




# Productivity Report on Email



**Email** is the standard communication tool for business. Remember when you had to print something out, fold it up, stick it into an envelope, find a stamp, and actually mail it to someone? Email certainly cuts down on the amount of time it takes to send information, which saves us a lot of time. But, most of the emails that come to us promote “Other People’s Agenda” (OPA) -- and this can have us spending time on things that are not important to us at all.


A 2017 study showed that professionals are spending an average of 11.7 hours a week on email during office hours, and another 5.3 hours a week after hours. That’s over 3 hours a day!

Email also has a powerful interruption effect that’s compounded by task switching. Task switching is very hard work for the brain and slows things down considerably.



“Your success hinges on your willingness to RISK missing some information.”  
- Darren Hardy





“You will never change your life until you change something you do daily. The secret of success is found in your daily routine.”  
- John C. Maxwell

Here's a typical example: let's say you're hard at work writing a blog post. Your email inbox is open on your computer. A new message comes in, and a notification dings to alert you. You decide to check the message. Your brain has to dump all of the “blog post” information it was holding in short-term memory and load a new set of information (the “context”) required to understand and respond to the new email message. When you're done with the email, your brain has to dump that information and re-load the information needed to move forward with the blog post.

Studies show that you lose a whopping 40% of your time through this context switching. If you are “multitasking” all day long, you are losing an average of 3.2 hours a day through the loss of efficiency alone. Even if you're doing tasks that don't require a lot of thinking, you are still affected.

A study at HP showed IQ dropped by 10 points when people were distracted by email. That's twice the drop from smoking marijuana. Do you really want to be interacting with customers when your IQ has been impaired? Studies have also found that multitasking has a negative physical effect, prompting the release of stress hormones and adrenaline.



If you're serious about having an online business that's **SUSTAINABLE** and gives you the kind of **FREEDOM** you crave, then you have to know how to tame your technology so it works **FOR** you. And yes, that means email.

Left uncontrolled, the apps and software you use to run your business will end up stealing your time and robbing your focus ... leaving you with a full task list and no time for the important stuff — like relationships, your health, and taking action on the things that will create even more success for you.

However, when you reclaim the focus stolen by your technology, that scattered “squirrel” feeling goes away. You can actually focus on something until it's completed. Projects get done and you find you have the bandwidth to write that job description for the assistant you want to hire. Now you're really rolling. All because you've stopped being a slave to technology that steals your time and promotes other people's agendas.



# So What Can You Do?

Email is a tool — like a knife. It's not good or bad per se, it all depends on how you use it. A knife can be "good" if you use it to slice your bread, and "bad" if you accidentally cut your finger in the process. Let's see how you can make the best out of email, while avoiding the negative impact it can have on your productivity.

## 1 Stay Out of Your Inbox

Stop checking email all day long. In addition to the cost of task switching, you waste time reviewing the same emails over and over again. Using your inbox to decide what to do next creates an effect where your brain narrows its focus and looks at those emails as the only options for actions to take. We've all been there, where you have important work to do but you find yourself scrolling through your inbox again and again looking for what you need to do next. Instead, schedule times during the day to check email.

It's also a good idea to not check email first thing in the morning, to prevent your day from getting hijacked before you do the important stuff.

"You will never find time for anything.  
If you want time, you must make it."  
- Charles Bixton



# 2

## Protect Your Brain

Some experts believe that we have a limited number of decisions we can make in a day before the brain gets fatigued. A fatigued brain has difficulty focusing, and that costs you time. Every time you look at an email and decide whether to respond to it, delete it, or unsubscribe, you are making a decision. Unsubscribe from lists and automatically filter incoming messages to limit the decisions you need to make from your inbox.

What about those emails that you need to keep and see later? Don't waste time and decisions by keeping them in your inbox. Today it's easy to defer them. There are tools you can use to send email messages out of your inbox and have them come back at a later time of your choosing. There's a great Gmail add-in called Boomerang (\$4.95 a month) which adds additional features. If you use Outlook for email, then the Sanebox add-in is the best option (starting at \$7 a month). Boomerang is also available for Outlook but I ran into some issues so I prefer Sanebox for my Outlook account.

Here's an example of how I use Boomerang. Back in October, I added a tracking device to my car and emailed my insurance agent to ask if that qualified me for a discount. He replied that they had a program but it hadn't rolled out yet in my state. He estimated that it would happen in March. I "snoozed" the email until some time in March and put it out of my mind. When that date came around in March, Boomerang popped his response back to the top of my inbox for me to follow-up with him again.

Another great use for Boomerang is when I send an email asking someone to do something. I set the email to boomerang back to me if they don't reply by a specific date. This allows me to put things out of my mind knowing they're not going to be forgotten, because the technology does the remembering for me.

# 3

## Set a Timer

Your brain will enter a time warp when you're in the Email Zone. Protect yourself from getting lost reading sales emails and other unimportant emails by setting a timer every time you log on. You'll be surprised by how quickly that timer seems to go off!

## The Challenges of Implementation

I'm sure you've read about productivity strategies that sounded great ... but you didn't adopt them. That's because your subconscious mind is making 95% of the decisions ... and it's wired for survival. When you're stressed, your brain is like an overprotective momma bear, and it judges many completely safe things to be "dangerous."

For example:

Vividly imagine for a minute not checking email until tomorrow night. Scan your body and notice any uncomfortable feelings. Maybe you feel it in your stomach, maybe in your chest. That feeling means your subconscious mind is reading this as "danger" (loss of connection). So even though you want to reduce the time you spend on email, when you actually try to implement practical strategies, your subconscious mind works against you, because it wants to "protect" you ... from things like people being upset with you for not responding, or missing out on important information, or feeling left out ... basically, being disconnected.





# The end result?

## Those practical behavioral changes you wanted to make don't happen.

I became kind of obsessed with how to fix this. I knew there had to be a way to reign in the unconscious mind and uncouple its natural tendency to resist change out of fear. I researched this problem for years, took everything I learned, drilled down to the root causes, applied my corporate background in process improvement and, ultimately, created a process that quickly and consistently produces results. I call this process the **Neuro Focus Shift Method™** – a straightforward and effective way to harness the power of your subconscious mind so that it's working **FOR** you instead of against you.

The Neuro Focus Shift Method helps to identify the specific limiting **beliefs, emotions, and habits** that prevent you from making positive behavioral changes, and enables you to extinguish them and rewire your brain for success. If this is something that interests you keep an eye out for emails from me. Sometimes I host free calls where you get to experience this technique.



## **“In just one session, NJ miraculously ‘found’ more time for me!”**

*“I was at that point in my business where I was scrambling to get everything done for my clients and wishing there were far more than 24 hours in a day. I was getting to the end of each day exhausted and knowing I'd worked my butt off, yet still feeling like I hadn't accomplished much at all. The worst part was that I didn't have any time left in my day to focus on marketing and growing my business. I was between a rock and hard place with nowhere to turn. Then NJ came to my rescue. She helped me map out a strategy that enabled me to have specific focus periods with zero distractions for a total of 5.5 hours on the first day. This enabled me to kick some major butt and finish a website project for a client. Implementing that strategy has made a huge difference in the amount of client work I can push out each day AND have time to grow my biz.”*

Pam Langord, Ridgetop Virtual Solutions



My biggest regret in life is not spending more time with my son when he was little because I was overworking. Today I help digital entrepreneurs break through their resistance to change and tame their tech habits so they can take back control of their day, focus on what really matters and have more time to spend with the ones who matter most. I do this through my free trainings, online group programs, and personalized coaching sessions. Learn more at [www.NJShelsby.com](http://www.NJShelsby.com).