

Getting a Grip on Email

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Does email devour your time at work? Can't resist that "you've got mail" tone? Are your real in-boxes and virtual in-boxes both overflowing? If so, try some of these time-saving email tips:

Turn off the tone. You don't need to read each email the second it arrives. If truly time sensitive and very important, the sender will call to ensure you got the email or to discuss the matter in person. Turn off the notification on your email system and set a schedule to read email several times during the day instead (10AM, 2PM, 5PM).

Don't delay processing and filing emails. For those emails needing quick and short responses (under two minutes), take care of them and either discard or file immediately. For emails needing follow-up or research, select one of the times you set for your email schedule later in the day as the appropriate time to respond to these lengthier or more time-consuming messages.

Use the subject line! Help recipients (and yourself on responses) by noting clearly in the subject line the topic of your email.

If you use FYI's, use them wisely. Let recipients know if you intend for them to do something with what you are sending and why you feel they would find it interesting or relevant.

Know when to use email, when to use a face-to-face, and when to write a letter. Sitting behind a computer, it can be easy to get "addicted" to electronic communication when occasionally walking down the hall, picking up the phone, or writing a note might work better.

If you manage an email account that gets routine inquiries (or sends routine responses) on subjects needing the same or similar attention (i.e., can I get an application for your program, when is the next volunteer opportunity, thank you for your annual dinner gala ticket reservation..., etc.) use stock responses saved in a file for cutting and pasting to save time and effort over retyping text over and over.

Contact *do good Consulting* at 217-778-1687 or dogood@dogoodconsulting.org for more information on time management techniques, organizing your work life and work space, or streamlining processes at your office.