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Organizing Your Email

By Kathy Burns

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Keeping your email organized is imperative, especially in corporate or small business settings. When you use email for business purposes, you are essentially handling customer files. Because of the importance of this for even the smallest of businesses, those files should stay as organized as possible. You wouldn't just lump all of your paper customer files into a corner would you? Most of us wouldn't, so here are some ways to keep the email files (correspondence) organized as well.

If your business email inbox is currently cluttered with hundreds of old items, set aside some time to clear it out. This first clearance may take several hours, so you may want to delegate some weekend or evening time to tackle it.

Filing Methods

Before starting the actual filing of the items, you'll need to brainstorm your organizational structure. If you do not have a solid contact management software program, I strongly suggest investing in one. My preference is GoldMine, and I'll explain why further on in this section. For now, you simply need to decide how you work, and what filing system will work best for you personally. If you need help coming up with filing and organizational ideas, here are a few popular ones:

1. Customer Name Folders - Create email folders that are named the same as your customers. All email to or from a particular customer will be filed to that customer's individual email folder.
2. Project Name Folders - If you work primarily with projects,

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you can create email folders that match past, existing or future project names. From there, you can file all email related to the project, regardless of who it is to or from, into the corresponding project folder.

3. Month and Year Folders - Create email folders that are named for each month and year. Then file all email sent or received in that month/year into the matching folder.

4. Print File Cabinet Mirror - Create email folders named to match your Print File Cabinet system. Then file email into the email folders in the same way that you file print papers into your hard copy system.

Once you have decided how you want to organize your email, set up the folders and then go through each and every item in your inbox. This is the part that may take hours so make sure you have set aside enough time to fully complete the job.

While you're sorting your messages, you may find several items that have not yet been addressed but need to be. Try to address these before filing them, or make a note on your calendar or to-do list. Alternatively, if your email system has the capability, you can mark them for completion later. Be aware however: If you file the messages away you are not likely to address them later unless you have something scheduled that reminds you to. So, if you can, it is better to address them now and get them out of the way.

If your email program has the ability to link messages to contacts, I strongly suggest using this feature. This is the primary reason I use the GoldMine software. With GoldMine, I can keep a running history for each and every person I come into contact with. All email messages sent or received can be filed into the history right along with the appointments, phone calls, faxes, project notes and any other correspondence I have accumulated.

By utilizing contact management software that files email according to the person whom the email is from or to, you do not have to continuously search through various email folders when trying to find a specific item.

Ongoing Habits

Now, once you have spent the initial time needed to organize your inbox, it is fairly easy to keep it organized from that point forward. It may take a bit of effort to get into the habit in the first week or two, but usually the joy of having it all cleaned out

helps to motivate you into keeping it cleaned.

Ready for the rest? Get the full booklet — Don't Put Into Email Today What You Do Not Want to See on Headline News Tomorrow — right now for just \$6.95! Visit Kathy's website and get it now!http://electronicperceptions.com/ebooks/effective_email.shtml

Organizing A Garage Sale

By Helen Walters

Before you start organizing a garage sale, find out if you are allowed to hold one in your area. Many municipalities frown on these sales and you may have to pay a fee or only be allowed to set up in a certain area of town.

So before you start organizing a garage sale and laying out items, you had best check with your city or town government as well as your management company, should you happen to live in a managed development. If they approve of you having a sale of used items, then plow ahead. However, your town or community may require you to obtain a permit.

If you need to get a permit from the local government, or permission from your community, then it is question and answer time. Hopefully, you can call or email someone with questions. If you cannot, you will have to slog your way through the legalese on the forms and information sheets. However you do it, you must find answers to the following questions before you start organizing a garage sale:

1. How much does it cost? 2. How long will it take to get a permit? 3. For how many days is the permit good? 4. What are the rules for rain dates? 5. Are there any restrictions on how long you can remain open? 6. What are the restrictions on the size and number of signs? 7. Can you post flyers? 8. If so, where can you post flyers? Where can you not post flyers?

Once you know you have the approval, you can comfortably start pulling things out of storage and begin organizing a garage sale. These may seem like trivial things to take care of, but taking half an hour to make sure that you are OK sure beats having a by-law officer roll up to your garage sale and issue a \$200 fine for holding a garage sale without a permit.

provides excellent resources on how to hold a profitable garage

sale with the least amount of work and hassle. Great selection of tips and advice will guide you to a very profitable and enjoyable garage sale experience.



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