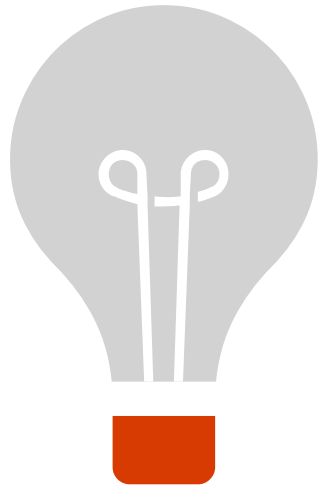Microsoft

MyAnalytics
Email

Office 365

Email is the most widely used collaboration tool with an estimated 110 billion messages sent daily. Despite its benefits, email has become overwhelming to manage. It steals our attention and leads to higher stress levels.

Better email practices can reduce stress, improve communication, boost productivity and support our ability to focus.

Healthy email

Write emails the way you want to read them – keep them short, use simple language and avoid long blocks of text

Don't "bury your lead" – write the important message and/or question first in your email followed by any critical background

Don't overuse the "Cc" field – thoughtfully select recipients based on role and resist pressure to be over-inclusive

Make concrete suggestions – be specific about times, locations and deadlines to reduce unnecessary back-and-forth

Send fewer emails to receive fewer emails – strategically consider different mediums (the phone, a meeting or chat) for your message

Avoid reply-all – pause to think about your role in the thread and send targeted messages instead

Batch process emails – select two or three times per day to process emails instead of checking email constantly throughout the day and night

Acknowledge important emails – if you don't have time to respond, then send a short email instead with an expected response time

Set boundaries – refrain from email during specific periods of time, e.g. 7PM to 7AM, and manage response-time expectations

Mini behavioral science lesson
Email interruptions hurt performance and lead to stress

Studies show that people spend 28% of their week emailing and check messages on average 74 times a day. Constant email interruptions not only impair performance, but they also lead to higher levels of stress.

A study found that when email is removed, people multitask less and experience less stress. People who read email were in a steady "high alert" state. Those removed from email experienced more natural heart rates and effectively communicated with others using alternative methods.

End the Tyranny of 24/7 Email >

Jettisoning Work Email Reduces Stress >

Remove barriers
Stop treating all emails as urgent

Common objection: I must respond to emails immediately because that is what my teammates expect.

Recommended solution: Email was originally used for asynchronous communication, but we are now expected to respond to emails right away despite research showing that only 1 in 3 emails is "essential" for work.

Instead of checking your inbox constantly, batch process emails 2 to 3 times a day and put your phone out of reach when you are home. Ask your teammates to find or call you when something is truly urgent.

Only One in Three Emails Received is "Essential" for Work >

Protecting Company Culture Means Having Rules for Email >

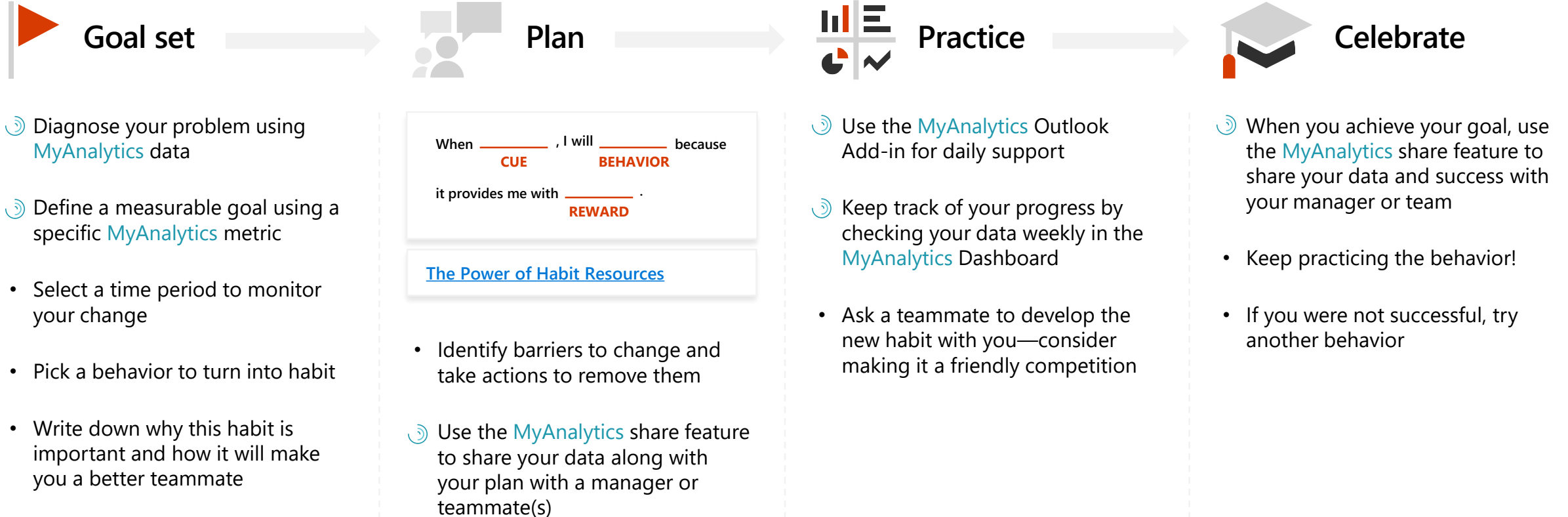# How do I turn behaviors into habits?

How to make it a habit

"Typically, doing just four to five things differently can enable people to claw back 18% to 24% of their collaborative time."[1]

Rob Cross, Professor of Global Leadership, Babson College

[1]**Reclaiming Your Day Research**

Goal set

- Diagnose your problem using MyAnalytics data
- Define a measurable goal using a specific MyAnalytics metric
- Select a time period to monitor your change
- Pick a behavior to turn into habit
- Write down why this habit is important and how it will make you a better teammate

Plan

When _____ , I will _____ because
CUE   **BEHAVIOR**

it provides me with _____ .
REWARD

The Power of Habit Resources

- Identify barriers to change and take actions to remove them
- Use the MyAnalytics share feature to share your data along with your plan with a manager or teammate(s)

Practice

- Use the MyAnalytics Outlook Add-in for daily support
- Keep track of your progress by checking your data weekly in the MyAnalytics Dashboard
- Ask a teammate to develop the new habit with you—consider making it a friendly competition

Celebrate

- When you achieve your goal, use the MyAnalytics share feature to share your data and success with your manager or team
- Keep practicing the behavior!
- If you were not successful, try another behavior

Here are some examples

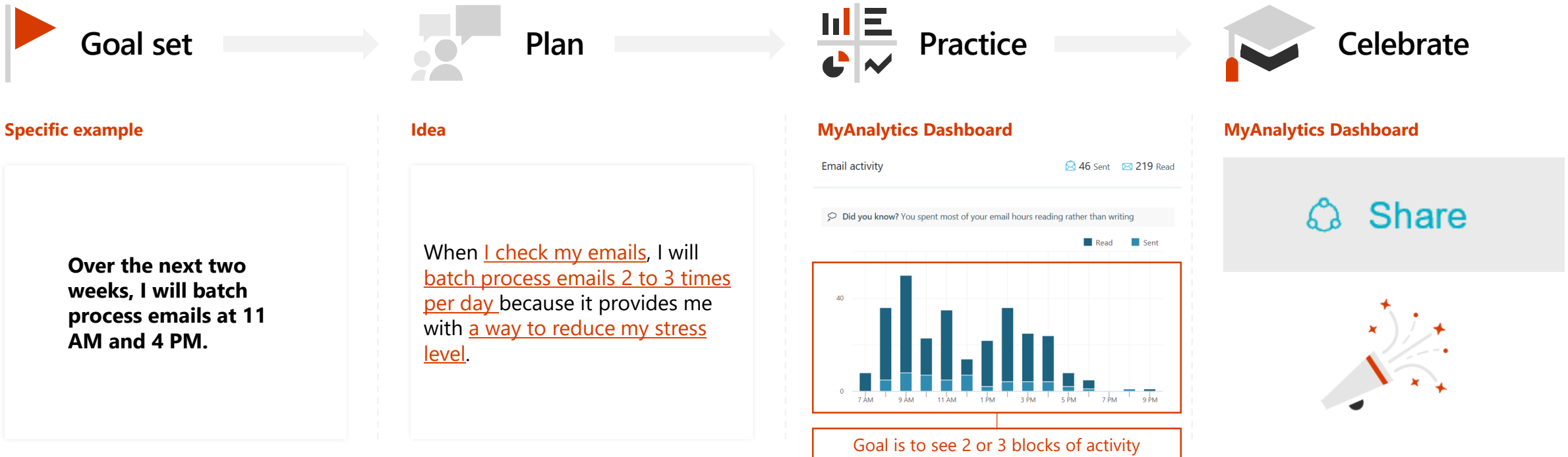# Habit playbook

Batch process emails 2 to 3 times per day

Bonus read

Brain, Interrupted

Processing emails constantly throughout the day subjects us to lower productivity and increased stress. It takes us longer than we think to fully return to a task after an interruption. Research shows that it takes 23 minutes to get back on task after an interruption and 16 minutes when the interruption is specifically email.

Source: **Worker Interrupted: The Cost of Task Switching**

Goal set	Plan	Practice	Celebrate

Specific example

Over the next two weeks, I will batch process emails at 11 AM and 4 PM.

Idea

When I check my emails, I will batch process emails 2 to 3 times per day because it provides me with a way to reduce my stress level.

MyAnalytics Dashboard

Email activity   46 Sent   219 Read

💬 **Did you know?** You spent most of your email hours reading rather than writing

■ Read   ■ Sent

40

0
7 AM 9 AM 11 AM 1 PM 3 PM 5 PM 7 PM 9 PM

Goal is to see 2 or 3 blocks of activity

MyAnalytics Dashboard

Share

Habit playbook

Wait to send late-night emails until the AM

A correlation has been found between the amount of time managers send email and organize meetings after-hours and the amount of time their direct reports do the same. In one Fortune 100 technology company, data shows that every hour that people managers spend after-hours translates to 20 minutes of additional direct report time spent after-hours.

Source: **If You Multitask During Meetings Your Team Will Too**

Goal set → Plan → Practice → Celebrate

Specific example

Over the next 2 weeks, reduce the number of emails sent outside of business hours by 50%.

Idea

When I choose to work after hours, I will wait to sent late-night emails until the AM because it provides me with the satisfaction that I am helping my teammates unplug.

MyAnalytics Dashboard

Email activity   ✉ 46 Sent   ✉ 219 Read

💬 **Did you know?** You spent most of your email hours reading rather than writing

■ Read   ■ Sent

40

0

7 AM   9 AM   11 AM   1 PM   3 PM   5 PM   7 PM   9 PM
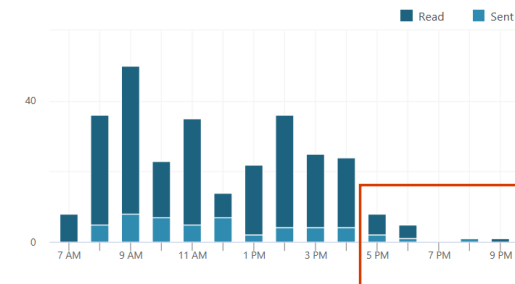
MyAnalytics Dashboard

Share

Habit playbook
Use another form of communication

Research has shown that 60% of communication is understood through body language, 33% through tone of voice and 7% through the actual words. When a person receives too little information in an email, they compose their own story, often a negative one. Matching message content with the appropriate communication form, e.g. phone for a sensitive topic, reduces email traffic with the added benefit of less miscommunication.

Source: One Second Ahead, by Rasmus Houggard

Goal set ➡ **Plan** ➡ **Practice** ➡ **Celebrate**

Specific example

Over the next 2 weeks, reduce the number of emails I send by 20%.

Idea

When I determine email isn't the best way to communicate, I will use another form of communication because it provides me with a way to reduce miscommunication.

MyAnalytics Dashboard

Email activity   ✉ 46 Sent   ✉ 219 Read

💬 **Did you know?** You spent most of your email hours reading rather than writing

■ Read   ■ Sent

40

0
7 AM   9 AM   11 AM   1 PM   3 PM   5 PM   7 PM   9 PM

MyAnalytics Dashboard

Share

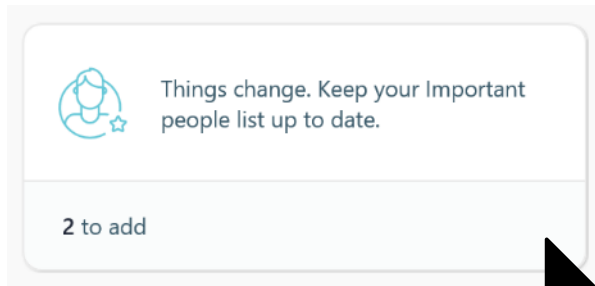# MyAnalytics features to support change

MyAnalytics feature
Unread mails & important people
Outlook Add-in

Use **unread emails** and **important people** to more efficiently manage a full inbox
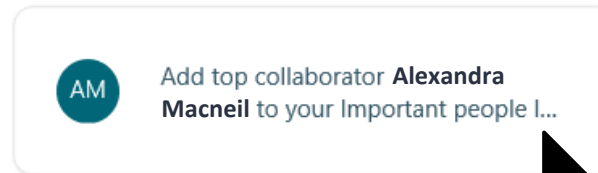
| 1	Select the Keep your **Important people** list up to date card

*The Outlook Add-in suggests important people based on your collaboration from previous weeks. To add people you don't see here, go to **My Network** in your MyAnalytics Dashboard. From there, you can search for people, view your entire list, and remove people from your list.*

2	Choose people to add

| 3	Stay on top of your relationships by selecting the **unread mails** card
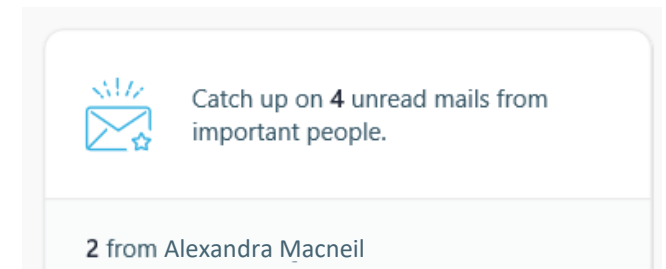
MyAnalytics feature
See if people are reading mail

Outlook Add-in

Use see if people are reading mail to monitor the effectiveness of the emails you are sending

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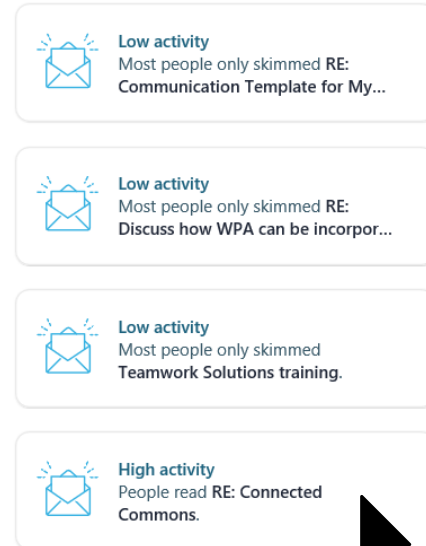**1** **Select the see if people are reading mail card**

Effective emails
See if people are reading the emails you send.

1 with high activity

3 with low activity
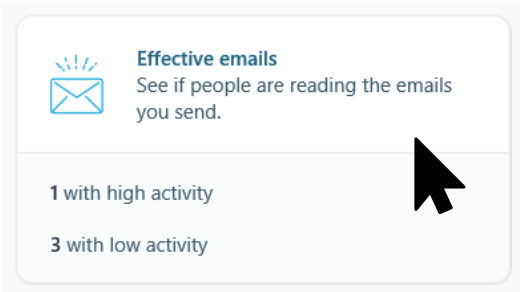
Note: MyAnalytics generates data only for emails sent to 5 or more individuals to preserve the anonymity of recipients.

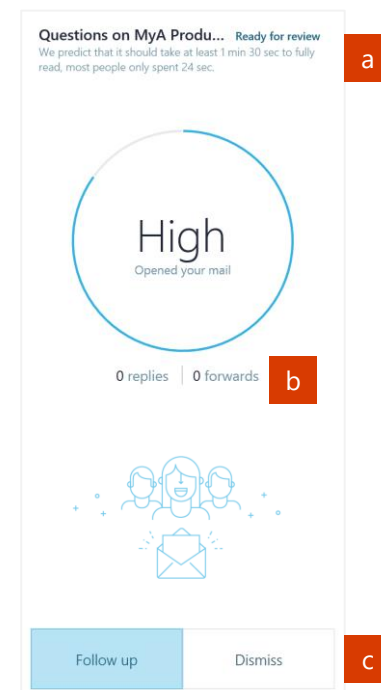**2** **Click on an email for a summary**

Read activity on emails you've sent

Low activity
Most people only skimmed RE: Communication Template for My...

Low activity
Most people only skimmed RE: Discuss how WPA can be incorpor...

Low activity
Most people only skimmed Teamwork Solutions training.

High activity
People read RE: Connected Commons.

---

3 **Develop an action plan to improve the effectiveness of your email**

Questions on MyA Produ... **Ready for review**
We predict that it should take at least 1 min 30 sec to fully read, most people only spent 24 sec.

a

High
Opened your mail

0 replies   0 forwards   **b**

Follow up   Dismiss   **c**

a If recipients spend a shorter amount of time reading your email than the estimated time to read, then it is likely your email was too long - try writing a shorter one.

b If few people have opened your email or replied, then you may need to resend or try a different form of communication. If there have been many forwards, then you may not have properly selected recipients.
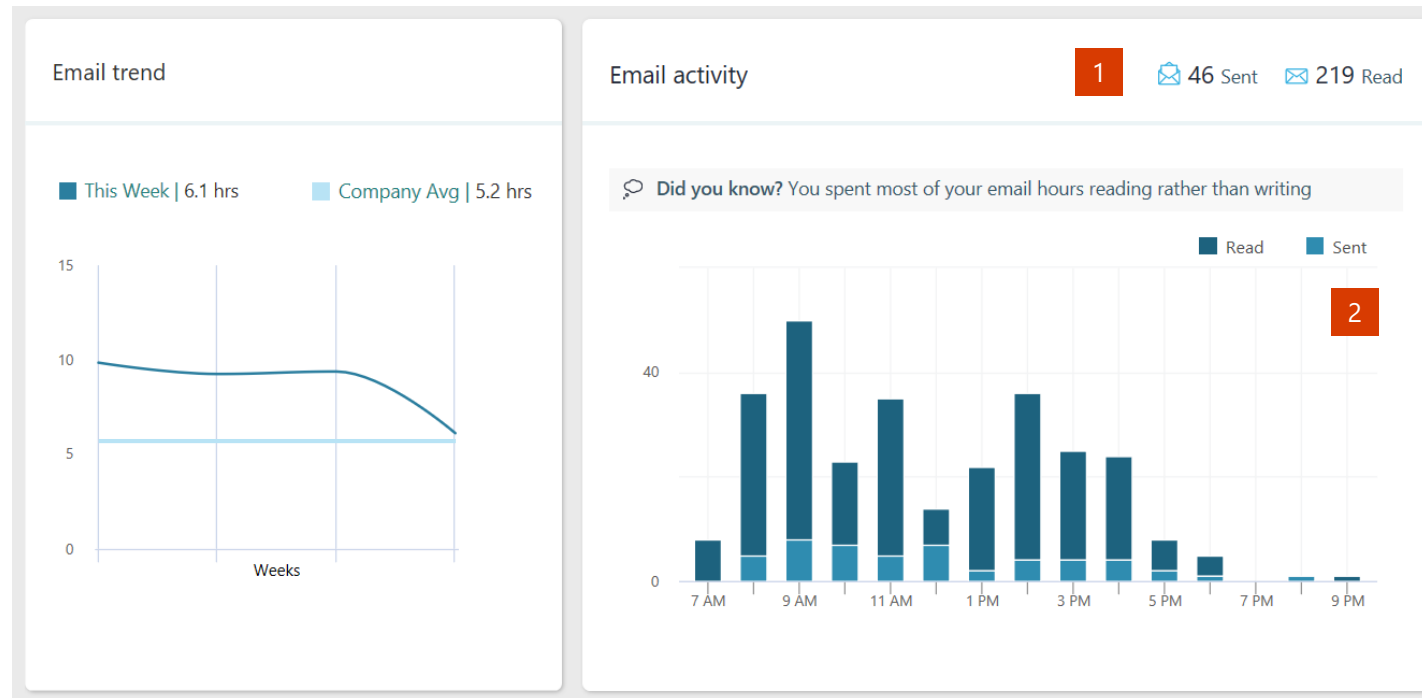
c If you conclude that your email was ineffective and email is still the best method for the message, then hit follow up to reach out to the group again with a more carefully designed email.

MyAnalytics feature
My email
Dashboard

Use your My email data to see number of emails and patterns in your weekly activity

1

Number of emails read typically exceeds sent, however, a large imbalance could help you become more aware of problems, such as sending too many emails or reading more emails than necessary to do your job.

2

Shows the total emails you read and sent during the week by time of day. It can be used to help you monitor a goal to avoid checking your inbox constantly throughout the day.
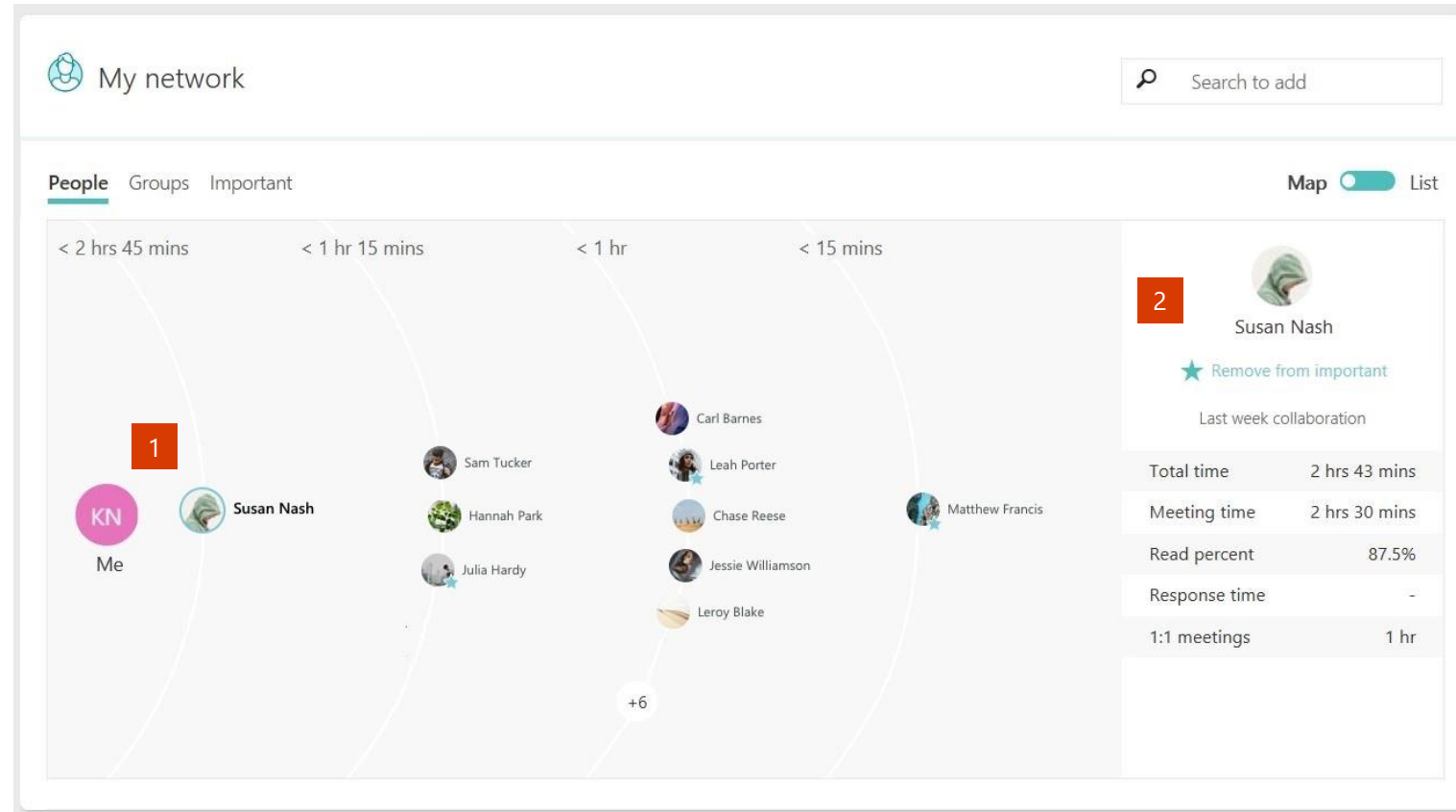
MyAnalytics feature
My network

Use My network to determine how responsive you are to emails from important people

Dashboard

1

Click on an important person in your map to view details about your weekly collaboration with that person in the right pane.

2

Focus on read percent and response time.

If your read percent is low, you are likely neglecting this relationship and important responsibilities.

If your response time is low, you are likely acting as a bottleneck for this person. If high, you may be too reactive to emails from this person and may need to readjust expectations.

Taking it to
the next level

Email-writing tips

How to write effective emails based on data

| File | Message | Insert | Options | Format Text | Review | Help | 💡 Tell me |

From ▼

To... — Include essential recipients

Cc... — Include people who only need to be informed and do not need to reply

Bcc... — Use transparently to drop people from thread when no longer needed

Subject — Make short and descriptive and consider a header

"Bottom line up front": Start your email key message(s) or question(s) at the very top of the email. Provide a brief summary of critical context to avoid a Q&A with recipients over email. Bold the names or use the "@" feature to specifically call out anyone who has an action or to whom you are directing a question. Use color, bold or underline to emphasize key information.

Additional background: This information is optional and provides more details on the context of the email. For unavoidably long emails, break the content up into short paragraphs and use bullets or numbered lists when possible.

Call to Action: Reinforce the purpose of your message by ending with a clear call to action, e.g. "please respond to my questions by the end of the week". This will help your recipients action your message appropriately.

Tip: *Suggested subject headers include [INFORM], [QUESTION], [ACTION], [PRE-READ], [SIGN], [REQUEST] and [DECISION].*

Data-driven Tips For Getting More Responses

- Open with "Hey", "Hello" or "Hi".

- Use shorter sentences with simpler words – a 3rd grade reading level works best

- Include 1-3 questions in your email, ideally time bounded

- Make sure you include a subject line and aim for 3-4 words

- Improve social cues by using a slightly positive or slightly negative tone

- Take a stand – opinionated messages see higher response rates

- Write enough, but not too much – try to keep messages between 50-125 words

- Schedule your email for an appropriate time* – 6 to 7 AM is best

- Close with "thanks in advance", "thanks" and "thank you"

- Write error-free subject lines

See the data:
7 Tips for Getting More Responses to Your Emails
This Email Closing Gets the Most Replies
How to Start an Email
Be Careful Sending Emails on Mondays

Source: Boomerang
*For instructions on how to schedule a delivery, click here: Schedule sending an email