



5-MINUTE EMAIL MANAGEMENT PLAN

One of the challenges of modern life, for leaders and employees, is managing the time and energy drain that our email inbox can be. Reading and responding can eat up vast amounts of valuable “deeper work” time. Used strategically, email is a useful tool. Used poorly, it creates overwhelm for ourselves and others. How do we deal with email in a productive and constructive way?

Triage email

Military people use 3 key strategies to help them organize and triage their email—and that of others.

1. We use keywords in the subject line.
2. We include the deadlines.
3. We use the BLUF-Bottom Line Up Front.

Email has become a burden for most recipients today, so we want to make it easy for them to sort through their messages quickly—and find/respond to ours.

1. Keywords

Start every subject line with one of these keywords, based on Mary’s acronym D.I.C.E.

- **Decide**
- **Information**
- **Coordinate**
- **Execute (Act)**

Example: If the recipient needs to take ACTION, start with Execute or Act, then describe the task.

2. Deadline

Part of this process means including the deadline in the subject line. The recipient should know by the first word what they have to do.

Example:

Subject: Act—Budget Submissions due Friday, August 30

3. BLUF

Then we use the BLUF—Bottom Line Up Front. This is the first sentence of the body of the email, and it quickly explains the Who, When, What, Where and Why.

EXAMPLE:

Budgets must be completed by Friday, August 30 and sent to the CFO’s email, or else the budget defaults to zero for next year.

Then amplifying information follows.

This allows people to quickly sort their email by priority and deadlines.

Some corporate cultures do not appreciate such a direct approach, but others claim using D.I.C.E. and BLUF helps them:

- **regain lost time once spent searching through tasks with vague subject lines.**
- **find amplifying data on projects.**
- **plan their time.**
- **meet deadlines because everyone knows what is due when.**

For full description of Mary’s email triage system, please visit ProductiveLeaders.com/Triageemail