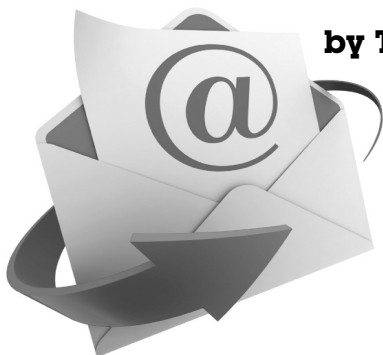


5

# TIPS

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***for efficient and***  
.....  
***effective emails***  
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by TODD HUNT



***If it seems you spend your entire days on email, here are some tips to get your life back.***



**“RE:”**

You send an email with the subject line “Workshop agenda.” Your colleague receives it, hits REPLY, the subject line automatically fills in “Re: Workshop agenda,” she types her response, hits SEND and it comes to you.

If you need to reply, type a NEW subject line (don’t let it default to “Re: Re: Workshop Agenda”). When you go back and forth, you lose track of who’s saying what, and your colleague may delete it before reading, thinking she’s already seen it.



# 2

## **BATCH**

Rather than answer emails immediately as they come in, block out three or four “email work periods” each day. Only during those designated times will you read each message, type your response, and save it as a draft. Type the next response, save it as a draft, and so on.

When all 15 or 20 (or however many) responses are finished, go back and read your drafts. You’ll probably catch typos (like double double words, “you” instead of “your,” etc.). Even just a few minutes between writing the response and reading it again is enough time to help clear your mind.

### **Another benefit of batching...**

You receive an email: “I need such-and-such report” or “I know you already sent the agenda for tomorrow’s meeting, but can you send it again?” Then two minutes later another message: “Never mind—I found it.” When you batch your responses you may actually save time by not having to look up that agenda and resending it the minute you get the first request.

And if you’re really serious, open each draft that contains a link, copy and paste the message into a new email and send to yourself. Then you’ll receive exactly what your recipient will receive and you can test the links. If they work, then send your drafts.

Does this take extra time? Yes, a little. But get in the habit and you’ll drastically reduce the number of errors you send.



## **CLEAR SUBJECT LINES**

Suppose you have three proofs (program, eblast and sign) for your upcoming convention to show people to review. Send each in a separate email and vary the subject lines.

### **But not like this:**

- Convention program proof
- Convention eblast proof
- Convention sign proof

because your recipient might glance at “Convention” and assume all messages are the same (you know how cluttered mailboxes get).

### **Instead:**

- Convention program proof
- Eblast proof—convention
- Sign for convention—please review

### **Even better, number each in brackets:**

- [1 of 3] Convention program proof
- [2 of 3] Eblast proof—convention
- [3 of 3] Sign for convention—please proof

Depending on the system, some emails arrive in the reverse order that they're sent. If this is the case for people with whom you regularly correspond (you'll need to find out), then send your emails in reverse order (#3 first, then #2 then #1)...so they arrive in your recipient's mail box in chronological order (1, 2, 3).

Takes only a few seconds on your part, and it can prevent communication miscues later (which, no doubt, you will be called upon to fix).

One of my clients reads nearly all emails on her smartphone. She told me that receiving just one attachment per email makes it easier to view and respond, then move on to the next message.

# 4

## SEPARATE MESSAGES

You send an email containing three or four questions. You get a reply, but only to your first question. So you have to write back, “Thank you, but what about my other questions?” Numbering the questions can help, but everyone is in such a hurry they don’t always read the full email.

So consider putting each point in a separate message.

I used to bundle my speaker contract and audio-visual list in a single email (one handy document for the client, I thought).

When I showed up at the convention center, I discovered the technician walking around with a printout of my email as his equipment checklist. (Would you want *your* fee details in a stranger’s hands for the world to see? Me neither.)

Now my contract goes in its own email. I send the equipment list in a separate email. Promo copy in a third email. Photo in a fourth, and so on.

That way the client can forward each message to the appropriate people for action.

# 5

## DAYS

You send an email: “See you tomorrow.” But what if your recipient doesn’t open the email UNTIL tomorrow? Better to say “See you tomorrow (Friday).”



In email, as in life, communicate not just so clearly that we’re understood, but so *precisely* that we cannot possibly be MISunderstood!



**Todd Hunt** speaks to organizations that want to add fun to their events and send members back to work smiling, with tips to improve communication and success.

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