

## Addicted to the Ding

Are you or someone you know addicted to the ding, the audible notice that there is another e-mail message in your inbox? We have found that a considerable number of our new clients are spending hours "doing e-mail," whether at their desks or away from their offices on their PDA's. While you could question whether e-mail represents a true addiction, I am sure you would agree there is an addictive quality to email. So how did e-mail become so addictive, and what can we do about it? Read on for key insights and suggestions for solving the addiction to the ding.

### Eliminate the Stimulus

Like Pavlov's dogs, many of us simply have gotten conditioned to responding to the sound of a bell. But having these alarms turned on presumes that whatever lands in your inbox is more important than what you are doing at the moment. Furthermore, as human beings we tend to pay attention to the most distracting element in our environment. This tendency may have kept us safe as early humans thousands of years ago, but it can be a punishing annoyance today. So for those of you who have your "dingers" turned on, I urge you to consider turning them off. By eliminating this type of stimulus you will go a long way toward eliminating the associated response.

### Establish Clear Communication Protocols

All too often, "living in the inbox" can be a sign of poor boundaries and unclear communication protocols. To reduce your e-mail volume and the temptation to respond immediately, be aware of what type of information is being communicated through e-mail. High volume and poor quality communication are created when people try to use e-mail for complex activities such as decision making, problem solving, brainstorming, or delivering emotionally charged content. E-mail is best used for:

- Communicating a decision once it's been made
- Information dissemination
- Simple delegation
- Distributing documents

### Respond to E-mails that Relate to Meaningful Objectives

## You Talked, We Listened

Many thanks to our Focus Group members who responded to the recent survey on the Prioritizing and Planning Your Calendar Webinar! Your responses overwhelmingly indicated that this one hour Refresher was well worth the time, and served as a truly valuable learning reinforcement and retention aid. Other key findings from the survey:

- 100% cited the content as valuable
- 100% agreed the webinar was easy to use
- 100% wished they had taken the webinar following their initial training or reading of the [Take Back Your Life!](#) book

As a result of the feedback, we are increasing the accessibility of all our tools by lowering the cost of the following products:

- Both the Email 101 and Refresher webinar series will now be available for \$25 each, or 3 for \$60.
- The Prioritizing and Planning Your Calendar webinar will be available free to readers of the new [Take Back Your Life! Using MS Outlook 2007 to Get Organized and Stay Organized](#) due in stores soon.
- Our powerful Take Back Your Life! Outlook Plug-In software, which puts TBYL methods and protocols at your finger tips to drive greater productivity, will be available immediately for \$59.95.

Free trials and previews of all of our

Hitting the send button multiple times throughout the day may provide you with that sense of completion you desire, but are your e-mails truly a reflection of your most important priorities? In other words are your e-mails directly related to your Meaningful Objectives? We suggest you measure your productivity on the completion of steps you take towards achieving major goals. In doing so, you will replace your reactivity to incoming e-mails with a proactive approach to getting the right things done at the right time.

Your Meaningful Objectives will cascade to Supporting Projects, followed by Strategic Next Actions (SNAs). An SNA is simply an action that relates to a Meaningful Objective and is physically doable with no dependencies. If there is a dependency on an action, you won't be able to complete the task. "Improve health" is not a Strategic Next Action. "Call Dentist to schedule a check-up" is. Completing SNAs frequently involves email communications, but to minimize your time in the inbox, they should always be driven by your Meaningful Objectives.

### **Tools for Learning More**

By learning better processes for managing e-mail and improving productivity, you can break your addiction to the ding. For more in-depth, self-paced learning, check out our popular Take Back Your Life! E-Mail 101 and Refresher Series Webinars. Free previews are available at [www.mcgheeproductivity.com/products](http://www.mcgheeproductivity.com/products).

--Anne McGhee Stinson, Executive Consultant

products are available at [www.mcgheeproductivity.com/products](http://www.mcgheeproductivity.com/products).

You talked, we listened. Let us know how we can improve our products and services more at [talkback@mcgheeproductivity.com](mailto:talkback@mcgheeproductivity.com).

---

***Take Back Your Life! Using MS Outlook 2007 to Get Organized and Stay Organized*** Available for pre-orders through retailers now!

With brand new content and upgrades, authors Sally McGhee and John Wittry show you how to achieve better work/life balance and improved personal and professional productivity using MS Outlook 2007. Look for our Special Edition Newsletter next month with exclusive offers and more details.

---

### **Fast Fact**

In March 2007, the New York Times reported the cost to U.S. companies of interruptions from e-mail, web browsing, instant messaging and other electronic communications at \$650 billion per year, up from \$588 billion two years ago!

---

To discuss how McGhee strategies can help you achieve your objectives more effectively, just [e-mail us](mailto:talkback@mcgheeproductivity.com) or contact us any time from our [web site](http://www.mcgheeproductivity.com).

---

Thanks for your interest in McGhee Productivity Solutions.  
We look forward to serving you in the future!

**[www.mcgheeproductivity.com](http://www.mcgheeproductivity.com)**

SUBSCRIBE to McGhee Productivity News. If you received this message directly from McGhee Productivity Solutions, you are automatically subscribed to this newsletter. If it was sent to you from a friend, you can subscribe by sending a blank e-mail to [subscribe@mcgheeproductivity.com](mailto:subscribe@mcgheeproductivity.com), or you can subscribe directly on our website, [www.mcgheeproductivity.com/library/newsletter.html](http://www.mcgheeproductivity.com/library/newsletter.html).

UNSUBSCRIBE to McGhee Productivity News. To unsubscribe, send a blank e-mail to [unsubscribe@mcgheeproductivity.com](mailto:unsubscribe@mcgheeproductivity.com).

---