

Raising the Bar on Managing Email

- 1. Take control.** Don't let email control you! Work out what your REALLY need and what you can do without. *It's more a mindset than anything else.*
- 2. Organise your folders.** Folders are your electronic manila folders. Five general main sub-folders can be, for instance, People, Clients, Action, Resources, Projects. Subdivide these into relevant sub-folders. (Right click on folder name, or Inbox, then select New Folder)
- 3. Sort your email before you begin.** If your email program allows it, set up an "Unread Mail" folder. It will display everything you have not read, regardless of which sub-folder it is sitting in. Be like a triage nurse with your email – sort it into 1) high priority, 2) can wait, and 3) rubbish.
- 4. Get rid of rubbish and clutter immediately.** Delete rubbish ruthlessly – spend NO time even looking at it – just get rid of it. Set your rules to do this automatically and empty the Deleted Items folder at the end of every day.
- 5. Screen with filters (rules) to automatically sort.** Learn to use rules (Tools, Rules)
- 6. Be honest – absolutely honest!** If you know in your bones that you are never going to respond to a particular email, get it out of the way or just delete it. Guilt is not going to make you more honest down the track. Trust your instincts.
- 7. Set your email to check every hour or so, not continuously.** Check email at the same times every day. Turn off the notification function. (Tools, Options, Mail Setup, Send/Receive)
- 8. Learn how to use "Categories" and "Flags".** Create meaningful categories and use them. (In the "Edit" tab, Categories) Categories and flags are both great ways to identify emails quickly and sort into similar types. You can colour code them too!
- 9. At the end of every day, make sure there are no emails unopened** – do something with every email.
- 10. Pick out the easy emails that need a response and can be done in less than 2 minutes.** If you delay them, they will actually take more time to file, retrieve them and then respond later.
- 11. Don't copy people unless they absolutely must know.** Tell other people to stop copying YOU! Same with FYI (For Your Information)
- 12. Ignore trivia, jokes and nonsense like virus warnings.** Don't open them, don't send them, don't forward them and tell others not to send them to YOU.
- 13. Choose the email newsletters you subscribe to with great care.** Make sure are crucial to your business. If you find you are not reading them, unsubscribe.
- 14. Write subject lines that are meaningful and relevant.** Make it easy for others.

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15. **If you don't know a sender, then NEVER unsubscribe.** Just enter it in your rules to delete automatically. Unsubscribing gives them your *real* email address and they've got you now and you may never escape!
16. **Write emails assertively, concisely, but politely.** Don't write unnecessary stuff that just pads out what you really want or need to say. See Bonus Strategy No. 1.
17. **Don't do the "courtesy leapfrog":** "Here it is", "Thanks", "You're welcome", "Not a problem".
18. **Set up a safety net account – www.gmail.com.** Email me (david@davidprice.com) for a free invitation.
19. **Train your staff and get an email coach for yourself.** Email me for details about Jani Murphy – a great email expert who can train and coach you and your staff.
20. **Take Action!** Set aside time *within 48 hours of now* to take control of your email. No-one will do it for you!

Bonus strategies that sound crazy but can work!!

Some people use these! Will they work for you?

- 1) **Insist that emails are one page or less.** Tell your staff you will not read more than 2 screens. It trains people to be concise and get to the point.
- 2) **If you have any doubt about what to do with an email, delete it.** If it's important you'll either get it again or someone will call you. Get on with the stuff that you *know* does matter.
- 3) **Cheat.** Keep some standard replies you tend to use a lot in a special folder on your computer and just copy and paste them in when you need to the same thing you have said a hundred times before to other people or maybe the same person.
- 4) **Ignore email.** Yes, ignore it. If something is important, you'll hear about it. People will eventually get the idea that if they want you to react, it is better to pick up the phone or come and see you.
- 5) **Delay your responses.** If you respond immediately to every email, you train people to expect it, even the minor unimportant things. If they don't get responses until the next day, they will know that if they have something important, they need to call you or come and see you. If they start coming to you with minor stuff, coach them so they understand what you expect to be interrupted with and what you do not expect. **Look up "delay delivery of all messages" in Outlook Help and follow the instructions.**
- 6) **Charge your staff for sending you messages.** Tell your staff you will deduct \$5 from their budget for every message they send you. You'll be amazed at how the number of messages will drop.