

# COURIER



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# Managing Your Channels Effectively

BY PAUL VITALE



SOCIAL MEDIA AND PROFESSIONALISM are two hot buttons in today's business environment. What do they mean to you as a travel professional? Discussing these along with other topics critical to success brought a medley of impassioned responses during Travel Exchange '16, dialogue that once again demonstrates the importance of etiquette no matter the situation or industry.

While some may say etiquette is "old school," most would agree that it has never been more crucial to set oneself apart from competitors. Recognize that as individuals we all have multiple roles in life, and etiquette—or the lack thereof—weaves its way through each position.

Whether considering personal demands or professional requirements, everything we encounter is communication-driven. The devices and tools used for connecting have become as abundant as the personalities that utilize them. So have the missteps and faux pas. The opportunity to share information instantaneously with a client, colleague or friend through email, social media and

smartphone or tablet) in today's business world, with endless possibilities for connecting.

Not only are they readily available for communicating, but these devices are also great assistants when it comes to calendar reminders and making notes. To ensure proper etiquette when using your device during an intimate meeting for note-taking, be courteous and advise others that you will be utilizing your equipment for that purpose.

With the endless possibilities offered by hand-held devices, the general consensus among NTA participants indicated that email is now on par with snail mail as two dinosaurs poised for extinction. Texting and Twitter are the preferred methods of corresponding. Facebook and LinkedIn rated next among the group with one very important caveat—be consistent. If social media is going to be employed, dive in with both feet and manage your avenues constantly. Stay current and visible. Explore apps such as Hootsuite and Sprout Social to administer your social media if needed. If you don't buy in completely, you are better off positioning your communication through other channels.

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texting not only broadens our possibilities for success, it exponentially expands the potential for a negative interaction if proper etiquette is not employed.

What communication tool has proven to be the most effective? What constitutes suitable use? Is social media a good outlay of time? What is the best way to interact with your clients? These are just a few of the questions posed to participants during my first session at Travel Exchange. The answers, though varied, struck a common theme: What began as a novelty a scant 20 years ago (the personal digital assistant) has evolved into crucial equipment (the

One channel that all professionals should perfect is the art of presenting with ease. In the travel industry and across the commercial landscape, having the ability to deliver a compelling message is critical to achievement.

Generally speaking, anxiety is the most common stumbling block for individuals when rising to deliver a pitch or presentation. According to attendees of my second session, "The WOW Factor—Presenting with Ease," the source of that anxiety varies from "feeling like I'm being judged" to "not liking how I look or sound." Some admit to forgetting to breathe, a common occurrence



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in front of an audience, even an audience of one. The point of difference for composed and effective presenters is simple: They are prepared.

Preparation takes many forms. Allow yourself time to gather the information and thoughts needed for your presentation. Consider the benefits to your audience and hone in on them when planning your approach and delivery. Step in front of a colleague and rehearse your pitch ... and then repeat it in front of a mirror. The more you practice, the better you will become; the more prepared you are, the less anxiety will distract you. In the end, if some anxiety remains, learn to channel it into energy to ensure a dynamic presentation.

High-quality communication in all forms is the key to success in the global market. Managing your channels effectively, practicing superior etiquette and expanding your horizons and methodology will deliver the results you desire.

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