

Email Management 101

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When utilized effectively email is one of the greatest things the computer revolution has done for personal productivity. The problem is there is so much email, many people find themselves checking email, reading and answering email all day long and feel like they can't get anything accomplished.

Is email killing your productivity? If so, then it's time for some basic email management rules to help you gain control of your inbox. One of the main issues is that many people leave their email client running continuously. If you leave your email running, it means that anyone anytime can interrupt what you are doing. Essentially, *they* pick the moments at which *you* pay attention. This hurts productivity. Below are a few ways to manage email more effectively:

- I. Set your Email configuration appropriately to minimize disruptions
 - Issue:** configuring your email client to present alerts when you receive an email message
 - **Improve productivity by turning off email alerts**
 - Issue:** configuring your email client to make noise when you receive an email message
 - **Improve productivity by turning off any alert that is audible**
 - Issue:** running your email client all the time
 - **Improve productivity by turning your email client off**
- II. Let your email program manage your email
 - You can set up folders so that certain types of messages are sent to folders rather than your inbox or spam is sent directly to the trash – this means you don't waste your time reading and deleting it
- III. Do not check email on demand
 - You don't need to see every piece of email the second it arrives
- IV. Don't read and answer your email all day long
 - You may get a handful or hundreds of emails each day that need to be answered, but they don't need to be answered immediately.

To maximize productivity and improve concentration you should schedule the times at which you pay attention to email. This could be a scheduled time in the day at specific intervals such as first thing in the morning, before or after lunch, and before the end of the day. By following some basic rules of email management you can improve your level of concentration and become more productive at work.