

This week, we're comparing our experiences with communication in the United States and Chile. We're emphasizing the communication medium that dominates here in Chile - WhatsApp. You'll hear us reference an article from *Harvard Business Review* in the episode about the rise of WhatsApp in Brazil. Challenge yourself, and check it out: [The Rise of WhatsApp in Brazil is about More than Just Messaging](https://hbr.org/2016/04/the-rise-of-whatsapp-in-brazil-is-about-more-than-just-messaging)

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COFFEE WITH GRINGOS - EPISODE 7 TRANSCRIPT

Paige: You're listening to Coffee with Gringos. I'm Paige Sutherland.

Mariah: And I'm Mariah Wika. Today, we're chatting about communication in the workplace. When Paige and I arrived to Chile, we were surprised by the workplace communication. It's different than what we're used to in the United States. So, we'll be unpacking that today and letting you know what we think. So, remember, if you're getting lost as we're talking, if we're talking too fast, if you miss a vocabulary word, you can always check out our transcript and guide on our website.

Paige: So, to start off, we have to talk about the gold standard here - WhatsApp.

Mariah: WhatsApp. Yeah.

Paige: Did you have a WhatsApp before you arrived to Chile?

Mariah: Absolutely not. I had heard of WhatsApp, but only vaguely, and I had never used.

Paige: Exactly. I used it when I went abroad for travelling, but I never in a million years thought to use it for work.

Mariah: No because for me, in my work, texting is personal! That's how you talk to your family, your friends. But email is professional. In my past workplaces, email was how you communicated, so I was constantly using my Gmail account and my Microsoft Outlook account. I could never imagine texting a client!

Paige: And that is what is normal here in Chile. If you send an email, you won't get a response. But if you send a WhatsApp, they will respond immediately.

Mariah: Right, or chances are good that you'll get a response quickly and efficiently. It's crazy! And it's really cool!

Paige: And it's interesting because you see on billboards for companies - it'll have not an e-mail address, but a whatsapp number for communications. If you wanna book a paddle board, if you wanna book a reservation at a restaurant - they suggest that you WhatsApp them.

Mariah: I booked a tour when I had family visiting Chile, and they said, "Contact us on WhatsApp for a reservation." And so, I sent them: "Hey, I'm looking for a tour!" They responded

immediately, they followed up, they texted me the day of to let me know when they were picking us up, and then they even texted me afterwards with follow-up questions about our experience. It was such a highly responsive system, but it also felt really personal to be talking one-on-one with somebody through messages in this way.

Paige: It's interesting because since I've been in Chile, I use email less.

Mariah: Me too. Sometimes I forget to check my email because the majority of my personal and business contacts - they're on WhatsApp.

Paige: And it's interesting, you were telling me you read this article where e-mails really are rarely opened.

Mariah: Yeah, so I did some research, and I was reading this article from The Harvard Business Review that focuses on WhatsApp in Brazil, and this researcher said that a good open rate for an email is 22%, whereas 98% of messages are opened and read on WhatsApp. 98%!

Paige: Wow. When I hear that, I think, "Okay, nobody's reading my e-mails. Maybe I should stop sending them." It's so different when you do something your whole life, like sending emails. That is the professional way, that's what you do. But now, no, when you're here, if you're working here, you should send WhatsApp. That's what people prefer, and that is the most responsive - clearly from the research - way of communication.

Mariah: Right. That's the best way of getting a quick response. The thing that worries me is: does this mean that we can never stop working? Because if you have your phone with you 24 hours a day, right? Even right next to your bed while you're sleeping... I mean, of course, people can send emails to your phone too, but something about receiving a WhatsApp message... it feels like you have to open it and respond because they can see when you're online. They can see if you've read the message. I feel like with an e-mail, the expectation for a response is maybe a couple days. With a WhatsApp message - maybe a couple hours.

Paige: I think the beauty of the app, and I like that it's different from text messaging is you can see when you get a WhatsApp, but you can make the decision to not open it, and the sender thinks you haven't read it.

Mariah: Yes.

Paige: So you know, Mariah sent me a message... I don't feel like responding. I'm not going to open it, and she'll think I didn't read it, and I'll have more wiggle room to not respond.

Mariah: So that is a little nice about WhatsApp.

Paige: That's fair. But when you do open it, you have instant pressure of: I need to respond. They know I opened it.

Mariah: Totally, those little blue check marks are there, now I have to follow through. The article said that in Brazil, WhatsApp kind of started out with small businesses, but now it's grown, and major real estate companies are using it, even government offices are utilizing WhatsApp to connect with constituents.

Paige: What's interesting too is that text messaging outside WhatsApp is not common.

Mariah: Not here in Chile.

Paige: You can have a Chilean phone, which I do, and I can count on my hand how many times I've texted someone or called someone. It's all through WhatsApp. Personally and professionally.

Mariah: Also because it's a more affordable option! It's more accessible. I mean, texting and calling is expensive. And of course with WhatsApp, if you want to sue WhatsApp out in the world, outside of a wifi zone, you need to pay for data, but when you're in a wifi zone with WhatsApp, the entire world is at your fingertips.

Paige: With data being expensive, text messaging and calling... is that the culture here is to use voice messages.

Mariah: Voice messages! That was so new to me. I love em'.

Paige: Never, in a million years, have I used one in the US. It's just not part of the culture.

Mariah: I love them so much.

Paige: But here, that is the new text message is a voice message.

Mariah: Yeah, a little voice memo. I actually love it. I think it's more personal. I think it's really time efficient, and it's hilarious to me because... think about voicemail. Who listens to voicemails anymore? Right, when you call somebody and it says, "Hey this is Mariah, thanks for calling!" Nobody leaves voicemails anymore, but an audio message is legitimately a tiny voicemail. It's almost a step back in time into that more personal phone call type of culture.

Paige: I think the best part of it is that it's so efficient. I can leave a voice memo when I'm driving a car, when I'm riding a bicycle, when I'm walking and I'm trying to pay attention to where I'm going. It's something you can just do on the go, wherever, whenever. And you can get your message across, you don't have to type a million words. So, it definitely is something that I'm getting used to, but something if I start doing it with my friends at home... I think they would have some questions.

Mariah: I'm slowly trying to spread WhatsApp to the United States via my friends and family, but, you're right, they feel uncomfortable at first with the voice messages - just like I did. Because, like we said, seriously, WhatsApp is not a thing in the United States - not yet. But, I think it will be.

Paige: So, the past few episodes, we've been talking a lot about work.

Mariah: Right. And, you've been listening to the sound of my voice and the sound of Paige's voice a lot. And so, the next episode, we'll be here, but you'll get a little break from us because we're inviting two of our friends onto the show.

Paige: Tune in next time.

Mariah: Thanks again for listening, and we'll talk to you soon!

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KEY VOCABULARY, PHRASES, AND SLANG

To unpack (verb) - used in this context to describe the process of explaining a concept
Example: Today, we'll be unpacking the topic of evolving communication in the workplace.

To let somebody know (phrase) - to tell somebody about something
Example: We're going to let you know about our perspective on the topic! **OR** I'll let you know if I can go to the party tonight.

To check out (phrasal verb) - to look at
Example: If you get lost, check out the transcript on the website.

To start off (phrasal verb) - to begin
Example: To start off, we're going to talk about WhatsApp.

Gold standard (noun) - a thing of superior quality
Example: The gold standard for everyday communication in Chile is WhatsApp.

Vaguely (adverb) - in a way that is uncertain or unclear
Example: Before my time in Chile, I had only vaguely heard of WhatsApp.

Never in a million years (idiom) - an exaggerated way of saying never
Example: Never in a million years did I think I would use WhatsApp for professional communication.

Billboard (noun) - very large advertisements that are displayed in public spaces
Example: Now, when you're driving down the highway, you can see large billboards displaying the companies' WhatsApp information.

To follow up (phrasal verb) - to revisit something that's already been started
Example: After we took the tour, the company followed up with us via WhatsApp.

Rarely (adverb) - almost never

Example: Since I'm using WhatsApp so frequently, I rarely check my e-mail.

Constituent (noun) - the citizens that the government serves

Example: Even government offices are utilizing WhatsApp to connect with constituents.

Affordable (adjective) - accessible, something you're able to purchase without significant financial difficulty

Example: WhatsApp is an affordable communication option.

The world is at your fingertips (idiom) - you have many accessible possibilities

Example: When you're in a Wi-Fi zone with WhatsApp, the entire world is at your fingertips.

Hilarious (adjective) - very, very funny

Example: It's hilarious to me that audio messages are just a new form of voicemail!

To spread (verb) - to extend over a large area

Example: I'm trying to spread audio messages to my friends in the United States.

Tune in (phrasal verb) - to listen to a podcast, radio program, or TV program

Example: Tune in to next week's episode of Coffee with Gringos!