

## Face-to-face – the universally best accepted form of communication is free on the web

Despite the advances in workplace technology, and with them the addition of communication tools such as email and intranet; there is still no better way to communicate than face-to-face, and that idiom is backed up by a powerful piece of research.

The IRS review, a specialist employment journal, found that although there is a plethora of communication methods in the workplace that includes memos; emails; online handbooks; team newsletters and road shows, the single most effective way to communicate is still via face-to-face discussions.

It is, as any internal communications expert will verify, definitely the best form of communication. Without being able to look at the person with whom we are communicating means we lose almost 50% of the overall communication process. That is because body language - including facial expressions - accounts for up to half of the total method in which we evaluate giving and receiving information.

Intonation is also crucial when communicating; but despite its importance and complexity, it is largely an unconscious mechanism. But, although intonation can be picked up in telephone conversations, what cannot be effectively conveyed are visibly displayed emotions such as laughing; crying, and even yawning. These and other visibly displayed emotions can be infectious, as is attitude. That is one of the first things that is picked up whether consciously or sub-consciously, by people talking to each other, and is generally derived by a combination of body language, intonation and inflexion. However, when communication takes place through means other than face-to-face these signals become confused.

In the workplace team meetings and focus groups, where everyone can participate and see each other and register their body language are the most popular methods of encouraging employee involvement. So, if time prevents one-on-one communication, at least these face-to-face methods of communicating are almost as effective. But, companies where employees are distributed throughout the country or even all over the world need other effective ways of ensuring face-to-face communication; that's when internet [video calls](#) come into their own. Although you can't be in the same room, during a video call every facial expression can be registered, especially when using HD quality webcams.

But, it's not just in the workplace where being able to see the person to whom you are conversing is important. Keeping in touch with friends and relatives that live in far flung locations around the world is vital for many people in today's global village. Although we can't always jump on a plane to see them, we can always rely on the internet and video calls to keep in touch with our loved ones in a way that we could only dream of 25 years ago, when TV science fiction series such as UFO, Star Trek and Space 1999 regularly featured the forerunner of video calling.

In 2008 the internet has given us many options to make free calls to others, whether the person we want to contact is just down the street or on the other side of the world. And as most of the services are free, surely it's only a matter of time before the majority of people communicate this way?

### About the Author

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Source: <http://www.tntarticles.com>