

Factsheet

Skills Boost Topic 2 Managing Emails



Introduction

Billions of emails are sent every day, which adds up to a lot of work! Unlike a letter email moves very fast and with the cc function messages can be delivered to large audiences instantly – yet this benefit can also be one of the weaknesses of email. If you feel your inbox is managing you, then its time to take action and start managing your emails.

Why is it important?

For most people answering emails isn't the job you've been employed to do, and if not managed properly it's all too easy for emails to eat up too much of your time and keep you from doing your job. A well managed email account will help you win back time, be more productive and give you a greater sense of control over your workload. Managing email is straightforward and this Skills Boost Topic Guide sets out the some of the most useful do's and don'ts of managing them.

Managing Emails Do's and Don'ts

Do's

Read and action 1 email at a time Aim to action each email first time and either: reply, file or delete it.

Have set times for looking at your emails This will give you more time to focus on the work you are doing as you won't be constantly checking your inbox.

Be nice Remember workplace emails are professional documents, take care to ensure your words won't cause upset.

Be in the right frame of mind If you are angry or tired don't send an email. Wait and think about what you need to say before sending.

Check before you send Always read your emails before you send, make sure the spelling is correct and the message makes sense.

Keep them short If your email is too long it is less likely to be read. Maybe a meeting or conversation would be more effective.

Be clear If the recipient needs to take action, make this clear at the start of the email – this suggests the whole email needs to be read.

Get filing Set-up folders for your emails to keep your inbox under control and make it easier to find old emails.

Use the phone If your email is full of questions a phone call is likely to be quicker and more effective.

Don'ts

Open, read and leave for later This wastes time and makes it easy to overlook messages as they have already been opened.

Copy everyone in to everything Use the cc function with care and only cc people who really do need to be copied in – don't use it to cover your back.

Action emails in your free time Your free time is valuable and you should not action emails when you are not in work. Use the out of office function and if needed provide alternative contact details in you absence.

Get drawn into email politics If you receive an "office politics" email – where possible ignore it, otherwise only be factual in your response.

Next steps

- Make time to clear down your inbox and where needed set-up folders
- Decide what 2 times in the day to review your inbox
- Think before you write an email – would a phone call be better?
- Think before you reply
- Check before you send.

The Agile Nation project provides workplace support and development for women and businesses in the convergence area of Wales, to find out more visit www.agilenation.co.uk