



# 7 signs that your email culture is productive

**Every organisation has a set of processes and behaviours that people have adopted as the way they “do” email.**

Email volume is on the rise. You can expect to receive at least 20% more email next year than you do now. As we struggle to deal with this ever increasing volume of email, inefficient practices start to develop and organisational productivity declines. The end result can be a toxic email culture.

How do you know if the email culture in your organisation is productive?

There are 7 key indicators:

**1. As you walk around the office you can’t hear the “beep” of emails being delivered.**

Every email “beep” causes a break in concentration which results in 64 seconds of lost time. This doesn’t take into account the time lost checking the newly delivered email and switching from one task (the current task) to another (checking email).

**2. People understand that email is not an immediate response tool.**

Using email when an immediate response is required doesn’t make sense. It assumes that people are sitting at their desks just waiting to respond to the next email that arrives. It encourages people to live in their Inbox and when we do this, we become interrupt-driven rather than plan-driven.

**3. Emails are addressed only to those people for whom the email is directly relevant.**

Overuse of Cc’ing and Reply to All is one of the main contributors to excessive email volume in organisations. Excessive volume costs time and money and is a big contributor to the “hidden” costs of email.

**4. Email conversations are no longer than 4 to 5 emails.**

Once a conversation goes back and forth four or five times without resolution, it’s time to talk. Email is not going to get the job done efficiently (if at all).

**5. Every email you receive is clear, concise, well-structured and has a compelling subject line.**

A poorly constructed email takes on average 10 seconds longer to read. Vague subject lines make an email difficult to manage and when any required action is not stated clearly, deadlines can be missed and more emails are generated to clarify requirements.

**6. If you were able to run a report showing you the number of emails in peoples’ Inboxes at the end of the day, the number appearing most often would be zero.**

An overloaded Inbox is a sign that email management processes are not working well. Accumulated emails become a distraction and worse, a source of stress.

**7. You receive a timely response to all internal emails.**

A delayed response to an email can be an indicator that people are struggling to stay on top of the volume of email they receive and the work required of them. When people struggle to manage the volume of email they receive, online silence results - their Inbox management processes are failing them.



The cost to the organisation of an unproductive email culture is huge. It can be in the vicinity of 20 days per person per year.

**So how can you create a productive email culture?**

The first step is to show people the benefits that can be obtained from putting into place best practice processes for using what is now our primary business communication tool – email.

Organisations must then establish comprehensive guidelines that set the standard for email behaviour and then educate, educate, educate.



*If you would like to find out how I have helped other organisations reduce the hidden costs of email, please call me on 0438 699 153; email me at [jani@emailsmart.com.au](mailto:jani@emailsmart.com.au) or visit [www.emailsmart.com.au](http://www.emailsmart.com.au).*