Better email management

www.thrivingamidstchaos.com
Distraction mitigation
Time management
Folders for current work
Volume reduction
Keeping up
1. DISTRACTION MITIGATION
Stop “checking.”

No email access during work that requires focus.

Turn off notifications.

Set “no email time zones” at home.

Stop “checking.”

Work on email in batches.

No email access during work that requires focus.
2. EMAIL TIME MANAGEMENT

How often should you work on your email?

2x / week → 2x / min
Help desk operator: continuously

Faculty member without administrative responsibilities= 1- 3x a day

Admin duties, managers, team leaders, “customer service” focus = ~ hourly
3 “working on” options

1. Full Processing
   Responses, delete, file, triage

2. Triage only

3. Emergency scan
   “Urgent” only
3. FOLDERS for CURRENT WORK
Waiting for

To store messages you send, when you need a reply

Two easy ways to get your sent message into “Waiting for:”

• Drag from Sent items
• CC / BCC yourself and drag over
Active projects/issues

@Projects associated messages

- Intro to Clinical Reasoning lecture DUE March 31
- Lab manager hire
- Paper - Hot flashes in men - data analysis
- Paper - Single cell DNA analysis in fruit flies - SUBMIT
4. VOLUME REDUCTION
Set rules to bypass the inbox:
   (1) file or (2) sent directly to delete
Try Focused Inbox
5. KEEPING UP
Decide the first time!

- Delete
- File, no action required
- Save information (e.g. contact update, event info)
- “Optional reading?”
- Is phone or in person better?
- Do / reply now
- Defer to later
My “full processing” method

Pass 1.
- Read each subject line
- Delete/archive if the decision can be made without opening the message
- If urgent, open and deal with

Pass 2:
- Start with the newest message (or the oldest).
- Open the message, read it, and follow the algorithm.
- Open the very next one, without skipping, and do the same.
Storing deferred messages in a single folder
Storing deferred messages in process specific folders

- susan-johnson@uiowa.edu
- Inbox triage
  - 00 Waiting For replies
  - 01 REPLY TODAY
  - 02 REPLY as soon as I can
  - 03 Read & Review
  - 04 Optional reading

- Inbox
- Sent Items
- Archive
Marking deferred messages with a flag

Sort on “flag”
The new you!
Bonus!

If you compose better messages, you will get better, faster replies

Elements

– Use a meaningful subject line
– Put the “ask” at the beginning: what do you need and when do you need it
– Minimize open-ended questions; make “proposals” instead.
– Keep the message short - <1 screen best.
– Ask the person to contact you if they have questions
Email me with your comments, questions, and tips!

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