

## Talking Was a Waste of Time

“Talking was a waste of time. We went around and around and I wanted to scream just to stop the frustration. I just won’t throw my time in the toilet like that anymore.”

Jack wasn’t telling me about his relationship with his wife, he was describing what happened when he used to try to “reason” with Rick, his business partner.

I asked him to tell me about a time when a conversation had worked well and he grinned and said, “When we set up times to play golf.”

“So, if you’re not talking about the hard stuff, how do you solve business problems?”

“We just sort of work around each other. We each try to figure out what might work and send an email saying what we’re doing.”

Estimates are that something between a pretty hefty 20% and a business killing 80% of productivity is lost because people aren’t having important conversations they need to have. It seems to me that this is an obvious place to add to the bottom line, but that isn’t the case in my consultations with entrepreneurs; almost anything is better than asking them to address difficult issues or unmet expectations with a key business associate.

The sad thing is that there are some very straightforward approaches to sticky conversations or differences of opinion that can both help work through a situation you’re in the middle of now and set up a template for future negotiations.

Listening to each other doesn’t have to take “forever” or “drive you nuts.” Reaching a “consensus” doesn’t mean wearing each other down with redundant statements. “Understanding” is different from agreeing. “Being able to talk” doesn’t require setting aside hours to process your different styles.

Talking is about getting business done, not getting in each other’s way, finding ways to keep the production going, feeling more relaxed with each other and yourself.

Give us two, one hour blocks of your time and we’ll get you solidly on the road to reclaiming a big part of the productivity lost when you avoid or shortchange the important conversations.