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Three Steps To Zero Inbox

Posted By **Kerry Ann Rockquomore**, Saturday, February 22, 2014

Every time I say that I zero out my inbox on a daily basis, people look at me like I have two heads.

That's right, I take it to zero every day, Monday through Friday. And guess what? It's not that hard. It just requires shifting a few limiting beliefs and practices in response to your email.

Before I describe how to get to zero every day, let's talk about the limiting beliefs that kept me under a pile of email for many years:

"My Email In-Box Is My De-Facto To-Do List"

This took me a long time to figure out, but using my email inbox as a to-do list never worked for me. It's ineffective, inefficient, and whatever gets past the first page is forgotten (out of sight, out of mind).

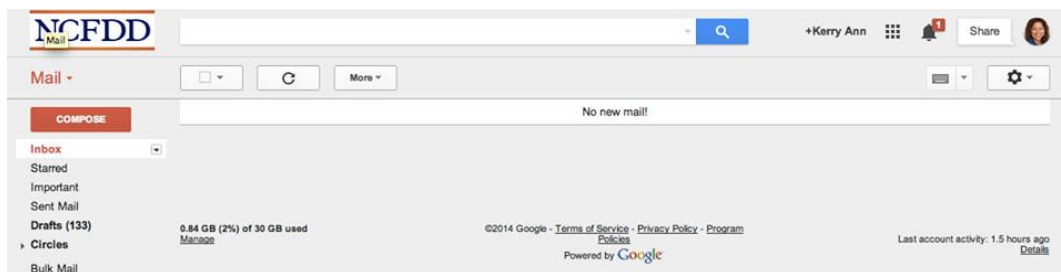
"I Can't Control What's Coming In"

Yes, you can. I limit what comes in by unsubscribing from list-servs, unplugging email from

any social media that may forward messages to it and whenever something comes in with an "unsubscribe" button at the bottom, I use it. And the single best secret weapon to reduce what comes in is **Unroll.me**. It provides a constant monitoring of subscription emails coming into your account (so you can quickly and easily unsubscribe) AND it compresses those you do want to receive into one daily email.

"I Have To Answer Every Email"

Not really. I have a few short rules on what I respond to (and don't respond to) that make deleting very easy. If I am cc'd, bcc'd or part of a group email: delete. If someone is asking a collective group of people for a favor (instead of taking the time to ask each person directly): delete. If I've never met you and our first point of contact is an email from you asking for something time consuming: delete. If I haven't seen or heard from you in over a decade and you want a letter of recommendation from me: delete. The bottom line is that there are many items that come through my email that I neither need to commit to, nor should get involved in.



Once I released myself from the limiting beliefs that kept me buried in email, I developed a very simple 3 step process that I follow most days:

STEP #1: Quick Triage

I do a quick triage several times a day in order to: 1) delete, 2) delegate, or 3) put into an ongoing task list. I'm a huge fan of ToDoist (www.ToDoist.com) because it's a great little task-management system that embeds itself into your gmail account and connects to your Google calendar. A quick triage simply means checking my inbox a few times per day and pushing one of four buttons:

- 1) Delete,
- 2) Forward (to whomever on my team can attend to it),
- 3) Todoist (so it goes to my to-do list software) or
- 4) Reply (only to things that are time sensitive).

STEP #2: Provide Alternative Spaces For Communication

Team NCFDD communicates as minimally as possible via email, even though our core team is spread across eight cities and our coaching staff is spread across 23 cities. Why? Because we have a separate space for ongoing communication during the day. We use a secret Facebook group for our core team and we have a separate one for our coaches to interact, problem-solve, and get questions answered. Both are far faster than email, build community, and keep everyone engaged throughout the work day.

STEP #3: The Sunday Meeting

There's no point in dumping a bunch of emails into a to-do list, unless you have a weekly commitment to systematically sort and schedule them. Even as an entrepreneur, I still use the **Sunday Meeting** as a way to plan my week. In terms of email, all those tasks that have built up over the week get evaluated and put into the time-space continuum (aka my calendar) during the Sunday Meeting.

That's it.

I've lowered the bar on when, who and how fast I need to respond to email and put a few mechanisms in place that get me to zero daily. It doesn't mean you'll hear from me within 24 hours, it just means everything that really matters and that can only be done by me will get addressed in due time.

I would love to hear your strategies about managing email so feel free to post below!

Warmly,
Kerry Ann

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Comments On This Post...

Andreana Prichard says...

0  

Posted Friday, January 23, 2015

Thanks to this inspiration, I've had a 0 inbox for three days and have a new Task Management app. I feel so much lighter and more organized already!

{ [Permalink to this Comment](#) }

Hannah Scherer says...

0  

Posted Thursday, May 28, 2015

I send my emails that require action to Evernote. I love that I can prioritize tasks and integrate email to-dos with other notes about the same topic.

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