

## **The Importance of E-mail Policy.**

### ***Are your employees doing the right thing?***

In today's business environment speed and efficiency are essential and e-mail has emerged as the preferred means of business and personal communication. E-mail messaging now exceeds telephone traffic and is the dominant form of business communication. Some knowledge workers are spending more than half of their day reading and filing e-mail. Besides the time spent sending and receiving e-mail there is also the time spent in storing/filing e-mail and then searching/retrieving old e-mails.

It is amazing to find that in this day and age, many organisations still have not realised how important their e-mail communications are. This is mostly due to the fact that the management of e-mail is usually left up to the individual employee. Organisations spend millions on their corporate image, strategies and public relations, but pay little attention to their e-mail communication and retention policy and it is often left up to each individual "***to do the right thing***".

Many people attending Productiv\_IT with Outlook workshops at Acorn are asked if they are aware of their organisation's e-mail policies. Frequently the response is that they don't know if their organisation has one. Having an e-mail policy is one thing but making sure all employees are aware of it and understand it is another.

By implementing e-mail policies and educating employees as to what can and cannot be sent in an e-mail, you may be able to protect your organisation from potential liability issues. In addition, an e-mail policy should also outline the appropriate practices for managing individual mailboxes, the retention of e-mail and the filing of information. Organisations should not leave decisions about what to delete or retain or how to file e-mail up to the individual.

### ***Suggested sections to include in an E-mail policy:***

1. a definition of what is an e-mail business record,
2. information about retention, deletion and filing of information,
3. rules outlining what is acceptable and unacceptable content,
4. a clear indication of what are banned activities,
5. an outline of the consequences for breaching the policy,
6. guidelines on acceptable personal use, and
7. an acknowledgement form for employees to sign.

Acorn Training and Consulting can assist you in making your employees more effective in e-mail management. We can also customise our workshops specifically to include information regarding your e-mail policies.