

# Ten tips to make email more productive

**Ever been overwhelmed by emails at work? Experts report billions of emails are sent every day and they're still increasing.** With so many messages arriving throughout the day, email can easily become a continual interruption and distraction from getting real work accomplished. Here are some useful tips that will help give you more control over your time and increase your efficiency.

## ① Put email on a schedule

Instead of reading and responding to emails as they arrive, set aside specific times of day for them. This can vary from one to three or four times a day, depending on your situation. If you're in the habit of monitoring your email continually it may take extra effort to change your behavior, but once you do you'll soon find yourself getting more accomplished.

## ② Get set-up for success

Once you've established specific times for email, set-up some new rules for your email application to help. Instead of automatically checking for new messages every minute, adjust your application to check at a more appropriate interval. You can also disable delivery previews and sounds to reduce email's intrusion into your productivity.

## ③ Read it and deal with it

Some messages are simply information, but others require action. Make a renewed effort to deal with emails as you read them—reply, file, delete, or print. If you don't, you'll end up reading the same message two or more times. In fact, if you know in advance that an email will take some concentrated effort, don't read it until you have the time to deal with it.



## ④ Put the subject line to work

When you write an email, take a moment to ensure the subject line is as clear and complete as possible. For example, "Need feedback on Jones Sales Presentation (attached) by Friday" is much more productive than simply "Sales Presentation Review."

## ⑤ Make the subject the message

When your message is very short use the subject line for the entire message. For example, "Reminder: Feedback on Jones Sales Presentation Due Today (EOM)." Use End of Message (EOM) so recipients know the body of the email is blank and won't waste time opening it.

## ⑥ Keep your message focused

When most people read on-screen they tend to scan. Big blocks of text discourage readers and information is more easily overlooked. Keep your emails short, to-the-point, and clear. Here are some tips to help:

- Add a space between paragraphs
- Use bullet points to improve readability
- List action items (with names)
- Use separate emails for disparate topics

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## 7 Consider your audience carefully

Who should receive your email? How about the CC? It's a balancing act. People like to be informed, but they also receive too many emails. Help your colleagues' productivity by selecting To, CC, and BCC recipients judiciously.

## 8 Reduce attachments

Nothing fills up an inbox faster than hefty file attachments. If possible, replace attachments with links to documents on servers or websites. If you can't avoid including attachments, convert large files like PowerPoint® presentations into compact PDF files. Compression software like WinZip® or StuffIt® is another alternative. Help the recipients of your emails decide if the attachment is relevant to them by including a useful description of the document in your message.

## 9 Provide response options

Use an email signature that includes your phone number and other contact information. The recipient(s) may prefer to call—for example to end a string of emails. By putting all the relevant information close at hand, you'll save time for everyone.

## 10 Save paper and ink

When you print emails, use your printer's two-sided print function (*if available*) and check the print preview to eliminate unnecessary pages. Software like GreenPrint evaluates and removes unwanted pages (*like pages with only URLs*), prior to printing. See [www.xerox.com/savepaper](http://www.xerox.com/savepaper) for more information.

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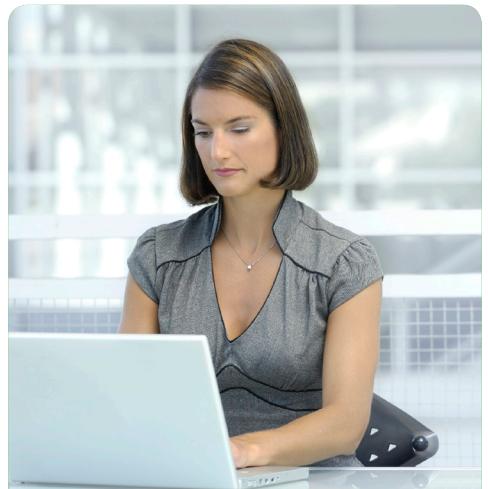
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