

# The Top Ten Ways to Reduce Your E-mail and Reclaim Your Productivity

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E-mail use is on the rise. Daily, people complain about the number of e-mails they receive. They tell me how much work it is for them to handle and how just opening up the inbox stresses them out. Here are 10 sure fire ways to manage your outgoing e-mail to reduce the numbers of e-mail coming in.

**1. Be very clear.** By making sure that the content of your e-mails is very understandable, you can avoid people e-mailing you with questions for clarification.

**2. Make the subject line detailed.** By including detailed information in the subject lines, your recipients will be able to sort and respond to your message with the right priority. The detailed subject line will also help YOU sort and handle responses.

**3. Use only one subject per e-mail.** The reality is that most people skim. If you put two requests in one e-mail, there is a strong likelihood that only one of the requests will be responded to.

**4. Place the main point, assignment, or request in the first two lines of the e-mail.** People have a tendency to build up to a conclusion when they write; this tendency makes it very difficult for readers to figure out what the main issue or request is. By putting your main point in the first two sentences, you can avoid misinterpretations and get readers focused on exactly what you want, right from the get-go.

**5. Copy only the people who need to read the message.** For every extraneous person copied on an e-mail, you have potential to receive a response. Now, you've just created more unnecessary e-mail for the both of you!

**6. Send less e-mail.** While this may seem a no-brainer, e-mail begets e-mail. Sometimes it is better and easier to pick up the phone, or to just not respond.

**7. Have a detailed signature line.** Make sure that all of your contact information is in the signature line of every e-mail you send. This way, anyone who needs to contact you will not have to e-mail you asking for your address, fax number, etc.

**8. Keep e-mails short.** When you send short, easy-to-read messages, people will respond in the same manner.

**9. Avoid controversial or argumentative e-mailing.** When you engage in an emotional discussion via e-mail, the e-mails will fly. Emotional issues should never be handled by e-mail; a phone call or person to person handling of the situation is best, both for the sake of your inbox, and the health of the office dynamic.

**10. Purge Purge Purge.** People don't realize that too many megabytes can cripple, slow, or even crash their hard drives. Systematic deletions of out of date items and purging your sent mail can help you stay ahead of the curve and protect your computer.

E-mail is here to stay; the sooner you develop productive habits regarding its use, the more time you will have for what is really important in your life.

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