

# A CLEAN INBOX IS A HAPPY INBOX: STRATEGIES FOR EMAIL MANAGEMENT

Presented by:  
Stephanie Baird, Oklahoma State Regents for Higher  
Education, & Ross Mehl, University of Oklahoma





# PRESENTATION OUTLINE

01

WHY ARE WE SENDING  
SO MUCH EMAIL?

02

WHAT IS EMAIL MANAGEMENT?  
WHAT IS IT NOT?

03

WHAT IS THE BEST EMAIL  
MANAGEMENT STRATEGY?

04

HOW CAN I GET STARTED ON  
MANAGING MY EMAIL?



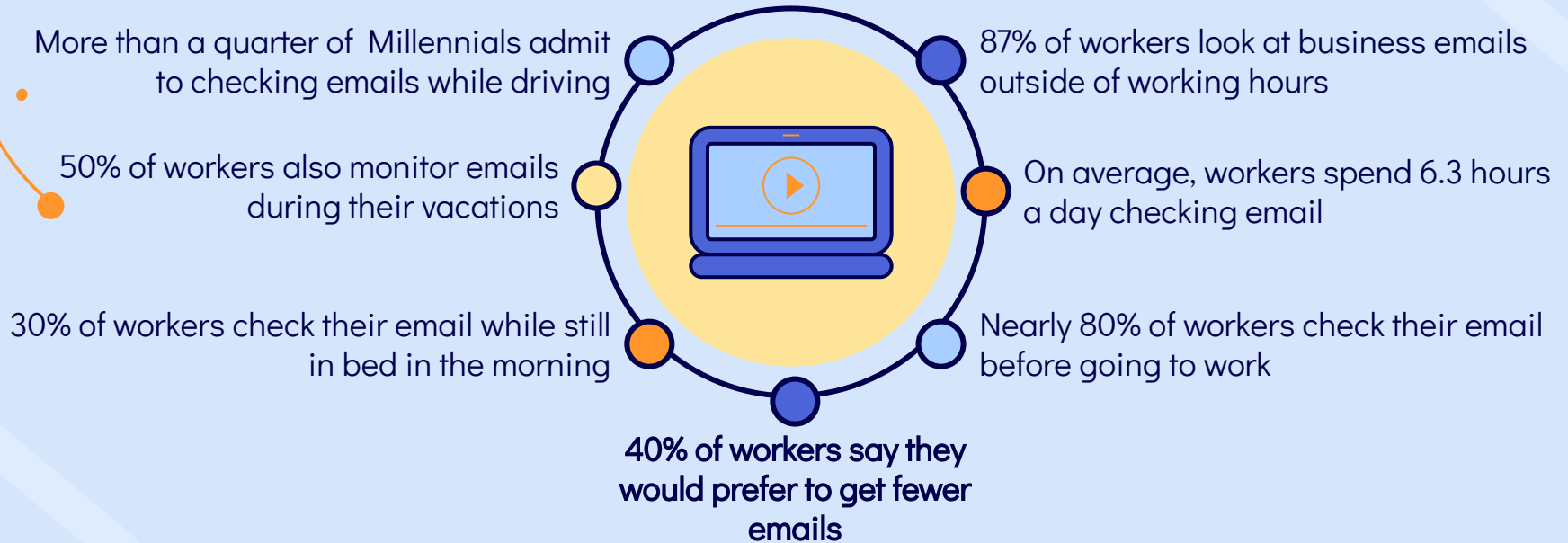
01

**WHY ARE WE SENDING  
SO MUCH EMAIL?**



- Email is easy and convenient
- It's nearly instantaneous
- It's asynchronous
- It's platform neutral
- It provides a written record of communication

# ACCORDING TO TECH JURY, WE SEND 319.6 BILLION EMAILS A DAY





02

**WHAT IS EMAIL MANAGEMENT?  
WHAT IS IT NOT?**

“Email management is a systematic approach to maximizing the efficiency of email practices and minimizing the negative effects that email handling can have on an individual’s productivity and job satisfaction.”

**IVY WIGMORE, TECH TARGET**



# EMAIL MANAGEMENT IS NOT...



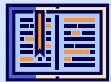
Overflowing Inbox



Using Email for Everything



Wasting Time in Inbox



Writing Long Emails



Never Deleting Emails



Doing Nothing!





## OVERFLOWING INBOX

Trying to stay on top of everything might lead to unnecessary threads, newsletters, and email notifications that contribute to an overflowing inbox. Clean up your inbox and it will feel lighter - and you will too.



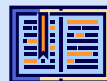
## USING EMAIL FOR EVERYTHING

Channeling everything to your email may seem efficient, but it might not be the right tool for certain tasks. The verdict is also out on using your inbox like a to do list. Instead, examine how you use your inbox and what tools could do it better.



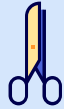
## WASTING TIME IN INBOX

Checking your email every five minutes, writing the same replies over and over, or manually organizing your inbox aren't the best use of your time. Make your inbox productive by setting notifications and scheduling times to check it.



## WRITING LONG EMAILS

Long-winded emails make it difficult for the recipient to understand what you are specifically asking of them. Good email etiquette includes brevity and clarity. Keep your message short and sweet and be descriptive in the subject line.



## NEVER DELETING EMAILS

A messy or cluttered inbox can negatively impact your productivity and efficiency. This is often when important emails fall through the cracks. Instead, clean up your inbox using the four Ds - more on that soon!



## DOING NOTHING!

If your inbox is really overwhelming, you've probably given up on having any kind of email management system at all. Don't! Doing nothing isn't going to help you and getting started is easier than you think!!



03

**WHAT IS THE BEST EMAIL  
MANAGEMENT STRATEGY?**

# INBOX ZERO: THE 4D APPROACH

(First introduced by productivity expert Merlin Mann in 2006)

Is it spam, trash, or not important to keep? Delete it!

**DELETE**

Do you need more time to reply? Defer it (but not indefinitely).

**DEFER**

Is it appropriate for someone else to address? Delegate it.

**DELEGATE**

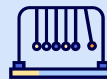
Won't take long to reply or do the task? Do it!

**DO**



## DELETE

If you don't need it, simply remove it from your inbox. This way, important emails won't get lost or buried in your pile of unimportant ones.



## DELEGATE

If you're not the best person to respond to the email, then don't! Forward it to someone who is and communicate with the sender that you are doing so (if appropriate).



## DEFER

If you need time to reply to an email, don't rush. Leave it in your inbox with a label and return to it later. You can also create a "to do" folder or use a snooze feature to remind you to come back to it. Be sure to let the sender know that you received it and will work on it when you can.



## DO

If you can respond or do the requested task quickly, just do it! Replying as soon as possible saves you time and energy to deal with more demanding emails and tasks.



04

**HOW CAN I GET STARTED ON  
MANAGING MY EMAIL?**



# STILL OVERWHELMED? START SMALL!



Schedule Email Time



Create Labels, Folders, etc.



Touch It Once



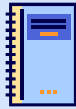
Follow the One Minute Rule



Unsubscribe!



Make Shared Inboxes



## SCHEDULE EMAIL TIME

Set aside structured time for your email in your schedule. If possible, avoid multitasking when checking your email. Minimizing distractions and staying focused allows you to run through your emails more easily and quickly.



## CREATE LABELS, FOLDERS, ETC.

Simplify your email management by using labels or folders to get and stay organized. A simple system, like creating a “completed” folder for the academic year and moving “completed” emails to it, will be more sustainable than a complex one.



## TOUCH IT ONCE

Revisiting an email over and over again is a waste of time. So touch it once, take action on it, file it away, and move on to the next email. This should allow you employ quick decision-making and keep you from getting distracted.



## FOLLOW THE ONE MINUTE RULE

If it takes just a minute to respond to an email, do it immediately. This one minute rule helps you to manage both your email and time more efficiently. This keeps you from sitting on emails that can be acted on quickly and keeps your inbox clean.



## UNSUBSCRIBE!

If you haven't already, unsubscribe from emails that you don't need to receive. You can do this individually as they come into your inbox (it takes less than a minute!) or utilize a service like Unroll.Me to unsubscribe from emails instantly.



## MAKE SHARED INBOXES

If you have a group inbox with others in your department, it can be hard to keep track of which emails have been answered. Use a ticketing system like Hiver to assign emails, improve workflow, and improve communication.

# REFERENCES

Brzeska, A. (August 6, 2018). *The 4 D's of managing your inbox: The zero inbox method*. LinkedIn. Retrieved from <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/4-ds-managing-your-mailbox-zero-inbox-method-aleksandra-michta/>.

Cairns, A. (October 7, 2019). *The five golden rules of effective email management: How to tame your email monster*. Retrieved from <https://adam-cairns.medium.com/the-5-golden-rules-of-effective-email-management-19bb55b1c4ce>.

Default, A. (January 7, 2015). *Five bad email habits that waste your time*. Entrepreneur. Retrieved from <https://www.entrepreneur.com/science-technology/5-bad-email-habits-that-waste-your-time/240864>.

Ganesh, M. (September 1, 2021). *Seven best practices and tips to effective email management*. Rock Content. Retrieved from <https://rockcontent.com/blog/email-management/>.

Skjekkeland, A. (February 12, 2009). *What is email management?* The Association for Intelligent Information Management. Retrieved from <https://www.slideshare.net/norwiz/what-is-email-management>.

Wigmore, I. (April 2014). *Email management*. Tech Target. Retrieved from <https://www.techtarget.com/whatis/definition/email-management>.

# QUESTIONS? TIPS AND TRICKS?

Stephanie Baird - [sbaird@osrhe.edu](mailto:sbaird@osrhe.edu)

Ross Mehl - [rmehl@ou.edu](mailto:rmehl@ou.edu)

CREDITS: This presentation template was created by **Slidesgo**, including icons by **Flaticon**, infographics & images by **Freepik**

