

## Instant solutions for emails<sup>1</sup>

Emails are without question an effective and handy communication tool. If you are not careful, however, they can just as easily become a *nuisance*. Here are some tips and quick solutions to manage your emails more successfully.



### Dos and don'ts

#### Don't start your workday with emails

The morning routine for a lot of people is to *fetch* a cup of coffee, switch on their computers and check their emails. So it might sound incredibly *daring* to say this, but do not start your workday like this. Rather, you should take an hour or two in the morning to work on your most important tasks for this day.

#### Don't check your emails constantly

Most people I meet receive their emails automatically and their email clients are open the whole day. In some jobs this is necessary and makes sense, for instance, if your main task is responding to issues that occur during the day. Most jobs, however, do not require a response period of less than two or three hours. Therefore, you should set specific times to check your emails, for instance:

- Two hours into your workday, after you have already worked on an important task.
- After lunch - the digestive low is not a good time to be super-productive anyway.
- Before you leave. Check your latest emails and prepare the to-do list for the next morning.

#### Respect response times

You do not want to respond within ten minutes and neither should you expect the person you have sent an email to to reply in such a short time.

#### Look at every email only once

...Or twice if you really need to. The best way to deal with emails is to handle them right away. Read an email and decide immediately what to do with it.

- If it is just FYI, either delete it or move it to a folder. (By the way, a complicated folder system helps nobody. Studies have shown, a simple structure is far more helpful.)
- If you need to work with the information or to respond, either do it right away or write it on your to-do list.
- Download attachments right away, even if you want to work with them later, and again, delete or move the email.
- If there is an instruction in the email that is too long to write on your to do-list, you may leave the email in your inbox - or move it to a special "to do"-folder.

(see next page)

<sup>1</sup> Article taken from *engine-magazine*, No.3, September 2017, pp.55-57

- Respond to emails right away, even if you do not have the information someone requires or if you need to complete a task at a later point. This is not only for your sake. The other party will also know what to expect then. Remember: right away does not mean the minute you receive an email but in one of your set email time slots.

### Use "to" and "cc" thoughtfully

One bad habit in many companies is to press the "reply all" button or cc everyone who could be the least interested in a subject. To avoid the masses of unnecessary emails in your inbox, you should start with maintaining a thoughtful email culture yourself.

Only write to addressees who really need to receive this email. It will make your life so much easier. You might also want to ask a person (rather in a face-to-face conversation) not to include you when the information is not relevant to you. This conversation, however, requires diplomacy.

### Use the subject line thoughtfully

Email organisation is so much easier when everyone uses the subject line to give an idea of the email's content. Also, when you press the "reply" button but change the subject, then change the subject line and delete the conversation from before.

### KISS - Keep it short and simple

Nobody reads emails carefully, so do not bother with putting in too much information.

### Have some style

Emails are business correspondence, even if they are less formal. That means you should write and proofread them thoroughly. Do not use CAPITAL letters as it looks as if you were shouting. Do not overuse exclamation marks! And certainly never use more than one. In general, professional correspondence does not need to be perfect, but it should be obvious to the addressee that you have put some effort in writing it. Even, or particularly, if it is a colleague you constantly work with. It shows professionalism and appreciation.

### Vocabulary

appreciation	Wertschätzung
bother, to	stören, sich aufhalten mit
cc, to	zur Kenntnis setzen
daring	gefragt
digestive low	"Futtermiese"
email client	Email Programm
fetch, to	holen
FYI (For your information)	Zur Info
nuisance	Störung, Belästigung
proofread, to	Korrektur lesen
for someone's sake	um jemandens Willen
thorough	gründlich

## Quick responses

All of the following email phrases can be introduced by a

<i>Dear Mr/Ms</i>		<i>Very best</i>
<i>Dear John/Jane</i>	<i>and end on a</i>	<i>or</i>
<i>Hello John/Jane,</i>		<i>Kind regards</i>
<i>Dear all</i>		

## Providing information

- *As promised, I'm sending you ... in the attachment.*
- *Attached you'll find ... as requested/agreed.*
- *I hope this is self-explanatory. If not, feel free to ask for more information.*
- *I just wanted to let you know that ....*

## Rearrangements

- *I have received your email and would like to suggest the following...*
- *Unfortunately, we will have to find a new solution for ...      Let me know when we can talk about this.*
- *It's not a problem to postpone our meeting. How about ...      ?*

## On receiving information

- *I've received your email, thanks.*
- *Thanks for the info.*
- *Thanks for taking care of this.*
- *I just wanted to confirm the appointment.*

## Wrong addressee

- *I'm afraid I'm not the right person for this issue. Please contact...*
- *This used to be my responsibility but now you will need to contact ...*
- *I have forwarded your email to ... - He / She will contact you soon.*

## Promising action

- *Thank you for this. I cannot take care of it right away, but I'll be in touch at the end of this month.*
- *I'll get back to you by...*
- *I'll take care of it. / I will sort it out. / I'll look into it.*
- *I just wanted to let you know I am / we are working on this and I / we expect it to be finished on ...*
- *I'm quite busy at this moment, but I'll be in touch next week.*

## Closing remarks

- *Thanks again for your corporation.*
- *Let me know if there is anything else I can help you with.*
- *If there are any questions, feel free to contact me.*

## Exercises:

Complete the handout and check your solutions with the qr-code.

Match the parts of an Email with their German counterparts.

- |               |                          |
|---------------|--------------------------|
| a. attachment | <u>e</u> Löschen         |
| b. drafts     | <u>h</u> Allen antworten |
| c. sent       | <u>g</u> Weiterleiten    |
| d. folder     | <u>i</u> Drucken         |
| e. delete     | <u>a</u> Anhang          |
| f. in-/outbox | <u>k</u> Betreff         |
| g. forward    | <u>b</u> Entwürfe        |
| h. subject    | <u>f</u> Postein/ausgang |
| i. print      | <u>c</u> Gesendet        |
| k. reply all  | <u>d</u> Ordner          |



Translate these short answers into English.

- a. Ich habe Ihre Email erhalten und möchte Ihnen ein Treffen nächste Woche vorschlagen. Wie sieht es bei Ihnen am Mittwochvormittag aus?

I have received your email and would suggest to meet next week.  
How about a wednesday morning?

- b. Vielen Dank für die Dokumente. Ich werde sie in den kommenden Wochen bearbeiten und melde mich dann wieder.

Thank you very much for the documents. I cannot take care of it  
right away, but I will get to it in the next weeks and will write back  
as soon as possible

- c. Ich bin leider nicht der richtige Ansprechpartner für dieses Thema. Bitte wenden Sie sich an Frau Schmidt.

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- d. Wie besprochen, anbei die aktuellen Zahlen.

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