



# Prime Solutions Training & Consulting P/L

**Computer Productivity  
Specialists**

**7 Things You MUST Know  
About Email**

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## Contents

1.	Email Notification .....	4
2.	Offline .....	6
3.	Stop Sending Emails.....	8
4.	Calendar .....	10
5.	Tasks .....	13
6.	Rules.....	15
7.	Drafts .....	16

## No 1 – Email Notification

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### 1. Email Notification

Email applications have a small preview pane or pop up box that is designed to notify you when you receive a new email message. This generally appears by default.

It can be very distracting if you have timelines on documents or spreadsheets that require your complete attention and the box appears. Often you are drawn in by curiosity to check the email which has a two fold effect of:

- a) Breaking your concentration – Research suggests that it can take 15-20 minutes to refocus your attention on the task from which you were distracted.
- b) The distraction often results in change of focus to email, only to find you are still working on email when you check your watch 45 minutes later!!!!

## **No 1 – Email Notification**

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To switch off email notification panes and boxes, visit Help in your email application and type in “Switch off Email Notification”.

Doing this allows you to focus on the task at hand without distraction as each email is delivered to your inbox.

## No 2 –Offline

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### 2. Offline

This may come as a surprise....but it is OK to close down your email from time to time when you are working on a specific task or to avoid being driven by other peoples "urgency" and "importance" rather than your own.

Many people say to me..."but what if it is urgent??" or I "have" to leave my email open all day. The question I ask is WHY?

I tell people, someone will CALL you on the phone if it is an emergency. After all, when you fill out forms and they ask for emergency contact details, they don't ask for an emergency email address DO THEY??

You also need to educate colleagues and customers that if it is something important, they should call.

If you were away ill or on holidays, you wouldn't be responding to email anyway....would you??

## No 2 –Offline

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For some this is a major issue as email represents control and security, despite the fact that often the volume of email often makes people feel out of control.

If the thought of closing down your email when you aren't using it scares you to death...try baby steps such as:

- a) Turn off the email notification message
- b) Close down email only when you have specific tasks you need to complete
- c) Only respond to email at designated times throughout the day rather than ad hoc.

**NOTE: Did you know that if you were able to stop emailing for 1 hr per day, across the course of a month that equals 2.5 days???**

What could you be doing SMARTER and not HARDER with YOUR email??

## No 3 – When to Stop Sending

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### 3. Stop Sending Emails

No doubt you have heard of the Law of Attraction. What you send out you get back. If you feel like you are having a bad day, your subconscious will look for signs to support your belief that you in fact are having a bad day.

As it relates to email, the more emails you send out, the more you receive back.

Every office usually has its serial “emailer”. The person who always has to cc or bcc everyone. The person who has to choose Reply to All when responding to group emails.

When you receive an email do the following:

- a) STOP
- b) Ask yourself if email is the most appropriate way to respond to the message you receive.
- c) Would it be better to pick up the phone and talk to the sender rather than start an email

### **No 3 – When to Stop Sending**

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“chain” of messages back and forward that my result in 2-3 days before completion?

If you do decide email is the most appropriate way to respond, ask yourself the following questions:

- a) Am I feeling angry, frustrated or hurt by this email? – if so, perhaps you need to leave responding for a little while until you calm down.
- b) Should I delete the sender's name, draft a response then save it as a draft until I “COOL” Down?
- c) Is my email clear? Could my response be misinterpreted and cause some friction? If so, consider a phone call or saving it as a draft before sending it.

Take the initiative to decide WHEN you should stop sending email, rather than just reacting to other peoples expectations or trying to “tick” a box and move on to the next task on your To Do list.

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## No 4 – Calendar

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### 4. Calendar

In the past employees were often judged by the time they arrived at work and the time they left.

These days it sometimes seems that we are judged on the VOLUME of email we send, who we cc and WHEN we send the email.

If you are a manager sending emails to your staff at 3am in the morning, be aware that although YOU may not be able to sleep, you may be creating an expectation that your staff need to respond immediately.

**You need to communicate your expectations – perhaps you just wanted to “get it out of your system” but they may interpret it differently.**

Most people in organizations receive performance appraisals on a regular basis. When it is time for your performance to be reviewed you are judged based on the KPI's or KRA's (Key Performance

## **No 4 – Calendar**

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Indicators or Key Performance Areas) and not based on the number of emails you sent or received during the course of the year.

Remember that email is a tool to communicate with clients and colleagues but it **ISN'T, THE ONLY TOOL.**

**So how does this relate to the Calendar I hear you ask???**

Here's how, most people open their email application directly to the Inbox, thus getting "sucked" into dealing with items that are important to other people rather than focusing on what YOU need to do today.

Change your email application so that it goes to the CALENDAR when it opens up. This reminds you that you need to focus on YOUR tasks, appointments etc that need to be addressed during the day.

## No 4 – Calendar

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Try managing email by allocating a specific time slot in your calendar each day to deal with it.

I know of some people who only respond to emails once a day and they educate their clients and colleagues of this fact.

You could even put a note in your email footer/signature indicating you only respond to email once a day.

Communication is the key. If you make your expectation or responsiveness clear then people know what to expect. ie. How are you supposed to remember to wish someone a happy birthday if they haven't told you when their birthday is??

## No 5 – Tasks

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### 5. Tasks

Most email applications have task or to do lists.

These are great for recording a list of tasks you need to complete, for your key performance indicators and their sub-tasks and progress.

Doing a “dump” of your tasks to a to do list allows you to then work out the priorities and schedule them into your calendar.

Research shows that you are more likely to do something if it appears on your calendar or to do list. Take your tasks and allocate a time to do those that are important. Keep those that are less important on the list for your to deal with as and when the need arises.

Most email applications incorporate a task list. Using the various menu options such as Copy Into

## No 5 – Tasks

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or via a drag and drop scenario you can copy mail messages into task or to do items and then allocate them to a specific timeslot on your calendar.

Doing this isn't about filling your day, but rather putting tasks into your calendar to meet the various deadlines you may have.

Many clients I work with **LOVE** the task list at performance review time. They don't delete their tasks for the year, but instead print a list out and take it to their manager when they have their appraisal. It presents a much stronger case if you have a list of tasks completed during the course of the year to substantiate why you may not have met your KPI's or to document the additional work you have done when seeking an increase in your salary.

## No 6 – Rules

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### 6. Rules

Most email applications have a feature called Rules (check the Help option for specific details).

Rules allow you to automatically process or file emails you receive that meet a certain criteria.

This is great to reduce the processing of non urgent email or to assist with filing emails.

Some possible uses include:

- a) A rule to automatically put newsletters and e-zines you subscribe to into an e-zine folder rather than have them clogging up your Inbox.
- b) Automatically place non urgent emails into folders for you to deal with – ie responses to meeting invitations, job applications etc
- c) Some email applications will allow you to use rules to “file” send messages. ie. put all messages with @abc.com in the domain name into an ABC folder

## No 7 – Drafts

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### 7. Drafts

Not only a great place to store emails whilst you “COOL OFF”, Drafts is also useful for creating and storing emails that you might use on a regular basis.

Things like:

- a) Regular email reports
- b) Email Response “templates”

## **Additional Information**

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If you liked the tips in this e-book, you might be interested in our other products available from the Prime Solutions Training & Consulting Pty Ltd website at [www.primesolutions.net.au](http://www.primesolutions.net.au) or our Resource Centre – [www.thetechnologytranslator.com](http://www.thetechnologytranslator.com)

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