ORDERLINESS
Handling Your Email Inbox

Overview

- Organisational Styles.
- Email management principles.
- Developing email systems.
- Implementing actionable strategies.

Exercise

What are your current email struggles?

INSIGHTS AND INSPIRATION

'Email is the greatest time-sink ever invented if you let it be'

Tim Ferriss.

ORDERLINESS
Understanding your Organisational Style

Clutterbug System

Cas Aarssen, identifies four different organising styles based on how people prefer to **sort, store, and view** their items. Each style is a combination of visual vs. hidden preferences and macro vs. micro organisating tendencies.

Bee

- **Prefers:** Visual storage (likes to see items).
- **Organizing style:** Micro (likes detailed categories).
- **Key traits:** Loves systems and knowing exactly where everything is; may get overwhelmed by things being hidden.
- **Best solutions:** Clear containers, labelled drawers, detailed filing systems.

Ladybird

- **Prefers:** Hidden storage (everything out of sight).
- **Organizing style:** Macro (broad, simple categories).
- **Key traits:** Wants clean, rubbish-free spaces but can struggle with maintaining small detailed systems.
- **Best solutions:** Bins with lids, closed cupboard doors, labels on the outside.

Cricket

- **Prefers:** Hidden storage.
- **Organizing style:** Micro (detailed, logical systems).
- **Key traits:** Analytical, loves planning and perfection; struggles if a system isn't fully developed.
- **Best solutions:** Drawer dividers, colour-coded folders, labelled bins inside wardrobes!

Butterfly

- **Prefers:** Visual storage.
- **Organizing style:** Macro (broad, easy categories).
- **Key traits:** Out of sight means out of mind; thrives with open systems and simple, accessible organization.
- **Best solutions:** Open bins, wall hooks, clear shelving, colour-coded folders.

CLUTTERBUG QUIZ

1. How do you prefer to store things?
A. I want everything out of sight—I can't relax if I see clutter.
B. I need things visible, or I'll forget they exist.
D. I love having my stuff on display—it's part of my creativity and inspiration.
C. I like things mostly hidden, but with some items out for quick access.

2. How detailed do your organizing systems need to be?
A. I need super simple systems, or I won't follow them.
B. I like very detailed categories and specific spots for each item.
C. I'm okay with complexity if it makes things more efficient.
D. I need it fast and easy—labels and broad groups are enough for me.

3. What happens when you try to declutter?
A. I get overwhelmed easily and shove things into drawers or closets.
B. I get excited about organizing and label everything in tiny detail.
C. I want everything in its place, even if it takes time.
D. I need to see progress fast or I lose motivation.

4. What does your space look like when it feels *just right*?
A. Clean surfaces, no visible stuff—minimal and tidy.
B. Everything out where I can see it, but arranged neatly.
C. Labelled drawers and hidden storage with everything in place.
D. Colourful, creative, and organised chaos that makes sense to me.

ORDERLINESS
Principles and Developing System and Processes

Three Principles

1. Establish a method of attending to your emails.

2. Check emails in scheduled batches, with your email program close the rest of the time.

3. Avoid using your phone for email and resist cherry-picking—stay focused and intentional.

How to Establish a Healthy Relationship with your Email

1. Schedule focused email time.

Decide when in the day to check emails.

Use batch processing to avoid constant interruption

- Set boundaries.

    - Once a day.

    - Two or three regular times.

    - The hourly dash.

    .

    - 10-90.

    - Extreme.

INSIGHTS AND INSPIRATION

REFLECTIVE QUESTION
When is your most productive time? When is your least most productive time?

'Email is a to-do list that anyone can add to.'

Anonymous.

ORDERLINESS
Developing System and Processes

2. **Prepare to process effectively**

- Know your typical email volume.

- Make time and space to handle them without distractions.

3. **Develop an efficient processing system**

- Create a simple system.

- Sorting system.

- Filing system.

- Use a clear method for handling each email (processing choices).

- Write shorter, clearer emails.

INSIGHTS AND INSPIRATION

REFLECTIVE QUESTION
How many emails do you get per day/per week? How long does email take you?

MOST BASIC EMAIL SYSTEM
- Inbox.
- Trash/Bin.
- Action.
- Read.
- Waiting.
- Archive.

PROCESSING CHOICES
- Delete.
- Respond.
- Diarise.
- Delegate.
- Unsubscribe.

Three-Minute rule If an email takes less than three minutes to respond to, do it immediately. For anything longer, schedule time to respond later. This simple rule keeps your inbox moving without letting messages pile up.

ORDERLINESS
Developing system and processes

4. **Tackle your email backlog**

- Use bulk actions and rules where possible.
    - Template responses.
    - Automatic filtering.
    - Use flags, stars or labels.
    - Auto reply.
- Schedule separate time for clearing old emails.
    - Practice inbox zero.

HOW TO GET TO INBOX ZERO OR GAIN CONTROL OF YOUR INBOX

- Create a backlog subfolder.
- Place all your emails in the backlog subfolder. You are now at inbox zero.
- Go to the backlog folder. Arrange emails in date order starting with the oldest. Delete all email older than 3-6 months. They are six months old. There is no point in processing them.
- Count the number of emails remaining and divide by 30. This will give you how many 25 minute slots you will need to process the emails.
- In your diary, place two hours to set up a method of processing emails in the next week or do it now.
- In your diary, place the number of hours required to process backlog in 25 minute slots over the next month.
- In your diary, place a repeating appointment time needed to process each day.

INSIGHTS AND INSPIRATION

TEMPLATE RESPONSES

- Baptism enquiry.
- Wedding enquiry.
- Sunday service – who is doing what.
- Discipleship evening – reminder.
- PCC Email reminder.
- General meeting reminder.

'Inbox zero is not a goal—it's a side effect of better habits.'

Merline Mann.

'The more elaborate our means of communication, the less we communicate.'

Jospeh Priestley.

ORDERLINESS
Creating an Email System

Developing a Personalised System

Knowing how we prefer to **sort, store, and view** items, here are some ways we might view our emails. This is very generalised, but might highlight what might work well for us.

Bee (Visual + Micro)
- **Inbox Traits:** Colour-codes and labels everything; keeps emails visible.
- **Inbox Zero?** Wants it, but holds onto emails "just in case."
- **Struggles:** Letting go, overly thoughtful replies.

Tips: Replace folders with visual labels; create a "Waiting On" folder.

Ladybird (Hidden + Macro)
- **Inbox Traits:** Wants it out of sight, fast.
- **Inbox Zero?** Yes, but may archive/delete too aggressively.
- **Struggles:** Missed follow-ups due to oversimplifying.

Tips: Use one "Action" folder; automate junk filtering.

Cricket (Hidden + Micro)
- **Inbox Traits:** Loves folder trees, tags, and precision.
- **Inbox Zero?** Yes, but risks over-processing.
- **Struggles:** Perfectionism, slow replies.

Tips: Use email templates; set time limits for organizing.

Butterfly (Visual + Macro)
- **Inbox Traits:** Inbox is the to-do list. Needs to see everything.
- **Inbox Zero?** Not likely unless it's super simple.
- **Struggles:** Avoids email, gets overwhelmed easily.

Tips: Use stars/flags; keep categories broad and visible.

CLUTTERBUG EMAIL QUIZ

1. When you open your inbox, what do you feel?
A. Excited to check everything and respond.
B. Slightly overwhelmed, but I want it clean.
C. Calm, I know everything has its place.
D. Anxious or avoidant, it feels like too much.

2. How do you organize your emails?
A. I label and colour-code everything.
B. I keep only what I need and archive/delete the rest.
C. I have folders for everything, down to fine detail.
D. I try, but I mostly keep it all in my inbox or one big folder.

3. What best describes your inbox?
A. It's full but I can find anything.
B. It's tidy and mostly empty.
C. It's sorted meticulously into folders.
D. It's overflowing and a bit chaotic.

4. What's your response time to emails?
A. I take time to craft a thoughtful reply.
B. I respond quickly and efficiently.
C. I might wait until I can do it perfectly.
D. I often forget until someone reminds me.

5. What do you think of Inbox Zero?
A. I like the idea, but I'd miss old emails.
B. Love it. I get there daily.
C. I like the structure it offers.
D. It sounds impossible.

ORDERLINESS
Implementing Actionable Strategies

Creating your own Email System and Processes

INSIGHTS AND INSPIRATION

'Just because someone sends you an email doesn't mean you owe them your time.'

Chris Bailey.