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Reasons to Use Delay Delivery for Your Outgoing Emails



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Reasons to Use Delay Delivery for Your Outgoing Emails



Here's an idea to make you more effective as a leader, influencer and communicator.

In business life, timing is important. The best time to deliver an email isn't always when you're ready to press send. Using Delay Delivery allows you to schedule your outgoing email for when they're most likely to have maximum impact and allow you to get a quality reply.

Many senior executives have days full of back-to-back meetings and phone conversations, meaning that email builds up during the day and is usually only addressed 'after hours'. In fact, of all tasks, email is the one most likely to be done 'after hours'.

As a result, the work day gets extended and often includes working on weekends. It seems this has become accepted, not just during times of high volumes but as an everyday expectation for some people and some roles. It has become the norm for checking and quick responding to email to continue from the work day to 'after hours' even if the sender is only intending to clear their inbox and not expecting an 'after hours' response.

But it means busy executives seldom feel disconnected from their work and this lack of real downtime adds to feelings of stress and contributes to 'executive burnout'. This blurring of the boundaries between work and leisure time are less of an issue for younger executives, but may aggravate work/life conflicts for older generations who may have family responsibilities.

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Some think that addressing email 'after hours' helps to reduce a sense of overload that comes from a build of email during the day. However, as this strategy has evolved as a way of keeping on top of one's work, many report that they continue to feel overloaded and under stress.

Those who don't respond to email 'after hours' require either a high degree of self-control or a mind-set of active resistance.

The latest research by the Kingston Business School into 'Strategies for Effectively Managing Email at Work' lists 10 learning points – four for individuals and six for organisations. The #3 of these strategies recommends using a Delay Send function when emailing out of hours.

While I agree with the principle, I think this should be called Delay Delivery (rather than send) – it is fine for you to write a message and send it 'after hours', just control when that message is actually delivered.

And I suggest that controlling when our messages are delivered is a great strategy for all emails that we write, not just those written 'after hours'.

So, here are 7 reasons to make use of the delay delivery functionality in your email software.

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1

Write an email when it suits you

Using **Delay Delivery** allows you to write an email at a time that suits you but have it arrive at a time that best suits the receiver and/or the outcome you're trying to achieve. You can write an email days or even weeks in advance and have the message arrive at an appropriate time for the receiver.

This allows you to do the work, thinking or decision-making and write the email while you are in that headspace. This might be at 11pm at night or 4am in the morning but is that the best time to send your message? **Delay Delivery** allows you to send the mail and get that task off your list but hold the message for delivery at more appropriate time.

A recent client who works in Project Management for a construction company found this an invaluable idea. At the start of a project, he was having to write himself calendar reminders to send certain emails at certain points along the project timeline. But by using **Delay Delivery**, he was able to write all these emails at the start of the project and delay sending them until the appropriate day and time in the project cycle.

Many write an email and then save it their Drafts folder to send some time later. And how many times have you then forgotten to do that? By using **Delay Delivery**, you don't have to remember to go back to the Drafts folder and send the message later. It also allows you to schedule an automatic email follow-up even if you are away from your computer, using an add-on app to suit your email software. You can set up repetitive emails in advance, at daily, weekly, monthly, yearly or customised time intervals.



2 Your email arrives at an optimal time

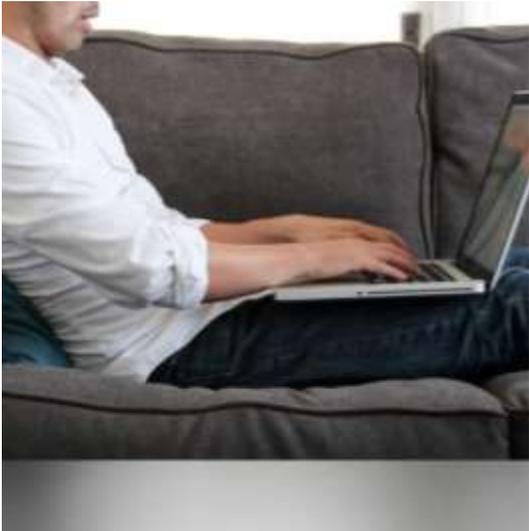
There are times of the day and times of the week that are more suitable than others for your message to arrive. For example, recent research shows that recipients are more likely to respond (and with a lengthier reply) earlier in the week.

It's also important to note that research showing that work emails 'after hours' are detrimental to employee health and long-term productivity. So important, in fact, that French laws came into place on 1st January 2017 that oblige organisations with more than 50 workers to start negotiations to define the rights of employees to ignore their smartphones 'after hours'.

The measure was introduced by labour minister Myriam El Khomri, who commissioned a report submitted in September 2015 which warned about the health impact of "info-obesity" which afflicts many workplaces.

Another consideration for when to have your email arrive is, would you believe, the weather! Research by Yesware of some 28,000 emails in the Top 10 US cities showed that you'll know when you're most likely to get replies (and gain a competitive email advantage) by understanding the weather patterns of the city of your recipient.

Now it's not as simple as 'when it's colder, people do less email'. It depends on the climatic norms for individual cities. Some cities see less email when it rains more, or when it rains less, when it's colder or when it's warmer – it depends on the norms for that city.



3 Enhances your professionalism

Using **Delay Delivery** to have your message arrive at an appropriate time during business hours enhances your professionalism. This way you're not seen to be writing email at all sorts of odd hours of the day or week.

However, it's important to realise that while your email is time stamped with your nominated delivery date / time in the recipient's inbox, if they double click to open the email the time showing will be when you composed and sent the message!

Even in our 'always connected', 24/7 global economy, many people will look at the time stamp of an email and hold it against you if it shows some crazy hour of the day. They may think you're a workaholic who doesn't have a life or whatever else may enter their thinking and it's unlikely to enhance their view of your professionalism.



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4 Provides opportunity to edit later

Using **Delay Delivery** allows you to go back to a message and make any edits or improvements before it is sent. In fact, many people set up a rule that puts a two-minute delay on all of their emails. Whatever the time delay, it allows you to pop back into your Outbox to:

- correct any inaccuracies;
- 'soften' a harshly worded message written in the 'heat of the moment' or in a hurry;
- add some details or an attachment not thought of when it was originally composed; and
- update the message with any changes that may have occurred since it was originally written.



"I think I had a whinge to you about not getting replies from a particular manager... Well, I took your advice on a couple of things. I was careful about what went in the subject line, and I delayed sending until early afternoon, rather than first thing Monday. Lo and behold: a helpful, meaningful reply within ten minutes! So, thank you!"

Manager at ABC Southbank, Victoria

5 Reduces chances of your email being missed

Using **Delay Delivery** helps to avoid your message getting lost in the 'morning purge' by your recipients. If you send a message 'after hours' it could be sitting in your recipient's inbox along with dozens of other messages when they check their inbox in the morning. Amongst these will be a host of spam and other low priority messages that will have the recipient in a 'delete' or 'purge' frame of mind – there's a risk your message could be lost in this process!

Recent research also shows that a wide variety of factors to consider to maximise your chances of achieving the desired outcome for your message. The best time to send email is when send volumes are lowest – weekends, early mornings, and evenings. People are most responsive in the early morning or later in the evening. If you're having a hard time getting in touch with someone, try sending emails that arrive between 6am and 7am, or around 8pm.

Although it contradicts point 3 above about your professionalism, it seems that Sundays are a sweet spot for email replies with a reply rate of 52%. The reason is that there is less competition for attention in the inbox when you send a message on a Sunday. There was a research piece done by the North Sydney City Council that showed one business in their area had maximum email volumes at 8:30pm on a Sunday night. It appears that this was because that was the time the CEO was addressing his email. The next level of executives cottoned onto this and so they started doing email at that time because they were able to get the CEO's attention. And so on it cascaded down the ranks in the organisation!

Having said all that, there may be people you correspond with for whom a Sunday message is not inappropriate and something to be taken advantage of.



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6 Avoid email 'ping pong'

Using **Delay Delivery** reduces the chances of getting caught up in email 'ping pong'. When you send a message, your recipient might reply very quickly, while you're trying to focus on other messages or tasks.

If you then reply, you can get caught up emailing back n' forth. It can often be better to write your response but delay sending it straight away. It is amazing how delayed gratification helps to reduce email volumes.

When others realise that they won't get an instant email response from, it's surprising how many issues begin to resolve themselves or disappear.



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7 Helps to manage expectations

For leaders and managers, using **Delay Delivery** helps you control expectations and have influence with others – staff, colleagues and clients.

Dealing with email out-of-hours is a strategy used by staff at all levels to help reduce the sense of overload that would ensue if email were allowed to build up. It is usually motivated by a desire to catch-up with and keep on top of work tasks.

However, a number of studies have shown that **frequently checking of email out-of-hours does not make a tangible difference to workers' perceptions of overload**. It appears that the act of checking email might, in itself, be considered work (even if there was no work email to subsequently deal with). As a result, it is the frequent 'checking', rather than 'dealing' with email, that maintains the sense of overload.

It seems the norms and expectations for checking and quickly responding to email during work hours continue for after-hours messages as well, even if the sender only intends to clear his/her work tasks, rather than expect an out-of-hours response.

When you send a message that arrives at odd hours, recipients will wonder if they are expected to respond straight away or soon or some time later - it's difficult for them to know when they are expected to respond. In effect, you are training the people around you that you are available outside work hours. Do you really want them starting to count on that?

So you can see that it would be better to use Delay Delivery to manage those expectations!



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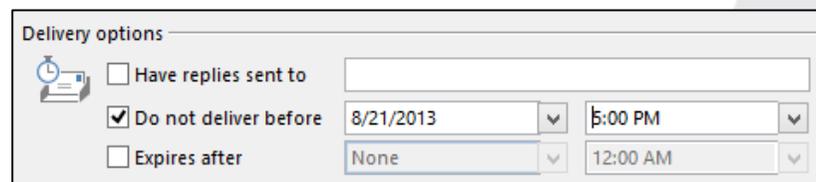
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How to Use Delay Delivery

Microsoft Outlook

1. Compose a new email
2. Go to Options > Delay Delivery > Check the box that says "Do not deliver before" > then select date and time



Delivery options

<input type="checkbox"/>	Have replies sent to	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Do not deliver before	8/21/2013 5:00 PM
<input type="checkbox"/>	Expires after	None 12:00 AM

3. Your email will sit in your outbox until the scheduled time

Note that for most users, the email will only be sent at the scheduled time if Outlook is open and running. To get around this, you can take advantage of a free app called '[SendLater](#)' which allows you to schedule an email to be delivered even if you are away from your computer.

Gmail

Use an app such as '[Boomerang](#)' or '[Yesware](#)'.



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Find out more

Like to know more about how you can get control of email?

- Is email central to most of your work?
- Do you feel the email is the biggest time waster and source of frustration in your day?
- Would you like to halve the amount of time and effort you currently spend 'doing email'?

That's where connecting with me will help. I'd like to show you how master email and make a real difference to your workplace productivity and personal life. In fact, more and more clients tell me what I show them is 'life changing'!

Hi, I'm Stuart Snooks. I work with busy professionals who are struggling to get control of their inbox and master their email. After more than decade as a specialist in this area, I've learnt that email overload is not so much about volume as it is about a lack of 'process' or a system for managing this critical aspect of everyday workload.

You see, most of us have never been taught how to master the productivity tools we use with our own hands every day. And as our technology delivers ever increasing volumes at faster and faster speeds, it's so important that we learn, right now, how to keep up.

If you like, I'd be happy to have a quick chat with you about this is some more detail.



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Let's connect

If you're interested, the easiest way to arrange this is for us to jump on the phone for 10 to 15 minutes. That way, I can get to know you, understand your biggest email challenge(s), give you some advice and discuss options to work together in the future if we are a good fit.

Simply use my on-line calendar to schedule a convenient time for us to connect and have a chat about your current situation.

 [Click to Schedule](#)

I look forward to speaking with you sometime soon!

All the best!



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