6 TIPS
TO MAKE YOUR CONVERSATIONS MORE PRODUCTIVE

BY DAVID HALES

Scalar

I have learned that effective communication is essential no matter the field you work in. As each conversation and situation differs, developing successful communication habits will make high-stakes emails, phone calls, and meetings more comfortable. I visited with Scalar's executive team, Vice Presidents, and seasoned valuation analysts to determine the best ways to find success in phone calls, emails, and in-person conversations

PERSONALIZE AND KEEP IT LIGHT

In today's fast-paced world, having meaningful but concise conversations is essential. **Steve Lindsley** ensures his clients continue to have a good day by keep conversations on topic but concise

In today's fast-paced environment, time is everything, time is money! Good luck getting a C-suite to read more than a sentence on a first-time email–I don't care how catchy the subject line reads. Keep your emails and conversations lite, concise and to the point—then end!

"Decision makers are busy! Expect typos, understanding that they're probably responding to your message while running late to their next meeting (no one cares whether or not you use the oxford comma). Finish with a clear objective, make it impossible for the reader to misread."

"I like to send text messages when possible. I want to my message to appear on their lock-screen. I also find a text can mean faster response times which translates to more efficient communication. You'll also avoid the junk folder!

Steve is a vice president responsible for the growth and business development at Scalar.

SHOW GRATITUDE

No matter the location or style of conversation, **Denise Jardine** is consistently courteous. Showing gratitude is key to keeping the conversation upbeat and respectful.

“I think I always end my conversations with a thank-you. I know clients are calling us and asking us for help, but I appreciate that they are taking their time to listen to me. In my emails I generally use ‘Thank you’ to sign off. And I always end my calls with something like, ‘Thanks for taking time with me.’ I'm here to help them and to be of service—it’s always been my priority to go above and beyond to help people.”

Denise joined Scalar in early 2018 as an analyst responsible for supporting the sales team with client engagements and deliverable fulfillment.

COLLABORATE

Spencer Hatfield wants his clients to know they play an integral part in their conversations with Scalar. Encouraging open communication is a great way to foster a fruitful relationship and build trust.

“At the end of my conversations I always say, ‘If you have any questions, please let me know.’ If anything comes up, I’ll reach out to you.’ I say this because I want the process to be collaborative. I will also say, ‘I’ll talk to you later,’ which shows that I don’t want the conversation to end. I want them to know our work is collaborative and we will talk more, as the process is always ongoing.”

Spencer is a senior associate at Scalar and is responsible for valuation and transaction advisory engagements.

BE MINDFUL AND ACCESSIBLE

No matter a person's position in a company, **Jordan Volz** is mindful of their time. To help your conversations be more productive, don't take your clients' time for granted.

"These people we typically talk to are business leaders with a lot of demand for their time. When I end a conversation, I thank them for their time and tell them I really appreciate them taking a few moments to speak with me. I remind them, 'Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any further questions.' I think it helps to acknowledge that these are busy people and that I'm not taking their time for granted.

"I think accessibility is also crucial because, at the end of the day, all of this is customer service. Yes, our employees are very highly skilled and they provide professional services, but it's about customer service and that means I need to be an advocate with my client. I need to be respectful of their needs and their time. I need to be efficient with approaching things, and I need to be accessible and available.

"I try to make a point of saying, 'Hey, please don't hesitate to reach out,' and clients take me up on it. They give me calls all the time, and I love that they'll call me even when we're not engaged in something. They'll call and say, 'Hey, we have this investor thinking about doing this. What do you think would happen?' I get that kind of stuff all the time, which is perfect because that's what I want them to do. In the long term, yes it can lead to an expansion or to business development, but more importantly, it solidifies that relationship. Then, when big things come along, they'll think of us and they'll be like, 'I liked working with that guy, and I want to do that again."

Jordan joined Scalar as an associate and has valued more than 300 companies for purposes related to estate and tax planning, mergers and acquisitions, financial reporting, special purpose acquisition companies, and raising capital.

HAVE A GAME PLAN

Oftentimes, conversations can cover a lot of material and topics. **Ray Smego** summarizes the conversation to help his client feel comfortable and confident.

“I've had sales roles historically, and I was told one of the most effective ways you can have a sales conversation is to tell someone what you're going to tell them, tell them, and then tell them what you told them. Typically I'll first recap our conversation to outline any of the high-level points that were covered—tell them what I told them. Second, I will outline action steps—what happens after we conclude the conversation. Lastly, I set expectations—what they expect from me and what we need to do before our next conversation.”

Ray came to Scalar in 2016 and is responsible for valuing both private and public companies for complex financial instrument valuations, deferred compensation valuations, gift and estate tax planning, and valuation consulting for raising venture capital and private equity.

FOLLOW UP AND FOLLOW THROUGH

I think it's important to make the process easy for your client. Be direct and summarize the next steps from your conversation. Immediately fulfill your commitments from the conversation.

"Typically, the most important thing I've found, for any conversation, is having some type of follow-up item or touch point. It is key to remember that each interaction is a step in developing a relationship with the individual and it is important to show that you were listening and will follow through. It can be as simple as saying, 'Hey, during our conversation you brought up wanting to connect with Bob. I'll follow up later today with their contact information so you can get in touch with them' or, if it's a potential client, 'Thanks for taking the time to talk. I understand that you are on a tight timeframe for this so I will send over a contract right after this call.'

I send the follow-up right away, and I always remind them in the follow-up that if they need anything, I am available to connect at any time. This has helped me solidify relationships from the get-go and gain trust."

I am a Vice President at Scalar responsible for business development and growth in the Pacific Northwest.

Phone calls, emails, and in-person conversations can be most successful if mindfulness tactics can be applied. Try some of these suggestions in your conversations and you may see an increase in your success.

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