Keeping Email Clutter at Bay

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It is said that more time is wasted looking at emails than using any other management tool. We all tend to save too many emails. This makes it difficult to find important ones that are waiting for response. A full mail box is a time sink. To better manage your email and keep clutter at bay, **open your email no more than twice per day** — once in the morning and once in the afternoon. Use one of these two times to clear your emails.

Processing email

In every viewing session, **all new emails should be read with the aim of filing, routing, or discarding them.**
•**Filing** an email signifies that after reading it, you would like to keep it, as the message might be valuable to access in the future.
•**Routing** is applied to an email that requires follow-up, or one that you need to read at a future time.

•**Discard** is used for emails that are irrelevant or require no future action.

I do not consider the processing of emails complete until both the Inbox and the Sent Box are emptied. When an email is sent, a copy appears in the Sent Box. I recommend going directly to the Sent Box as soon as your send an email. File, route, or discard that email right away.

The careful processing of emails can prove invaluable to managing your business efficiently. For individuals who are slow to respond to requests, you can set up emails with due date reminders. People will recognize that you are well organized and effective at holding them to task!

Follow-up applications

Follow-up applications allow you to bring back emails at future dates so you can manage your time better. Here's how they work. When you open an email and find that the content requires more time then you have available now, you click on the follow-up application. It enables you to select a future time to read the email and will resend it to you then. Boomerang, Snoozelt, and Snooze are some examples of this type of technology.

Set up side folders

The main reason clients say they leave messages in their Inbox is that they think they will need the information sometime soon. **To keep your information readily available — but not in your Inbox — create side folders.** Start by recreating the same side folders you have already set up in your contact list system. Add subject folders as needed. Once this habit is in place, you will find that you can locate any email in less than 15 seconds.

The merits of "empty"

The only emails you should have in your mailboxes are subjects that you plan to address before the end of the day. **Keeping your Inbox and Sent Box empty allows you to operate more efficiently with less clutter and more time to focus on projects that are important or urgent.**

5 KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. More time is wasted looking at emails than using any other management tool.
2. All new emails should be read with the aim of filing, routing, or discarding them.
3. The processing of emails is complete when both your Inbox and the Sent Box are empty.
4. To keep your information readily available, create side folders.
5. The careful processing of emails is invaluable to managing your business efficiently.