

## **The Ten Temptations and Seven Myths of E-mail**

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### **The Ten Temptations of E-mail**

#### **#1. The Temptation to Send**

The tendency to send an e-mail message without really considering whether or not this will be of importance or significance to the recipient. These include the “I loved this, so will do” emails, chain letter e-mails, and various “for-your-information” messages.

#### **#2. The Temptation to Respond**

We sometimes feel as though we need to respond to each and every e-mail message we receive. But every e-mail does not require nor deserve a response.

#### **#3. The Temptation to Broadcast**

Distribution e-mail lists too often include people who do not need to know the information communicated in such broadcasted messages.

#### **#4 The Temptation to Treat People with Disrespect**

We practice civility in person and on the phone, but sometimes abandon it in our e-mail communications.

#### **#5. The Temptation to React**

We sometimes compose and send e-mails while angry with someone and then regret it 10 minutes after clicking the send button.

#### **#6. The Temptation to Hide Behind E-mail**

There are some messages (particularly bad news) that should be delivered in person, not via e-mail.

#### **#7. The Temptation Toward Mutiny**

A world using e-mail only can be very isolating. How should one feel when a colleague two cubicles away sends a message rather than come over and deliver it verbally? On-line communication may seem coldly efficient and its use deliberate and hurtful.

### **# 8. The Temptation to Become Addicted to E-mail**

It is easy to default to e-mail as your only means of communication, forgetting that sometimes an in-person meeting, a phone call, or a hand-written note may be more appropriate in certain situations.

### **#9. The Temptation to Send Attachments**

Just because you can attach five documents to your e-mail doesn't mean that you should. Consider the importance of the attachments to the recipient and their likely desire and time available to download and read these.

### **#10. The Temptation to Cry Uncle**

It is easy to blame oneself for the inability to keep on top of the e-mail pile. This is not necessary as e-mail volumes are unreasonable and there are ways of managing this.

## **The Seven Myths of E-mail**

### **Myth #1: E-mail Saves Time**

At 25 messages a day, e-mail is a great productivity enhancement tool. However, when you have to handle more than 50 messages daily, productivity gains are marginal, and are probably taking you away from other key tasks you need to perform to be effective in your job.

### **Myth #2: Using E-mail is Profitable**

The cost of time wasted on excess, low-value e-mail traffic can run into thousands of dollars annually per employee. More information on these costs is included in the Management Guide section of this tutorial.

### **Myth #3: E-mail Expands Communication Flow**

E-mail is a tremendous tool, but it is just a tool. It does not make the writer a better writer. And it is not always the best means of creating a shared understanding between two people.

### **Myth #4: E-mail Creates a Paperless Office**

We still print off a large percentage of our e-mails for reading and filing, just as we did with paper memos and records in the days before e-mail.

**Myth #5: All IT Professionals are E-mail Efficiency Experts**

IT professionals can help ensure that your organization's e-mail system is running as it should. They cannot, however, help ensure that it is being used as efficiently and effectively as it should....that is a management issue.

**Myth #6: Attachments Don't Require Management**

E-mail attachments take time to download and time for the recipient to read. Their number and size need to be carefully consider before sending these through.

**Myth #7: There is Nothing We Can Do About Managing E-mail**

Managing both our e-mail in-boxes and out-boxes is within our reach. There are definite steps we can take to better manage the way we process both in-coming and out-going messages to leverage the productive benefits of e-mail. We can manage e-mail before it manages

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