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**Small Business
Technology Report
via e-mail**

Business Email Culture: Manage it or Watch Your Profits Slide Away



I'm sure most of you are flooded by email. Some of you have nice and tidy email inboxes but I suspect many of you have email boxes that look worse than a child's in-box.

I asked Marsha Egan, CEO of the Egan Group, Inc. and a leading authority on email productivity to write a guest column about email productivity. I'm sure it's something we can all benefit from.

She works with forward thinking organizations who want a profit-rich email culture. Her recently released ebooks include:

Help! I've Fallen into My Inbox and Can't Climb Out!
Five Email Self management Strategies that Will Add Hours to Your Week and
Reclaim Your Workplace Email Productivity: Add BIG BUCKS to Your Bottom Line can be found at <http://eganemailsolutions.com>.

Every time you let your email interrupt your productive work, it takes you an average of 4 minutes to get back on track. If in one day you let 15 emails derail you, you've just lost an hour of billable, productive time. Multiply that by every employee every day and you can see how office-wide unproductive email use can be an enormous drain on your profits.

Have you ever stopped to examine how do your employees use their email? How do they manage it, send it, and save it? The habits they adopt, both good and bad, can be contagious. Since email touches all of us several times a day, an office email culture evolves quickly.

Here is an example. A boss calls a meeting with 3 of his department managers. He sends an urgent email, needing a response within 15 minutes. One manager, who is working on an important project, does not have his email on, misses the request, and angers his boss.

This manager has just now learned that he cannot turn off his email, ever. But it doesn't stop there; it rolls down the corporate ladder. All three managers now have "permission" to use email as an URGENT delivery system. They use it in their departments, and very quickly, the entire organization is infected. No one can turn off his or her email for fear of missing something vital. Employees become slaves to the "brinning" and stop productive work anytime an email comes in.

This is just one example of email mis-use that plagues businesses. Think of the practices of copying everyone under the sun, just so you don't miss someone. Or how about using email as a chat room with multiple recipients to resolve dilemmas? Or the slippery slope of

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using email to critique someone's performance? One person does it, others do it. Culture is changed.

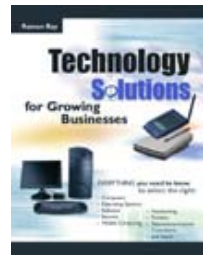
There are, however, certain practices you can instill into your employees to create a positive email culture. It requires strong leadership and change management efforts, but by following specific methods, you and your employees will be able to reclaim more time, and improve your bottom line. Here are a few tips on how you can improve your office's email culture, for more information please visit eganemailsolutions.com:

1. NEVER use email as an urgent delivery system. If the matter is urgent, pick up the phone or walk down the hall.
2. Have everyone turn off "Automatic Send/Receive" and set "Receive intervals" to a minimum of 90 minutes. If someone is expecting an email, he or she can always hit receive manually.
3. Move everything OUT OF your inbox. Your employees can manage their work better by putting emails in appropriate folders for easy reference later.
4. Make Subject Lines be VERY specific. By including details in subject lines, you will help others sort and prioritize their work.
5. Copy only the people who REALLY need to receive the email. Each superfluous "cc" will have to open and read the email, adding unnecessary tasks to their already full days.

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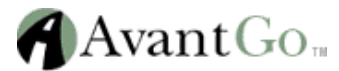
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