Email is the most widely used collaboration tool with an estimated 110 billion messages sent daily. Despite its benefits, email has become overwhelming to manage. It steals our attention and leads to higher stress levels.

Better email practices can reduce stress, improve communication, boost productivity and support our ability to focus.
Healthy email

Write emails the way you want to read them – keep them short, use simple language and avoid long blocks of text

Don’t “bury your lead” – write the important message and/or question first in your email followed by any critical background

Don’t overuse the “Cc” field – thoughtfully select recipients based on role and resist pressure to be over-inclusive

Make concrete suggestions – be specific about times, locations and deadlines to reduce unnecessary back-and-forth

Send fewer emails to receive fewer emails – strategically consider different mediums (the phone, a meeting or chat) for your message

Avoid reply-all – pause to think about your role in the thread and send targeted messages instead

Batch process emails – select two or three times per day to process emails instead of checking email constantly throughout the day and night

Acknowledge important emails – if you don’t have time to respond, then send a short email instead with an expected response time

Set boundaries – refrain from email during specific periods of time, e.g. 7PM to 7AM, and manage response-time expectations
How do I turn behaviors into habits?
“Typically, doing just four to five things differently can enable people to claw back 18% to 24% of their collaborative time.”

Rob Cross, Professor of Global Leadership, Babson College

1Reclaiming Your Day Research

How to make it a habit

Goal set

- Diagnose your problem using MyAnalytics data
- Define a measurable goal using a specific MyAnalytics metric
  - Select a time period to monitor your change
  - Pick a behavior to turn into habit
  - Write down why this habit is important and how it will make you a better teammate

Plan

- Use the MyAnalytics Outlook Add-in for daily support
- Keep track of your progress by checking your data weekly in the MyAnalytics Dashboard
  - Identify barriers to change and take actions to remove them

Practice

- Use the MyAnalytics share feature to share your data along with your plan with a manager or teammate(s)
- Ask a teammate to develop the new habit with you—consider making it a friendly competition

Celebrate

- When you achieve your goal, use the MyAnalytics share feature to share your data and success with your manager or team
  - Keep practicing the behavior!
  - If you were not successful, try another behavior

The Power of Habit Resources

- When ________, I will ________ because ________
- it provides me with ________
- The Power of Habit Resources

- Use the MyAnalytics share feature to share your data along with your plan with a manager or teammate(s)
Here are some examples
Batch process emails 2 to 3 times per day

Processing emails constantly throughout the day subjects us to lower productivity and increased stress. It takes us longer than we think to fully return to a task after an interruption. Research shows that it takes 23 minutes to get back on task after an interruption and 16 minutes when the interruption is specifically email.

Source: Worker Interrupted: The Cost of Task Switching

Specific example

Over the next two weeks, I will batch process emails at 11 AM and 4 PM.

Idea

When I check my emails, I will batch process emails 2 to 3 times per day because it provides me with a way to reduce my stress level.

MyAnalytics Dashboard

Goal is to see 2 or 3 blocks of activity
A correlation has been found between the amount of time managers send email and organize meetings after-hours and the amount of time their direct reports do the same. In one Fortune 100 technology company, data shows that every hour that people managers spend after-hours translates to 20 minutes of additional direct report time spent after-hours.

Source: If You Multitask During Meetings Your Team Will Too

Goal set → Plan → Practice → Celebrate

### Specific example

**Over the next 2 weeks,** reduce the number of emails sent outside of business hours by 50%.

### Idea

When **I choose to work after hours**, I will **wait to send late-night emails until the AM** because it provides me with the satisfaction that I am helping my teammates unplug.
Research has shown that 60% of communication is understood through body language, 33% through tone of voice and 7% through the actual words. When a person receives too little information in an email, they compose their own story, often a negative one. Matching message content with the appropriate communication form, e.g. phone for a sensitive topic, reduces email traffic with the added benefit of less miscommunication.

Source: One Second Ahead, by Rasmus Hougaard
MyAnalytics features to support change
MyAnalytics feature
Unread mails & important people
Outlook Add-in

1. Select the Keep your Important people list up to date card

2. Choose people to add

3. Stay on top of your relationships by selecting the unread mails card

The Outlook Add-in suggests important people based on your collaboration from previous weeks. To add people you don’t see here, go to My Network in your MyAnalytics Dashboard. From there, you can search for people, view your entire list, and remove people from your list.

For definitions of terms and metrics, please visit: MyAnalytics
**MyAnalytics feature**

See if people are reading mail

Outlook Add-in

1. **Select the see if people are reading mail card**

   - Effective emails
     - See if people are reading the emails you send.
     - 1 with high activity
     - 3 with low activity

   **Note:** MyAnalytics generates data only for emails sent to 5 or more individuals to preserve the anonymity of recipients.

2. **Click on an email for a summary**

   - Read activity on emails you’ve sent
     - Low activity
       - Most people only skimmed RE: Communication Template for My...
     - Low activity
       - Discuss how WPA can be incorporated...
     - Low activity
       - Most people only skimmed Teamwork Solutions training.
     - High activity
       - People read RE: Connected Commons.

3. **Develop an action plan to improve the effectiveness of your email**

   - If recipients spend a shorter amount of time reading your email than the estimated time to read, then it is likely your email was too long - try writing a shorter one.

   - If few people have opened your email or replied, then you may need to resend or try a different form of communication. If there have been many forwards, then you may not have properly selected recipients.

   - If you conclude that your email was ineffective and email is still the best method for the message, then hit follow up to reach out to the group again with a more carefully designed email.

For definitions of terms and metrics, please visit: [MyAnalytics](#)
Use your My email data to see number of emails and patterns in your weekly activity.

Number of emails read typically exceeds sent, however, a large imbalance could help you become more aware of problems, such as sending too many emails or reading more emails than necessary to do your job.

Shows the total emails you read and sent during the week by time of day. It can be used to help you monitor a goal to avoid checking your inbox constantly throughout the day.
My Analytics feature

My network

Dashboard

Use My network to determine how responsive you are to emails from important people.

Click on an important person in your map to view details about your weekly collaboration with that person in the right pane.

Focus on read percent and response time.

If your read percent is low, you are likely neglecting this relationship and important responsibilities.

If your response time is low, you are likely acting as a bottleneck for this person. If high, you may be too reactive to emails from this person and may need to readjust expectations.

For definitions of terms and metrics, please visit: MyAnalytics
Taking it to the next level
Email-writing tips
How to write effective emails based on data

Tip:
Suggested subject headers include [INFORM], [QUESTION], [ACTION], [PRE-READ], [SIGN], [REQUEST] and [DECISION].

Data-driven Tips For Getting More Responses

• Open with “Hey”, “Hello” or “Hi”.
• Use shorter sentences with simpler words – a 3rd grade reading level works best
• Include 1-3 questions in your email, ideally time bounded
• Make sure you include a subject line and aim for 3-4 words
• Improve social cues by using a slightly positive or slightly negative tone
• Take a stand – opinionated messages see higher response rates
• Write enough, but not too much – try to keep messages between 50-125 words
• Schedule your email for an appropriate time* – 6 to 7 AM is best
• Close with “thanks in advance”, “thanks” and “thank you”
• Write error-free subject lines

See the data:
7 Tips for Getting More Responses to Your Emails
This Email Closing Gets the Most Replies
How to Start an Email
Be Careful Sending Emails on Mondays

Source: Boomerang
*For instructions on how to schedule a delivery, click here: Schedule sending an email