

DON'T EMAIL JUST CALL



As I'm sitting at my desk trying to put together the necessary papers to submit for event permits, I realized I had a question and needed some clarification. I searched the city webpages to find an email address for the correct department and after about 20 minutes of searching I gave up and just emailed the info@ address provided at the footer of the website. A few days later I still had no response. I gave myself to the end of the week before I'd email them again.

This cycle went on for about two more weeks before I finally picked up the phone to call. I was easily able to find the phone number for the correct department, speak with an individual and was off the phone in about 15 minutes. The process wasn't painful, but for some reason I just didn't want to pick up the phone and call.

There is an interesting article in the *Entrepreneur* online archives titled, "Why a Phone Call is Better Than an Email (Usually)." I found it to be such an interesting read because it explains how a phone call can be used to your advantage to show urgency, be more emphatic, be more accurate and be more honest. When you're on the phone, you're able to make a connection in a way an email just cannot. It's hard to pick up the emotional gradient and connect with the potential sponsor or event client when they are only reading words.

It's also difficult to move forward or really make any progress in an email because often we are devising reactive responses. It's easy to respond to an email from an upset client reacting to their feelings, versus taking the time to really understand what they are upset about and helping to find a solution. In some cases, as explained in a Harvard Business Review article, it can prolong debate and hurt relationships.

Now, I'm not saying that a phone call will solve all problems or make a person's day go smoother, but it certainly can help in building stronger relationships and developing a good reputation with industry professionals. If you can make that call it shows confidence and firm belief in the work you are doing. Sponsors are more likely to commit, you're more likely to sign on that client and if you tell people you are open to phone conversations you are more likely to be looked to as reliable and trustworthy. Personally, I use phone calls and emails to stay in touch with festival sponsors and committee members and I find success in that blended approach.

Don't get me wrong, emails and texting, instant messaging and so on have certainly made getting things done easier. However, we must not forget about that human element, how our words can build relationships and trust in an industry where that is certainly one of the most sought after traits in an events coordinator. So maybe in today's world, we should work harder to try and get back some of that personable touch.

Britnee Packwood is currently the Director of the National Lentil Festival in Pullman, WA. She started her career in events during her undergrad at the University of Idaho where she earned a B.S. in Public Relations and a B.S. in Conservation Social Science. She is currently working on obtaining an MBA focusing on Music Business. When she isn't coordinating events one can find her listening to vinyl, knitting or enjoying the great outdoors. She can be reached at britnee.packwood@gmail.com.