**MANAGING YOUR EMAIL**

**Excerpts from, E-mail: A Write It Well Guide, by Janis Fisher Chan**

**A study commissioned by Hewlett-Packard found that excessive day-to-day use of technology...can be more distracting and harmful to the IQ than smoking marijuana...**

 **Benjamin Pimentel, Email Addles the Mind**

 **San Francisco Chronicle, 5/4/2005**

**TIPS FOR CONTROLLING YOUR HABIT: REDUCING EMAIL INTERRUPTIONS**

 **Turn off your computers Youve Got Mail notification.**

 **Unless expecting something important, check your Email only at certain times.**

 **Dont check Email while you’re talking on the phone or in a meeting, it’s rude and distracting. Focus your attention to the task at hand.**

 **If needed, remove yourself from temptation by moving your work to a conference room for a while and away from your de-vices.**

**REDUCE THE AMOUNT OF EMAIL YOU RECEIVE**

 **Unsubscribe to companies who send you advertisements via Email. Ask to be taken off distribution lists for information you dont need. (Do this a few days before going on vacation, as itll cut down, the volume of Email youll need to sift through upon your return).**

 **Use Rules to automatically move unwanted/solicited emails to your Junk folder. Scan the folder occasionally to ensure nothing of importance was moved here then delete the contents.**

 **Use the phone for discussions rather than shooting Emails back and forth.**

**RESPONDING TO MESSAGES**

 **Decide whether you need to respond or is information being passed along?**

 **When several people have sent messages on the same topic, read them all before responding. When ready, craft a response that provides all information requested/needed.**

 **Be careful when forwarding information you think is interesting, as it just may create clutter in someone elses inbox.**

 **Postpone responding to Emails that have elicited anger or upset. Theres no unsend button.**

**KEEPING YOUR INBOX CLEAN**

 **Your inbox should be for active messages and only active messages. Act decisively when looking at new messages to avoid clutter.**

 **Use the Four-Ds:**

**1. Delete it, if you dont need it**

**2. Do it, especially if it takes 2 minutes or less to respond and complete, then use #1**

**3. Delegate it, sending it to someone else to handle, possibly creating a task to follow-up with later.**

**4. Defer it, if it’s not crucial and can wait until later, adding it to your calendar if you use this feature.**

 **Set up a systematic approach when going through your inbox. Scan the list and practice the Four-Ds with those that stand out. Make a second pass through the remaining messages to effectively clear them from your inbox. (See Responding to Messages, above).**

**SCHEDULE YOUR EMAIL TASKS**

 **This has to work for you, depending on how important Email is to your job. Develop a schedule to check Email, maintain your folders and stick to it. The main idea is not to get distracted or lost in the task, taking you away from other important things. A suggestion is to check first thing in the morning while having coffee, right before lunch when youre hungry, or maybe near the end of the day, to set limits. Set aside a little time to review folders at the end of the week or every other week.**

 **If youre waiting for something important, periodically scan quickly for the item youre looking for, take action on the item when it arrives, then jump out before getting seduced into looking at other items.**

 **If youre not planning on responding immediately to an Email, its nice to send a brief reply to the sender, letting them know when you will respond.**

**CREATE AN ELECTRONIC FILING SYSTEM**

**Emails are records. They are useful to you only if you can find them. Setting up a filing system that works for you is imperative.**

 **Set up folders that reflect the work you do.**

 **Set up new folders as the need arises.**

 **Redesign your filing system when it no longer suits your needs or you change positions and periodically review your folders and get rid of what is no longer needed.**

 **Review your Junk Mail Folder periodically as important messages can get routed there.**

 **Make sure to take out the trash from time to time from your deleted folder as it can slow down your system.**