

2.5.13: Modernizing Business Messages

Learning Objectives

- Discuss the shift from traditional to modern communication methods

The advances in information technology, and especially the widespread use of the Internet, have brought dramatic change to the way business communication is conducted. This in turn has precipitated change in the very way that we work today.

Traditional written business communication consisted of letters, memos, brochures, etc. that all shared the same media: paper. Modern written business communication consists of those as well but now is utilizing digital media. The move to digital communication methods has seen expanded communication techniques such as email, instant messaging, texting, posting, chatting and more. We will discuss these in more detail later.

Practice Question

Digital business communication has not only seen the expansion of communication in general but has transformed the way we work thanks to near instant methods of communication. First, since we are now “always” connected, there is the tendency to always be at work. But this change in communication has also brought some good news as traditional work hours have given way to flexible work time for many businesses. Secondly, we have seen a shift from direct manager-to-employee reporting relationships to a more team-oriented, “flattened” collaborative organizational structure. Third, where we work has become less structured as well with the advent of virtual workplaces and remote employees.

Dell's Connected Workplace

The Dell company, known for computers and electronics, is a prime example of the impact electronic communication has had on modern work practices. The increased use of digital communication platforms to conduct work allowed Dell to develop the Connected Workplace program. This program promotes employees to work remotely, meaning employees can work from anywhere in the world as long as they have internet access.

Some of Dell's North American employees who opted to work remotely relocated to ski areas in Canada to take advantage of their mobile status. Some employees work Sunday through Thursday from 12:30pm to 9:30pm so as to better coordinate with team members based in other time zones. This then allows them to spend their morning and weekend free time on the slopes. In 2012, Dell expanded their “Flexibility and Mobility” program to seventy three sites in twenty nine countries representing twenty five percent of eligible employees^[1].

1. "The Global Impact of Remote Work," Remote.co, September 2016.

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