



## WV Executive Branch Privacy Tip

### The Top Ten Ways to Reduce Time Spent on Email and Reclaim Your Productivity

*There's no arguing that email use is on the rise. Every day, people tell me how overwhelming it is to address their email backlog and how just opening up their inbox stresses them out. To help remedy this crisis, here are ten surefire ways to manage your outgoing email to reduce the number of emails coming back your way.*

- 1. Be very clear.** By making sure that the content of your emails is very understandable, you can avoid people emailing you with questions for clarification.
- 2. Make the subject line detailed.** By including detailed information in the subject lines, your recipients will be able to sort and respond to your message with the right priority. The detailed subject line will also help YOU sort and handle responses.
- 3. Use only one subject per email.** The reality is that most people skim. If you put two requests in one email, there is a strong likelihood that only one of the requests will be responded to.
- 4. Place the main point, assignment, or request in the first two lines of the email.** People have a tendency to build up to a conclusion when they write; this tendency makes it very difficult for readers to figure out what the main issue or request is. By putting your main point in the first two sentences, you can avoid misinterpretations and get readers focused on exactly what you want, right from the get-go.
- 5. Copy only the people who need to read the message.** For every extraneous person copied on an email, you have potential to receive a response. Now, you've just created more unnecessary email for the both of you!
- 6. Send less email.** While this may seem a no-brainer, email begets email. Sometimes it is better and easier to pick up the phone, or to just not respond.
- 7. Have a detailed signature line.** Make sure that all of your contact information is in the signature line of every email you send. This way, anyone who needs to contact you won't have to email you asking for your address, fax number, etc.
- 8. Keep emails short.** When you send short, easy-to-read messages, people will respond in the same manner.
- 9. Avoid controversial or argumentative emailing.** When you engage in an emotional discussion via email, the emails will fly. Emotional issues should never be handled by email; a phone call or person to person handling of the situation is best, both for the sake of your inbox, and the health of the office dynamic.
- 10. Purge! Purge! Purge!** People don't realize that too many megabytes can cripple, slow, or even crash their hard drives. Systematic deletions of out-of-date items and purging your sent mail can help you stay ahead of the curve and protect your computer.

*Email is here to stay; the sooner you develop productive habits regarding its use, the more time you will have for what is really important in your life.*

Marsha Egan, CPCU, PCC, is CEO of the Egan Group, Inc., Reading PA. An ICF Certified Professional Coach, she is a leading authority on email productivity. She works with companies who want to recover lost time and money due to wasteful email practices. More helpful hints can be found at her website, <http://EganEmailSolutions.com> and her blog, <http://inboxdetox.blogspot.com>

**Note:** Your agency/bureau/department/division may have specific requirements – always check your policies and procedures. If you have questions, contact your Privacy Officer.