

WHAT

What I would like to talk about today is the serious impact that email has on the productivity of your business and demonstrate to you just how easy it is to fix the problem just by spending 30 minutes less each day on email.

WHY NOW?

This is important to you because you have a relatively small window of opportunity to address the problem but when you do you will immediately get a 6.3% improvement in worker productivity.

HOW?

I will do this by firstly talking about:

1 – How the design of email software has forced us to manage a mountain of irrelevant information, encouraged us to avoid making decisions and allows an undisciplined workforce to spend the bulk of their time on easy and trivial work – when they are not fighting fires.

2 – How the essential solution lies in one simple behavioral change in your workforce – which takes place in their head - and finally

3 – Why a top down initiative to improve enterprise productivity starts with sponsorship by the CEO, CFO and COO supporting the need to introduce an email charter based upon ten simple email management principles

At the end I'll take your questions.

Outcome

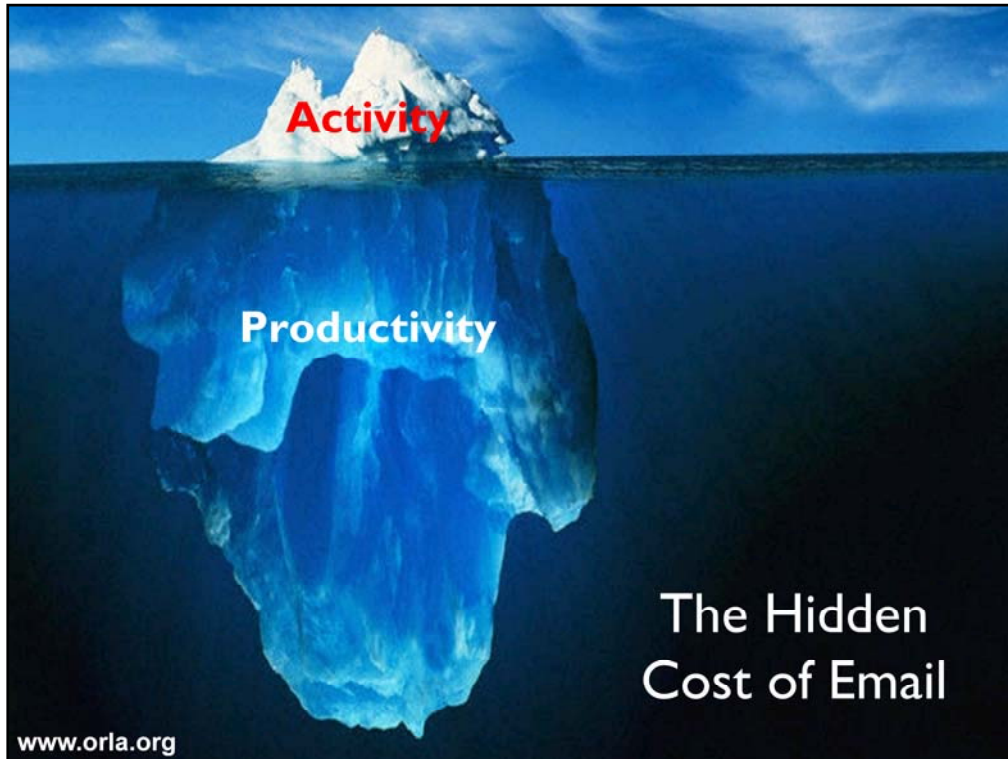
So, by the end of this presentation you will be able to clearly understand how the email problem came about, what's required to fix it and how spending just 30 minutes less each day on email will significantly improve workforce productivity.



What?

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Lets start by looking at the effect that email is having on your workforce.



Email is a great business tool – the most important communications technology in history – by far.

But it has serious problems which impact on personal and corporate productivity.

The iceberg is a very apt analogy

Activity = our interactions as a result of communicating, good and bad, using email

Productivity = is being sunk by all the activity

Email Receivers' Plight

***“Who will save the receivers of [email]
from drowning in the tide of information
so generated?”***

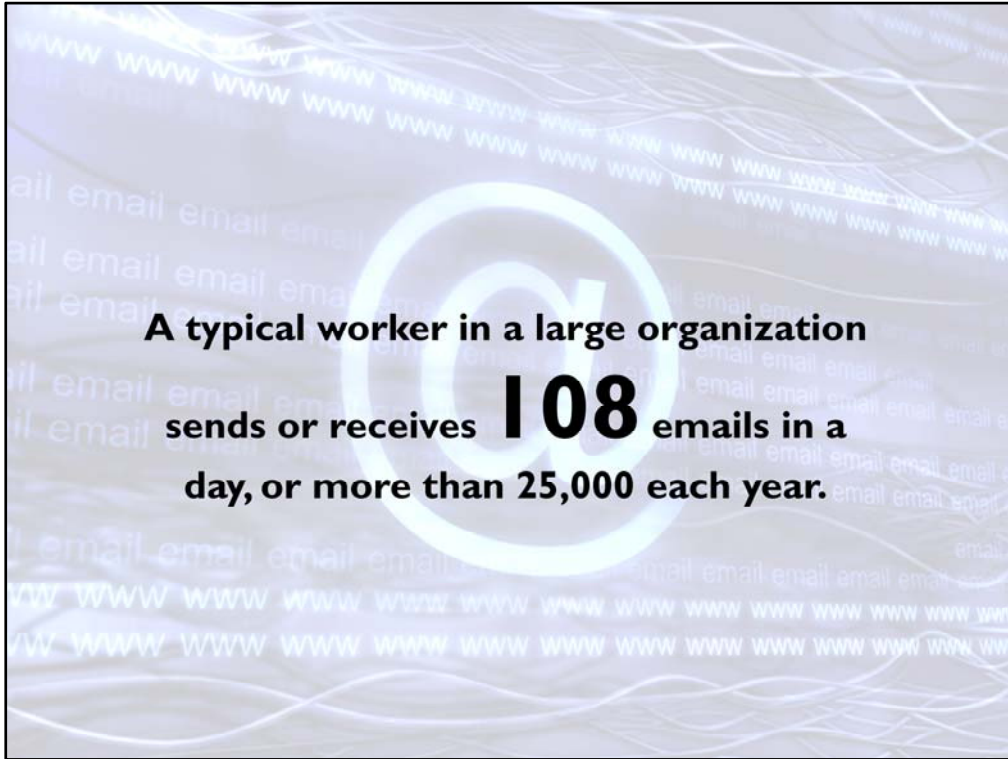
*Peter Denning, President
Association for Computing Machinery,
1982*

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The problem was anticipated even before email was a glint in Bill Gate's eye.

Note the quaint title of the leading professional organization at the time (1982)

And drowning we are – let's look at some stats



**A typical worker in a large organization
sends or receives **108** emails in a
day, or more than 25,000 each year.**



More than **25%** of

employed US adults acknowledge
that the volume of email they
receive causes them to fall behind in
their work.

The average office
worker is interrupted
by communications
technology once every

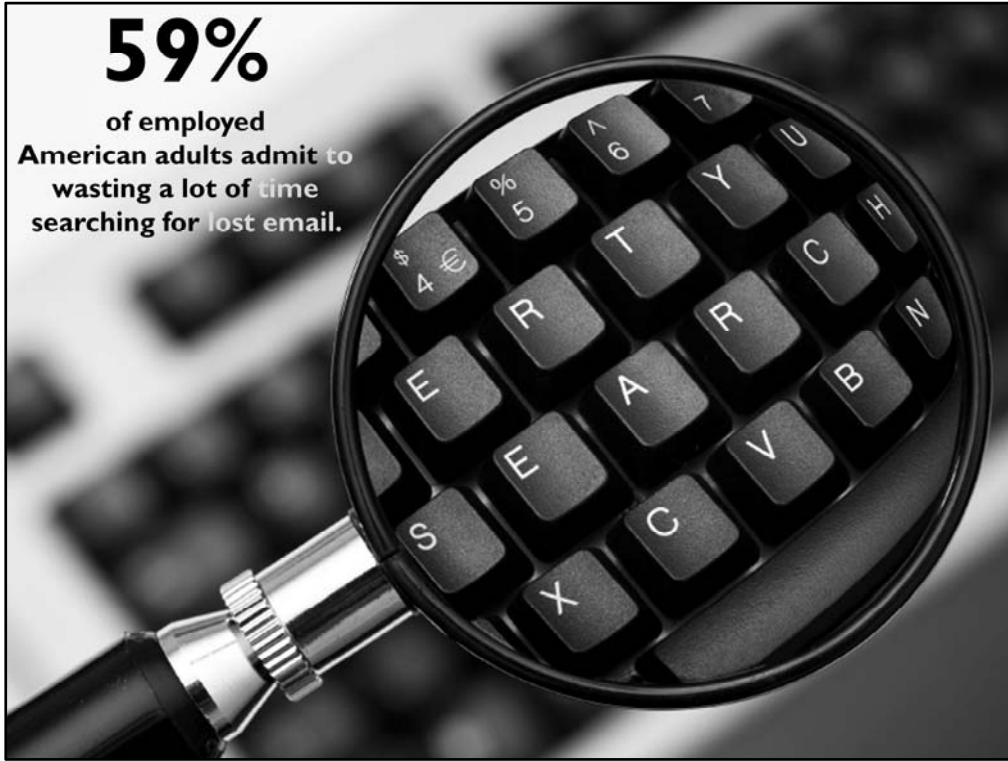
10
minutes.



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59%

of employed
American adults admit to
wasting a lot of time
searching for lost email.





71% of white-collar
workers feel stressed about
the amount of information
they must process and act on
while doing business...

... **60%** feel overwhelmed.



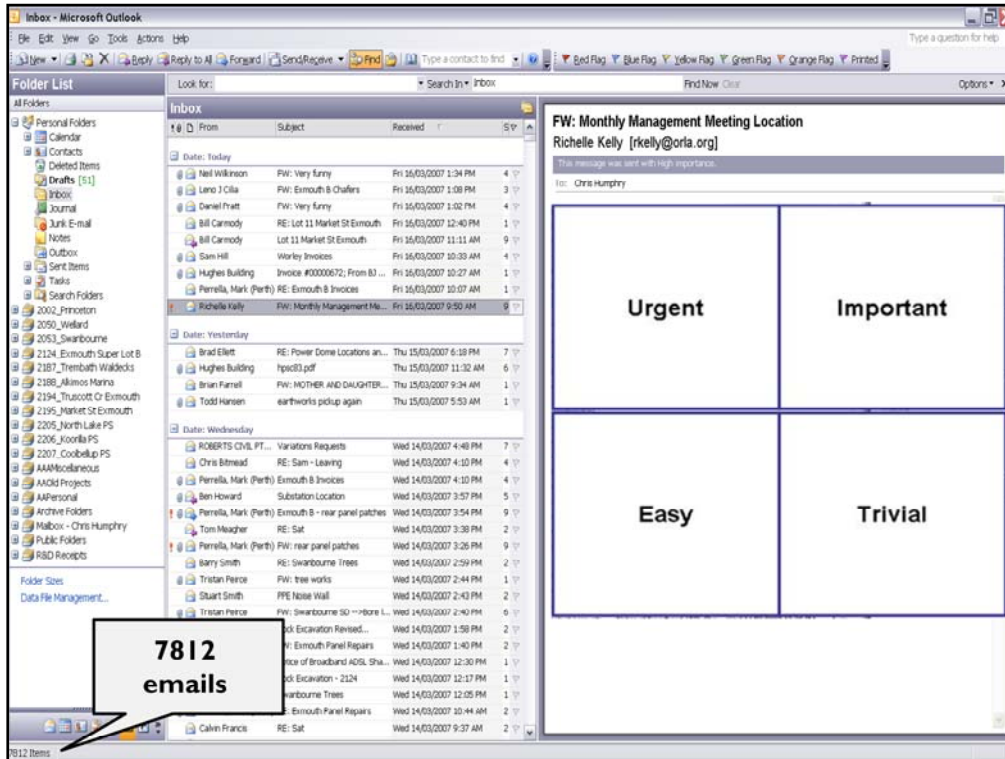
41% !!

In 2009 it is predicted that 41% of our
time will be spent managing e-mail

The Radicati Group as quoted in AdAge



<http://www.ick.com/photos/2004/11/28>



Does this look familiar (audience will laugh)

Ask the audience – who thinks email is a great business tool and has added a huge amount of value to the enterprise?

Who is 100% satisfied with their email experience and see no room for improvement?

How many people in this room have a clear idea of how productivity is affected by email in your business?

Have you ever surveyed your staff?

Measured any outputs from email?

Formally evaluated the worth/value of email to your business?

Ever done any analysis?

The answer is that for the most part, you simply don't know.

CLICK

But when faced with far more emails than can possibly be managed, with more arriving by the moment, what the average worker does is to spend their time on the easy and the trivial – turning their attention to the urgent and important only when they really have to. Which explains why email causes stress – they are always 'under the pump'.

So for most workers 'doing email's' defines their productive output. And psychologically, people genuinely feel they have been engaged in value creating activity as they plough their

Productivity : \$\$ Cost

1. \$50,000 p.a. worker costs 50 cents a minute
2. 10 minutes per hour lost to email disruptions/ looking for information
= 80 minutes per day (or \$40)
3. Weekly cost = \$200 per worker
4. Annual cost = \$8,800 per worker (44 week year)



spend 30 minutes less each day on email

= **\$3,300 (or 14 days per year)**

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The research literature clearly shows that significant time is lost to email each day.

If you extrapolate these findings you arrive at some pretty provocative costs estimates.

But we want to do something tangible about it – so we simply look to spend 30 minutes each day less on email activity

There are simple ways to do this – ways we shall discuss later in this presentation

Productivity : Headcount Cost

*For every 30 minutes per day your employees
spend composing or reading emails:*

*Spend 30 minutes less on email = workforce reduction of **6.3%***

*Spend 1 hour less on email = workforce reduction of **12.6%***

*Spend 2 hours less on email = workforce reduction of **25.2%***

[30 minutes per day = 0.5 hours : 8 hour working day : so saving = 0.5/8 = 6.3%]

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For many businesses, the hidden costs of email are just too hard for them to fathom.

So, they measure improvements in efficiency by a simple headcount reduction metric.

Namely – if I implement a new productivity initiative targeting email how many FTEs can I stop spending on as a result of the improvements brought about?

Answer? If you have your 100 strong workforce spend 30 minutes less each day faffing around inside their Inbox, you will save the costs of 6.3 FTs.

For every \$50,000 per annum employee

*Spend 30 minutes less on email each day = **\$3,300 p.a.**
in productivity savings*

or

*Spend 30 minutes less on email each day = workforce
reduction of **6.3%***

or

*Spend 30 minutes less on email each day = **14 extra
working days per year***

The Bottom Line

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Make a productivity omellete have to break some eggs.

In deciding how to invest to get this return on investment, you need to ask yourself 2 questions:

One

How much money am I willing to spend to get my workers to spend 30 minutes each day less time on email and how soon do I want to experience that return on investment?

\$3,300 p.a. works out to \$332 per month or \$83 per week

Two

How can I know that I am actually getting a return on my investment?

In other words: what am I to measure and how am I to measure?

Finally

I will ask each and every one of you in the room today.

If the productivity fairy came along right now and said to you that she could guarantee that 80% of your workers would spend at least 30 minutes per day less time on email after just two hours of training and that you would get a complete return on your financial investment in less than three weeks, how many of you would sign up for the ball?



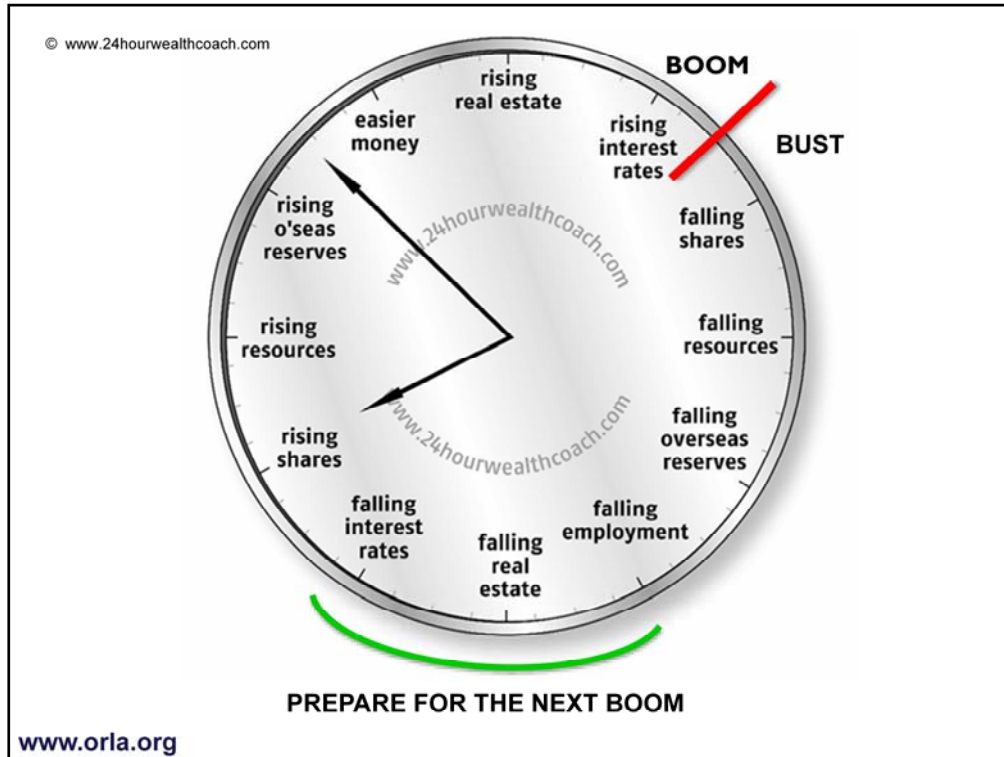
30 minutes less on
email each day

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Why Now?

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The economic clock shows where we are in the boom/bust cycle

All BOOM/BUSTS have their own unique characteristics – 73 was about oil, the present one is about hyper-inflated asset values and credit

The difference this time is the speed at which we receive information and the speed at which the excesses are working themselves out. Also massive intervention by governments on a global scale.

Your crystal ball is as good as mine as to when we do finally turn the corner but a simple glance of the clock is very telling.

It was only 18 months ago when you couldn't get staff, the staff you could get were often mediocre, they were then pushing you for more money and God forbid if you tried to get them to change any aspect of the way they worked. They would vote with your feet.

Then of course you were so busy making money that changing things for the better was the least of your concerns. Let's make hay while the sun shines was the refrain or 'I don't need to improve productivity as I have more business than I can possibly handle right now' – and you certainly didn't want to have the staff spend time improving themselves and your business in the process.

My, how times have changed.

The reason why you struggled as you did during the boom times is that you DIDN'T prepare for them during the last bust time. The smart companies PRFPARE the next boom when



How?

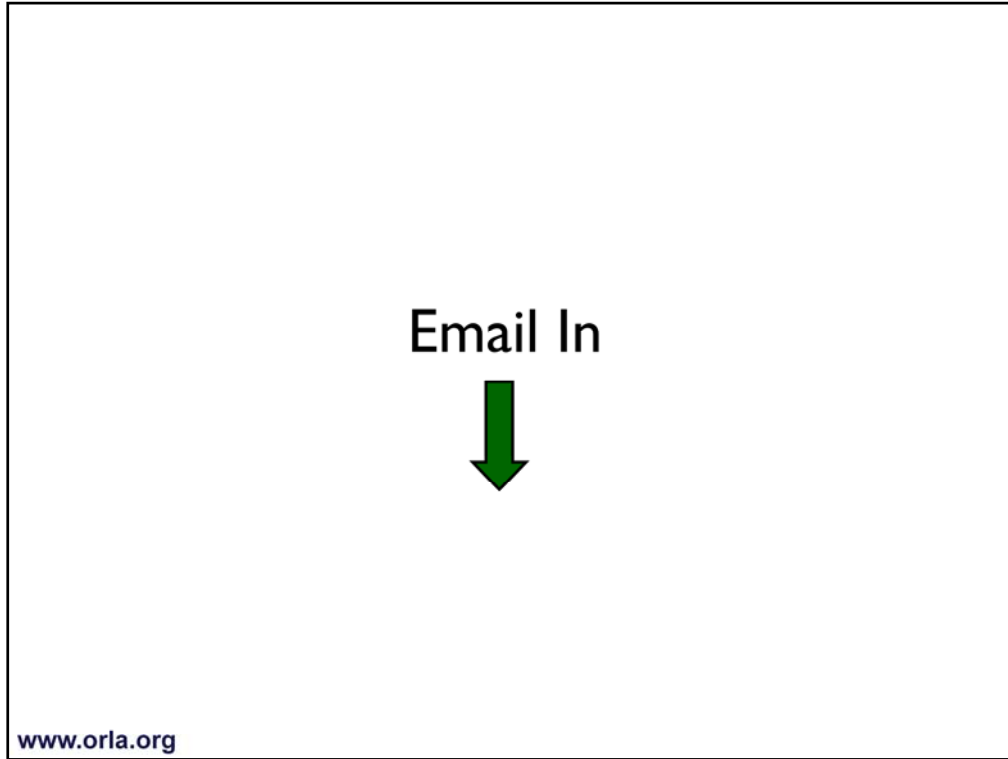
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Email "In" & Email "Out"

When discussing productivity improvement in the context of email, we have to recognise that there are two facets to the problem - the email we send and the email we receive



So lets examine the email we Receive, first.



In designing the email software the original engineers didn't call the Inbox the Inbox for any old reason.

It was intended to replicate the concept of the Paper in tray. But consider

A couple of years ago Microsoft put out some very revealing statistics. They reported:

- 1) There are 400 million people using Microsoft Office around the world
- 2) 90% of the time Office is open on a computer it is open on Outlook
- 3) 90% of the time Outlook is open, it is open on the Inbox
- 4) There are on average 3000 emails in the corporate Inbox

So if you think about that, this is just like having your paper in tray stuck right in the middle of your desk, with 300 pieces of paper in it. Moreover, there are more papers arriving by the minute and every time a new one arrives at the top, you stop what you are doing, stand on your chair and take a look to see what it contains, before going back to what you were doing just prior to its arrival.

This is a nonsense that we would never allow to happen in the world of physical information management, but which the modern business enterprise seems happy enough to let continue in the context of electronic information management.



So how did we get to this point? Who are we to blame? Consider:

- A It took 70 years for the telephone to become a mainstream consumer telecommunications technology
- B 15 years for the fax
- C Just 18 months for email

For better or for worse, human assimilation of technology is defined by the parameters of its design and how we are forced to interact with it. If the basic interactions are easy to accomplish and we can get value by using the technology, our habits and 'use' pattern forms. Human cognition then takes over and before we know it, we adopt the method of working with the technology because we know it 'works' - we become "cognitively patterned" towards it.

For example – when we pick up the telephone we are cognitively patterned to hear the dial tone. When we hear it, we know its going to work for us and so we then commence to use it.

Ditto the fax machine – when we hear the handshake, we know our fax will be sent or received.

With email – we have been cognitively patterned to 'Send-Receive-File' – namely we interact with the technology to send communications, receive communications and file communications away.

This is great if you want merely to communicate. But what about if you have to DO SOMETHING other than communicate or just file a communication away? So, the next logical step to take is to ask yourself, "OK – what kind of things can I now do with this communication" which will allow me to determine my NEXT ACTION is as a result of having received or sent this communication?

From the perspective of what's my next action, there are only ten possible things you can DO with an email.

1. Transfer to the deleted items folder.
 2. Prioritize and treat as 'super-urgent'.
 3. Delegate the work resulting from the email to another person.
 4. Keep the email close to hand to accommodate a short-term filing requirement.
 5. Put the email away for good to satisfy long-time filing need.
 6. Associate the information with appointments and meetings you need to schedule or have previously scheduled.
 7. Associate the information with today's tasks to be completed.
 8. Associate the information with future tasks to be completed.
 9. Associate the information with, or as, a matter 'pending'.
- THINGS YOU CAN DO WITH AN EMAIL**
10. Collect the information, categorize it according to need and then save it away for active reference.

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Whilst these are the ONLY next actions you can consider as a result of sending or receiving any given email, the question becomes, how can I access these ten actions and how can my access to those ten actions be converted into a new cognitive pattern so that I am no longer thinking about email as 'Send-Receive-File' but am now thinking about email in a new way?

The answer lies in the 4Ds'

4Ds

DITCH – remove the email from your system as you have no future use for it.

DEAL – if the work is super-urgent or will take 2 minutes or less to complete, deal with the matter straight away.

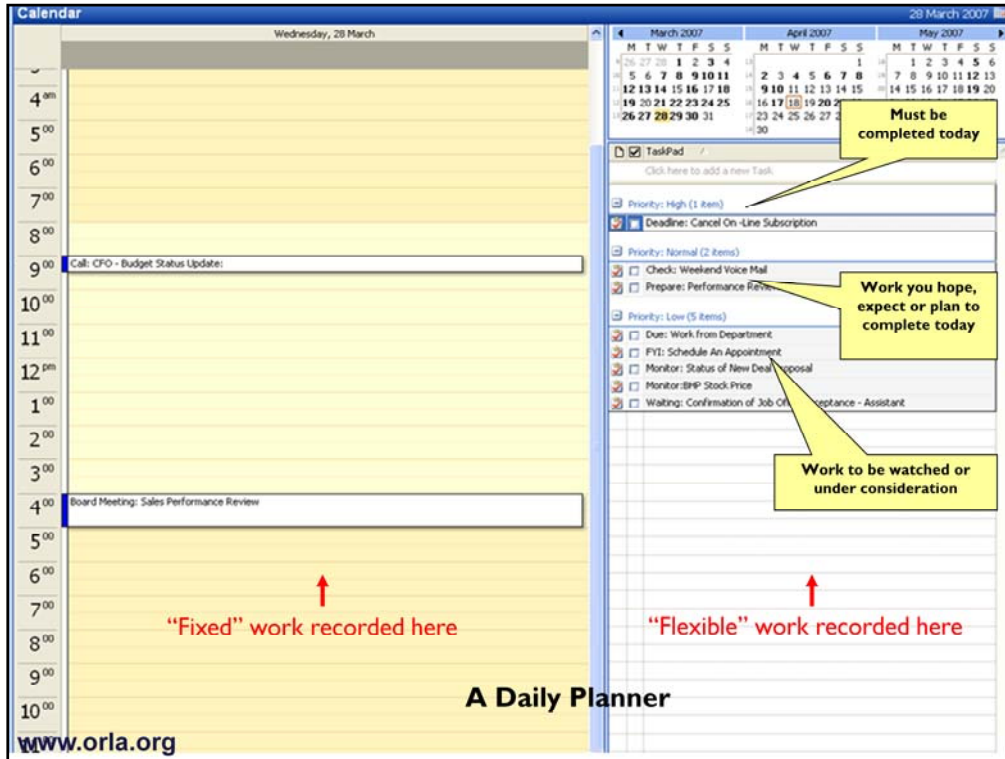
DELEGATE – if you can quite reasonably give the work to another person to do.

DECIDE – if you need to plan the work or file the information away from your Inbox for future use or reference.

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This is not new stuff. It has been around in the literature for a very long time. Distinguished writers such as Kerry Gleason, David Allen, Barbara Hemphill and Steven Covey have been talking about this approach to next action management for more than 30 years.

In essence, every single email can be either Ditched, Deal With Delegated or Decide upon to arrive at one of the ten things you can do with an email.



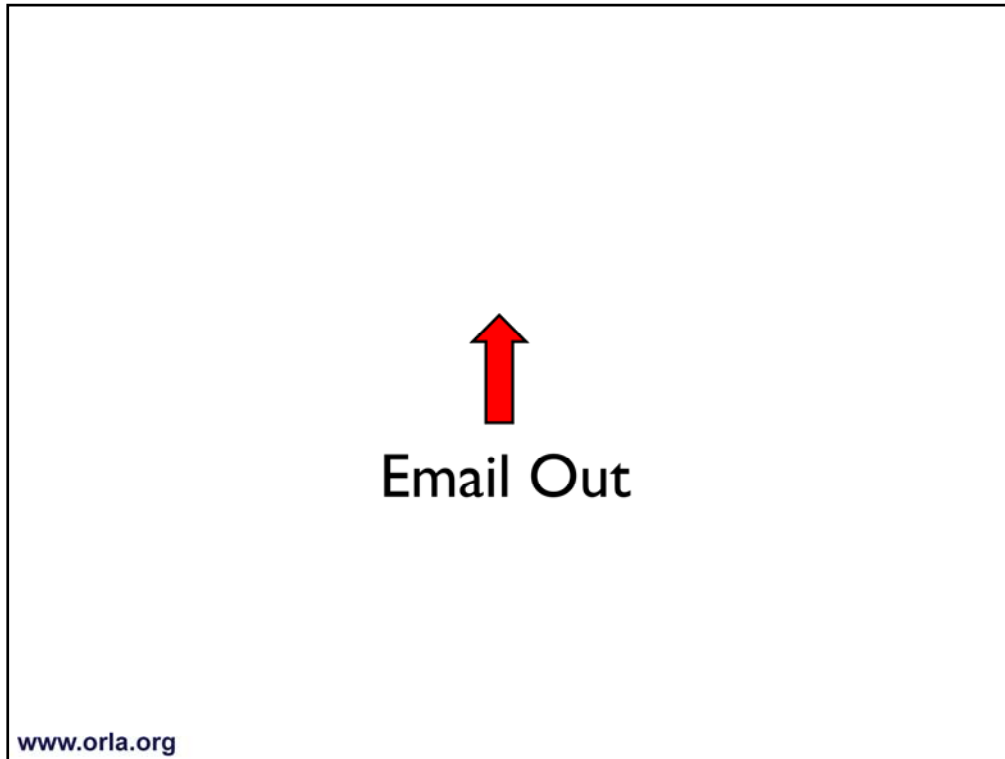
In so making one of these four decisions you are directing where the email needs to go next after your Inbox (which in essence is just the gateway to your working life). From a personal productivity perspective, what you are aiming to do is to identify the work you actually need to do within each email you receive and then arrange for it to be recorded on a new section of your email software which will tell you what you need to do each day.

You need to be working from, surprise surprise, a daily planner.

After all, its what you do each day that determines whether you fail or succeed in the end.

And when you break down the constituent parts of the work activities that you undertake each day you realise something very straight forward can be understood. Namely:

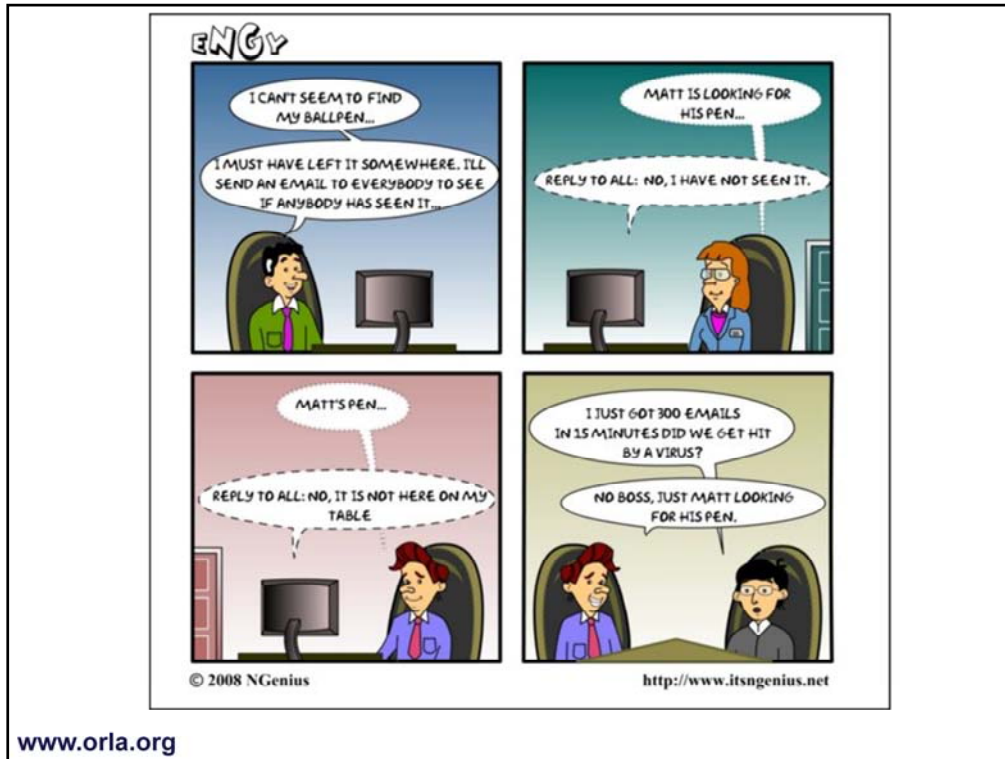
- A – you have two types of work – Fixed in Time and Flexible
- B – you do your Flexible work when you are not doing your Fixed in Time work
- C – your Flexible work is comprised of three priorities
- D – any work you do not do today you roll over to another time in the future
- E – if you plan to do too much work today, you’ll never get it all done
- F – so use your daily planner to schedule and prioritise the work that you have to get done each day
- G – and you use the 4D method to identify the work that needs to go on your daily planner



In summary - managing the work you have to do as a result of the email you **Receive** is a simple matter of 4D-infgeach email and then transferring any resulting work onto your calendar and your TaskPad for the day you want to undertake it.

It really is that simple! Once you know how you should be spending your time each day, your productivity will soar.

But improving productivity with email is also about the email you **Send**.



And this cartoon kind of sums up the modern email experience. And the problem essentially exists because most businesses have never laid out any ground rules for email use at work. Lets face it, every business would like to improve productivity and have a better email experience at the same time, so if there were some ground rules in place, then we'd be on our way.

Here are ten

- ONE** Select the right medium
- TWO** Don't post anything to a public list unless you have to
- THREE** Give a complete response
- FOUR** Read (or think!) before you send
- FIVE** URGENT and IMPORTANT may be just that!
- SIX** Do not request read or delivery receipts
- SEVEN** Reply to all or "Reply to None"
- EIGHT** Do not spam internally
- NINE** Structure your subject lines
- TEN** **COMMANDMENTS OF EMAIL**

THE NINTH COMMANDMENT

Subject: Re.: Upcoming newsletter and your ideas about content|

Typical Subject Line

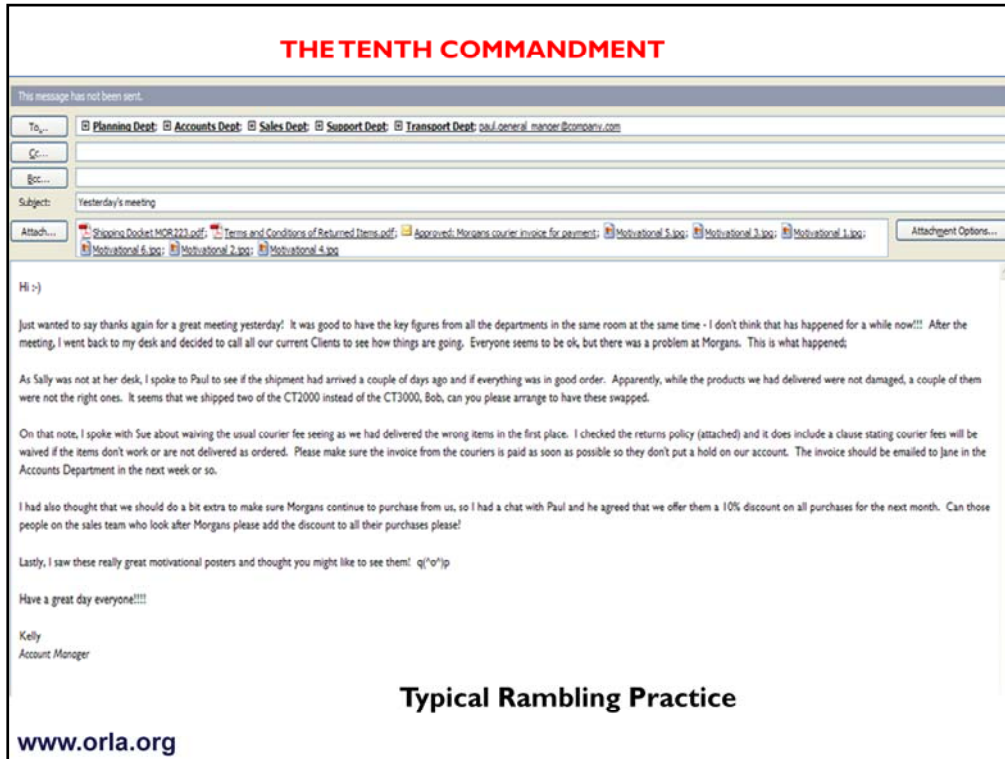
Subject: Required: Your Contribution to the April News Letter [Please Action By... 11-Mar-2009]

Productive Subject Line

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From this example we can easily see what the next action expected of the recipient is.

Subject lines structured with an activity word at the beginning, descriptive text in the middle and an indicative date for action at the end make it so much easier for the recipient to understand what this email is all about for her.



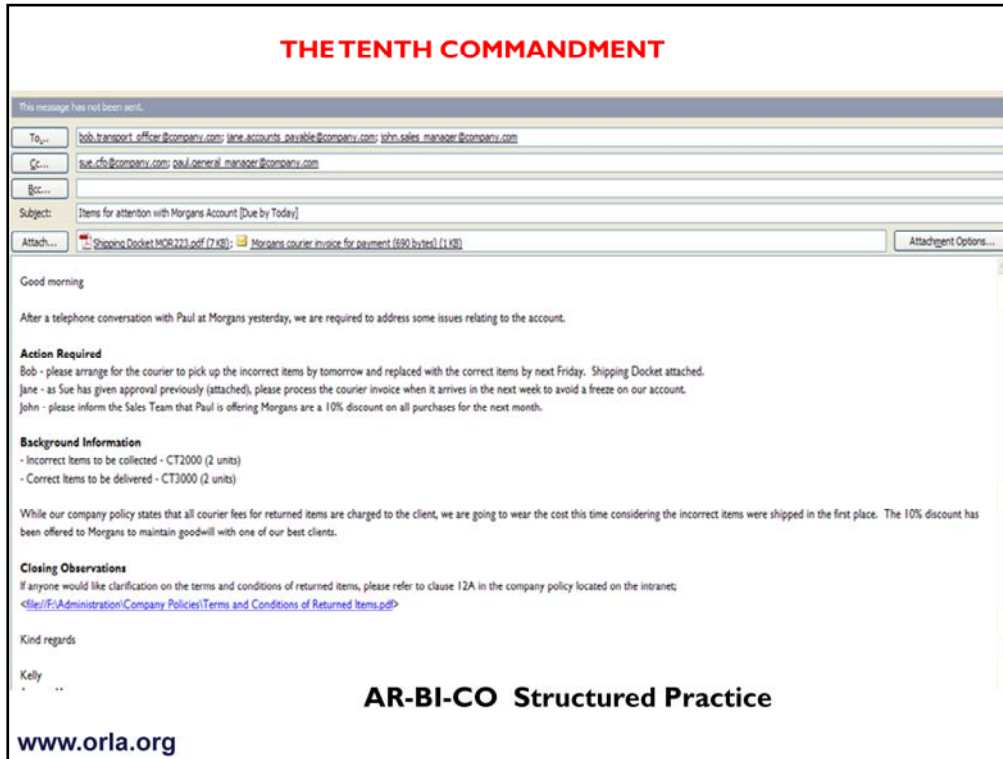
This is a typical example of how people are presently using email, even for important communications.

The To: field contains all and everyone

The subject line gives no clear indication of its content

Attachments included will clog up corporate email mail limits

The narrative rambles not making it clear who is to do what, why and by when.



But a little bit of thought and attention using the AR-BI-CO methodology provides a much more productive missive.

Note the subject line is structured and attachments eschewed for hyper link to centralized file server – saving mail box capacity degradation



The Outcome

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Recap



30 minutes less each day on email

(= 14 days p.a. : \$3,300 : 6.3% workforce reduction)

by

- 4D-ing Your Email
- Using a Daily Planner (not the Inbox)
- Adopting the Ten Commandments



In my company, we have promoting these three concepts to our clients and in some respects we are a bit different from most of our competitors – because we actively measure the changes in behaviour, email management practices and productivity of workers.

These are typical results – we know the methodologies work – and a minimum of 30 minutes each day less on email can be achieved – after only two hours of on-the-job training.

Moreover, the cost of the training should be less than 50% of the annual training budget allocated to each employee. Assuming this is \$500 per employee per year, it means the employer will receive a complete ROI in less than one month.

The 80/20 principal applies here like it does in every other aspect of life – so the trick is to start out with the majority 80% who will achieve the 30 minutes per day minimum and then work on the minority 20% who will follow on.

Experience shows that the minority hold the potential to stop the majority – which is why the sponsorship of C level management is an absolute pre-requisite to the productivity improvement initiative



To get the rewards of the banana you need to make sure you avoid slipping on the skin

- If nothing changes, nothing changes
- Get expert help, need a strategy
- Don't rely on the IT folks – if they knew how to solve the problem they would have already – they have their own agenda (and its not the same as yours)
- Its about 4Ds – emails in the Inbox are simply postponed decisions – if you are paying good money for people to make decisions
- For the benefit of your business and they have hundreds or thousands of unmade decisions in their Inboxes – ask yourself – can this be right?
- Use a daily planner and keep your Inbox empty
- Get senior management to implement the ten commandments
- Remember the simple challenge - 30 minutes per day = 14 days per year, \$3300 in time value or 6.3% in productivity

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Questions?