



## Top Ten Tips for Handling E-mail

With advances in technology, comes easy and quick access 24/7. That has its downside. Email is a necessary evil but learning to manage the email monster can ease its hold on you. I took an informal survey of friends and clients who estimated that about 5% is critical, 15% is information they need to know but don't need to do anything about, 30% is necessary to conduct business and the remaining 50% they could ignore without consequence. Using software currently available on the market, here are some ways of managing the flow of information in your inbox.

- ✉ **Use folders.** Use folders to categorize mail. Use your settings to have newsletters go directly into a folder for reading at your convenience. Use flags to be sure to handle items of urgency or that are time sensitive.
- ✉ **Use the 3 D's.** Do it. Dump it. Delegate it.
- ✉ **State expectations in your email signature.** If your email does not require a confirmation or reply, state "no need to reply" in your email. This works well for emails that are FYI related and do not need a reply.
- ✉ **Consolidate.** Use one day a week to handle any incomplete messages or tasks that have been generated by email. A good day may be Friday to handle flagged emails or tasks that need to be completed.
- ✉ **Schedule email time.** Mentally incorporate email into your workday. Answering critical emails in detail could be scheduled into your workday so it does not accumulate. Assign a block of time or two blocks of time each day to answer emails. Avoid the knee-jerk reaction to the email chime!
- ✉ **Use the delete button.** If your inbox email is handled, delete it from the inbox so that visually you are not confronted with hundreds of email messages.
- ✉ **Handle Junk mail.** Delete junk mail first. Use spam protection and virus protection software to maintain security of your inbox.
- ✉ **Keep the important stuff.** File emails whose information you want or need to retain in the appropriate documents folder instead of keeping them in your inbox.

⚡ **Save and Archive.** Archive your inbox, sent and deleted folders every two weeks or sooner. You will have them in case you need them but they are out of the way.

📧 **Be rigorous.** Determine which emails generate tasks you need to handle (your decision making or projects) and which emails generate tasks that can be delegated. Be clear in your responses about what action needs to be taken by the recipient, if any.

Communication and information flow are important to running your business or your life. Don't let the flow drown you. Incorporate these tips and you will better manage your time and your inbox.

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