be potentially damaging to someone’s career and/or reputation, including your own. Beyond email’s general lack of security and confidentiality, your recipient can always accidentally hit the Forward button, leave his/her email account open on a computer, or print and forget that he/she printed a copy of your email.

Can I send attachments?

Yes, as long as you are sure that your recipient can receive them. Sending attachments is a normal practice when you are submitting documents for review or exchanging information in the workplace. Here are some tips to consider before attaching a document.

- Title the document that you are attaching in a way that is easy for the recipient to find once he or she downloads it to his or her files. For example, if you are sending a document that is your goal statement then title it “goalstatement.doc.”

- In the context of your email it would be appropriate to tell your recipient what type of software was used to create the document, the year/version, and the title of the attachment. For example: “The file attached is called ‘goalstatement.doc’ and it is in MSWord 2000.”

- Make sure that you do not send overly large attachments unless you are sure that your recipient’s Internet connection and email client can handle them. For example, a user on a 56K dialup would have to spend a long time downloading a 5M PowerPoint file, whereas a co-worker on a fast work connection would have no problem.

- Do not send unnecessary attachments – if you have already presented all of the relevant information in an email message, do not attach a Word document repeating the same information.

How long should my email be?

In general, the email should be approximately one page printed or the length of your computer screen before scrolling. However, there are times when email messages need to be longer to convey important information. Oftentimes organizations seeking to reduce their paper costs will use email as their primary source of communication.
Email, cont.

When you need to write a long email try to include three essential elements at the top of the email: (a) an executive summary at the top of the document, (b) how soon a response is required from the recipient(s), and (c) a table of contents.

An executive summary

This is a short summary of everything in the email document including the main goal of the email or the “bottom line.”

Required response

Because your reader is most likely going to read the first few lines of your document thoroughly and browse through the rest, if you need to have him or her respond by a certain time with certain information, that should be stated within the executive summary.

Table of contents

A table of contents allows the reader to pick and choose what sections of the email are most relevant to him or her. A person is most likely to comply with your requests when you make it easy to navigate your materials.

Am I flaming someone? (And what does “flaming” mean?)

Flaming is a virtual term for venting emotion or sending inflammatory emails. It is best to avoid flaming because it tends to create more conflict and tension. Flames are virtual food fights and are unproductive and injurious to the parties involved.

What you say cannot be taken back. Misinterpretations happen very easily in neutral emails because there is a lack of nonverbal expression to cue the recipient about your motives and intentions. You can imagine how much misinterpretation can occur when you are expressing frustration and/or anger.

Things to consider before venting in email:

- Would I say this to the person’s face?
- Am I putting the receiver in an awkward position?
- How would I feel if I got this email message?

Usually, by the time you consider the above questions you will be calm enough to write your message with a different approach. Catching someone by surprise in a flaming message is a quick way to alienate your reader mainly because they will react with anger or embarrassment.
Email, cont.

When should I not send an email?

There are many subjects that are too sensitive to discuss over email mainly because misinterpretation could have serious consequences. Some topics that should generally be resolved outside of email are:

- Disciplinary action
- Conflicts about grades or any personal information
- Concerns about students and/or co-workers
- Complaints

When it appears that a dialogue has turned into conflict, it is best to suggest an end to the swapping of email and for you to talk or meet in person. If you receive a flaming email try to respond in a short and simple response. If that does not appease the flamer then make contact with him or her outside the virtual realm.

Any violation of our email policies and procedures will be handled through our Progressive Disciplinary system.
**Instant Messaging (IM)**

Instant messaging is a type of real time communication service. It is somewhat like email, but much more like a chat room. Both parties are online at the same time, and they “talk” to each other by typing text in instantaneous time.

Instant messages are well suited for transmitting short amounts of information or written communication that needs to be received immediately, such as addresses, telephone numbers, purchase order numbers, delivery times, etc. The instant message can be “cut and pasted” into electronic databases.

Employees’ use of instant messaging should be limited to work related matters, except for incidental personal use. Incidental personal use of instant messaging by employees is permitted as long as it does not interfere with the employees’ work, the University’s operations, or use of communication facilities, and does not violate any policies. Employees should not use the instant message system to “visit” with colleagues about non-work-related subjects. Employees should always indicate when they are “in” or “out” of the office as well as whether or not they are “available” or “unavailable” for Instant Messaging.

When using instant messaging, employees are to follow University security procedures:

- All communications, including instant messages, that are transmitted, received or stored on University facilities (e.g., computer, modem, software, network, telephone lines, Internet service provider) are the sole property of the University. Accordingly, the University may access and monitor employee instant messages.

- The use of passwords does not imply any privacy. The system administrator can override personal passwords. Employees shall not disclose their codes or passwords to others. All passwords and all software used to encrypt instant messages are considered University property. Employees may not use personal encryption software for instant messages sent via University facilities.

- All instant messages are captured by system software and are subject to review by management. The University reserves the right to disclose the content of instant messages to third parties with notice to employees.

- Use of University facilities to send instant messages grants consent to use of software to capture content of instant messages and to review and disclose instant messages.

Employees should not use instant messaging to transmit confidential, proprietary, or trade secret information or personnel information. Instant messages generally are not acceptable to ask permission to leave early or to report that you will arrive late. When voice lines are not available in an emergency, instant messages may be sent instead.

Instant messages are not to be used as a substitute for oral communication with nearby co-workers. Generally, verbal communications are preferred when practical. Instant messages are not to be used to create contracts or agreements.
**Instant Messaging (IM), cont.**

**Do not use slang.** You will not impress anyone by using “lol” and not everyone knows what “afaik” or “ianal” means. While you may get away with blaming all of your computer problems on “PEBKAC”, supervisors and managers just are not impressed with IM slang. This is a business tool for a business environment. It should be treated as such.

**Improper Use**

Improper use of instant messages will be handled through our Progressive Discipline system.

Improper use includes:

- Foul, inappropriate, or offensive messages, such as racial, sexual or religious slurs.
- Harassing or illegal messages.
- Demeaning, insulting, defaming, intimidating, or sexually suggestive messages.
- Unauthorized codes, passwords, or other means to gain access to others’ computers to send messages.
- Instant messages using another employee’s identity.
- Chain messages and/or sports pools.
- Solicitation for outside business ventures, personal parties, social meetings, charities, membership in organizations, political causes, religious causes, or other matters not connected to the University’s business.
- Any use that violates the University’s policies and procedures.

**Slang Term** | **Meaning**
--- | ---
lol | lots of laughs
afaik | as far as I know
ianal | I am not a lawyer
PEBKAC | Problem exists between keyboard and computer
The basic process of communication begins with the fact or idea observed by one person. That person (the sender) may decide to translate the observation into a message, and then transmit the message through some communication medium to another person (the receiver). The receiver then must interpret the message and provide feedback to the sender indicating that the message has been understood and appropriate action taken.

Good communication should be complete, concise, clear, concrete, correct, considerate, and courteous. More specifically, this means that communication should: answer basic questions like who, what when, where; be relevant and not overly wordy; focus on the receiver and his or her interests; use specific facts and figures and active verbs; use a conversational tone for readability; include examples and visual aids when needed; be tactful and good natured; be accurate and nondiscriminatory. Unclear, inaccurate, or inconsiderate business communication can waste valuable time, alienate employees or customers, and destroy goodwill toward management and/or the University.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Written Communication

One advantage is that written messages do not have to be delivered on the spur of the moment; instead, they can be edited and revised several times before they are sent so that the content can be shaped to maximum effect. Another advantage is that written communication provides a permanent record of the messages that have been sent and can be saved for later study. Since they are permanent, written forms of communication also enable recipients to take more time in reviewing the message and providing adequate feedback. For these reasons, written forms of communication are often considered more appropriate for complex business messages that include important facts and figures. Other benefits commonly associated with good writing skills include increased customer / client satisfaction; improved inter-organizational efficiency; and enhanced image in the community and the industry.

There are several potential pitfalls associated with written communication. For instance, unlike face-to-face oral communication, where impressions and reactions are exchanged instantaneously, the sender of a written communication does not generally receive immediate feedback to his or her message. This can be a source of frustration and uncertainty in business situations in which a swift response is desired. In addition, written messages often take more time to compose, both because of their information-packed nature and the difficulty that many individuals have in composing such correspondence. Mindful of the large number of employees who struggle with their writing abilities many organizations are offering on-site writing courses. Finally, some questions you may want to ask prior to sending your correspondence:

- Will it get lost?
- What is the cost for prompt, secured delivery?
- Since this is a permanent record do I really want to send it?
**Facsimile (FAX)**

It can be informal at times, but faxing documents is still a business process, so you should always try to follow basic business fax guidelines:

**Always Use A Cover Page**

Even if it is just a handwritten note (although clear, pre-printed material usually works best), include a cover page on each fax. Be sure to clearly note your name and contact number, the number of pages being sent, and name of the intended recipient, and any other pertinent information before transmitting.

**Follow Up To Confirm**

Simply sending a fax does not mean that the intended recipient read it, or even received it. Do not assume that unsolicited or unexpected faxes have reached their intended targets. Always follow up to confirm.

**Practice Discretion**

Do not fax personal or confidential messages. If you must send confidential information make sure to call ahead and let the recipient know to be ready. As a business communication it would be improper to send jokes, personal or religious attachments or include emotional symbols 😊 😊.

You should always question whether or not there is a more efficient way to send your information. The FAX is fast and convenient, however, it may not be the best.
### Guidelines for Choosing and Using a Method of Communication

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<td>* Can be highly interactive</td>
<td>* Convenient</td>
<td>* Convenient</td>
<td>* Carefully worded message possible</td>
<td>* Carefully worded message possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Immediate feedback</td>
<td>* Efficient</td>
<td>* Ecological</td>
<td>* Efficient</td>
<td>* Convenient</td>
<td>* Wide distribution</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>* Economical</td>
<td>* Audible Clues</td>
<td>* Economical</td>
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<td>* Wide distribution</td>
<td>* Wide distribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>* Can serve as a receipt</td>
<td>* Carefully worded message is possible</td>
<td>* Can involve more than two people</td>
<td>* Permanent record</td>
<td>* Permanent record</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>* Automatic permanent record</td>
<td>* Can be a permanent record</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>* Multiple inputs possible</td>
<td></td>
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<td>* Immediate feedback</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>* Can be confidential</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* Carefully worded message possible</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Overcomes distance and travel time</td>
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<td>* Permanent record</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>* Interrupts recipient</td>
<td>* No certainty that message was received</td>
<td>* Not utilized by everyone</td>
<td>* Expensive</td>
<td>* Subject to unintended distribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* No automatic record</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>* Recipients may not have skills and/or software to respond</td>
<td>* Slow</td>
<td>* No certainty that message was received</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>* Recipient my misinterpret importance</td>
<td>* Requires reliable technology</td>
<td>* Subject to unintended distribution</td>
<td>* Subject to unintended distribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>* Possible inadvertent recipient(s)</td>
<td>* Inturrupts recipient</td>
<td>* Can be lost</td>
<td>* Confidentiality is an issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>* Can be forwarded to unintended recipient(s)</td>
<td>* High stress on recipient</td>
<td>* Not secure</td>
<td>* Limited security</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>* Does not provide a tone</td>
<td>* Can become permanent record</td>
<td>* Permanent record</td>
<td>* Can become a permanent record</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>When to use</strong></td>
<td>* Complex subject matter</td>
<td>* Time / distance and availability constraints</td>
<td>* Routine information, requests or questions</td>
<td>* Routine information, requests, questions and announcements</td>
<td>* Appearance is important</td>
<td>* More efficient method is not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Need interactive discussion</td>
<td>* Routine information, requests, questions and announcements</td>
<td></td>
<td>* Time / distance and availability constraints</td>
<td></td>
<td>* Volume is a factor</td>
<td>* Permanent record desired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Impact desired</td>
<td>* Time critical</td>
<td></td>
<td>* Send a scanned signature, picture or document</td>
<td></td>
<td>* Rapid response is a factor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Build relationship</td>
<td>* Personal matters</td>
<td></td>
<td>* Automatic permanent record</td>
<td></td>
<td>* Permanent record not desired</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>* Permanent record desired</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| **When not to use** | * Use as your DEFAULT when it is difficult to choose a method of communication. | * Record can or cannot be kept | * Information is debateable, sensitive and/or complex | * Unsure if recipient has software and/or the skills | * Rapid response is required | * More efficient way is available |
| * Time / distance and availability constraints | | | * Requires interactive discussion and detailed feedback | | * Permanent record is not desired | |
| | | | * Confidentiality is an issue | | | |
| | | | * Permanent record not desired | | | |

- Decide on the purpose, the recipient(s) and the urgency of a communication. These decisions will help you determine the preferred method of communication.
- Let the recipient clearly know the purpose of the communication, who sent and/or forwarded the communication, and what action or feedback (if any) is expected.
- Consider how the recipient will interpret what you say or write.
- Be concise.
- Read a written message (email, IM, print, FAX) carefully before sending it. If possible, set the message aside and then re-read it before sending. Does it say what you intended to say? Could someone else review the message for you?
- What you write or say is a reflection of you and Wilmington University.
- Be professional.