Taming the Associate Dean’s E-Mail Beast

Larry Cunningham
Associate Dean & Professor of Legal Writing

Association of American Law Schools’ Annual Meeting 2019

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Problem #1

Problem #2
Problem #3

Recommendations

Strategy #1: Your Mindset

My job is not to answer e-mail.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z9UjeTMb3Yk
Strategy #1: Your Mindset

My job is to _____________.

Strategy #2: E-Mail Processing Time

3-4 times a day

When not processing e-mail, Outlook is set to “offline” mode.
Strategy #3: Turn Off Notifications

Exceptions:
1. President
2. Provost
3. Dean
4. Your Spouse

Strategy #4: Process E-Mails

Quick Processing – Decisions
1. Delete
2. Move to Saved Folders
3. Respond or delegate, but only if < 2 minutes
4. Schedule To-Do/Action Item

Strategy #5: Work With To-Do’s, not Inbox
Strategy #5: Work With To-Do’s, not Inbox

[Diagram of email management]

- Open Message
- Print...
- Reply
- Reply All
- Forward
- Forward As Attachment
- Redirect

[Menu options: Create, Mark as Unread]

[Tab: St. John’s]

[Inbox]

[Flagged for Followup (more...)]

[Task List]

- Center for Advocacy
- Classes
- Direct Reports
- External
- Law School
- Personal
- Students
- University

[Task List options: Today, Tomorrow, This Week, Next Week, No Date, Custom...]

[Diagram of task management]
Product Recommendation: Things

Things
https://culturedcode.com/things/

• Organize by projects, areas of responsibility
• “Snooze” to-do’s
• Link to e-mails
• Mail to Things

Strategy #6: Use “Rules” Effectively

• Flag VIPs (President, Provost, Dean, Spouse)
• Move listserv e-mails to special folder
• Automatically categorize/color code
Strategy #7: Generic E-Mail Addresses

- studentservices@______.edu
- deansoffice@______.edu
- registrar@______.edu
- academicadvising@______.edu
- onestophelp@______.edu

Strategy #8: When Not to Use This Process

- Student services may need a continually monitored e-mail box. But it doesn’t have to be the associate dean!
- For some employees, their job is to respond to e-mail.
- When a conversation or phone call would be better …
  - Complex topic
  - Sensitive topic
  - Will take too long to respond in e-mail
  - Emotions are high …

Strategy #9: Get Tech Help
Strategy #10: Write Better E-Mails

- Write e-mails, not law review articles, so you have time to write law review articles.
- Keep it short.
- Use bullets.
- Use templates/autocorrect for frequently asked questions.

Top Tips for Getting Started

- Watch https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0sFkDfbYk
- Turn off notifications
- Find online/offline button in Outlook.
- Schedule e-mail processing time in Calendar.
- Get a to-do app. Setup projects and areas of responsibility.
- Create “Followup” and “Saved” folders. Merge all others.
- Setup “Rules.”
- Turn on “conversation” view.
- Learn how to create keyboard shortcuts.
- Talk to your assistant, direct reports, those you report to.
- Consider “e-mail bankruptcy.”

Additional Reading

- https://blog.hubspot.com/service/inbox-zero