

Hello. This is Wayne Rivers at The Family Business Institute, thank you for tuning in. We'd like to have the benefit of your thinking in the comments below and as always, click on our social media icons. And we appreciate that.

This week in our blog, I want to talk about rules for business texting, the 11 rules, in fact, for business texting. Now, why is this important? Who knew? Who knew that they were rules of etiquette for texting, especially business texting? So today we'll be communicating more frequently than ever before in this crisis driven business environment, all the rules are off the table in terms of, we're using texting, we're using email, we're using Zoom, we're using our phones. Because all communication basically for the last few weeks has been remote for the most part. So texting is certainly a part of the menu of what people are using. So, 11 tips so that when you do business texting, you're doing it in the right way.

The first tip is don't text in meetings when you are in meetings with human beings. Don't have your phone under the table, texting people. We have a firm, no cell phone in meetings rule here, because it seems to be unimaginable that people wouldn't be using their phones if it's in their proximity in today's world. So, don't text under the table. Live human beings in your presence are more important than people that are remote. If there's a family emergency of something, of course you get up and you leave the meeting, but please be nice, and don't be texting under the table when people are trying to engage with you in a face-to-face meeting.

The second thing is text: only established business relationships. Prospective customers or clients, it's probably inappropriate to be texting them. The third tip don't text outside of business hours. I haven't had this happen, but I'm not sure how I'd react if I get a text at 10:30 at night, somebody soliciting business that, I may react to that negatively. So only business hours, please. Know when to pick up the phone and call. Text works sometimes, but for a complicated, lengthy, controversial communications, where you might use a text is to say, "At what time would you like for me to call you to talk about X?" That would be a good use but trying to get a complicated or controversial discussion started via text is probably a nonstarter. Don't go there.

Watch your, "Tone". Don't use all caps. You're going fast when you're texting, almost by definition. So, use complete sentences. And especially the all caps; that's I think all caps in texting is perceived to be yelling. So, make sure you have your all caps turned off. Avoid abbreviations that people may not understand. Use complete sentences. Do not text bad news. Do not text anything controversial, or email either for that matter. Right? I mean, some things have to be spoken or even in person to people to be appropriate. So, no bad news via text. Oh, and no confidential news. No confidential information. Because once you push that text out there, it's awfully easy for somebody to copy and move it somewhere else and broadcast it all over the place. So, what's the old saying: don't put anything in writing that you wouldn't want to see in a New York Times headline. So, I think with texting that especially applies. Don't try to be funny. Subtlety is often missed in texting. So, don't be subtle. Don't be cute. Don't be funny. Just straight information and keep it clear.

The ninth one, sign your name. In a business context, people may not have your cell number in their phone, and they're not exactly sure, who's saying what. So, sign your name at the end of the text, so that people will know from whom it's coming.

Check your recipients. I think we've all had email blunders where we sent an email that was intended for party A to party B and then, oh my gosh, we've got egg on our face and we feel terrible. So, make sure your recipients are right when

you're texting. Just in the last couple of weeks, I've gotten all kinds of texts that were not intended for me, but maybe for somebody with my initials. Who knows?

And the 11th and final one: proofread your texts. See number five above watching your tone. Proofread, read it out loud, make sure the tone is what you want. Make sure you don't have misspellings. Make sure you don't have inappropriate words or names or anything like that in your text. Take a good, hard gander at it and make sure that everything is the way you want it.

So, in the comments I'd like to know what are your rules? What are your rules for business texting? And hopefully this tiny etiquette lesson will pay off for you in your business. This is Wayne Rivers. Thank you.