

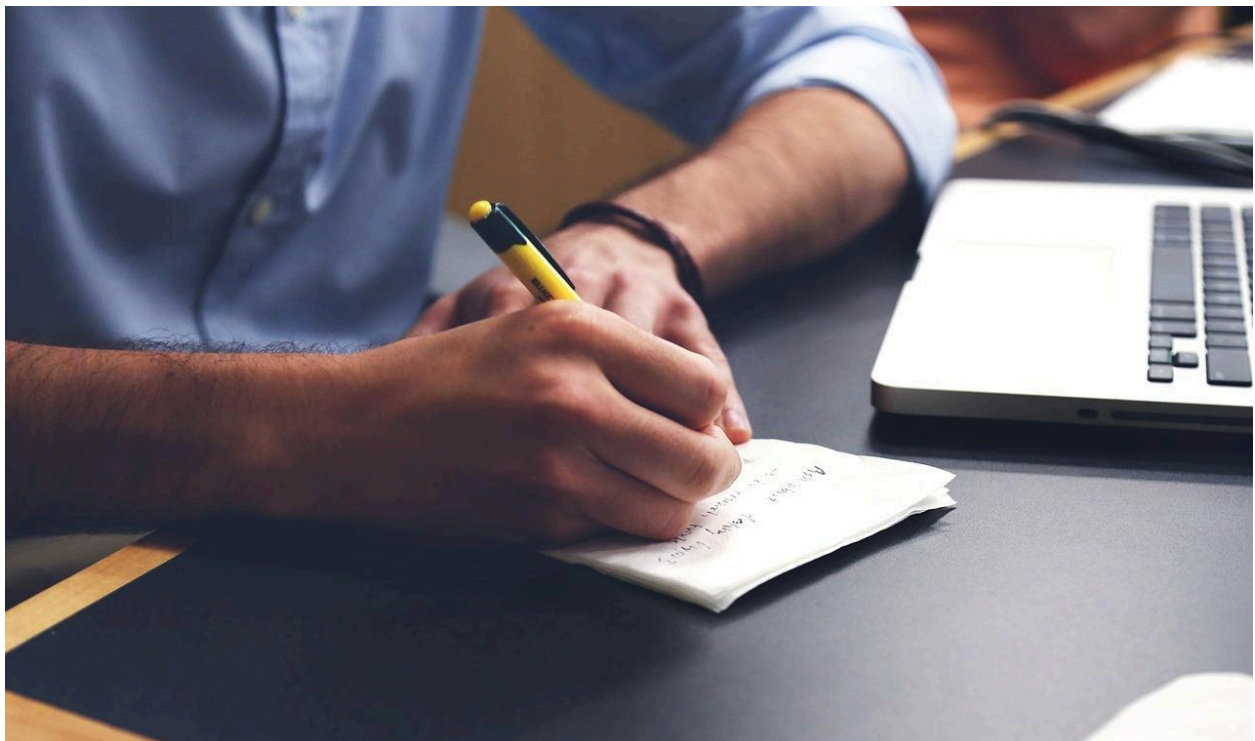
# 10 email management tips to declutter your inbox

Managing a five day work week can be quite a task in itself. Add to that coordination with colleagues, occasional interruptions and long meetings and ensuring you get work done can begin to feel a bit like flying a plane. There's constant coordination involved and noise from all quarters. It can become very easy to lose track of productivity when you're spending a good chunk of your day in meetings and replying to emails.

What you can do, however, is make sure your inbox stays clean so you can focus on what's really important for your work day. With emails being the lifeline at white collar workplaces, it's essential to keep your inbox the same way you'd keep your desk - clean.

If you find that your inbox is distracting you from what's really important at work, here are some tips to keep your email squeaky clean, and your productivity soaring.

## **1. Deal with all your email only after you've made a work plan for your day**



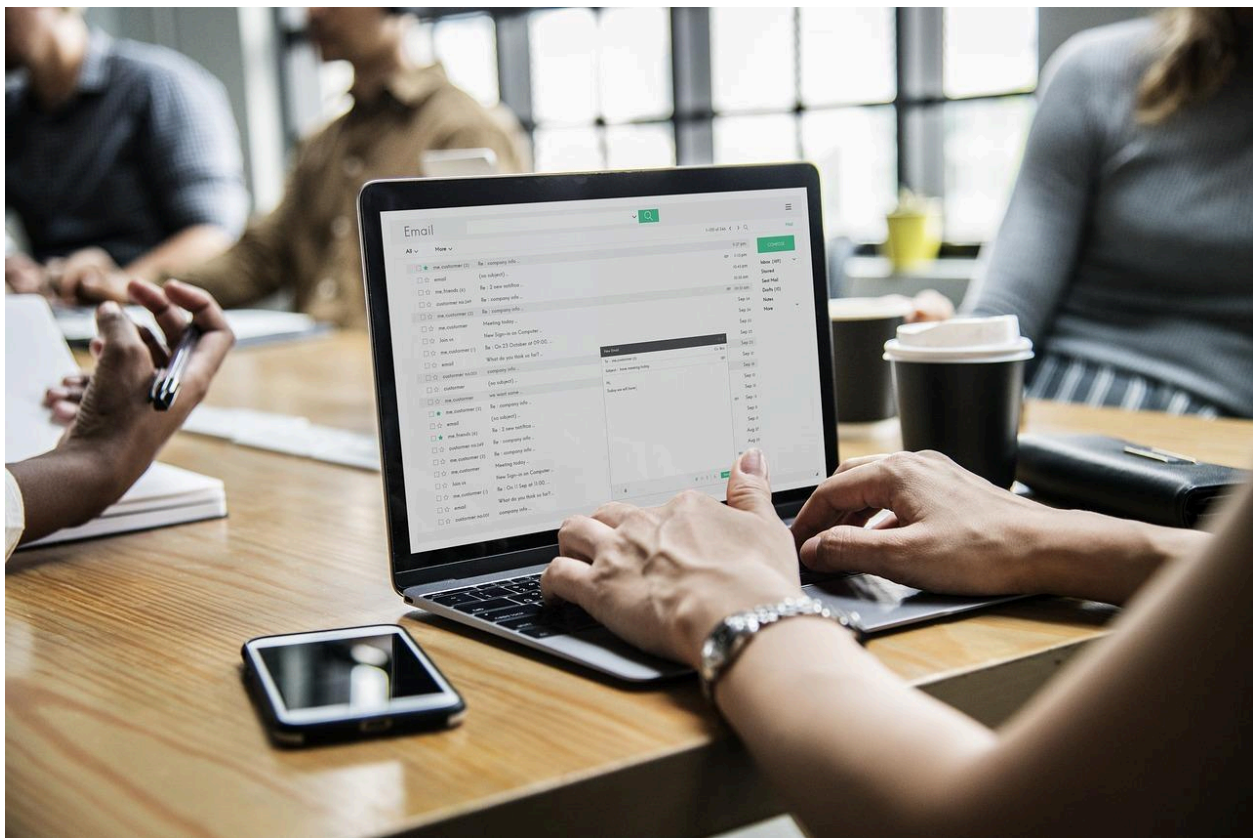
It's not uncommon for professionals to boot up their computers and immediately start looking through their emails. If you've done this often enough, then you also know that it's a time sink. First you start looking at mails marked urgent, and

before you know it you're reading a newsletter about improving productivity that takes half an hour to get through. Start with deciding what work you want to get done on a given day so you can deal with relevant emails first and archive the unimportant ones for later.

## **2. Siphon off all your newsletters to a separate folder**

Avoid wasting precious minutes looking for important work emails among a sea of junk newsletters and mailers. Use [Gmail's filter feature](#) to send newsletters straight to a separate folder and out of your way. When you get to your inbox in the morning, you'll find yourself responding only to the emails that require your immediate attention. Fewer the distractions, the more work you get done.

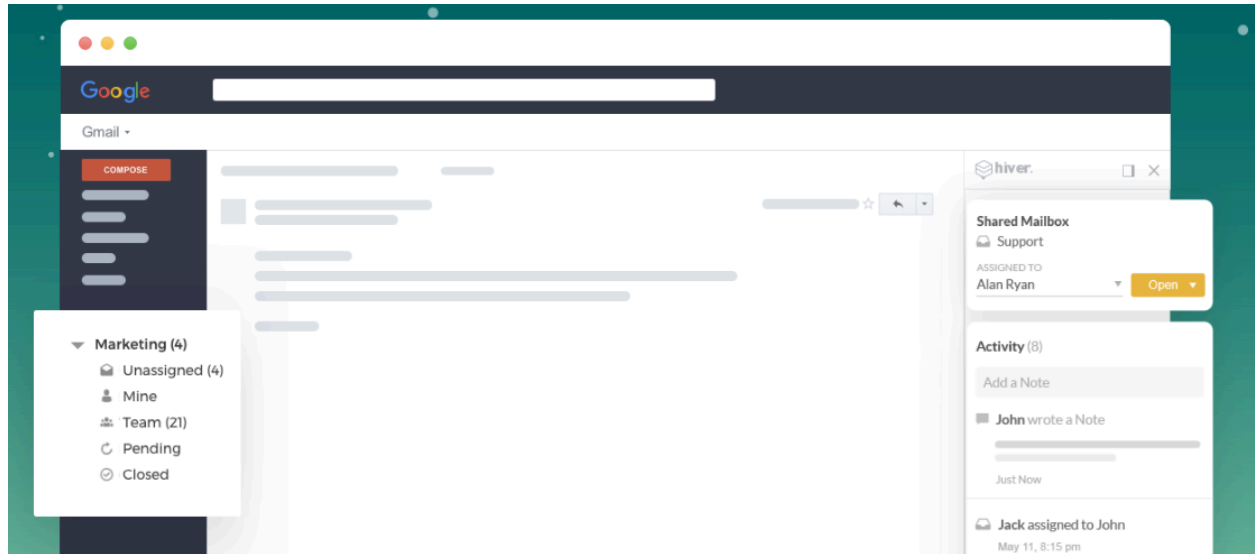
## **3. Take 10 minute breaks through your work day to respond to emails**



Don't let your email pile up throughout the day. Take a few minutes every two hours to write back to colleagues, clients or business partners. According to [this study](#) of the use of emails at the workplace, "By turning off email alerts and allocating time to check and deal with it at regular intervals, research reports that people feel more in control and less overloaded by email". Your inbox won't seem as full or as intimidating if you remember to act on pending emails from time to time.

You'll end up getting collaborative work done faster, and also come to a pared down inbox each morning.

#### 4. Use email management software to assign tasks in your team



A large part of the back and forth on emails at work is just tasks getting delegated. You can use email management services like [Hiver](#) to set up a shared inbox and make sure that the right people in your team pick up tasks. You can say goodbye to long email threads and forwards.

#### 5. Opt out of email notifications on your social media accounts

If you handle multiple social media and networking accounts for your workplace, unsubscribe from getting email notifications for all activity. Without switching off email notifications, if you already have networking apps on your phone or work computer, you'll just double the amount of notifications you get. If you're handling a Facebook ads manager account at work, you don't need an email every time your promotions end - you're probably already keeping track of them. If you're on LinkedIn, you can safely unsubscribe from most email notifications if you login regularly. Take stock of what email notifications you really need, and switch off the rest. You'll see fewer distractions in your inbox.

#### 6. Send emails only if absolutely necessary

If you work in smaller teams and have access to your colleagues at all times, this is a no-brainer. We can easily get carried away by long email threads because they're easy to respond to. But threads can really pile up if multiple people are responding all at once. Use options like IM, Trello or even just talk to your colleagues to track tasks, quell fires and coordinate projects. You don't need to use email to check if a shipment has been sent or if a meeting is on schedule. Using your email for

extremely important communication and limiting its use will help you keep your inbox under control.

## **7. Treat your inbox the same way you would treat your physical mail**



Almost all of us compulsively throw out junk post that we get in the mail as soon as it reaches us. It's not a bad idea to do the same with your email - hit delete on anything you know you're not going to need. Not going to reply to a cold pitch? Delete. Not interested in renewing a subscription? Delete. Don't be afraid to hit the delete button if you're certain you're never going to act on an email. The more you make a habit out of this, the cleaner your inbox will be.

## **8. Reply, Archive, Delete**

Make sure you take action on every single email in your inbox everyday - even if that means just hitting archive or delete. Take a few seconds to quickly process the contents of your email and don't close the tab until you choose one of the three options. Your unread emails can go from zero to a few thousand very quickly if you don't make sure to take at least one action on each email.

## **9. Unsubscribe**

Let's face it, we've all had our work email make nefarious beelines into mailing lists. When we're so bogged down with work and have an endless list of things to do, it doesn't occur to us to pause and hit unsubscribe. And if your inbox has been getting floods of mailers you never subscribed to, use a free tool like Unroll.me to get rid of them all at once.



## **10. Set up IFTTT to help manage your email**

IFTTT or “If This, Then That”, will help you stay on top of your email even if you’re away from your desk. If you’re not someone who likes to keep their email on their phone, this is the perfect way to get notified. You can set up recipes and have IFTTT send you a text message when you get an email from certain senders. That way, if you’re on your commute or in a meeting, you’ll have a push notification on your phone reminding you to respond to a new email. [Check out this tutorial video](#) to get started.

Managing your inbox and keeping your unread emails at zero is not that hard. With a few tools and some determination, your emails can actually help you be more productive. Just remember to deal with every email you get, use inbox management tools wisely and you’ll be on the top of your game in no time.