

Own Your Inbox

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Being *busy* is not the same thing as being *productive*

Any fool can be busy.



Cult of Busyness

- 61% of employees say they don't have enough time to do what they want
- 30% of our day is consumed by email
 - McKinsey Global Institute study
- And people brag about being busy!



3 Evils of Email

1. Inbox Overload
2. Message Management
3. Constant Checking



Email Evil 1: Inbox Overload

- When everything comes into the Inbox and stays there...forever
- Keep the Inbox for New Messages and New Messages only
- Move opened, read, and handled messages into another folder



Email Evil 1: Inbox Zero

- **Inbox Zero** is a *method*, not an *outcome*; it is about processing your email
 - More than checking
 - Less than responding



Email Evil 1: 4D Processing

For every email in your Inbox

- 1) **Delete** (or archive based on records retention rules)
- 2) **Delegate**: Just because you received it doesn't mean it's yours to respond to
- 3) **Defer**: For just a few minutes
- 4) **Do**: Reply and get it off our plate



Email Evil 2: Message Management

- Filing Email == Wasted Effort
- Solution: Archive almost everything when done with it into one centralized folder and search the folder when you need to find something
- We spend too much time on unnecessary decision-making in determining where to file email
 - This is also why we give up and let it pile up in our Inbox!



Email Evil 3: Constant Checking

- Looking at our email as soon as we wake-up before we even get out of bed
- Review inbox at the breakfast table
- During meetings we are checking email



Email Evil 3: Constant Checking

- Having a negative effect on our output and ability to help others
- We spend an average of 6.3 hours a day checking email, including dealing with email
 - We do a lot of Unfocused Work
- Having email up on a screen means we're not engaging with the other activity
- It's not about time spent doing email, but what can be done in time in between doing email



Email Evil 3: Constant Checking

- There is a big difference between spending focused time on email and just checking email
- Consider the best time to actually process email vs checking all the time
- Need to use other channels out of normal hours, e.g. cellphone
 - We all need to have a shared agreement on this!



Nav's Tips

Disclaimer: The following tips require discipline!



Nav's Tip: Use Mail Rules

- Create folders for mailing lists, distribution lists, and other predictable but *not urgent* emails and create mail rules for messages to move them into the appropriate folder upon arrival
- I have one called “External” for all non-UVic email, which also helps me avoid phishing scams



Nav's Tip: Use Folders & Quick Steps

- Create *NEEDS ACTION* folder that appears in *Favorites* and use it to drag messages from the Inbox that need action.
 - Right-click on the folder to show "Total number of items" to ensure it is always clear how many items need action
- Create *Dealt With* folder and put emails into this folder when you're done with them
- Use Quick Steps to really make it efficient to move messages



Nav's Tip: Use Conditional Formatting

- You can configure rules in folders like your Inbox to make certain messages appear differently:
 - Messages from my boss are **red**
 - Messages from my colleagues are **blue**
 - Messages from my team are **green**
- At-a-glance I can see messages from the people that matter to me



But how do I learn all of this?!

- Lynda.com!
 - “Outlook 2013: Tips, Tricks, and Shortcuts
- There are a ton of videos that can save you a ton of time with a very minimal investment of time
- Most of the Office 2013 videos are still relevant for Office 2016
- If you want to be more efficient, spend some time learning how!



Takeaways

- Never keep read messages in your Inbox
- Create rules to reduce emails in your Inbox
- Don't waste time filing emails, use archive and search
- Pick when you will check email and when you won't
 - Use alerts and notifications correctly
- Spend some time learning the features of the tools that can help you



Final Thought

Inbox Zero and 4D Processing become easier if we practice good email hygiene:

- Good subject lines
- Good messages
- Use email only when appropriate



QUESTIONS?

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