

Working Remotely: Tip of the Week **March 1, 2021**

Email Clarity and Digital Empathy

In working remotely, it is critical to be clear and use emotional intelligence in our digital communication. Emails that use 'brevity', or contain 'unspoken assumptions', and 'ambiguous statements', can create communication deficits that lead to conflict, confusion, and stress. How often do we use words such as 'ASAP' and 'urgent' in our emails, or reply to an email chain by saying "yes" without specifying time or identifying important things such as who, how and what?

Digital deficits can be avoided following a checklist. For example:

- Ask yourself if you have used the right channel to communicate. If your email is a page long, then it may be better to pick up the phone (or arrange a Zoom meeting)
- Is your subject line informative and has it been revised as needed? If your subject line is a question, make sure it is specific for the reader
- Should an email chain be ended, and a new mail be started?
- Are those cc'd relevant to the discussion?
- Did you use a time frame or deadline?

Along with email clarity is the ability to apply digital empathy in our emails or text. When working virtually, be aware that misunderstandings can occur more quickly as we react with less filtering, disagree more, and often give up easily, resulting in an empathy deficit existing in our communications. Various aspects of the 'empathy deficit' can be addressed with the following:

- Think about how your words and tone may be perceived or misinterpreted
- Consider how punctuation! and emojis can help convey feeling 😊
- Proofread your emotions – reflect and read your words out loud before sending
- Check your interpretation of others' words and assume positive intent
- Remember the person behind the words

As our work becomes more permanently embedded in the digital world, our ability to dissolve tensions and avoid unintentional or ill-perceived miscommunications becomes ever more important to our well-being and effectiveness.

For more Tips on working remotely, please visit <https://bit.ly/mc-remote-working-e> and watch for the next tip on March 15, 2021.

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