

COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE

How to communicate with someone under 35 – that is, how to get your call returned

Business owners are aging in Orange County. Frequently, I take a



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meet-
ing with a
business
owner in
his late 50s
or 60s who
introduces
me to his
heir ap-
parent — a
son, daugh-
ter or in-
law. It's this new genera-
tion that has made com-
munication critically
important.

Being a proud father
of three young adults
born between 1983 and
1988 (who are married
to two more), I am some-
what qualified to give
advice on effective com-
munication with millen-
nials.

If you are a boomer
— as I am — born be-
tween 1945 and 1964,
your business conversa-
tion hierarchy from most
important to least im-
portant goes something
like this:

- Face to face
- Call to the office or home
- A reluctant call to the cell — only in an emergency
- Write — letter
- Email
- Other — text, social media outlet, etc.

If you were born be-
fore 2000 and after 1982,
chances are (I guarantee
it) you have a different
business conversation hi-
erarchy. From most used
to least:

- Text
- Snapchat
- Tweet
- Facebook message (if

over 30)

- Instagram (if under 30)
- Other — call — are you kidding me? Email, face to face, what is a home phone anyway?
- Write? Hmm, not if over 140 characters

OK, now that I've
highlighted the differ-
ences, how can you effec-
tively communicate with
someone under 35?

Here are some sugges-
tions:

Try to make it all about him

If you have ever dealt
with someone under 35,
you know that the min-
ute he wants something,
it cannot happen fast
enough. In the return
situation, well, not so
much. Tailor your mes-
sage ever so slightly to
make him the focus.

Example: My wife and
I rented a beach house
for a week last year with
the hopes of having a
nice family gathering.
We needed to get “buy-
in” on a week that would
work for all of us. We
knew that if we called,
texted or “othered,” we
would be lucky to get a
timely response from 1
out of 5. So we texted all
five and said, “We are
discussing an early dis-
tribution of our estate.
Please call.” Within five
minutes, we heard from
all five! Now we didn't
lie; the travel and rental
— that we contributed
— were an early distri-
bution.

Employ the DEFCON system

I love the movie “War
Games.” A computer
game-generated global

nuclear war. (Not really
— it was only a game,
but NORAD didn't know
that!) DEFCON was used
in the movie. DEFCON
(1-5) stands for “defense
condition” and reflects
the current status of mil-
itary awareness (1 least
to 5 most) in preparation
for an attack.

DEFCON for com-
munication to some-
one under 35 is first level
(email), second level
(call), third level (text),
fourth level (all three at
once) and fifth level (a
personal visit).

Send him a letter

THIS will freak him
out!

Mirror his timing. In
this crazy digital age,
your contacts can now
come during any of the
24 hours in the day.
Watch when people un-
der 35 respond to you
and mirror that timing.

Don't take the lack
of gratitude personally.
Boomers grew up believ-
ing that to not respond
was rude, mostly because
our P's and grandp's
were from the “greatest
generation,” where grat-
itude was a part of life.
If you don't get a thank-
you for a job well-done
or for a gift you sent or
for busting your hump to
make something happen
(see “all about him”), try
not to take it personally.
He certainly don't — or
he would say thanks.

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