WHITE PAPER

MEASURING

EMAIL PRODUCTIVITY
WITH LEANMAIL

A COMPREHENSIVE SOLUTION TO EMAIL OVERLOAD

By Michael Hoffman, CEO, LeanMail

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1 INTRODUCTION

The white paper titles "From Data to Results: Measuring Email Productivity with LeanMail" explores the challenges face by individuals and businesses in managing email overload and presents a unique approach to measuring email productivity using LeanMail's software. The white paper outlines the various metrics that can be used to measure email productivity, including the number of unread emails, the ratio of normal to high priority emails, and the attention given to urgent emails. The paper also highlights the importance of measuring the impact of email on business outcomes, such as revenue and profit. and provides insights into how email management can contribute to stress and burnout. By utilizing LeanMail's software, individuals and businesses can gain a better understanding of how they are managing their email, identify areas for improvement, and work towards increasing their productivity. The white paper concludes by highlighting the importance of automates measurement tools to streamline the measurement process and provide accurate and comprehensive insights.

2 VARIABLES

It can be extremely challenging, if not impossible, to accurately measure email management metrics with just Outlook alone. That's because there are many variables that make measuring email management productivity challenging, including:

1. **Lack of Standard Metrics:** Unlike other areas of business, there are no standard metrics for measuring email productivity. This makes it difficult to bench ¡mark and compare productivity across teams and organizations.

2. **Subjectivity:** Email productivity is subjective and can vary greatly depending on the individual and their role. What may be considered productive for one person may not be for another making it challenging to measure objectively.

3. **Time Management:** Email management is just one aspect of time management, and it can be difficult to isolate and measure email productivity without considering other factors that impact overall productivity.

4. **Volume of Emails:** The volume of emails received can also impact the ability to measure productivity. A high volume of emails can be overwhelming and make it difficult to prioritize and respond to important messages in a timely manner.

5. **Varied Workflows:** Different teams and individuals have different workflows and processes for managing emails, which can make it challenging to develop and standardized approach for measuring productivity.

6. **Technology Limitations:** The tools and technology available for measuring email productivity are often limited, especially within popular email clients like Outlook.

2.1 KEY METRICS

To manually measure email productivity, some of the key metrics you may want to track include:

1. **Total Emails Received:** This is the total of emails received over a given period of time, such as a day, week, or month.
2. **Total Emails Sent:** This is the total number of emails sent over a given period of time.
3. **Response Time:** This is the amount of time it takes to respond to an email after it has been received
4. **Average Email Length:** This is the average length of emails sent and received.
5. **Email categorization:** This is the categorization of emails according to their level of importance, urgency, or topic.
6. **Email Prioritization:** This is the prioritization of emails based on their level of importance, urgency, or other factors.
7. **Email Volume by Time of Day:** This is the volume of emails received and sent during different times of the day.
8. **Email backlog:** This is the number of unread or unanswered emails in your inbox.

2.2 MISSING ELEMENTS

While tracking email metrics can provide valuable insights into email management, there are important elements that are often missing from the above types of measurement. These include:

1. **How each email affects the top and bottom lines:** It's essential to track how email communication impacts business outcomes, such as revenue and profit, to understand the true impact of email on business success.
2. **Prioritizing important and urgent emails:** It's critical to ensure that important and urgent emails are being answered first to reduce bottlenecks and maximize productivity.
3. **Balancing quick and easy tasks with important work:** Answering less important and less urgent emails quickly may create a false sense of productivity while important work is neglected.
4. **Addressing stress and burnout:** Email overload can contribute to stress and burnout, leading to lost work days and decreased productivity
5. **Ensuring email management does not delay projects and deals:** Poor email management can lead to delays and missed opportunities.

Manual measurement of these elements can be time-consuming and prone to errors. Therefore, it's important to utilize tools and software that can automate and streamline the measurement process while providing accurate and comprehensive insights.

3 THE THREE MOST IMPORTANT MEASUREMENTS

There are actually only three principal measurements needed:
1. *Are people prioritizing the right emails?*
2. *Are people working according to true urgencies, ad-hoc, or feeding off the top of their inbox?*
3. *Are people relaxed and feeling in control over their inboxes.*

These three measurements are important because they provide a framework for assessing whether an individual is managing their inbox effectively.

Firstly, measuring whether people are prioritizing the right emails is crucial because it ensures that the most important messages are being addressed first. Without proper prioritization, individuals may be spending valuable time on emails that are not critical to their work or the organization's goals.

Secondly, measuring whether people are working according to true urgencies, ad-hoc, or feeding off the top of their inbox is important because it helps ensure that individuals are not getting sidetracked by emails that are not urgent or important. Without a clear understanding of what is truly urgent, individuals may be spending valuable time on low-priority tasks, leading to decreased productivity and missed deadlines.

Lastly, measuring whether people are relaxed and feeling in control over their inboxes is important because it impacts job satisfaction and overall well-being. An overwhelming inbox can lead to stress, anxiety, and decreased productivity. By ensuring that individuals feel in control of their inboxes, they are more likely to approach their work with a positive attitude and perform at their best.

Overall, these three measurements provide a framework for assessing whether individuals are managing their inbox effectively, allowing for targeted improvements and increased productivity.

4 HOW TO MEASURE USING LEANMAIL

LeanMail's software provides a comprehensive approach to managing email overload by offering real-time snapshots of users' inboxes. These snapshots provide valuable information about the user's understanding of what is important and urgent by displaying the following information:

1. **Number of unread and unprioritized emails:** This measure can help to identify how effectively users are managing their email inbox and prioritizing their tasks. By tracking this measure over time, it's possible to assess whether users are becoming more efficient in managing their email and prioritizing their work.

2. **Ratio of Normal to High priority emails:** This measure can help to identify whether users are prioritizing their tasks effectively, with a balanced ratio of Normal to High priority emails indicating a good balance between urgent and non-urgent tasks. By tracking this measure over time, it's possible to assess whether users are improving their ability to prioritize their tasks effectively.

3. **Attention given to urgent emails:** This measure can help to identify whether users are giving appropriate attention to urgent emails, ensuring that important deadlines are met. By tracking this measure over time, it's possible to assess whether users are becoming more effective in managing urgent tasks and meeting deadlines.

4. **Sent emails:** This measure can help to identify whether users are communicating with the most appropriate contacts and ensures that nothing falls through the cracks. By tracking this measure over time, it's possible to assess whether users are becoming more effective in managing their communication and staying on top of their tasks.

Overall, these measures can help to provide insight into how effectively users are managing their email communication and prioritizing their tasks. By tracking these measures over time, it's possible to identify areas for improvement and help users to become more productive and efficient in their work

5 REPORTING

5.1 PRINT-SCREENS

Users can instantly (with three clicks of a mouse) send in reports (snapshots of their inbox and sent items) on a regular basis or from time to time to demonstrate their productiveness. These snapshots do not contain any personal information except the names or email addresses of the senders.

Provided that users have given explicit and informed consent to share their snapshots, sending such reports is unlikely to violate the GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation). However, it is important to ensure that users have a clear understanding of how their data is being collected, processed, and shared. Additionally, the names or email addresses of the senders can still be considered personal information and should be protected accordingly. It is recommended to provide users with clear and easily accessible information on how their data is being used and give them the ability to opt-out or delete their data at any time.

5.2 SURVEYS

Another practical tool to use is surveying. LeanMail has a number of pre-designed surveys to choose from, but we can also create customized surveys upon request. Typically, we survey before, during and after training. Please contact us to learn more about surveys

6 APPENDIX

Every company has different values, so there is a possibility that you would like to measure other aspects of email management. To that end, here is a more comprehensive list of challenges that one could choose to measure; the idea being that you could pick and choose what you felt was important to investigate. These values are divided into the following categories: General, How to measure whether people are working on the most important emails? Ways to measure a person's ability to prioritize emails based on urgency and importance:

6.1 GENERAL

1. Prioritization and urgency: It can be difficult to prioritize emails based on their importance and urgency, leading to missed deadlines or opportunities.
2. Email volume: The sheer volume of emails received on a daily basis can be overwhelming, making it challenging to manage time effectively and respond to messages promptly.
3. Re-reading and re-analyzing emails: Going back and forth over an email thread can waste time and lead to confusion or misinterpretation of the message.
4. Inability to take notes on emails: Users may need to take notes or make annotations on emails to help remember important details or follow-up actions, but there is no built-in feature in most email clients to support this.
5. Difficulty in remembering: Emails can be easily forgotten, especially when there are many other things vying for one's attention. This can lead to missed opportunities or forgotten commitments.
6. Search functionality: Finding specific emails or information within emails can be difficult, leading to wasted time and frustration.
7. Email triage: It can be challenging to quickly identify and prioritize emails that require action, leading to delayed responses or missed opportunities.
8. Interruptions and distractions: Email notifications can be distracting and interrupt workflow, leading to decreased productivity and increased stress.
9. Email overload and mental fatigue: Constantly dealing with emails can lead to mental fatigue and burnout, leading to decreased motivation and productivity.
10. Multitasking: Email can encourage multitasking, which has been shown to decrease productivity and impair cognitive function.
11. Spam and phishing emails: Spam emails are unwanted and unsolicited messages that fill up email inboxes. Phishing emails, on the other hand, are designed to trick users into providing personal information, such as passwords or financial details.
12. Email overload: With the constant influx of emails, it can be challenging to manage and prioritize messages, leading to an overwhelming amount of unread emails.

13. Email security: Email accounts can be hacked, and sensitive information can be compromised, leading to data breaches, identity theft, and other cybersecurity risks.

14. Miscommunication: Email communication can be prone to misinterpretation, leading to misunderstandings or miscommunications between senders and recipients.

15. Email organization: It can be difficult to keep track of emails, leading to missed messages, lost information, and wasted time searching for emails.

16. Time management: Constant email notifications can be distracting and lead to decreased productivity, especially when emails are not prioritized.

17. Accessibility: Email may not be accessible to individuals with disabilities, such as those with visual or hearing impairments.

18. Email etiquette: Poor email etiquette, such as improper grammar or tone, can lead to misunderstandings or offend recipients.

19. Legal issues: Email correspondence can be used as evidence in legal disputes, making it important to maintain proper documentation and archiving practices.

20. Language barriers: Email communication can be challenging when language barriers exist, leading to miscommunication or misunderstandings.

21. Mobile access: With the increasing use of mobile devices, users need to be able to access and manage email on the go. However, this can be challenging with smaller screens and limited functionality.

22. Attachment size limitations: Email clients may have limitations on the size of attachments that can be sent or received, which can be frustrating for users who need to send or receive large files.

23. Compatibility issues: Different email clients and platforms may have compatibility issues, leading to formatting problems, missing attachments, or other errors.

24. Email archiving and storage: Emails need to be archived and stored for future reference, but this can be challenging when dealing with large volumes of messages and limited storage space.

25. Email collaboration: When multiple people need to collaborate on an email thread, it can be challenging to keep track of who has responded and what actions have been taken.

26. Email communication in different time zones: With the increasing globalization of business, it can be challenging to communicate effectively with colleagues or clients in different time zones.

27. Email overload and stress: Constantly dealing with emails can lead to increased stress and anxiety, which can have negative effects on physical and mental health.

28. Cultural differences: Cultural differences in email communication styles and expectations can lead to misunderstandings or misinterpretations.

29. Legal compliance: Organizations need to comply with various regulations regarding email communication, such as privacy laws and data retention policies.

30. Email addiction: Email can be addictive, leading to compulsive checking and increased distraction from other tasks.

31. Email policies and guidelines: Organizations need to establish and enforce email policies and guidelines to ensure that employees use email appropriately and avoid security risks.

32. Email scams and frauds: Scammers and fraudsters can use email to trick users into disclosing sensitive information, making it important for users to be aware of common scams and avoid falling victim to them.

33. Email backups and disaster recovery: Organizations need to ensure that they have backup and disaster recovery plans in place to protect against data loss and ensure continuity of operations in the event of a system failure or other disaster.

34. Email spam filters: While spam filters can help to reduce the amount of unwanted emails, they can also filter out legitimate emails, leading to missed opportunities or important messages.

35. Email server downtime: Email servers can experience downtime or other issues, leading to disruption of email communication and delays in sending or receiving messages.

36. Email monitoring and surveillance: Employers may monitor employee email activity for security or compliance purposes, which can raise privacy concerns and affect employee morale.

37. Email formatting issues: Emails may not display correctly in different email clients or devices, leading to formatting issues or broken links.

38. Email address book management: Maintaining and updating email address books can be time consuming and challenging, especially for larger organizations with many contacts.

39. Email language translation: When communicating with international partners or clients, email language translation can be a challenge, especially for non-native speakers of the language.

40. Email server capacity: Email servers need to have enough capacity to handle the volume of emails sent and received, which can be a challenge for organizations experiencing rapid growth or high email traffic.

Psychological issues

41. Email addiction: Constantly checking and responding to emails can lead to addiction-like behaviors, such as an inability to stop checking emails, even outside of work hours.

42. Email anxiety: The fear of missing important emails or the pressure to respond quickly can lead to email anxiety, which can have negative effects on mental health and well-being.

43. Email overload and burnout: Dealing with a high volume of emails can lead to burnout, causing decreased motivation, productivity, and job satisfaction.

44. Email-induced stress: Managing email can be stressful, especially when dealing with urgent or important messages. This can lead to increased stress and anxiety, which can have negative physical and mental health effects.

45. Email interruptions and distractions: Constantly checking emails can interrupt workflow and reduce productivity, leading to increased stress and frustration.

46. Email overload and decision fatigue: When dealing with a large volume of emails, it can be challenging to make decisions about which emails to prioritize and respond to, leading to decision fatigue and decreased cognitive function.

47. Email-induced multitasking: Constantly checking and responding to emails can encourage multitasking, which has been shown to decrease productivity and impair cognitive function.

48. Email-induced procrastination: The overwhelming nature of email can lead to procrastination, causing delays in responding to important messages and missed opportunities.

49. Email-induced isolation: Over-reliance on email communication can lead to feelings of isolation and decreased social interaction, which can have negative mental health effects.

50. Email-induced miscommunication: Email communication can be prone to misinterpretation and misunderstandings, leading to decreased job satisfaction and interpersonal conflicts.

Business issues

51. Email confidentiality and data protection: Organizations need to ensure that email communication is secure and protected against unauthorized access or disclosure, especially when dealing with sensitive information.

52. Email compliance and legal issues: Organizations need to comply with various regulations regarding email communication, such as privacy laws and data retention policies, to avoid legal liabilities.

53. Email branding and consistency: Organizations need to ensure that their email communication is consistent with their branding and messaging, to maintain a professional image and avoid confusion or misrepresentation.

54. Email marketing and spam regulations: Organizations need to comply with various regulations regarding email marketing, such as opt-in requirements and unsubscribe options, to avoid spam complaints and legal liabilities.

55. Email customer service: Email can be an important channel for customer service communication, and organizations need to ensure that they respond promptly and appropriately to customer inquiries and complaints.

56. Email project management: Email can be used for project management communication, such as assigning tasks and tracking progress, but it can also lead to confusion or miscommunication if not managed properly.

57. Email collaboration and teamwork: Email can be used for collaboration and teamwork, but it can also lead to conflicts and delays if not managed properly.

58. Email productivity and efficiency: Organizations need to ensure that email communication is managed efficiently to avoid wasted time and decreased productivity.

59. Email customer relationship management: Email can be an important tool for customer relationship management, such as sending newsletters and updates, but it can also lead to spam complaints and decreased engagement if not managed properly

60. Email analytics and metrics: Organizations need to track email metrics and analytics, such as open rates and click-through rates, to evaluate the effectiveness of email communication and make data driven decisions.

6.2 HOW TO MEASURE WHETHER PEOPLE ARE WORKING ON THE MOST IMPORTANT EMAILS?

Measuring whether people are working on the most important emails can be challenging as it requires determining what qualifies as important for each individual or organization. However, here are some ways to measure whether people are working on the most important emails:

1. **Email response time:** Monitoring email response time can provide insight into how quickly people are responding to important emails. If important emails are being responded to promptly, it can indicate that people are prioritizing them appropriately.
2. **Email categorization:** Encouraging people to categorize emails based on their importance can provide insight into which emails are considered important and how much time is being spent on them. This can be done manually or through the use of automated tools that categorize emails based on predefined criteria.
3. **Email tracking:** Tracking email open and click-through rates can provide insight into which emails are being read and acted upon, which can indicate their importance.
4. **Email feedback:** Collecting feedback from email recipients can provide insight into the effectiveness and importance of emails. This can be done through surveys or direct feedback channels.
5. **Goal tracking:** Aligning email communication with specific goals, such as lead generation or customer retention, and tracking progress toward those goals can provide insight into the importance of different types of emails.
6. **Performance metrics:** Evaluating performance metrics, such as sales revenue or customer satisfaction, can provide insight into the effectiveness and importance of email communication in achieving business objectives.

6.3 WAYS TO MEASURE A PERSON'S ABILITY TO PRIORITIZE EMAILS BASED ON URGENCY AND IMPORTANCE:

It's important to note that measuring whether people are working on the most important emails requires a comprehensive understanding of what qualifies as important for each individual or organization, and it may require ongoing evaluation and adjustment as priorities and goals change over time. Balancing work and paying attention to priorities is an important aspect of email productivity. Here are some scientific ways to measure a person's ability to prioritize emails based on urgency and importance:

1. **Email response time based on urgency:** Measuring the response time of emails based on their level of urgency can provide insight into a person's ability to prioritize emails effectively. Urgent emails should be responded to promptly, while less urgent emails can be addressed later. Analyzing the response time distribution across different levels of urgency can provide insight into a person's ability to balance priorities.

2. **Email response rate based on importance:** Measuring the response rate of emails based on their level of importance can provide insight into a person's ability to prioritize emails effectively. Important emails should receive a response, while less important emails may not require a response. Analyzing the response rate distribution across different levels of importance can provide insight into a person's ability to balance priorities.

3. **Email categorization:** Encouraging people to categorize emails based on their level of urgency and importance can provide insight into a person's ability to prioritize emails effectively. Analyzing the distribution of emails across different categories and the response time or response rate for each category can provide insight into a person's ability to balance priorities.

4. **Email analytics:** Analyzing email analytics such as open rate and click-through rate for different levels of urgency and importance can provide insight into a person's ability to prioritize effectively. Emails that receive high engagement may be more important or urgent and require a prompt response.

5. **Time management:** Measuring a person's time management skills can provide insight into their ability to balance work and priorities. This can be done through self-report measures, such as time tracking, or through observational methods, such as video recording or electronic monitoring.

It's important to note that measuring a person's ability to prioritize emails requires a comprehensive understanding of the urgency and importance of different emails, and it may require ongoing evaluation and adjustment as priorities and goals change over time. Additionally, it's important to consider that email prioritization is just one aspect of overall productivity and should be considered in the context of other factors such as teamwork, collaboration, and strategic decision-making

Michael Hoffman
CEO
LeanMail

Michael Hoffman is a renowned executive coach with a track record of working with leaders of Global 500 and Fortune 500 companies. He is also the CEO of LeanMail, a productivity solutions provider for email, meetings, and projects. Michael brings a wealth of experience to his role, having held various management positions, and worked with diverse people and cultures. His entrepreneurship experience stretches over 30 years.

As an executive coach, Michael focuses on providing skills and tools to individuals who are dedicated to achieving personal and professional excellence. He takes a pragmatic approach, emphasizing on work-life balance and a holistic mindset. His book, *The Power of Coaching and Mentoring - A Human - Machine Collaboration*, is a must-read for those interested in exploring the world of coaching and mentoring. Whether you seek personal growth, professional development, or organizational improvement, this concise yet powerful book will undoubtedly inspire and empower you to unlock your full potential through the art of coaching and mentoring.

LeanMail, has partnered with more than 250 organizations, including six Fortune 100 companies, in order to improve their focus on profitability, lower stress, and reduce waste in the realm of internal collaborative communications, including meetings, messaging/email management, policy making, and change management.

In addition, Michael has trained first-year MBA students at IESE through a program called ScaleYOU, which aims to assist students in managing their time effectively, reducing stress, and leading more efficient and effective lives.

Specialties: General management, change management, negotiations, business process design, IT management. Strong leadership and communication skills enabling him to inspire employees, partners, and clients alike.