



## TenStep Supplemental Paper

---

14 March 2004

### You've Got Mail!

E-mail is definitely an important source of information. However, most of us are victims of information overload through this medium and probably end up spending hours reading junk. How can you make electronic mail a blessing rather than a curse?

Today, there is hardly anyone who does not make use of the electronic mail in view of its advantages. However, people are also aware of its drawbacks. An insurmountable amount of mail, resulting in jammed mailboxes, is one of the pitfalls. The following is a four-pronged management approach to making e-mail work better for you.

**Control your e-mail lists.** While often a source of valuable information, e-mail lists generate overwhelming incoming e-mail messages. Finding the pertinent messages can be time consuming and stressful. Subscribe to several e-mail lists and you may never see daylight. Therefore, subscribe only to those that offer high value. If the volume of messages is too high or they are irrelevant, simply unsubscribe. Subscribing and unsubscribing is as simple as sending an e-mail message to the list manager. Another useful tip: when you are out of town, unsubscribe from busy e-mail lists. Otherwise, upon return you may face several hours of e-mail reading.

**Use the e-mail list digest.** An interesting feature of e-mail is the fact that it delivers a daily or weekly compilation of all messages in a single message. Each e-mail list has a different method of subscribing to list digests. Send a message to the list administrator for subscription or change to a digest version of the list.

**Set up e-mail folders.** There are several options other than a central inbox for all your incoming messages. Create folders to organize your messages and move them accordingly. This enables you to find important e-mails instantly.

**Use email rules.** Make use of the rules feature in programs. This will help you organize incoming messages automatically. For example, you might create a rule that moves all mail from an e-mail list to the appropriate folder. Once the rule is active, all incoming messages from that list will be stored automatically in the relevant folder. This makes review and retrieval easy.

### Summary

Managing information is one of the biggest challenges in the modern workplace. Today's mail is tomorrow's pile and most people think that this problem can be solved by dealing with the backlog. However, they fail to make the changes necessary to avoid facing the same problem later!