



Is There Really Just One Forum for
Digital Interaction?

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Multi-modal In-person Interactions

We don't have ALL of our in-person interactions in the same kind of place and in the same way. Some how, we intuitively get that it just makes more sense to have some interactions in one place -- say, a conference room, hallway or near a desk -- and others in other places -- say, a breakroom, huddle area, while riding in a car, at Starbucks.



We Work and the offices of leading enterprises increasingly reflect this with an array of spaces of various sizes, formality, privacy and comfort to foster a broader range of interactions that taken TOGETHER tend to accelerate collaboration and innovation.



At RF our RealDiscovery Sessions also reflect this: we actively design different kinds of spaces -- small round tables, loose semi-circle of chairs facing a flipchart, standing room round a rolling whiteboard -- to move through and work in during a session because we know that that physical variety prompts and encourages a broader range of interactions and a wider net of thinking.

The Hammer of Email

So why in the world of digital business interaction do

we still tend to assume that there is only one way of digitally interacting -- by email?



We see all around us in the non-business world an expansion of interaction modes and venues -- billions of humans use Facebook AND text apps AND email AND Instagram AND discussion forums every day!



So why, in the business world, do we seem to continue to believe that every digital interaction, every digital communication can be done in just ONE venue -- email? ('Why' is probably a rhetorical question...or rather a question that requires a non- business venue and some non-business beverages to answer. In vino veritas indeed...) The more directly answerable questions are:

- Q: Should we continue to try to conduct all digital business interactions in email? A: No**
- Q: Should we take advantage of the additional digital venues designed to support a broader array of business interactions? A: Yes**

We DO need a 'hammer', but we don't need to try to use a hammer for every job if we have other tools. Email has a place and an ongoing role in our digital interaction toolkit. It's just that it should be one tool in the toolkit, **not the only** tool.

Our 21st Century View of Business Digital Interactions, or...Right-Sizing (Not Eliminating) Email

All of that is why we have evolved a digital interaction and collaboration architecture at RF that is moving beyond the single arrow of email and incorporating other arrows more effective at hitting other interaction targets. But we also don't want this to be an ever expanding and changing quiver. So we really only have a handful, as follows:

- Teams - as the place where we do project / initiative-focused interactions (defined work towards defined goals over a defined time with a defined group of people)
- Yammer - as the place where we interact about topics of enduring interest to you and the firm
- Outlook - as the place where external (non-project) communication takes place and where specific and limited types of internal communications occur

You don't need to think that through from scratch. We've figured that out for the enterprise and for you. All you need to do is

- Generally - broaden your horizons about this richer, more effective ecosystem in which more interaction and collaboration can take place and
- Specifically -train yourself to take a few seconds BEFORE each interaction and ask yourself two questions:
 - Will there be CONTENT in this message/ interaction that has value beyond the moment of receipt? (for example, 'lunch tomorrow?' does not but 'here are my notes on five ways we could better tell our know I edge story in our next presentation' very much does!)
 - Are there PEOPLE beyond the recipient(s) I am thinking of at this moment who would benefit from seeing this content? (for example, 'confirm

that you are going to call x as we agreed in the meeting yesterday' does not but 'in our meeting yesterday we discussed the following actions that need to be refined and then distributed to others'al most surely does)

If the answer to EITHER is yes then the interaction will probably work better in Teams (if the content is about shared work towards a shared goal) or Yammer (if the content is about a topic of enduring interest). Also keep in mind that both Yammer and Team much more naturally allow people you might have been thinking of at the moment you hit 'send' to benefit, learn from and engage with that content.



Remember that most (all?) of you are already doing this in your non-business digital life -- you 'choose' (although at this point it probably happens naturally, seemingly without thinking) to text some things, facebook or Instagram others and then email a bit when other venues don't naturally 'fit'.

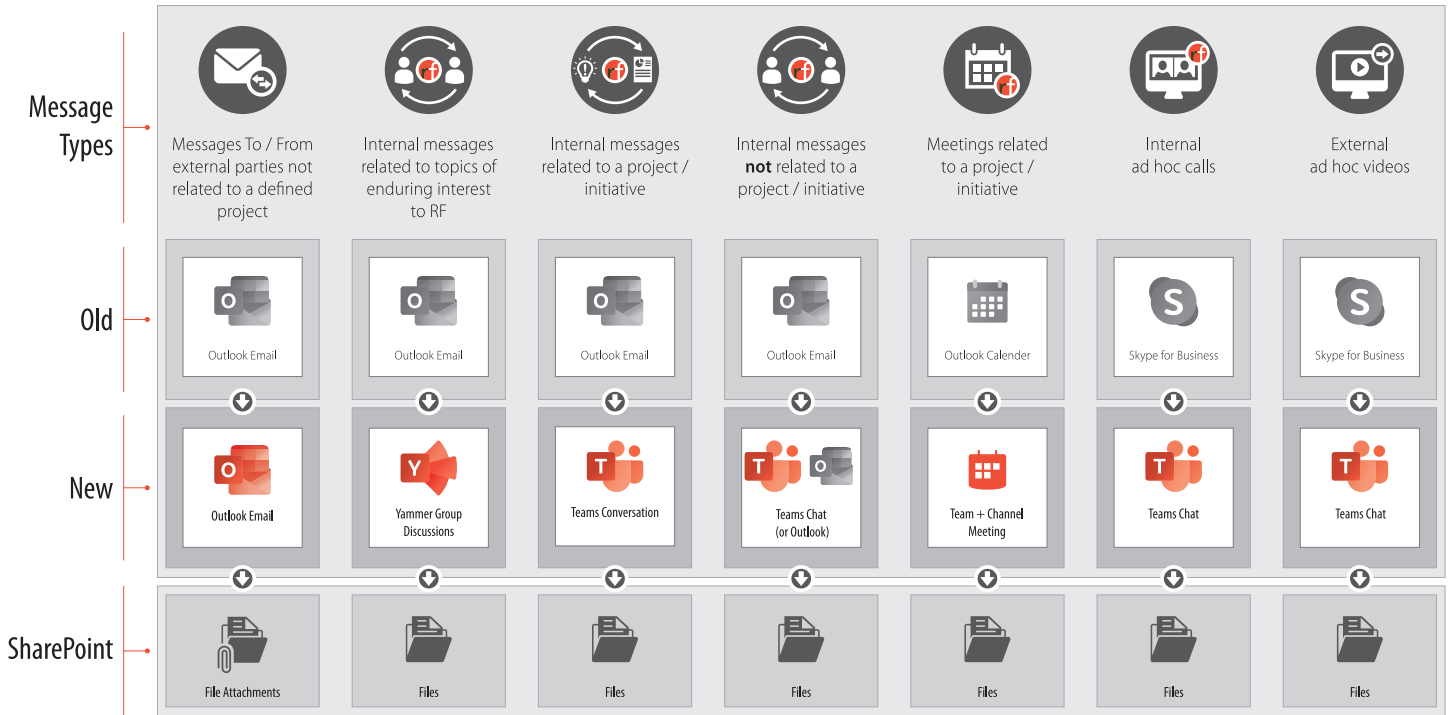


Those of us who have set ourselves this challenge -- first with Yammer about 5 years ago and then more recently with Teams over the past 18 months -- have found that the first hurdle was the hardest (at least for those of us over 35!)

Email-as-the-only-business-digital-interaction-venue was so deeply ingrained that it was a bit difficult to root it out and replant it in the right place. Once we did that the effort on a message-by-message basis is a matter of a few seconds at first and then becomes second nature as we start spending more and more time in the Yammer and Teams 'places' and less time in the Outlook 'place'. The increasing richness of the Yammer and Teams mobile apps helped too!

Guidance on changing our individual and collective habits at RF

This chart might provide context and guidance for adjusting one's digital interaction habits over time:



Note: All files attached to activity in Yammer **AND** Outlook **AND** Teams **AND** OneDrive **AND** Stream are stored, searchable, accessible directly inside the SharePoint user experience **in addition to inside** the respective source user experience (Y, O, T, OD, S). That is **Every File** created, uploaded, edited in Y, O, T, OD, S can also simultaneously be found in SharePoint user experience. This is an Intentional **AND** not OR.