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## EPISODE 146: DAVID JAY – THE NEW EMAIL

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### Ken White

From William & Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia, this is Leadership & Business, the podcast that brings you the latest and best thinking from today's business leaders from across the world. We share the strategies, tactics, and information that help make you a more effective leader, communicator, and professional. I'm your host, Ken White. Thanks for listening. Imagine a world without email. Well, that's not likely anytime soon. The way email looks and the way we use it is changing. The days of video email have arrived. Everyone's familiar with the negative aspects of traditional email. It leads to overloaded inboxes. There's too much back and forth. Writing and replying take up a great deal of our time. But beyond that, email and websites that rely on the written word are low touch, and the intent is sometimes misinterpreted. Well, David Jay is out to change that. He's the founder and CEO of Warm Welcome, a company that helps professionals and organizations change the way they use email and the online written word and instead use video to form better relationships with customers and prospective customers, which has a positive effect on the bottom line. He joins us on the podcast today to discuss the downside of using traditional text and the upside of replacing it with video. Here's our conversation with David Jay, Founder, and CEO of Warm Welcome.

### Ken White

David, thanks very much for joining us. It's nice to see you. Thanks for sharing your time with us.

### David Jay

Great to be here, Ken. Thanks for having me.

### Ken White

And you're, of course, I'm in Williamsburg, Virginia, and you're totally on the other opposite end of the country in beautiful Oregon, right?

### David Jay

Yeah, Bend, Oregon. So we're kind of this little island out in the middle of the desert. It's not as rainy as Portland, and yeah, we love it.

Ken White

Yeah, nice. Again, thanks for joining us. When when you explain warm welcome to people. How do you explain it? What do you tell them?

David Jay

Well, the way that we talk about it is, and you know this, people have a really difficult time standing out in their business. You start a business, whether it's a service business or a software business. And the struggle is always like kind of getting recognized and standing out from everyone else, you know, that's in your market. And so, what we try and do is help businesses stand out by transitioning from the boring text that most businesses communicate into personal video. So, just like we're on video now, you know, it really helps businesses stand out, and it helps them build better relationships. And, of course, we all know relationships lead to revenue. So that's what we do, is we try to connect those dots and help people transition from kind of an old archaic way of communicating to a new, more modern way.

Ken White

Where did the idea for warm welcome originate? Do you remember?

David Jay

Yeah. Oh, I sure do. Actually, it was right in this little office. I had a friend come over. Eric Knopf is his name. He has a company called Webconnex. And I was showing him some other video technology that we were building. And he said I want to use that to send personal video emails to all of our customers and just thank them for being our customers. I was like, that is a really cool idea. I was like, I'm going to steal that, and I'm just going to make a whole business around it. And so he's like, do it. He's like, just make sure I get the first free account. And so he did, and he uses it in his business now. He has like five accounts now for all his different companies. But yeah, it's neat. People always kind of iterate and come up with better ideas than my ideas. So I try to listen to them and change what we're doing to fit what they want.

Ken White

Yeah. And it's obviously working. It's so interesting that the business it's part technology, it's part communication, it's part email, it's part relationships, part bottom line. How do you see it when you think about it?

David Jay

Yeah, it's a very holistic business, and that's the way that we wanted to approach it. You know, in a new sort of space like this, a lot of companies will tackle things tactically. Right?

They'll take on a piece of the pie. So they'll do like video emails, and people will be like, oh, I want to send video emails, I'll go to this company or that company. And so that's where we started. But then we said, well, gosh, if video emails are effective, then wouldn't applying video to just about every point in the customer experience be effective. And so a video business card or a video bubble on your website or a video email signature or video embedded in your website that someone can engage with and send a video back. And so we thought, gosh, let's just connect all those dots and create a nice, consistent client experience through personal video rather than just kind of taking on one piece of the pie. And so that's what we've done. And it's been a really fun switch. We've been surprised how much we've enjoyed it because of the personal connection. And it's like, how many support tickets do you get or how many emails do you respond to every day? And after a while, they all start to feel the same. And it's easy to not see your customers as people anymore, but to just see them as another, you know, support chat or another email or another, you know, just words on a webpage. And when you change it to video, and you can see someone's face and hear their voice, you're like, wow, that's another human, another person on the other side of this that I get to engage with, and business gets to bring us together. And so it's really brought a lot of passion to our company.

Ken White

It is interesting just to look at your website. It's a very as a visitor; it's a very different experience from another website. I there was hardly any text on there.

David Jay

Yeah.

Ken White

I was watching videos. Yeah. And of course, we like to watch videos as human beings anymore. It seems like it's the thing we do these days, you know. Yeah. What about results? What have you heard from people using it, your clients? What do they what's the reaction from them and those receiving videos from them?

David Jay

Oh, the response rate and the open rate on these is just, I mean, it's night and day. It's like 10x, you know, we used to send, you know, just mass marketing emails, and you get, you know, 20 percent open rate and then one percent, two percent click through rate on them. And now we're getting 90 plus percent open rate and almost a hundred percent response rate on them. And I think the reason one is it's very new, and not very many people are sending these videos out yet. But the other reason is because you recognize that it's a real person on the other end of the line if you will. And so it would be like if we met up on the street or we met up at a coffee shop and I, I engaged you. I said something to you. I said,

hey, Ken, what do you think about this? Like, it would be very odd and awkward for you not to respond. Right.

Ken White

Yeah.

David Jay

But yet we feel completely okay not responding to a text email or not responding to some, you know, old form of communication, but a video, you know, where the person is engaging you saying, hey, Ken, I was thinking about you the other day. You know, I was wondering if this would be helpful for your business. So I wanted to send it along right. For you to not watch that video or not respond to that. It starts to feel a little bit odd. Right? So

Ken White

Absolutely.

David Jay

everyone responds now because it's human to human communication again, rather than text to human.

Ken White

Right. Interesting. Let's talk about some of the features. For example, a video signature. What is that?

David Jay

Yeah, so when we started with video email, one thing we found is the people who were very proactive, more sales types, marketing type people, they would go, and they would ground and pound on these things, and they were like having tons of success with them. But there's another type of person that isn't going to be as proactive with it but still wants to personalize all of their communication, all of their emails. So we said, well, when you get an email, you see a bunch of text, right. So it doesn't stand out. And so people just trash it or don't respond to it. Well, what if we could personalize every single email that somebody sent out without them having to do something every single time? And so we said, well, shoot, let's take it. You know, let's take the signature portion of the email, you know, the part that's just auto included in there. And personalize it. Let's add a smile and a wave to it just like that. And if you just do it one time, right, you record a little video. Hey, I'm David. This is my video email signature. Feel free to send me a video back or send me a text message back or email me back, whatever you want. But now every email I send has my smile, has my wave, and as humans, those are trust-building tools, right. And so if

somebody sees me and they see me smiling at them, that communicates to them that I like them and that we're friends. And immediately, you start the conversation off. You start the relationship off on a better foot than just a big old page of words.

Ken White

Yeah. And yeah. And all those things we can't do in text we can do in video. Yeah. That's so interesting.

Ken White

We'll continue our discussion with David Jay, CEO of Warm Welcome, in just a minute. Our podcast is brought to you by the William & Mary School of Business. The post-COVID world will require new skills and new approaches. And those skills and approaches are taught in the William & Mary MBA program. We offer four different formats, including the full-time, the evening, the online, and the executive. All taught by our top-ranked MBA faculty, the William & Mary MBA, will prepare you to succeed in our new world. Check out the MBA programs at William & Mary today. Now back to our conversation with David Jay, CEO of Warm Welcome.

Ken White

I assume the video business card is quite similar.

David Jay

Yeah, very similar. You know, the video business card was another thing that we thought, you know, hey, everyone has business cards these days. But there's so many limitations to a paper business card. One is you just give it to one person, and that person usually throws it away. That's the downside of it. And so it doesn't scale at all. But two, you can only communicate as much as you can cram on this little business card. Right. And it can't be shared in a digital environment. There's like so many things wrong with it. And yet, people still do. You get a promotion? Guess what happens to all your old business cards? Trash. So a video business card. Now, when I share it with you, you can share it on with a thousand other people, and there's no extra cost to anybody. Right. So there's a scalability factor, a marketing factor to this business card. You can also communicate so much more in a video business card than a paper business card. The last one, which is really fun, is you can actually communicate through it. A paper business card like you still have to go and send the email or go and do something. A video business card, they can click and send a video right back. They can send an audio message back. They can send text back. And so it's a really nice like container and delivery mechanism for a person rather than a piece of paper.

Ken White

What do you think about the future of email and the way we're communicating? Do you see video? What do you think about it? Yeah. Where do you see it going?

David Jay

Well, I think we're on, you know, maybe a thousand-year shift, certainly a six hundred year shift in the way people communicate. You know, six hundred years ago is when the printing press came out, and the printing press was this revolutionary thing because it was one of the first things in the world that scaled. And so we all became obsessed, humans became obsessed with the written word because it was the first thing in the world that you could do one time and replicate a million times. And so, for the past six hundred years, almost all of our communication has been geared towards text or written communication. Right. And you've got Post-it notes. You've got text messages. You've got emails. You have spiral notebooks, leather-bound notebooks, bound books. We have so many ways to communicate with text-based communication. But the problem is the text-based communication is a terrible way for humans to communicate. I mean, look at Facebook, look at Twitter, like are these environments that people are leaving happier and better? No, they're terrible.

Ken White

Yeah.

David Jay

And it's you know, you say something, you type something, I should say. And people read it in a negative slant. Right. Almost all written communication is read and judged in a negative state, whereas video is the opposite. And so, in the last 10 or 20 years, we've had the Internet and video come together and create the opportunity for a much better way for humans to communicate at scale than we've ever had in human history. And so it's a it's an exciting time, and there's going to be a million iterations of it. And so

Ken White

Right.

David Jay

that's why we're not a competitive company or Blue Ocean Company because there's going to be a million services just like cars. And that's great because it makes the world better. Like when people start communicating as humans again, the world a better place. That's, you know, sounds cliched, and I'm sorry for that. But it's true.

Ken White

No, and I get it. And as one who loves video and loves audio, this is exciting to me that hopefully, we're going this way. But one of the things I've learned when many executives reach out to me or many of our students and say, I don't like Zoom, I don't, I don't like teams, I don't want to see myself. I'm so uncomfortable on video. What do you say to the professional who feels that way but probably knows they should be embracing video?

David Jay

Yeah. So, again, it's kind of a tactical question, right? And they're thinking about the technique. They're thinking about the medium that they're communicating in. And it is a little bit different. And I think the video communication is young, right? It's in its teens. It's a teenager's awkward. It's uncomfortable. Right. But over time, it's going to mature. And some of the things that I think we're changing already is seeing our self on video, like the tendency when there's a video up on the screen is to look at our self.

Ken White

Right. Absolutely

David Jay

Right. When we're talking to somebody at a coffee shop like we don't hold a mirror up and look in the mirror the whole time. Right. And so when we're communicating one, we should get ourselves off the screen, first of all, like, we don't need to see ourselves. But the second thing is the entire goal or the hope in a conversation is that we're adding some sort of value or contributing something to the other person. And when that's our focus, it gets off of our self. How do I look? How do I sound? Like all these self things that are terrible, like but that's not what we want to think about, as we're in a relationship with somebody, we want to be thinking about the other person. And so the technical, tactical things of get your own video off the screen, stop looking about yourself, stop thinking about yourself, start thinking about how to add value to the other person. And when you do that, you're able to get beyond some of those insecurities that we have.

Ken White

That's our conversation with David Jay. And that's it for this episode of Leadership & Business. Our podcast is brought to you by the William & Mary School of Business. Businesses and organizations are seeking professionals to lead in the post-COVID world. Professionals who think strategically, communicate effectively, and manage ambiguity. You'll learn those skills and much more in the William & Mary MBA program offered in four formats the full-time, the evening, the online, and the executive MBA. Check us out online to learn more. Finally, we'd like to hear from you regarding the podcast. We invite you to share your ideas, questions, and thoughts with us by emailing us at [podcast@wm.edu](mailto:podcast@wm.edu).

Thanks to our guest David Jay, CEO of Warm Welcome, and thanks to you for joining us. I'm Ken White wishing you a safe, happy, and productive week ahead.