

Attention Management

Which emails in the Inbox need Attention?

On average Knowledge workers can spend up to 3 hours a day on e-mail. A certain percentage of that e-mail **does not** warrant their attention.

E-mail can usually be grouped into three main categories.

They are:

1. *Action items*; the sender is requesting something be done (take action).
2. *Information only items*; the e-mail contains reference material or information worth keeping.
3. *Occupational spam*; e-mails coming from people you know or work with that are *worthless*.

Out of the three categories, obviously the “Action items” need attention; the other two categories should be filtered out of the Inbox so they **do not** get your attention. The best way to handle the “Action items” is to convert these e-mails into **Tasks**, so that they can be prioritised, scheduled, actioned and then completed.

In MS Outlook filtering can be performed in several ways. You can customise the current view and apply a filter. However, this will just hide the filtered e-mails and does not move them. Manually moving e-mails to folders is a common way of reducing the number of e-mail in the Inbox, but this requires the receiver to read or at least browse the subject before moving each item.

Using “**rules**” to automatically move e-mail to other folders is another way of filtering e-mails. The key is to be able to identify the criteria that will effectively target the appropriate e-mails. For example, e-mails that has been **copied** to you, e-mails from a particular sender or group of senders, e-mails with specific words in the subject line and e-mail receipts (e.g. meeting replies).

MS Outlook defaults to giving you a desktop alert for every new e-mail, this type of *interruption* is *distracting* and takes your *attention* away from your current work. To assist with your “Attention Management” why not turn off the desktop alert (you will find it in Tools > Options, E-mail Options, Advanced E-mail Options) and then create a “**rule**” that only alerts you when something warrants your attention.

Acorn’s Productiv_IT with Outlook combines good time management practices and workflow processes that will assist you with your “Attention Management”.

For more information go to our web site; www.acorntraining.com.au