

# RMM Retail Multiunit Management

Leading From a Distance



## Making Technology Work Electronic Communication Tips for Multi-Unit Managers

When you're leading remotely, with store visits at a minimum due to time and distance, you have to rely on technology to engage, motivate, and leverage the strengths of the entire team.

Here are some of the pitfalls and pointers for using common forms of electronic communications.



### 4 Qualities of Successful Multi-Unit Managers

It's one of the hardest transitions for retail managers to make, but do it well, and you're on your way to the top spot. Research shows there are four qualities that have to be developed to successfully move from single-store to multi-store management.

[Learn what they are.](#)



### Pitfalls



#### EMAIL

- Avoid using "reply to all" feature automatically
- Don't use humor or cartoons
- Write with the understanding you are creating a permanent record which anyone might eventually read



#### TEXTING

- Using to "start" conversations (i.e., topics not previously discussed)
- Don't use for bad news
- Using abbreviations not widely known; LOL is pretty universal, IRL not so much
- Don't use emoticons/emojis
- Sending multiple texts when you don't get a response
- Sending too many attachments – phone is not always ideal for viewing



#### TELEPHONE

- Can be most intrusive form
- Hard to stay in the moment when your cell phone rings
- Avoid general conversation (e.g., checking in, etc.)



#### VOICEMAIL

- Too long, multiple units for same topic
- Request call back without reason
- Lack of sufficient detail for caller to respond



#### SKYPE/ FACETIME

- With a visual medium, make sure you and the background look professional
- While Skype is available for every platform, FaceTime is limited to use on Apple products
- Depending on how strong Skype connection is, be prepared for delays in conversation or frozen screen
- Only free to talk Skype-to-Skype; landline or cell phone calls cost



### Pointers

- Use 3-time rule: if you receive 3 emails communicating about the same topic, pick up the phone instead of continuing to use email
- Use for messages that have:
  - Phone numbers
  - Name spelling
  - Statistics or other critical details
- Include original text with responses
- Use for approvals to create a record

- Keep it short – 150 characters or less; if more than that, email/phone call
- Use for quick recognition or follow-up
- Be respectful of schedules/time differences
- Check autocorrect, especially when using "speak to text" conversion
- Be cautious using group texts; cell phone numbers for everyone are often displayed
- Phrase texts carefully; avoid using emotionally charged words

- Top reasons to use the phone:
  - Emergencies (e.g., power out)
  - Loss prevention issues
  - Critical HR issues
  - Hot-button situation (e.g., unannounced visit by inspector)
  - Unknown visitors or vendors requesting approval/signatures

- Best used for group broadcast for general information
- Quicker response on key issues
- Use for confidential topic

- Since it's free or low cost, use to make international calls
- FaceTime is better for 1-1 with Apple devices; Skype is better for larger group calls across multiple devices
- Use Skype for instant messaging, audio conferencing, file or screen sharing (not included with FaceTime)
- To look your best, don't just rely on overhead lighting; shine soft light directly on your face