



# MONDAY MOTIVATOR

CREATED BY PERFORMANCE STRATEGIES  
MANAGEMENT CONSULTING GROUP

WILL ROBERTSON / JAY McDOWELL

[Will@PS-MCG.com](mailto:Will@PS-MCG.com) [Jay@PS-MCG.com](mailto:Jay@PS-MCG.com)

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## All About Details and E-Mail

It's been a fun time this past week. Thanksgiving festivities along with family, friends, the football games and holiday movies plus all those car ads showing Santa flipping a switch to instantly trade in his traditional sleigh for a nice shiny new red sports car!



But after all, Thanksgiving is simply one day out of our year, not a whole week or two. There is a mentality among business people that tends to think that this time of year is all about the holidays (more than one). While there are a few sprinkled throughout November and December they are only a few days, not a few weeks. Work still needs to get done. Sales

need to be made. People need to get up, dress up and show up.

This is also a good time to handle a few office details that tend to work best near the end of the calendar year. Let's look at one of the more important and see what benefits might come from some attention to e-mail.

I use a laptop for away from my office work but when at my desk the bigger monitors allow for more visibility and thus more work to get accomplished. But I was in a bit of a hurry that day and as my Outlook app came up I quickly went to the inbox to show any unread e-mails that had accumulated over night. A few of the first entries were not something I wanted to keep so I

highlighted them (so I thought) and hit the DELETE button on my keyboard. The usual “Are You Sure?” message popped up and without giving it a thought I clicked on the YES icon.

Then I got another pop up box saying the e-mails were too large for the delete file so would I be okay with permanently deleting them off my computer. Again, I thought little of it and quickly hit the YES icon. A few seconds later the inbox list sat in front of me totally empty. I did not simply delete a dozen or so e-mails; I had deleted the entire inbox of over 3,000 of them from my computer. These included messages from friends, family, clients, customers, prospects and junk with them. Everything was gone. I was sure there must be a collection of them in a backup spot somewhere but such was not the case. I felt a sense of panic. What had I just done?



I had no idea how many important messages I had just trashed. There were over 3,000 of them a moment ago and now there was zero. A year of messages had just vanished! I was sure this was a major disaster so I called a few techie friends only to learn that the e-mails were, indeed, gone. There was no getting them back short of hiring a data recovery specialist for a special recovery operation. The cost would have been about as much as the entire

computer so I resigned myself to the consequences.

Turns out there were no consequences. None. I did not miss a single thing, nor did any of those messages contain life altering information that I did not already have. To be frank, that image of a clean inbox got refreshing in a hurry. I relaxed and began fresh with the usual 200 daily e-mails that show up every morning. The junk filter worked just like before so I only had to glance at half of them. Most went to the junk pile as well. The blog notices, messages from friends and family, clients and prospects, vendors, associate partners, my business partner Jay, all got a little more scrutiny.

So I learned a good lesson; several, in fact. Although I use both PC and MAC units my comments here will apply to Microsoft Outlook that has a version for both platforms. I'm not offering any detailed instructions here as the various versions of Outlook feature different

commands in some cases. (One of our services at Performance Strategies is to teach a select group of applications for business use and that includes MS Outlook.) Here are our 3 golden rules for E Mail:



1. Never allow more than 1000 e-mails to pile up in your inbox without a good house cleaning now and then. Trash what you do not need and file the important ones. Some people only allow a hundred or less to remain there. At my desk I flush the entire inbox every 30 days. I mean everything gets flushed out. I am down to ZERO items in my inbox following that ritual. It feels wonderful! I'm sure it adds a few hours to my life.
2. If you are really concerned that certain e-mails are "must-keeps," you can create your own custom list of folders under your Outlook inbox. I have about fifty such folders to store e-mails from special sources that I may want to refer to in the future.
3. On a PC if you are using Outlook you will likely have what is called a .pst file. (Dot PST). This file contains all your contacts, saved e-mails, sent e-mails along with tasks and calendars in one file. It's a good idea to back up that file every 90 days or so just in case of a problem later. I recommend you back it up to an external storage device in case of an internal hard drive issue. Once you find the .pst file it's quite easy to copy it to another

location. I simply highlight the file and drag it to an external storage device. Here's a link on how to find your .pst file: <https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/kb/291636>

In summary, when you have a few slow days why not plan on a little PC housekeeping? I recall helping a retired friend organize his e-mail file a few months back. He said the computer ran slow. When I took a look at his inbox he had accumulated over 23,000 e-mails, dating back over four years and most of which were not read. Most e-mail client apps limit the amount of such data you can save on your hard drive, but in his case there was no set limit. Had I not



come along he would likely be up to 50,000 e-mails by now! We cleaned up the huge file and got him going again but it did require some talking about the real value of e-mails that were dated two years ago and beyond. The bottom line here is: don't horde e-mails just because you have not had time to read them. If they are not important enough to read they are likely not important enough to keep. <http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/import-manage-multiple-email-accounts-gmail/>

Until next week, if you know of any business that would benefit with a little coaching in the areas of organization, time and task management, social media, sales, marketing, customer service, operations, HR, leadership or team-building, have them give us a call at 562-577-7000 or send us an email. We will keep you in the loop on how it's going.

Will Robertson, Founder / CEO and Jay McDowell, President / MBA are doing business as Performance Strategies as of Jan. 1, 2017. Our offices are located at 1231 E. Dyer Road, Suite 215, Santa Ana, CA 92705. You can reach us 562-577-7000. Our web site is [www.PS-MCG.com](http://www.PS-MCG.com) Our E Mail addresses: [Will@PS-MCG.com](mailto:Will@PS-MCG.com) and [Jay@PS-MCG.com](mailto:Jay@PS-MCG.com)

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Will Robertson, Founder / CEO



Jay McDowell, President / MBA