

Managing Email Part 2

Thank you for all your comments on our last issue. Here are some additional tips for dealing with email. Now that you have your email more organized and are seeing few messages in your inbox, let us talk about how to utilize the “Four D’s” in handling your email. There is an old rule in time management that says, “handle each piece of paper once. The “Four D’s” Do it, Delegate it, Delay it or Delete it, can help you do that with email.

Do it – Acting immediately on an email is one of those things that’s “simple, but not easy”. Something always seems to get in the way, a meeting, phone call, page, or another urgent interruption. Force yourself to reply, when necessary, in a brief and businesslike manner. Do it and move on. An Irish proverb may help, “The quickest way to do many things is to do only one at a time”.

Delegate it – This item may not be your responsibility, but it ended up in your inbox. Delegate it to the appropriate individual by forwarding the email with a completion date. Then flag the item (With Outlook® Ctrl + Shift + G) with the completion date. When your reminder pops up, check to see that the assignment was completed. Remember, if you delegate anything you are still the one accountable.

Delay it – Sometimes you just cannot act on an item. You may not have the information necessary, other people are involved, or outside factors prevent action at this time. Just delay the item, but make sure that you flag it so that you do not forget it. If others are involved, forward the email FYI and the date you need to complete the task.

Delete it – My favorite task, when I arrive at my desk and open my inbox is using the “delete” key. It’s a great way to relieve stress. We all get more email than necessary, so “When in doubt, throw it out”. One of the major reasons for deleting items is the sense of control you achieve. Your inbox begins to look manageable and you increase your level of confidence. Once or twice a month, go to your “Delete” file and permanently remove all the deleted email. (With Outlook®, click Edit then Select All and then Delete)

“We write our own destiny...we become what we do.”

Madame Chaing Kai-Shek