

Editorial

Javier Bajer

Rēs, Nōn Verba (facts, not words)

In ancient Rome, when someone uttered too many words during a speech, their audience would have shouted “Rēs, Nōn Verba!”^[1], demanding less talking and more action.

Two thousand years later, we might be stuck in a similar place.

Our world is packed with talking. We devote way more time to “talking” than to “doing”. On average, employees spend 18 h a week (about half of their working time) in meetings, of which (they say) nearly a third could have been skipped. The culture of making sure everyone is in the loop has caused that 45% of people today feel overwhelmed by how many meetings they attend, and a record 39% admit to dozing off during a meeting.

Throw in announcements, speeches, briefings, feedback sessions and time catching up with employee portals, and you probably would be wondering when people could find time to do *real* work.

And that is assuming that the talking is always relevant and value-adding – not the most common currency these days.

I believe that most times, words are just used as a copout strategy. Why? Because they are great at helping us avoid the risky enterprise of taking action.

It is obvious that the right amount of talking is needed. There is healthy planning, learning, fine-tuning and even celebrating.

What would happen if we all agreed to use words as propellers for action, jettisoning them as soon as possible and focussing on the things we do, rather than the things we say?

The choice is, of course, ours. Rēs, Nōn Verba!

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Note

1. From latin *rēs* (“facts”) + *verba* (“words”).