

Dealing with E-mail Overload

Is the in-box in your e-mail always full? Try these tips to regain control of the incoming flood:

- Keep business and personal email separate. Set up two different accounts.
- Check e-mails at set times each day. Limit the number of times per day you check e-mail. Turn off the incoming e-mail alert. Let people know that if they need to reach you instantly, e-mail may not be the way. If, on the other hand, you use a Blackberry or other similar device you may want to alert people that you are accessible easily via email. The following suggestions still apply.
- Use personal form responses to answer the same question over and over. Cut and paste form responses into your message instead of composing each answer from scratch.
- You do not have to respond to every message. This is particularly true of one word messages such as “Thanks” or “Great”. Many software programs let you mark routine messages with “No response necessary”.
- Clear your in-box of all messages daily. Keeping all messages in your in-box creates clutter and stress. The in-box is for temporary storage only. It’s not a to do list, a follow up file, or calendar. Deal with every message when you open it. Take action ... delete it ... forward it ... schedule it ... respond to it ... and/or flag it for follow-up. Create folders for easy reference.
- Use and learn to use the right software. Outlook, Goldmine or similar products help you not only manage e-mail, but also to manage how you spend your time.

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