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HOW HAS EMAIL, ONLINE COMMERCE, AND SOCIAL MEDIA AFFECTED FACE-TO-FACE COMMUNICATION IN TODAY'S BUSINESS WORLD?

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Introduction

Since the beginning of time, man has been aware of the need to communicate in a timely manner. One of the most important things in the business world is the timeliness in which information is relayed. The first digital technology that came into existence was the telegraph. Electrical circuits turning on and off were used to transmit messages across the country. When the telegraph was invented in 1837 it became possible to send a single message across the country and eventually around the world in a matter of minutes. This changed the business world forever. Business leaders realized the importance of being able to communicate with others in a speedy fashion as monumental (Phillips, 2000).

Newspapers were one of the first industries to take advantage of the new technology of the telegraph (Phillips, 2000). News on the events of the world could be received almost instantaneously and printed in the next day's newspaper. Instead of reporting news that was several days old, newspapers were able to report the previous day's events.

Sending a telegraph was mostly used by the business world. It was expensive to send a telegram and time-consuming since you actually had to go the the telegraph office to transmit your message (Phillips, 2000)

Within a few years, the telephone was invented, and people could conduct their business by picking up the telephone. Since having a telephone was less expensive, many people could afford to have one in their homes to utilize for the own personal communication. Following the telephone came telex and facsimile machines. A written message or entire document could now be sent without waiting several days for the postal service to deliver it.

The explosion of the internet made communication faster and less expensive than ever before. Every business and almost every home today, has a computer or laptop and access to the

internet. The telegraph only had the capacity to send one message at a time and to only one receiver (Phillips, 2000). The telex and facsimile machines both had the same capabilities. A telephone could only be used to establish communication between two people up until the invention of the speaker phone and conference calling. The internet opened up the number that an organization could communicate with at one time. It was now feasible to send multiple messages to countless recipients globally from your desktop in seconds.

How has email, online commerce, and social media affected our face-to-face communication in today's business world?

Although it probably was not realized at the time, this ease of communication created a lapse in our daily face-to-face communication. Over the years, communication experts have started to realize that our interpersonal communication skills have fallen through the cracks. We need to examine not only how this has occurred, but also how to relearn our own skills and teach them to future generations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Email

Electronic mail, which we commonly refer to as email, is the electronic transfer of messages between two or more computers (University of Maryland, n.d.). Email is the most utilized function of the internet and it is used by business people and average people on a daily basis (Phillips, 2000). Raymond Tomlinson is an American computer programmer who is attributed with the invention of email (Spicer, 2016). In 1971, Tomlinson was able to send messages on the government's ARPANET system (University of Maryland, n.d.). The ARPANET system was the early forerunner to the internet as we know it today and was developed by the United States Department of Defense. According to the Internet Hall of Fame,

"Tomlinson's email program brought about a complete revolution, fundamentally changing the way people communicate, including the way businesses, from huge corporations to tiny mom-and-pop shops, operate and the way millions of people shop, bank, and keep in touch with friends and family, whether they are across town or across oceans" (internethalloffame.org, n. d.).

Raymond Tomlinson devised the method of using the "@" symbol and a host name to differentiate between local and network mail. He began testing on the ARPANET system by transmitting messages to himself and this began the introduction of network email (University of Maryland, n.d.).

One of the most important things that propelled email communication was the invention of the personal computer system during the late 1970's and early 1980's. Hundreds of thousands of IBM personal computers and Apple Macintosh computers were sold using "bulletin board systems" that had the capability to send and receive messages between users. What was formerly only able to be accessed by the military and government agencies was now going mainstream to be utilized by private and public companies and organizations. Employees could now exchange messages through the access of intranets or local area networks. Email went global during the mid-1990's when the development of the internet granted the ability to share information world-wide in a matter of seconds (University of Maryland, n.d.).

Computer-mediated communication is a collective term used to describe all computer-generated communication between individuals and departments through a network of computers. These communications can either asynchronous or synchronous. *Asynchronous* communication is when the participants are not all logged on together and not interacting at the same time. Email would be an example of asynchronous communication, since people can respond when they are available to. *Synchronous* is the term used to define when communication is "live", and all the participants are logged on at the same time and communicating together. Another form of

synchronous communication would be a telephone or video conference call. Both of these methods are effective for different types of communication (Santra & Giri, 2000).

The modernization of technology has expanded the capacities of storing, conveying, and communicating information. This ability has changed considerably the manner in which employees in the workforce correspond and network with each other. The hundreds of millions of internet users who interact daily have brought into existence new "social situations and communication behaviours". Computer-mediated communication is considered to be "an altered state of communication, including altered physical environments, altered time and space, and altered structures in communication". Employees are no longer constrained from meeting face-to-face through a combination of synchronous communication such as through the telephone, chatting, or text messaging and asynchronous communication such as email (Santra & Giri, 2000).

There are many benefits to be gained from using computers to communicate such as lowering costs, the accessibility of almost unlimited information, and the speed with which information can be exchanged (Siegel, Dubrovsky, Kiesler, & McGuire, 1986). Email has become the commonplace form of communication for employees to correspond with their coworkers, superiors, customers, suppliers, and other stakeholders since it provides the means for both internal and external communication (Boarcas, 2017). Users can communicate at any time and from any location (Boarcas, 2017). Employees have the freedom of being able to work from home or while away from the office through email (Santra & Giri, 2000). Communicating through email also provides a record of who, what, and when the information was transmitted for future reference (Boarcas, 2017).

Email is the most widely used aspect of computer-media communication. The use of email has become such an everyday method of business communication that it would be difficult to imagine a work environment without it. Employees have the ability to reach important contacts, are able to communicate effectively, can accomplish more in less time, and react appropriately in their work environment. When access to their email account is unavailable, their daily work becomes severely restricted. Workers have the access to communicate with others that are in different locations so that the locale of whoever they are corresponding with becomes inconsequential. Email allows employees to communicate quickly with others and receive a speedy response (van den Hooff, Groot, & de Jonge, 2005).

Many companies and organizations utilize email in their marketing and advertising campaigns. According to Camelia Boarcas, "online marketing saves the company money that would otherwise be spent on traditional means of advertising" (Boarcas, 2017). This provides smaller businesses with the opportunity to compete with larger businesses by saving money and expanding their outreach. Companies of every size send out daily emails advertising their sales, coupons, and special offers to customers. Email marketing and advertising helps level the playing field for small businesses. It saves the business money on office supplies and the time it would take to fax or mail letters to their customers (Boarcas, 2017).

Online Commerce

Online commerce or *electronic commerce* is a general term that involves any type of business or commercial transaction over the internet. This range includes several types of businesses such as customer-based retail websites, auction house websites, and the business of exchanging goods and/or services between corporations (Maamar, 2003).

Online shopping is defined as "searching and purchasing products and services on the internet". Searching is considered a necessary aspect of shopping, so the definition includes both searching and purchasing (Akhter, 2015).

One of the most notable features of the internet is the ability for small businesses to expand their reach of customers on a more monumental scale and more effortlessly than ever before. The internet can be implemented for marketing and advertising in ways that will save the business money and time (Boarcas, 2017).

Someone with a small business now has the potential to grown into a big business. A storefront will only reach the consumers in the local area, but with the internet a business can now attract customers from around the world. Businesses no longer need an actual storefront to conduct their daily operations. A small business that creates a website is now able to market and sell their products globally instead of just around the neighborhood. Since the internet is always open for business, a small business now has the potential to be open twenty-four hours a day. This creates a much larger customer base instead of just being able to compete with local businesses. These small businesses now have the opportunity to compete with larger corporations and to grow as much as the larger corporations (Boarcas, 2017).

Many small businesses create their own website, but others prefer to market their goods on sites such as Amazon or eBay. The seller has the chance to sell to consumers around the world. Since these sellers do not have an actual storefront, their only means of communication with their customers is conducted through electronic channels.

According to a study by Syed Akhter, online shopping has not attained the number of shoppers that was expected. One of the conclusions is because of a lack of trust on the part of the consumer. People do not feel that their credit card and banking information is sufficiently

protected when shopping online. Another reason is that shopping takes away from the social context of the exchange. Consumers also like to be able to see and touch the products they are purchasing (Akhter, 2015).

Online banking is defined as using the internet for banking, paying bills, and investments (Akhter, 2015). Banking online offers the convenience of "bill payment, fund transfers, account inquiries, online check ordering, electronic statements, and online loan applications" (Sievewright, 2002). It is estimated that sixty-five percent of all depository institutions that are insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation provide some aspect of internet banking to their customers (Sievewright, 2002). Thirty-four percent of all financial institutions offer transactional websites to their customers (Sievewright, 2002).

Although online shopping may be responsible for the closing of some brick and mortar stores, the same cannot be said for the banking industry. The number of bank branches has not declined since internet banking became a reality (Sievewright, 2002). Online financial institutions have not reached the expected number of users that financial analysts predicted (Akhter, 2015). According to a study quoted by Mark Seivewright, ninety-two percent of American households have paid a visit to the local branch of a financial institution in the recent past (Sievewright, 2002). One of the reasons for this trend is that you cannot cash a check or withdraw cash from your account online. Any transaction that involves cash must be done in person or at an automated teller machine.

One of the biggest reasons that some people do not utilize online banking is that they are concerned with the security and privacy issues involved in online banking (Akhter, 2015). Many bank customers feel that their private information is more secure when they walk into the bank building instead of conducting their transactions online (Akhter, 2015). Consumers indicate that

they consider online banking to be at a higher risk than online shopping (Akhter, 2015). Many customers are concerned about their exposure to online viruses (Akhter, 2015). Other concerns are password integrity, data encryption, privacy, protection of their personal information, and hacking (Malik & Oberoi, 2017).

In 1994, the first electronic investment firm became available online. These online brokerage houses brought in over twelve million investors in less than five years and made up over one third of all retail stock trades (Konana, Menon, & Balasubramanian, 2000).

Online investing allows an investor to trade their stocks with a click of their mouse instead of waiting in line at a brokerage house or sitting on hold waiting for their broker to pick up the telephone. Investors are taking advantage of this financial freedom to take control over their own investments and forgoing the more traditional brokerage houses who only offer trading at their branch offices (Warner, 1998).

Social Media

Social media is a relatively new terminology and does not yet have a universal academic definition. It is comprised of social networks, content communities, forums and bulletin boards, and content aggregators. This creates a community where users share their experiences and opinions with others and without any reserves. Websites and cellular telephones apps such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and countless others have burst onto the scene as a type of interactive communication. Technological advancements have provided individuals with the ability to report and telecast information around the world. Instead of just being the receivers of information, individuals now have the opportunity to become the broadcasters. People around

the globe are now able to have immediate communication with one another thanks to the development of social media (Kadam & Ayarekar, 2014).

The first social media website came online in 1997. Six Degrees was online from 1997 to 2001. Users could create a profile and add other users as friends. In the early 2000's MySpace became the newest social media website to attract users that allowed them to connect with their friends online. Most of the youth of today have never heard of either of these early forerunners to the large list of websites and cell phone apps that many people follow every day. Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, and many others are followed by millions of users (Keith, 2015).

These social media websites appeal to the younger generations and were originally considered only as a means for them to communicate with their friends. In the mid-2000's, researchers realized that businesses, companies, and organizations could capitalize on the benefits of social media to better communicate with their customers (Morales, Sosa-Fey, & Farias, 2017).

Small and even medium businesses encounter sometimes overpowering competition in today's constantly changing business environment. They must be prepared and equipped to face the many challenges that exist. One of the biggest challenges they face is the integration of social media into their business strategies (Kadam & Ayarekar, 2014).

Companies have taken advantage of social media to connect with both their customers and their employees (Sapkota & Putten, 2018). A virtual online environment is created to institute their presence, make visible their customer support, and enhance their customer associations (Sapkota & Putten, 2018). Other advantages are the capacity to enhance a company's brand image, manage complaints from customers, the collection of important data,

and the ability to promote new goods and services (Morales, et al, 2017). Businesses can share

their advice on products, be a participant in discussions regarding current issues, and create more

personal relationships with their customers (Sapkota & Putten, 2018). The capability to interact

in real-time benefits the business in connecting with their customers instantaneously (Sapkota &

Putten, 2018). By listening to what consumers are posting on social media, companies are able

to provide instant feedback and address customer concerns in an up-to-the-minute fashion

(Morales, et al, 2017). By responding to negative comments in real-time, companies can turn the

negative occurrence into a positive experience for the customer (Morales, et al, 2017). Studies

indicate that eighty-three percent of consumers who left a negative comment online and who had

gotten a response from the company within a few days were content with the results (Morales, et

al, 2017). Seventy-three percent of those who left the complaints, said they would continue to

conduct business with the company regardless of their negative experience (Morales, et al,

2017).

The *word of mouth effect* has become a powerful tool in marketing for businesses.

Customers who participate in personal conversations about their products and services on their

social media accounts are promoting the brand name among themselves. Companies who

monitor social media conversations are able to use this information to help fine-tune their

products and services for the constantly changing market. This type of communication becomes

invaluable to many businesses. Consumer behaviors are easier to track and monitor than ever

before (Morales, et al, 2017).

Social media also has the advantage for consumers who want to investigate a product or

service before purchasing. Customers have the ability to voice their opinions about the product

or service and rate it for the use of other potential consumers. With very little effort on the part

of the company, consumers worldwide have access to this information. Consumers tend to have more trust in what other consumers say about a product or service than the company's advertising. Consumers hold more power about a product's reputation than an expensive advertising campaign does (Morales, et al, 2017).

Yelp is a website that is dedicated to allowing customers to post their reviews of a business. This website is strictly word of mouth from consumers and used by potential customers to read reviews before they patronize a business or purchase a product or service. Companies are not allowed to edit or remove any negative posts that their business may receive so they have no control over what customers may say about them (Morales, et al, 2017).

Even though social media has a powerful prominence and a host of affirmative aspects, many companies still oppose to utilizing it in the business world. Many of the companies who have not integrated social media into their business affairs are concerned about the negative effects it can have. The potential to damage or destroy a company's reputation, either intentionally or unintentionally, is a major concern. Some of the more traditional companies believe that social media has the capacity to impair their business relationship with their customers (Morales, et al, 2017).

Although advertising and marketing are two of the most important aspects of social media, it also creates more opportunities for companies (Sapkota & Putten, 2018). Businesses who do not engage in social media may lose the interest of their customers and may start to trail behind their competition (Sapkota & Putten, 2018). Companies who interact on social media to promote their products and services have the ability to appeal to new customers and retain the business of their current customers (Morales, et al, 2017). Studies have shown that more than fifty percent of the consumers who follow a particular brand on social media remain loyal

customers of that brand as opposed to the consumers who do not follow a brand (Morales, et al, 2017).

A business can utilize social media to create an interest that appeals not only to attract customers but also to recruit suitable candidates for future employees (Sapkota & Putten, 2018). Some companies are establishing employee referral programs on their social media accounts to appeal to viable job candidates (Baker, 2001). They are taking advantage of their employees' social media accounts to expand their search for future employees (Baker, 2001). Current employees receive a bonus check for each successful hire (Baker, 2001). Future employers often used social media websites such as Facebook to research their potential job candidates (Morales, et al, 2017).

Research has indicated that although social media has become a powerful tool in communications within companies and between companies, the more conventional forms of communication are favored among employees. The researchers also predict that social media will become a more standard form of communication in the future (Morales, et al, 2017).

Face-to-Face Communication

Communication is the act of imparting knowledge or exchanging thoughts, feelings, or ideas by speaking, writing, using gestures, etc. to allow a feeling or emotion to be willingly or unwillingly sensed by and transmitted to one or more individuals that will create a mutual understanding (Boarcas, 2017).

Types of Communication

There are two basic types of communication: *verbal* and *non-verbal* (Porter, 1969).

Verbal communication is an expressive form of communication that involves both speaking and writing. Oral communication is when the message is spoken. An individual's

spoken message can be affected by such things as volume and tone of voice. Written communication involves symbols, signs, letters, and books (Porter, 1969).

Non-verbal communication refers to the body language that a sender uses when sending a message. This consists of postures, gestures, eye contact, and facial expressions. Our non-verbal communications can sometimes speak more than our verbal communications. Non-verbal communication can either enforce, distort, or confuse the message that you are attempting to send (Kurien, 2010).

An individual has the ability to monitor their verbal communication mainly by self-control, but much of a person's non-verbal communication is involuntary. Often times, the interpretation of an individual's body language can create confusion in the message they are attempting to convey (Kurien, 2010). Both verbal and non-verbal skills are necessary to relay a clear communication (Porter, 1969).

Communication Process

The communication process consists of seven components. The *sender* or *encoder* is someone who is asking for information or relaying the information to one or more individuals. The *message* is the information that someone wishes to transmit to another individual or individuals. *Encoding* is the process the sender uses to transmit the information. *Channel* or *medium* is the manner in which the information is transmitted. The channel can be written, oral, visual, or tactile. *Receiver* is the individual or individuals to whom the information is sent. *Decoding* or *interpreting* is the process in which the receiver analyzes the message. *Feedback* is the response to the sender's message (Boarcas, 2017).

Barriers to Communication

Communication skills are one of the fundamentals for success in organizations. Transmitting information can become very challenging as it moves along from one point to another. Each channel of sending the message has its own pitfalls that have to be avoided in order to be successful. Advancements in technology have made communication faster but relying solely on electronic communication can create more errors in the efficient flow of communication. All individuals in the workforce must be aware of the potential barriers that can cause difficulty in the receipt of their intended messages. Some barriers are more prevalent in electronic communication and others are more prevalent in face-to-face communication. Some types of barriers may occur in both electronic and face-to-face communication (Shrivastava, 2012).

There are many barriers that can affect communication. *Filtering* refers to when the message is altered by the personality of either the sender of receiver. This includes psychological factors such as bias or prejudice (Boarcas, 2017).

Other barriers include physical barriers, perceptual barriers, emotional barriers, cultural barriers, technological barriers, language barriers, gender barriers, interpersonal barriers, and noise barriers. Some social psychology researchers have estimated that there is commonly a forty to sixty percent loss in the meaning of a message from transmission of the source to the receiver. To be an effective communicator, today's employees must overcome all of the possible barriers to get their messages across (Shrivastava, 2012).

Physical barriers, according to Shrivastava, "refer to the specific area of transmission and communication" and is "decided on the contextual significance of communication". This is a type of secret communication that not all members of a workforce are privy to based on certain areas or zones where others are not permitted. One of the important aspects of this is that it

keeps all the different areas of the organization from working in a parallel fashion.   Another aspect is that the information does not flow from one department to another due to such things as closed office doors, cubicle screens, working on different floors or locations, or people from different office statuses in the hierarchy (Shrivastava, 2012).

Perceptual barriers are based on each person's "perception of an incident, issue, problem, its understanding, and the process of seeking a solution for it". Everyone's perception is different in how we perceive matters, and this determines our reaction to it. The perceptual barrier has the capability to change the entire meaning of a message in different ways for different people (Shrivastava, 2012).

Emotional barriers are those which are based on the emotions of the sender and/or the receiver of the message. Human beings are comprised of multiple emotions at any one time and this has a huge impact on our communications. These have been immersed in ourselves since childhood and include "hatred, trust, mistrust, fear, love and many others" that have stayed with us all our lives (Shrivastava, 2012).

Cultural barriers pertain to those that are based on a person's cultural background. Everyone has a different cultural background that can affect their communication. According to Shrivastava, "the greater the difference in background between senders and receivers, the higher the difference in meanings attached to a particular word and behavior". Our culture is based on religion, caste, creed, nationality, and social status among other things. The messages we send can be received differently than we intended due to differences in our cultures. What means one thing in one culture may mean something totally different in another culture. In order to avoid miscommunication, we need to take the time to learn and understand the culture of the intended receiver (Shrivastava, 2012).

Technological barriers apply to those that are created by the devices we use to transmit a message. Technology has provided us with computer systems, laptop computers, cellular telephones, hand-held tablets, and other devices that enable us to communicate with speed and accuracy, but they are not always free from error. Some messages never get delivered because of no service or a low signal. Other messages can be distorted due to a failure in the system. This type of barrier cannot be controlled by the sender or receiver, but it is something that they must be fully aware of (Shrivastava, 2012).

Language barriers come from the sender and receiver speaking two different languages. There are several thousand languages that are spoken in the world today and many countries have more than one national language spoken there. Language can become an almost insurmountable barrier when the sender and the receiver do not speak the same language. Speaking the same language is necessary for the sender and receiver in order to achieve successful communication (Shrivastava, 2012).

Gender barriers are in regard to the different communication patterns between males and females. Women tend to speak about twenty-five thousand words per day while men only speak around ten thousand words per day. The communication model for a man is "linear, logical, and sectioned" while a woman's model is "a combination of logic and emotion". Men and women can have different methods of explaining and understanding the same incident based on these gender barriers (Shrivastava, 2012).

Interpersonal barriers are those where the sender's message is received differently that was originally intended. Often times this is because of a personal difference between the sender and receiver. This can cause complete failure of the message or only a partial delivery. Senders

must make the effort to clarify the message just as receivers must make the effort to understand the message (Shrivastava, 2012).

Noise barriers refer to any external factor that may inhibit communication flows. There are several types of noise that can interrupt a message such as environmental, physiological, psychological, cultural, organizational, syntactical, and semantic (Shrivastava, 2012).

Communication skills are divided into three basic categories: *organizational* communication skills, *leadership* communication skills, and *interpersonal* communication skills (Boarcas, 2017).

Organizational Communication

Organizational communication skills are the set of skills an organization implements to communicate in an effective manner with all internal and external stakeholders, which maintains coordination and organized behavior among employees. The most necessary skills for organizational communication are "initiating open discussion, resolving conflict, creating information networks, teaching important skills, using information technology, providing performance feedback, negotiating, writing business correspondence, and making convincing presentations" (Boarcas, 2017).

Communication can move throughout an organization in several ways: *vertically*, *horizontally*, and *diagonally*. Each of these ways can be either formal or informal (Boarcas, 2017).

Vertical communication can move either downward or upward through an organization. Downward communication starts at the top of the organization and moves down through the ranks. Upper level managers must ensure that they are communicating in such a way as to be understood by all other levels in the chain of command. Upward communication comes from the

lower ranks of the organization and moves to the higher ranks. Many times this is the lower

levels asking questions and seeking information from those that are higher up in the organization

(Boarcas, 2017).

Horizontal or lateral communication is that which moves parallel through the

organization. Horizontal communication is between the staff such as those in a particular work

group or department, between more than one department, or between the managers and staff that

are all on the same level of the hierarchy (Boarcas, 2017).

Diagonal communication transpires between more than one level of the hierarchy that

occurs in the organization. This will be from a department on one level to a different department

on another level (Boarcas, 2017).

Informal communication can best be described as the "grapevine" in the organization.

There is not a formal structure to informal communication since it can flow freely between all

departments, levels, and hierarchy inside and outside the organization (Boarcas, 2017).

Leadership Communication

Leadership communication skills are those skills that advance business leadership in the

pursuit of effectually communicating with employees and important external stakeholders by

applying communication methods through the use of story-telling, informality, metaphors,

openness, and dialogue to formulate trust and support between fellow coworkers and staff. The

most important skills for leadership communication are "arousing enthusiasm, being a change

catalyst, creating group synergy, building team bonds, expressing encouragement, providing

motivation, being persuasive, and building optimism (Boarcas, 2017).

Interpersonal Communication

Interpersonal communication skills are the skill set that enables business organizations to communicate effectively with internal and external stakeholders in a more personal, intimate, and one-on-one basis. This includes the interchange of thoughts in a face-to-face situation with both verbal and non-verbal contexts by exchanging information, issuing feedback, or preserving a social relationship. The most fundamental interpersonal skills are "active listening, building rapport, demonstrating emotion self-control, building trust, and relating to people of diverse backgrounds" (Boarcas, 2017).

According to psychology there are two different types of personalities in people: *introverts* and *extroverts* (Gino, 2015). The communication differences between extroverts and introverts have been chronicled in numerous studies (Dugas, Powers, & Sawyer, 2007). Each personality type has their own specific styles and tendencies (Dugas, et al, 2007).

Extroverts have a tendency to be more assertive, talkative, bold, less reserved, and more energetic. Introverts are the opposite of extroverts and tend to be more shy, quiet, reserved, and less energetic. Research has shown that introverts make up between one-third and one-half of the human race (Gino, 2015).

Extroverts are drawn to groups and enjoy constant action. (Gino, 2015). They also have strong social skills and like to work with others (Dugas, et al, 2007). Face-to-face communication is more aptly suited to an extrovert. External stimuli such as personal interactions, social gatherings, and sharing ideas will energize and recharge them (Gino, 2015). They receive their energy from being around other people (Gino, 2015). Extroverts have a more positive emotional outlook, a stronger sense of their self-image, and less negative thoughts (Dugas, et al, 2007). They have more self-confidence and are often considered to be more popular because they are perceived as being more interesting to be around (Dugas, et al, 2007).

Introverts as a rule tend to dislike noise, anything that interrupts them, and being in large group settings (Gino, 2015). Introverts do not speak as much as extroverts and are less expressive (Dugas, et al, 2007). They are more likely to bask in quiet solitude, having the time to think about what they are saying or doing before speaking or acting, and take pleasure in the ability to build their relationships and trust on a one-on-one basis (Gino, 2015). It is indicated that introverts excel better at online methods of communication. An introvert will recharge through reflection, researching ideas by diving deep into their own inner landscape, and an intense focus on their work (Gino, 2015).

Extroverts tend to be more effective leaders when their team is comprised of employees who are looking to the leader for their guidance. They have the capabilities such as vision, assertiveness, energy, and networks that are needed to prove direction for the team members (Gino, 2015).

The opposite is true for introverted leaders. They tend to be more effective as a leader when it is the team who is proactive and takes the initiative when introducing changes, creating new visions, and introducing more productive strategies (Gino, 2015).

Team members who exert initiative and eagerness in their jobs are often considered a threat to the extroverted leader. An extrovert will often shut down and be less receptive to the team members' suggestions and contributions. An introverted leader will have the tendency to be more accomplished at listening and willing to take the team members' suggestions into consideration. Research has shown that extroverts are more effective leaders with a team of introverts and introverts are more effective leaders with a team of extroverts (Gino, 2015).

Perceived-Similarity Theory is based on the concept that people "are attracted to others with whom they share similar characteristics such as attitudes, beliefs, values, and personality

traits" (Dugas, et al 2007). When someone sees the same characteristics in another person it

confirms and rewards these similarities. This serves as an interpersonal communication that aids

in strengthening their social bonds. This theory implies that extroverts communicate more

effectively with other extroverts and the same is true for introverts communicating with other

introverts, but studies show that this is not always the case. (Dugas, et al, 2007).

Face-to-Face Communication

Media Richness Theory is used to determine what is the best channel to use for
communication. It states that:

 intra-organizational communication can be ordered on a continuum from leanest to
richest media, where lean media, such as numeric documents, lack a personal focus and are not
able to transmit nonverbal cues or to prove immediate feedback that rich media, such as face-to-
face communication are able to accomplish (Kupritz & Cowell, 2011).

Rich forms of media are necessary for uncertain situations and lean forms of

media are acceptable for more certain situations. It is also noted that face-to-face

communication as a choice of media displays trust and an informality while written

communication portrays an air of authority (Kupritz & Cowell, 2011).

All employees must communicate with each other on a daily basis and in a

manner that is efficient. It is critical that managers develop excellent communication

skills in order to become more effective (Boarcas, 2017).

Face-to-face communication will always be considered the richest form of

communication. Face-to-face communication involves two or more participants in the

immediate presence of one another. It also involves a two-way flow of communication where

participants are both senders and receivers (Crowley & Mitchell, 1994). This method of

communication promotes the consciousness of the other person during the interaction and

provides more social presence than other forms of communication. Those who participate in

face-to-face communication are more inclined to translate non-verbal cues and are able to contribute prompt feedback (Kupritz & Cowell, 2011).

For matters that are private or confidential, personal, or sensitive face-to-face communication is the only method that is acceptable. Basically, all human resource issues are critical and best handled face-to-face. Other issues that are not considered to be confidential such as meeting, training, or policy changes and especially any communication that contains several details are better sent through emails. Managing people involves interaction and conversation and organizations cannot allow technology to override the human element. Organizations have to realize that employees are impacted by the manner through which information is distributed to them. It is imperative that an organization determine the most effective communication channel through which messages are conveyed based on the characteristics of each message. Electronic communication should be utilized to enhance face-to-face communication, not replace it (Kupritz & Cowell, 2011).

Other studies show that people would rather use computer-mediated communications such as email or instant messaging in those situations where their representation of themselves may feel threatened. Teenagers are especially prone to convey negative messages through instant messaging because of the ability to word their messages more carefully. This makes the sender more comfortable than delivering bad news in a telephone call or a face-to-face meeting (Keaten & Kelly, 2008).

Those individuals who are shy or bashful are more apt to use computer-mediated communication because it eases their anxiety regarding face-to-face communication. Computer-mediated communication has been described as the "perfect medium" for those with a shyer personality by some experts. This is speculated because people have positive or negative

reactions toward certain channels of communication based on their past experiences with and their understanding and impressions of those channels. Some studies indicate that the internet provides the ability for those who are shy or socially awkward to overcome their stumbling blocks in communicating. It is suggested that a lack of physical presence and the perceptions of lessened negative judgement allow shy individuals to communicate more completely. Even people who are shy or reticent are aware that the preferred channel of communication will always be considered to be face-to-face, but computer-mediated communication allows them to interact in a more comfortable environment (Keaten & Kelly, 2008).

People who are shy, bashful, or perceive themselves as socially awkward may be more suitable to computer-mediated communication because it has the ability to make them feel less anxious. They have the capacity to know what to say, time what they say, remember what it is that they wanted to say, choose the appropriate words, and deliver their words in the manner they originally intended. Computer-mediated channels of communication lowers their level of anxiety and inhibitions (Keaten & Kelly, 2008).

According to the research by Keaten and Kelly, individuals who are more shy or reticent consider themselves to be more effective communicators when using computer-mediated channels than face-to-face situations. They appreciate the ability to better prepare and control their messages along with experiencing less anxiety and inhibitions. It is also noted that these individuals stated they are more likely to send an email message instead of using face-to-face communication when facing a difficult situation (Keaten & Kelly, 2008).

In order for communication to be considered competent, it is necessary that it includes the relevant effectiveness and appropriateness. The effectiveness is determined by one's ability to receive their intended goals in a particular situation. Choosing the proper channel for

communication is essential in determining effectiveness. The thought on appropriateness is "the implicit agreements concerning the social rules and expectations for behavior". There is much research to suggest that oral channels of communication (such as telephone conversations and face-to-face meetings) are considered as more appropriate than computer-mediated communication in both organizational and interpersonal interactions. Although face-to-face communication is expected in difficult situations, some researchers wonder if an inappropriate channel of messaging would be considered more effective because of the individual's effectiveness by going through that channel (Keaten & Kelly, 2008).

Keaten and Kelly suggest that when relaying a message, not only the characteristics of the message itself are important, but also the characteristics of the sender. They state that the individual sending the message will choose the communication channel that will strengthen their effectiveness and appropriateness in that particular situation. It is insinuated that face-to-face communication will be less effective than computer-mediated communication for someone who is shy or socially awkward. They are considering that a shy or reticent individual still has the capacity to be an effective communicator when they have the ability to choose a channel that allows them the opportunity to prepare their message carefully and not have to cope with the anxiety or inhibitions when delivering a face-to-face message. The person who is sending the message chooses the communication channels that they are they most effective in purveying their messages across in order to increase their effectiveness (Keaten & Kelly, 2008).

Organizations often have to make the decision whether to use face-to-face or electronic communication based on the costs involved. Factors such as workforce diversity and globalization could determine if electronic communication is the most effective channel to use (Kupritz & Cowell, 2011).

Breakthroughs in technology and the evolvement of the internet and intranet have made such great strides in the available choices of communication channels in the last several decades. Email, video-conferencing, instant messaging, and mobile telephones are all implemented to communicating information in the work environment. Computer-mediated communication has created new types of interactions by merging email, instant messaging, face-to-face, and telephone communication for both internal and external transmissions of information. Employees appreciate the convenience of having so many high-tech options of communication channels at their disposal to use while conducting their daily business, but also appreciate the face-to-face contact they receive from their superiors (Kupritz & Cowell, 2011).

Communication, whether it is effective or not, is a basic fundamental aspect of all organizations and it is constantly taking place. Today's organizations recognize that effective communication is at the core of the organization and is necessary for all other operations to function properly. If modern-day organizations did not have the ability to communicate effectively, they would cease to exist. No matter what changes internally or externally in a workplace environment, communication will always continue to be the one aspect that unites all of the various operations, departments, and employees into a consolidated organization (Santra & Giri, 2000).

In order for today's business professional to achieve a successful career they need to become an expert in all business communication skills. All employees find it necessary to communicate with each other in an effective manner and this can only be performed through the learning of business communication skills. They must be aware of the different types of barriers that may arise and become proficient at overcoming them (Boarcas, 2017).

Today's Business World

The work environment of today's business world is characterized by "corporate mergers and acquisitions, downsizing, reengineering, reorganization, globalization of labor and customer markets, strategic partnerships an alliances, outsourcing, geographically dispersed and cross-functional teams, and other types of organizational change, such as the constant turnover of knowledge" (Kupritz & Cowell, 2011). Most organizations do not have a solid basis that is stable. They are in a constant state of organizational change (Kupritz & Cowell, 2011).

The progressions in globalization has given rise to many significant changes in trade, investments, and technologies. During the 1980's global competition started to grow at heightened speeds and has escalated the pressure on the profitability and survival of companies. This was brought on by the two main factors of the deregulation and hence globalization of financial markets and the advancements of new technologies (Reddy, 2000).

After consecutive rounds of international trade agreements that led to the formation of the World Trade Organization, tariff levels and other trade barriers were lifted. The organization of this led to agreements in other countries such as the European Union, North American Free Trade Area, and Association of South East Asian Nations that opened up trade among different countries (Reddy, 2000).

The assemblage of computer, communication, and control technologies created new opportunities for multinational enterprises to expand their resources and operations to a global scale. Organizations can interconnect their departments such as production and marketing around the world. Multinational enterprises, banks, and industrial and services firms have installed intra-corporate world-wide information networks to link all of their facilities together.

This corporate strategy has created new types of interactions between suppliers, customers, and competitors (Reddy, 2000).

The globalization process has facilitated the development of new international competition from other countries, especially in East Asia. These new challengers have taken advantage of the international trade agreements and new technology to overpass the long-established competition. This has resulted in creating an increased threshold of success for all international organizations (Reddy, 2000).

Outsourcing is when "an organization transfers some of its tasks to an outside supplier" (Gnuschke, Wallace, Wilson, & Smith. 2004). *Offshoring* refers to when an organization moves some of their tasks to another country. Some organizations build their own facilities and take advantage of the low-wage local labor while others use the offshore facilities that are already available. In either case, both are utilized to avail the organization of lower production costs and wages, increased profits, and remaining competitive (Gnuschke, et al, 2004).

The biggest area that has been affected by the international trade agreements is in the development of technology. Research and development may be performed in one country, the components manufactured in another country, the assembly conducted in another country, while the finished product is exported to yet another country to be sold. Each stage of the production is completed in the location that is the most cost and time efficient. The availability of resources along with the lower cost of wages in other countries are both contributing factors. The comparative advantages of outsourcing and offshoring are utilized in the manufacture of such things as cameras, cellular telephones, computers and laptops, watches, television sets and other household appliances, and copiers. Commercial aircraft, semiconductors, and automobiles are often assembled in this manner of an around the globe process. Other areas of industry that are

affected are "retailing, consumer packaged goods, distribution, insurance, consumer finance, and caustic chemicals" (Reddy, 2000).

It is understandable that organizations would want to increase their bottom line by moving components of their operation to another country in order to increase profits. But looking at it from the perspective of the workers who have had their wages forcibly lowered or lost their jobs altogether, this is little comfort and their losses are difficult to justify. Consumerism and capitalism are not viable reasons to an employee who is losing their high-paying job (Gnuschke, et al, 2004).

Blue-collar jobs such as manufacturing and production are not the only departments that have been outsourced. Now white-collar jobs are also being outsourced to other countries. Financial institutions and service providers are also taking advantage of the competitive edge by the outsourcing of their customer service departments. Many credit card companies use outsourcing for their call service centers such as American Express, Bank of America, and Citigroup. Other business functions such as telemarketing and document management are also being outsourced to other countries (Gnuschke, et al, 2004).

Workers whose employment has been affected or will be affected in the future are certain to suffer financially. Consumers benefit from the lower prices reaped from organizations searching to provide the least expensive manner of producing goods and services, but this assumption relies on whether or not workers in the United States will still be capable of earning a living in an economy that is always becoming more global (Gnuschke, et al, 2004).

The effects of globalization have removed the United States as the single most significant economic power in the world.   The United States must remain cutting-edge so that the country is able to keep its place in the highly competitive global market (Gnuschke, et al, 2004).

The Great Recession of 2007-2009 still has lasting residual effects on the job market of today. The economic deterioration from this recession was even greater than the Great Depression of the 1930's. The Great Recession actually began in December 2007 but was exasperated by a major stock market crash in October 2008. The unemployment rate jumped from five percent in January 2008 to ten percent in 2009. Although the unemployment rates have gone down in recent years it is still at an alarming high. Many of the unemployed workers that were able to return to the workforce were forced to do so at a job with a much lower salary than the one they had previously earned. None of this bodes well for graduating students aspiring to enter the job market (Couch, Reznik, Iams, Tamborini, 2018).

Many employees who lost their jobs were left without an income, health care coverage, contributions to their retirement accounts, and financial security. Their loss of income causes a trickle-down effect to their Social Security disability insurance and retirement benefits as well as their own investments in their private retirement accounts. Younger workers who lost their jobs will have less lifetime earnings that will affect their future Social Security retirement benefits not to mention their enrollment in other social insurance programs. The Great Recession created an economic downturn that impacted millions of workers and is still prevalent in today's business environment (Couch, et al, 2018).

Some plants and companies found it necessary to downsize while others were forced to either move or close altogether. The largest areas of job loss were in the industries and occupations that were dominated by routine tasks (Cowell, et al, 2018).

Outsourcing has resulted in the loss of countless American jobs. The United States government is beginning to realize that there must be more done to create opportunities in this country for those who have lost their jobs due to globalization (Gnuschke, et al, 2004).

Because of the ability of the internet to make information travel instantly and inexpensively, the actual physical location of an organization is no longer a relevant issue. Organizations are working to incorporate the labor force in the United States with their international labor forces to increase our competitiveness far into the long-term future (Gnuschke, et al, 2004).

Since many companies had to restructure because of the economy, they are now attempting to raise productivity and economic growth while decreasing unemployment by enhancing the skills of their employees. They are trying to bridge the gap in their employees' formal training by enhancing their communication skills (Robles, 2012).

It is no longer enough in today's business environment for an employee to possess only the technical skills required of a job to be hired. *Hard skills* are defined as those items that would be included on a resume such as education and work experience. Knowing how to type or knowledge of a particular software program are considered hard skills. *Soft skills* are "character traits, attitudes, and behaviors – rather than technical aptitude or knowledge" (Robles, 2012). Common sense and a positive attitude are examples of soft skills. Hard skills refer to an employee's set of skills and abilities while soft skills are on an interpersonal level (Robles, 2012).

The top ten soft skills that employers are looking for in the business world of today are "integrity, communication, courtesy, responsibility, social skills, positive attitude, professionalism, flexibility, teamwork, and work ethic" (Robles, 2012) In the past technical skills or what is considered as a hard skill, were the only skills necessary for a candidate to become employed. Technology has created the change in what employers are looking for in

business graduates. Research suggests that between seventy-five percent and eighty-five percent of career success is attributed to these soft skills (Robles, 2012).

Providing an excellent product or service is no longer sufficient for a company to stay in business; today they must also be socially and environmentally responsible. Consumers and stakeholders are requiring that companies provide more transparency about their values and social commitments. A company's success is not only measured by its financial bottom line but also its social and environmental impact. Past, present, and future activities such as acquisition and safety issues are all things that contribute to a corporation's brand and reputation (Villagra, Cardaba, Ruiz San Roman, 2016).

The business world of today is more volatile than ever. Employees and future employees must be aware of the constant changes that affect their jobs and be willing to adapt in order to remain employed.

Analysis

How Email Affects Communication

Before email was invented, communication to several receivers was mainly handled through the means of typing a letter, making multiple copies of the letter, and mailing it to various recipients, sending numerous faxes, or placing legions of telephone calls. By sending an email instead of typing and sending business letters, organizations have the capacity to save money previously spent on paper, envelopes, postage, and long-distance telephone calls. Another benefit is the amount of time that employees are saving by sending emails.

Within a short period of time, email became in integral part of conducting business. Timeliness in communication has always been important in the business world and now email has become an indispensable component of conducting daily business. With email we have the

capacity to reach countless stakeholders at the same time and in a manner that is faster than ever before. It also serves as a way to track our communications and keep a record for future reference (Boarcas, 2017). All emails have a time and date stamp along with a list of all recipients. This can become a useful tool when proof of information being sent or received is necessary. Record-keeping is essential in the world of business and email has the capacity to record communications without having to print, file, and store them in another location.

In order to become efficient at electronic communication, today's young professionals will need to be trained to utilize this in business applications. They will need to learn that the courtesy and style of electronic communication is the same as any other form of business communication. Emails must be proofread to check for misspellings, punctuation errors, and grammatical misusage. Another set of errors that is often overlooked is the misuse of the words they're, their, and there along with to, too, and two. Emails are professional communications and must follow the same fundamentals as any other written form of business communication (Bowman, 2016).

With email being the most commonly used application of the internet, it has become a necessary tool for spreading information, both internal and external, in an organization. According to Sproul and Kiesler, many electronic communications may actually be more effective than face-to-face communication. They explain how electronic communication can actually enhance some forms of communication better than face-to-face communication. Differences in race, gender, and organizational status are not as prevalently known and encourage people to participate more than they normally would when they are in the actual presence of someone. In the study by Sproul and Kiesler (1986) it was reported that computer-mediated communication lowers barriers to communicating that may be present in face-to-face

communication. This study also noted that hierarchical status is not as prevalent in digital communication. Employees are more likely to speak their mind in an email than they are while sitting in the boss' office. Some employees may not have the courage to speak up in meetings but are better able to articulate themselves in an email (Sproul & Kiesler, 1986).

Santra and Giri make the observation that "communication is not a secondary of derived activity within an organization; rather, it is the essence of organizational activity and one of the basic processes from which all other functions derive" (Santra & Giri, 2009). This seems like such a fundamental statement, but it is one that most people either do not realize or forget about. If you are speaking with someone face-to-face, it may hinder your participation because you may be self-consciously aware of their race or gender. These cultural and gender barriers can become daunting. When you are composing an email to send to someone you are more likely to write what needs to be said instead of over-editing the content when speaking to avoid communication barriers.

According to a study conducted by Kerr and Hiltz, the factors that can inhibit communication such as race, gender and organizational status are less commonplace in digital communication (Kerr & Hiltz,1982). Employees are less likely to be intimidated by someone in an email than they are in a face-to-face meeting. Women are often timid about speaking up in front of male counterparts for the fear of not being taken seriously. This type of gender barrier can become very restricting. When the face-to-face aspect is removed, many women become more comfortable in expressing their ideas and suggestions. The same can be said when there are more than one race present in a face-to-face meeting. Although someone may not be racist, they are often self-conscious when speaking in front of those from other races. They become so

fearful of saying the wrong thing that they cannot say anything. But when they are able to send an email the dilemma of a cultural barrier is taken out of the picture.

Our society has become obsessed with being so politically-correct that it often impedes us in our basic communication skills. People have become hesitant of saying anything for fear of offending someone else. On the other hand, the internet has provided an anonymous outlet for the so-called trolls who are only trying to cause trouble. Electronic communication does not give us the opportunity to be obnoxious, but it does enable us to have a forum in which to be precise in our communication. An added bonus is that you can edit an email until it is worded correctly to aid in getting your point across. Those with an introverted type personality appreciate the ability to word their communications before sending them. That is not possible when you are having a conversation with someone either on the telephone or face-to-face. You do not have the ability to edit a statement after it is spoken aloud. Another example would be if you are in the boss' office and he asks your opinion, you may be less likely to speak freely while facing him. On the other hand, if he asks the same question in an email, you are more likely to voice your opinion. Email has not only enhanced our communication in speed but also it has opened up our voices in new ways.

Although computer-mediated communication offers many advantages in terms of cost-effectiveness, ease of communication, and time efficiency there are also many drawbacks to consider. Email can be a great time saver, but it can be a great time-waster when it is abused.

Many workers are simply overloaded with a daily barrage of emails. Coworkers sitting next to each other will communicate through sending an email instead of talking over the cubicle wall. In 1994, over 776 billion emails had been back and forth on computers in the United States. It was predicted that by 2000 the number of emails would be over 606 trillion. It is

unimaginable what today's number would be. With all of these emails, some employees are just overloaded with email. Some workers receive a couple hundred per day. Just deleting spam and junk emails takes up valuable employee time each day. In order to streamline communications, Gwynne and Dickerson offer some helpful suggestions. They say to "never discuss bad news, never criticize, never discuss personal issues over email". Each of these situations should be handled in a more direct manner, either face-to-face or over the telephone. Email has become such a vital business tool that employees sometimes forget that it can also be abused (Gwynne & Dickerson, 1997).

Electronic communication has been used to replace interpersonal communication and may be damaging to the relationship skills of workers. Bowman explains that managers must determine the best method of communication depending on the message being sent.   Not all messages are best delivered in an email and the sender must determine the appropriate method based on the receiver and the message itself. A message containing bad news should always be delivered face-to-face no matter how difficult. Bowman states that it is important to train employees how to use electronic communication in business applications in the furtherance of becoming effective (Bowman, 2016).

Many of those already in the business world prefer face-to-face communication over computer-mediated communication (Bowman, 2016). More than eighty-nine percent prefer face-to-face scheduled meetings (Cardon & Marshall, 2015). Unscheduled conversations that occur in person are preferred by eighty-one percent of business professionals (Cardon & Marshall, 2015). Telephone calls are preferred seventy-two percent over text messages (Cardon & Marshall, 2015).

Many things cannot be determined in electronic communication such as personality and behaviors. According to Mercurio, the lack of human contact makes it difficult for managers to learn about their fellow workers. Knowing the personal characteristics of employees is crucial to leaders when it comes to interacting with them. Leaders have to be able to create interpersonal relationships with their employees in order to remain effective (Mercurio, 2010). Leadership communication skills are necessary for those that are in any position of authority. They must take the time to get to know their employees in a face-to-face setting before they are able to determine the most effective way to communicate with them personally.

Communicating through electronic means are prone to misconceptions through perceptual, interpersonal, and emotional barriers. The sender does not have the advantage of seeing the receiver's personal reactions through facial expressions and body language. Any message that may be subject to interpretation is best delivered through face-to-face communication rather that electronically. The sender needs to have the ability to gauge the receiver's reactions and react accordingly and this option is not possible in an email.

Technology is a wonderful thing and enhances our lives in countless ways. Until it does not work. Power outages, internet outages, and low or no cell phone signal are all things that can keep a message from being delivered. Any message that is of importance must be followed up with another form of communication to ensure its delivery.

Communication is necessary in all areas of business. An organization communicates on a daily basis with its employees, customers, suppliers, and other stakeholders. Without an effective means of communication, an organization would soon fall apart. And in today's fast-paced world, the speed with which we communicate is more important than ever. This helps to put into perspective just how important computer-mediated communication is in an organization.

How Online Commerce Affects Face-to-Face Communication

Online commerce has made our lives so much simpler in the last several years. We can conduct our banking online, search for the best rates on car and home insurance, shop for a new pair of shoes, and resell our old shoes without ever getting dressed or leaving the comfort of our own homes.

Most banks now offer online access to personal and business bank accounts for the convenience of their customers. You can check your balance, view your statements, transfer funds from your savings account to your checking account, and pay your bills online. Many people enjoy the convenience of having their weekly paycheck automatically deposited into their account. Some institutions also offer online loan applications. Many businesses offer the option to pay your bill through the company's website. You can pay with a credit card or withdrawal from your checking account. The business is paid immediately instead of waiting days for the check to be delivered. This also avoids the trouble of having the check getting lost in the mail.

The downside to the convenience of banking online is that many people prefer the face-to-face encounter of walking into a bank. They feel that their transactions are more secure and less prone to error than over the internet. If an error occurs on their transaction, they are able to talk to a real person to get it resolved. People become frustrated when they have to go through several prompts from a computer-generated voice on the telephone before they can reach someone to handle their problem. Sometimes they just want to talk to a real person (Johnson, 2017).

Insurance is another business that has made our lives easier by becoming available online. You can comparison shop from your computer without ever having to speak with an agent. This means no more pushy salespeople to deal with. You have the ability to search for

who has the best prices on the coverage you want instead of being told by an agent what they think you need to buy. You can print out your insurance cards, change your policy, and even file a claim all from the convenience of your computer.

In the past, trading in the stock market was conducted through your investment broker or banker if you were not a day-trader yourself. Now individuals can wheel and deal their own stocks and bonds online. Many brokerages have their own websites and apps where people can buy, sell, and trade for themselves. They can access up-to-the-minute stock prices and other information from across the world and use this information to invest on their own.

Probably the largest area of online commerce is shopping. You do not have to brave the elements, search for a parking space, deal with the crowds, or search numerous stores to find the perfect thing only to discover they have sold out of it in your size. At the end of the day, you are exhausted and still do not have what you were looking for. When you shop online the variety of choices is practically endless. It is also easier to search for better prices by not having to drag yourself from store to store. If you need to send a gift across the country, you can do so without having to make that extra trip to the post office. Making discreet purchases is also a lot easier. Many people enjoy the online shopping experience because they do not have to deal with the crowds or salespeople.

Online shopping may be convenient, but it removes the social element out of the transaction. Some ladies like to spend the day getting away from the husband and children, having lunch with their girlfriends, and going shopping. They also like to see and touch the products they are purchasing (Akhter, 2015). It is often difficult to determine the quality of a product while looking at a picture of it on your computer screen. People like to be able to try something on to see how it fits and ensure that it looks good on them. If you purchase something

online, you often have to pay for return shipping if something does not fit properly. Plus make an extra trip to the post office.

When making a complicated purchase such as an automobile, consumers want to be able to do so with a human being. The customer will want to haggle over the price of the new car with a salesperson. Negotiations will need to be conducted over the price of a trade-in. They will need to discuss payment options and interest rates. People want to kick the tires on an automobile and take it for a test drive. They want to see how well it maneuvers and listen to how the engine sounds. None of these are things that you can do over the internet.

When shopping for an emotional purchase as an engagement ring, customers want to see how much a diamond sparkles and compare it to other diamonds in the store. They like to look at the diamond under a ten-power loupe or a gemscope to search for flaws or inclusions. Looking at a diamond on the internet will not accurately show the characteristics of the stone. A woman likes to see how the ring looks on her finger and how it looks in a mirror. What appears gorgeous on a computer screen may not be so flattering on her hand. Some purchases are better conducted in person.

Online shopping does have numerous advantages, but we are missing out on the social aspect of shopping in person. Running into an old friend in the mall is a face-to-face experience that we could not have online. Haggling over the price of our new car promotes our negotiation skills. Interactions with people of different genders, races, cultures, and who speak different languages are all experiences that allow us to practice and therefore enhance our face-to-face communication skills.

How Social Media Affects Face-to-Face Communication

Social media has a strong presence in the business world. Many companies and organizations are taking advantage of the free apps such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram and using them to market and advertise their business. A company can reach countless people in real time with a single post, Tweet, or photo. This saves the company money in advertising expenses and time (Boarcas, 2017). Previously, when launching a new product or service, it would take days, weeks, or even months to make the public aware through newspaper, magazine and/or television advertisements. Now the new product or service can be seen by millions of people around the world in a matter of seconds. Social media users often share these posts and the company's reach becomes even more widespread.

An added benefit to companies utilizing social media is that customers can rate and review the products or services. Other consumers find it helpful to use this type of information to make an informed purchase. The company can also use this information to improve an existing product or discover a niche where a new product needs to be developed. Customers have the ability to communicate with other consumers and the organization itself through social media. No other form of media has this kind of power.

This type of power also has its drawbacks. If a consumer has a bad experience with a company, then they can spread their complaints over all their accounts. This online word-of-mouth can get out of hand before the company has a chance to respond. Once a post or tweet goes viral it is virtually unstoppable. Companies have to stay on top of what others are posting about them online in order to remain effective communicators with their customers.

A drawback to digital communication is present in the lives of millennials (Raina & Marchewka, 2018). They have spent their entire lives online. Millennials have never known a life without the internet. One of the key points Raina and Marchewka stress is that although

millennials are aware that spending too much time online can have a negative impact on their personal communications, this does not change their habits (Raina & Marchewka, 2018). Raina and Marchewka point out that people have to learn to balance their digital lives and their personal lives in order to maintain their personal relationships (Raina & Marchewka, 2018). These points are backed up by Brignall and Van Valey (2005). They discuss how today's youth who grew up with the internet will have trouble separating their virtual selves from their real selves (Brignall & Van Valey, 2005). This comes at the cost of developing their social interaction skills. When these youth enter the work force, they may have a difficult time transitioning from the virtual world to the business world. The millennials of today ware going to become the future professionals of tomorrow. They must come to realize the importance of developing interpersonal communication skills in pursuance of being effective in a corporate atmosphere. Their fellow employees that they will begin working with will most likely be of an older generation and these two groups must be able to communicate, work, and coexist in a professional manner.

The Affects in Today's Business World

Today's business world moves faster than ever. People have grown to expect to have all the information they want and need in a split second. The stock markets in Asia and Europe open several hours before the New York Stock Exchange does. This means that we can have the latest stock trends from around the world at our fingertips in real time instead of waiting for it to be printed in the newspaper. The old adage "time is money" is crucial in the business of trading stocks and bonds. Learning that a company you are about to invest in has had a security breach in customer's credit card accounts is imperative to know before purchasing their stock. The more up-to-the minute the information is, the more money traders and investment firms can

make for their clients. The internet has given us the ability to communicate almost instantly with anyone around the globe, but it has never been more crucial than in the business world.

Tirumala Santra and Vijai N. Giri explored the correlation between computer-mediated communication and the effect it has on an organization. They looked at how it affects the success of an organization. They write how communication is constantly taking place in an organization and how "effective communication is considered to be the foundation of modern organization". It is pointed out the communication is at the basic structure of an organization and determines how all business it conducted (Santra & Giri, 2009).

Globalization has some of the biggest challenges in communication. With companies outsourcing their workforces to locations around the world, communication becomes crucial. Having workers in other countries can hinder the flow of communication due to language and cultural barriers. Face-to-face communication may not be a viable option due to cost and time constraints. Email often becomes the only available option. Leaders and managers must be adept in their messages to overcome any of the language and cultural barriers.

One of the biggest ways that companies lose money is due to employees abusing access to the internet at work (Johnson & Rawlins, 2008). Millions of dollars and countless hours of productivity are lost each year due to employees playing games, shopping, and various other activities on the internet instead of performing their daily jobs. Organizations are cracking down on employee internet abuse. Some employers are installing tracking software that monitors an employee's internet use. Offending employees are sometimes reprimanded by suspension or fired altogether for abusing their internet privileges. The internet during work hours should be used to enhance the time and ease with which they communicate with other

stakeholders. It is meant to increase productivity but too many individuals are abusing it by wasting company resources.

Today's graduating students already have the computer skills necessary to succeed in the professional world, but many do not have any training or experience in the interpersonal communication skills that are needed to advance in their careers. In the business world, technical skills are considered to be hard skills, while interpersonal communication skills are considered to be soft skills. These millennials have grown up conducting most of their communication online and have not had the opportunity to develop these soft skills. Whereas today's professionals had to learn computer skills in order to remain competitive in the the business world, millennials will have to learn interpersonal communication skills to reach the heights they aspire to. Millennials will need to become adept at these skills so that they may communicate effectively with their coworkers, superiors, customers, and suppliers. Electronic communication has become an integral part of business and will continue to be just as important in the future (Bowman, 2016).

Today's graduating students face more challenges than ever before when faced with securing gainful employment. The job market has become harder to navigate than ever before. Graduating students looking for a new job are also in competition with those who are still left unemployed by the Great Recession.   Employers are hiring fewer workers than in the past and they are becoming more selective about those they hire. It is no longer enough to have the prerequisite education and degree, job-seekers must also acquire the necessary skills to harmonize with the existing work staff. Possessing the proper communication skills are just one of the things today's employers are searching for (Bedwell et al, 2014).

The loss of income from those affected by the Great Recession has caused a trickle-down effect to the rest of the economy. This created a shift in the housing market since people were no longer able to afford their mortgages. Luxury purchases had to be cut out altogether. Travel and leisure activities were no longer affordable. Shopping, dining out, going to the movies, or attending sporting events were all activities that had to be excised from the budget. Less spending translates into less income for other businesses. Each of these issues has had an effect on another sector were employees had to be laid off or terminated when their business suffered because of the recession. Some plants and companies found it necessary to downsize while others were forced to either move or close altogether (Couch et al, 2018).

Many people are having to take any job they can get instead of being able to acquire gainful employment in the field they are educated and experienced in. The competition for jobs is fierce and today's graduates are competing with older workers who are much more qualified in terms of experience. The research show that employers are searching for employees who possess excellent communication skills so all job candidates need to work to enhance these techniques.

Recommendations

Young job seekers must take extra steps to ensure that they are viable candidates in order to become competitive in securing employment. Some of the most important skills and abilities that employers stress job candidates possess are technical, leadership, and interpersonal skills. Since not all of these abilities and skills are reflected on an application letter and resume, job candidates must be able to display these assets in other screening processes.

The future job hunters of tomorrow need to be taught interpersonal communication skills before they are set loose on the job market. Executives are seeking new employees who already

possess these skills (O'Sullivan, 2000). Interpersonal skills must be taught in the classroom just as academic knowledge and technical skills are. As many as sixty percent of executives believe that interpersonal skills are more easily learned by students than those employees that are already in the workforce (American Management Association, 2012). Many colleges and universities do not have the capability to increase their heavy course loads with more classes, so the existing courses need to determine a way to incorporate interpersonal skills into their curriculum (Bedwell, Fiore, Salas, 2014). These lessons can supplemented with lectures, demonstrations, practice, feedback, and evaluations (Bedwell, et al, 2014).

Lecturing is the basic fundamental in every classroom setting. All classes have an instructor or professor that provides instruction and knowledge. Having each of these instructors add a few lines to their classroom dialogue will furnish the basis for acquiring interpersonal skills (Bedwell, et al, 2014). According to Bedwell, Fiore, and Salas:

If many educators from the same program are incorporating IPS instruction into their teaching, each instructor only needs to provide a brief lecture that not only emphasizes the particular skill they are targeting in their classes, but also discusses the importance of related component skills (Bedwell, et al, 2014).

Providing students with an abbreviated lecture on interpersonal skills and their definitions will give them an understanding on how these skills and their components are related (Bedwell, et al, 2014).

Demonstrations such as film and/or video clips present the advantage of allowing students to see proper interpersonal communication in action. These videos can demonstrate skills in real-life scenarios to enhance students' engagement of the subject. Video websites such as *You-Tube* allow instructors to discover almost limitless examples to aid in their lectures (Bedwell, et al, 2014).

Practice is crucial to learning according to the science of training. Learning something must be demonstrated through the practice of it for the sake of reaping the benefits of it. Group activities such as creating a video or conducting experiential exercises teach students how to work together and become team players (Bedwell, et al, 2014).

Every form of practice must be followed up with feedback and evaluation in the furtherance of being effective. Feedback and evaluation from the other students participating in the project and the instructor should be given to each individual student and the group as a whole (Bedwell, et al, 2014).

The students coming into the business world of today will have to be able to demonstrate to their future employers that they are capable of interacting efficiently with others they encounter on a daily basis. Many of these students have spent their lives online and have not developed these skills. Before they start to work, they must sharpen their interpersonal skills in order to become effective communicators. Teaching these skills in the college curriculum will give them the basis for success.

Powell and Jankovich suggest that students assemble a portfolio of their work that will demonstrate to future employers that they have attained the necessary skills and abilities. This portfolio will provide a job candidate an advantage in the initial screening process. Their portfolio should include reports of all of their projects, seminars, workshops, and courses that show their experience and skills attained during their college careers. A portfolio of their student work will show employers how their achievements during college will transcend into the business world. The most important abilities to showcase are categories in academic skills, basic skills, and communication skills (Powell & Jankovich, 1998).

The academic achievements that should be emphasized are those that show proper time management and organizational skills. Collaboration projects should be included as they demonstrate a student's participation in teamwork (Powell & Jankovich, 1998).

The sixteen basic skills that employers are searching for in job candidates are "knowing how to learn, reading, writing, mathematics, listening. oral communication, problem solving, creative thinking, self-confidence, motivational goal setting, personal and career development, interpersonal skills, negotiation, teamwork, organizational effectiveness, and leadership" (Powell & Jankovich, 1998). Oral communication and interpersonal skills are two of the skills listed that many employers stress are necessary for new hires. Listening, negotiation, teamwork, and leadership are other skills that fall into the communication category. Employees must master these skills of communication and be able to demonstrate them to future employers.

Communication skills such as oral communication, listening, interpersonal communication, and written communication are criteria employers use to assess job candidates (Powell & Jankovich, 1998). The fact that there is an overlap in the list of basic skills and the list of communication skills employers look for proves that communication effectiveness is an important trait that is desirable in job seekers.

A well-formed portfolio may get a job candidate in the door for an interview, but they must be able to demonstrate their communication skills once they are there. Non-verbal communication such as "eye contact, facial expressions, hand and arm gestures, posture, body movements, speech rate, pauses, and loudness" are all gauged during an interview to determine if a candidate is suitable for the job (Powell & Jankovich, 1998). The portfolio should be designed to attract the attention of the interviewer, but the job candidate must be capable of making their communication skills evident during the interview.

Organizations that realize that there is a correlation between employee effectiveness and the success of their business may strive to encourage their emotional well-being through interpersonal communication. Companies can improve employee relationships by offering training programs teaching workers how to improve interpersonal skills. Hynes outlines the methods and outcomes of a United States based company that integrated this program for their employees. All employees need to have fulfillment in their jobs in order to be productive employees. Part of that fulfillment comes from the relationships they have with their superiors and other employees. Many companies train their employees on how to accomplish their jobs, but most do not train them on their interpersonal skills that are so necessary in the professional world. This training is important because it teaches employees the skills required during face-to-face meetings, formal presentations, team skills, negotiations, email, and interpersonal communication (Hynes, 2012).

The design of a particular office is often an unknown physical barrier to the flow of communication. Leaders need to take a second look at the layout of their office space to ensure that it is laid out in a manner that will not heed their employees from communicating effectively. Cubicle walls give employees a small amount of privacy to conduct their work, but they may also be a hinderance in communications. Superiors may need to consider having an open-door policy that does not make their subordinates feel that they are being locked out in their work environment. Each level of the hierarchy must be enabled to communicate with the other levels.

Conclusions

Computer-mediated communication is here to stay. Just as the previous generations had to learn computer skills, the next generation will have much to learn also. Many of the

professionals that are working today did not have an email account when they began and that is something they had to learn how to maneuver. Those who will be new in the business world will find it necessary to learn and perfect their interpersonal communication skills in order to acclimate into a professional atmosphere. Each generation has something to teach the next generation as well as learn something from them and vice versa. Business communication comes in many forms whether it is an email, text message, telephone call, or in a face-to-face meeting. Employees must be capable of exceling at all the various forms of communication in order to be successful. There will always be interaction between employees and superiors and it is imperative that communication flow freely vertically, horizontally, and diagonally.

We communicate with everyone we come into contact with in our daily lives. This may be our families, friends, coworkers, strangers on the street, and even the checkout clerk at the grocery store. We communicate through our words, gestures, and body language. Other manners of communication are through the written word, email, telephone calls, text messages, and on social media. Workers must communicate efficiently with superiors, fellow employees, customers, suppliers, and various other stakeholders in order to be effective. They must also master these skills in pursuance of being successful in the business world.

A drawback that has occurred as a result of the internet is that people have allowed their interpersonal communication skills to fall through the cracks. It is much faster to send an email or a text message than it is to pick up the telephone and place the call. Electronic communication is less troublesome than walking down the hall to someone's office for a face-to-face meeting. We are spending less time communicating face-to-face than ever before.

Online banking and shopping have their perks, but some of these come at the cost of losing the social context of the experience. It may be convenient to stay in bed wearing your

pajamas and order that new handbag you have been craving, but you miss the opportunity of running into an old acquaintance you have not seen for years. Any and all social encounters provide us with the opportunity to enhance our communication skills. Plus, you miss out on the instant gratification of the purchase of that new handbag while waiting for the postal service to deliver it.

Social media is an amazing way to keep up with the daily events in the lives of our family and friends, but we cannot allow social media websites and apps to replace the time we spend with them in a face-to-face environment. Our lives are meant to be enhanced by our own personal experiences, not the things we see others experience on our social media accounts. Today's youth develop friendships through social media apps instead of going out and socializing with them. They may have never even met their online friends and followers. The social skills we attain in our day-to-day lives carry over into the business world as well. These skills must be adapted in order to properly communicate with those we come across in our professional lives.

Today's business environment has become more competitive than ever. Corporate America has become more volatile over the years. Recessions and layoffs have resulted in even the most qualified and educated employees being left without a job. Globalization has resulted in many American jobs being transferred overseas. People are living longer than ever before and retiring later in life. This means that there are fewer positions available for incoming workers.

Face-to-face communication skills are one of the most important skills to possess when searching for gainful employment. As individuals we must strive to enhance our own interpersonal communication skills. College can provide students with an education, but the students must take it upon themselves to practice and learn how to communicate in today's

corporate environment. Companies need to be aware how important face-to-face communication is to their daily business and take the necessary steps to enhance it. Face-to-face communication can never be allowed to be replaced by computer-mediated communication.

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