



BONUS REPORT:

Slaying the E-mail Monster

**Stop Letting E-mail Run Your Life!
Simple, Seemingly Obvious Secrets to Get CONTROL of your E-mail!**

One of the final frontiers for me to conquer as I sought to be the one in charge of my life and time and focus was how to slay the e-mail monster! Being the founder of an Internet ministry that reaches thousands daily, a blogger, a social network junkie, and having friends and family all

over the country who I've accidentally trained that e-mail is the best way, not only to reach me, but to get anything from me, I got to a point where I was spending hours a day in front of a laptop managing the hundreds of daily e-mails I get and that most often need some kind of action or reply. The reality was that, as important as most of my e-mails are, sitting in front of my laptop doing e-mail all day, and on my PDA/cell phone when out and about, was not the most valuable use of my time. I had to kill this beast, even as I depend on it to get so much of what I do done! But how?



Don't miss the Slaying the E-mail Monster video at www.YouTube.com/Kidologist (Also in the Leadership Lab 05 Training Video)

The Kidology Handbook - Leader's Edition



While I'm sure I'll never have this area mastered, I have learned some powerful secrets, which while they will sound simple, even silly, and seemingly obvious, if you implement them, they just may transform the way you interact with e-mail. It's working for me, and I'm never going back to allowing e-mail to drive my life and determine my work load each day. I'm done being driven by e-mail!

Here are some simple steps you can take that I think will greatly help you out if you are struggling with e-mail:



#1 Empty Your Inbox NOW. If you have an overflowing inbox, empty it NOW. Create a new folder and label it "Inbox Monster" or whatever you want, and move ALL the messages into there. They will survive the transfer, and so will you. Schedule one hour a day to work through the Monster Folder. But you are starting fresh!

#2 Open your e-mail settings. Turn off auto-retrieval of messages. They will now come in only when you tell them to. YOU are now in charge. This is powerful, you have no idea! Turn off e-mail notification sounds, for incoming or any other actions. If you have your e-mail set to check every minute (like most people) then you are being interrupted and distracted potentially 2,400 times a week by your e-mail, and that's if you work only 40 hours. (Did I hear you laugh?)

#3 Schedule E-mail Time. Whether it is 9am, 1pm and 4pm, or every hour on the hour. YOU determine when you will do e-mail, and pull in your messages ONLY at those times. And it's O.K. not to pull any in on the weekends, really, it is. I've never heard of anyone dying from lack of incoming e-mail.

#4 Never Check E-mail Again. Huh? That's right. Checking e-mail is a waste of time. When you "check your e-mail" what do you do? Scan through it, looking to see if there are fires that need to be put out? Don't check your e-mail ever again. Instead, PROCESS YOUR E-MAIL. This will profoundly change how you do e-mail, the time you spend on it, and save you more time than you probably realize. What's the difference between "processing" and "checking" e-mail? Read on!



#5 Never Work From Your Inbox. Your inbox is NOT a work place, it is an inbox. Period. In an office, would you work from the mail cart doing the rounds? Would you work from the bulletin board in the employee lounge? Do you make the mailman stand there while you read the mail and hand him your reply? No. Your inbox is only there to deliver your electronic work to you. ALL YOU DO WITH AN INBOX IS PROCESS E-MAIL, and processing is FAST!



the secret formula!

#6 Process Every Message In Your Inbox Immediately. Remember, you aren't checking your e-mail, and it isn't coming in whenever it feels like it, it is coming in when you request it, and then you process it.

Every e-mail will probably fit into one of these categories:

DELETE IT (fall in love with the delete button, its your best friend)
DELEGATE IT (can you forward it to someone else and get it off your plate?)
RESPOND (if you can in 1-2 sentences, do it and delete it!)
DEFER (file it for later, see next point)
DO IT (if you can do the request in 1-2 minutes, just do it and delete it!)
OR: schedule it (such as a phone call you need to make), and delete the message.

If you are DEFERRING, this simply means, you file/sort it immediately into **ACTION FOLDERS**. You will determine your own, but only have a few, such as (these are mine, yours will vary according to your work):

ACTION ASAP
ACTION NEEDED
STAFF RELATED
READ ONLY
RESPONSE NEEDED
WAITING REPLY
CURRENT ISSUE
ARCHIVE

#7 Schedule Time to Work Electronically. When you have time to focus on your electronic work, (after what matters most to you is completed first) you work ONLY from your action folders. You may start by processing any new messages in the Inbox, but then you work from the Action Folders. Start with the Action ASAP, as

these are ones you probably would have answered right away from the Inbox. But you were good, since you filed them here and processed ALL the inbox messages first. Work down through your ASAP box, ignoring anything new that may arrive. (If you have auto-retrieval turned OFF you should not have that distraction. Believe me, they can wait, and so can you!) Work through what you can with the time allowed, and when the time is up, STOP. Yes! You can stop doing e-mail to get back to more important things that you scheduled for the day, remember?

"Thing is: if the amount of time you devote to lite correspondence with individual people exceeds the amount of time you spend on making things, then you may be in a different line of work than you'd originally thought you were."

- Merlin Mann
43folders.com



#8 Don't Bother With a Complicated Folder Structure. Just have one ARCHIVE folder. Let's face it, have you ever used that complicated folder structure to actually *find* a message? No, you use search to find what you need, so all you need is one, or at best 3-4 archive folders if you want to separate very broad categories such as Personal, Work, Church, etc.

#9 Turn Your E-mail Software OFF When Working On Something Else. Really, the Internet will survive! Why have it on? Remember, *YOU* are now in charge of your e-mail. **When you have time and are ready to focus, open the software, request your messages, and process them immediately. Otherwise, keep the software closed.** Do not allow your inbox to be your TO-DO list! It is an inbox. Incoming tasks should be added to your calendar, to a real to-do list/software program, or filed to work on when you are ready to focus.

the secret formula!

#10 Do Unto Others As You'd Have Them Do Unto You. If you don't like getting tons of e-mail, don't zip off an e-mail to others every time a stray thought crosses your mind — keep a list of items to discuss the next time you see/meet with them. And here's an odd tip: Don't feel you have to say "thank you" to every e-mail. Save the expression of gratitude for the next time you see them. They'll appreciate it more and have one less e-mail to delete.

Seriously, YOU CAN KILL THE E-MAIL MONSTER and put yourself in charge of your e-mail. I promise you, as I've seen myself, if you apply these simple, seemingly obvious secrets, you will get more done, spend less time on e-mail, waste less time and be more productive. And you really won't get behind if you schedule time to work on the messages you have processed. You'll still have work to do, but you'll spend a lot less time on meaningless e-mail and more time on the things that really matter and that add value to your work and life.

GO FOR IT, I DARE YOU TO SLAY YOUR E-MAIL MONSTER!

Recommended Resources

While many of these "secrets" were discovered myself in my own struggles to manage e-mail and time, the ideas are not unique to me and have been refined and improved by many of the following sources that I recommend highly:

Books:

Getting Things Done and Ready for Anything by David Allen

Blogs:

amazingtimemanagementsecrets.blogspot.com
www.43folders.com/izero
www.beunreasonable.com/blog
www.unclutterer.com