



Hate your inbox? Try these...

By Andy Bounds

One of the most common grumbles I hear:

“I hate my inbox”

When I dig into this a bit, I find that people – in effect – think this:

“Well, there are only two problems – finding the time to craft all my brilliant emails; and being forced to read everyone else’s rubbish ones”

Familiar?

If so, you might think there’s nothing you can do. But, fortunately, there’s ‘more than nothing’ you can do. Here are a few:

- When you get an email that looks like it’s going to be complicated to reply to, visit/telephone the person who sent it, and ask what they want you to do
- Empty your inbox as often as you can – put things in folders... or the bin
- Want to get good emails? Then, send good emails:
 - Review your sent items – when you re-read your emails, ask yourself whether others will find them useful? If not, how could you improve them?
 - Ask your colleagues for feedback on how good your emails are
- Unless it’s appropriate, don’t “reply all” – that just clutters everyone’s inbox (and often leads to them hitting “reply all” and cluttering yours)

- When you receive a lengthy email, reply/call with “Thanks for this. I’m short of time today. Very quickly, what is it you would like me to do with it?”

- If you need an email to act as evidence/audit trail, have a chat with the person first, get verbal agreement and then send an ‘audit trail email’ confirming your agreement (*much* quicker than seeking agreement in an Email Chat)

- When you get a long email chain, delete all but the most recent one – there’s lots of repetition

- When you’re struggling to identify how best to phrase an email, pick up the phone

- When someone sends an email that you can reply better to verbally than in writing, pick up the phone

- It’s probably worth you picking up the phone more often than you do

- Just pick up the phone

Emails are weird things. They should help – they’re fast, convenient and provide an audit trail. And when used correctly, they are helpful. But when they aren’t, well... they aren’t.

Action point

Since there’s ‘more than nothing’ you can do to improve your inbox, then do ‘more than nothing’! Identify which of the above points will have the biggest impact, and do it.

And if you’ve found this tip useful and want lots more, check out my helpful videos [HERE](#)

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About the Author

Andy Bounds is an expert at helping companies communicate and sell better. Author of two best-selling books and winner of the title Britain’s Sales Trainer of the Year, Andy has shared his expertise with some of the world’s largest companies, helping every one of them have more success. Marketing legend Drayton Bird said Andy had taught him ‘... more about effective communicating than a lady who’d taught two American Presidents’.

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