

## Face Time Beats E-Mail Any Day

Posted by [Martha Newman, J.D., PCC, TopLawyerCoach, LLC](#) • December 8, 2010 • [Printer-friendly](#)

### *Step Away from the Computer and Start Talking in Person for a Change*



Any interpersonal communication expert will tell you that valuable **face-to-face interaction has fallen by the wayside** thanks to e-mail. Sure, a finely crafted e-mail message can be a work of art, but how much power does it really lend?

The answer, according to researchers at the University of Illinois-Urbana-Champaign and George Mason University, is not much. In fact, they say, **e-mail can work against you!** [Their study](#) put more than 200 students in groups to perform teamwork tasks and found that those working face-to-face showed greater cooperation than those communicating through instant messaging or video-conferencing, who were more likely to lie.

When interacting face-to-face, "you're getting more information from the people around you," says coauthor Gregory Northcraft, which "is allowing you to trust them more."

Though e-mail messages and instant chats can be a convenient way to record conversations, the authors of the study say that professionals who interact in person also **feel more engaged** with

**Top Lawyer Coach, LLC**  
601 Penn Street  
Fort Worth, TX 76102

817/992-6711  
[newman@toplawyercoach.com](mailto:newman@toplawyercoach.com)



one another and the work. Only 7% of communication that deals with feelings or attitudes is conveyed in words, with the rest of the meaning coming from tone and nonverbal cues. We miss a lot of that if our communications are read and not heard in person.

All of this is not to say ditch e-mail altogether. It's still an efficient way to convey detailed information. So, the experts recommend that **digital messages are better used as supplements than substitutes** for speaking in person.

The next time you think about firing off a quick "what's up?" message, consider walking down the hall or meeting for lunch to say it in person. **Engage yourself** instead of hiding behind a computer screen!

**Top Lawyer Coach, LLC**  
601 Penn Street  
Fort Worth, TX 76102

817/992-6711  
[newman@toplawyercoach.com](mailto:newman@toplawyercoach.com)

