

# The Key to Managing E-Mail

**Do something with each message you open.** Consider yourself in a meeting with your Inbox and deal with each message. Delete it, file it, forward it, delegate it, do it if it's quick, or schedule time to do it later.

**Change how you use your Inbox and keep it to one screen.** One of the most important steps you'll make to control email overload is to rethink how you use your Inbox. It's for incoming mail and temporary storage.

## **IT IS NOT:**

- 'To do' list for unfinished work. Keep a paper or electronic 'to do' list and add the tasks from e-mails to it. Then every item is on one list.
- Calendar with meeting notices and reminders. Add the information to your paper or Outlook calendar after reading the e-mail so you can see immediately if you have time conflicts and prevent future ones. (You can drag the message to the Outlook Calendar tab and an appt box will open with the e-mail's subject line entered as the appt subject line and the body of the e-mail shown in the Notes section. You just select the right day and time and create the appointment.)
- Database for contacts/addresses/phone numbers. Add/update the information to your database system and/or your paper address book as soon as you read the e-mail. It only takes a moment and then your Contacts are always up-to-date. And you only have to look in one place when you need to find a name or phone number.
- Filing system for ongoing projects. Create an Outlook folder, name it for the specific project or committee, and drag the e-mail into it. Then you can easily find e-mails relating to any project/committee/area of interest in one place to review and work with them.

**Learn everything you can about your software.** With Outlook, you can drag a message from your Inbox to your calendar; create rules to send certain messages to folders; use templates with signatures to send information you relay often; and so much more. Learn the tricks to organize and finish much faster. (Click the Help option and search for a particular topic. Inside the Help option you can also click 'Connect to Microsoft Office Online' to access their 'Help and How-to' section for your version of Office.)

## **Organize everything around you so you can find an answer fast.**

Organize the papers on your desk, your computer files, your Inbox, and your contacts. If you can quickly find what you need, you can answer the e-mail (and voicemail) and move on to the next one.

You **can** establish a routine that keeps you efficient and in charge. You want to streamline your workload and time, and you work with busy people who want answers fast - so put these tips into practice and make it happen!

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