

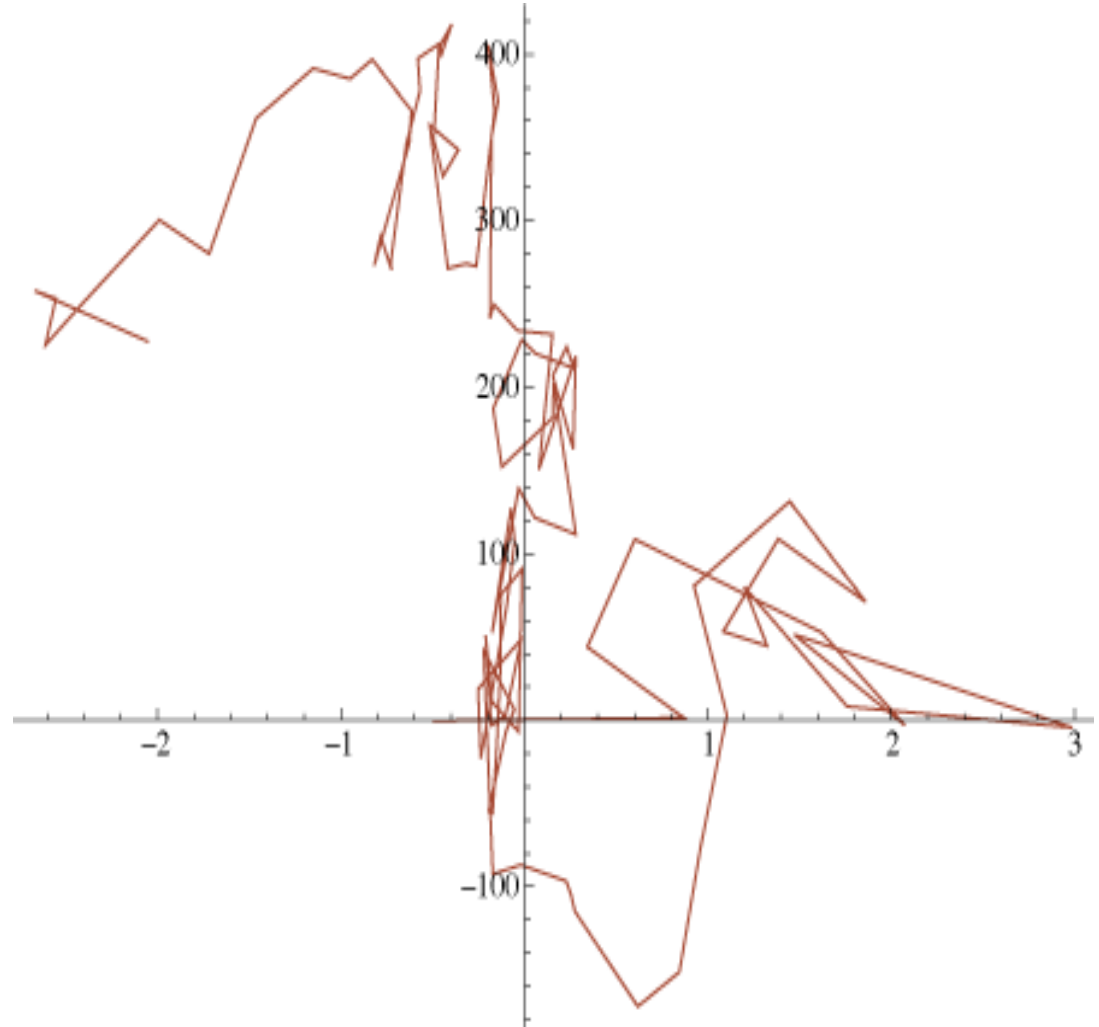
Email Action Plan

- ✓ Improves your email responses
- ✓ **Eliminates unnecessary follow-up emails**
 - ✓ Solves problems quickly

Why do you need a plan?

**Do your
emails
wander off
the track. . .**

**and no one reads
them?**



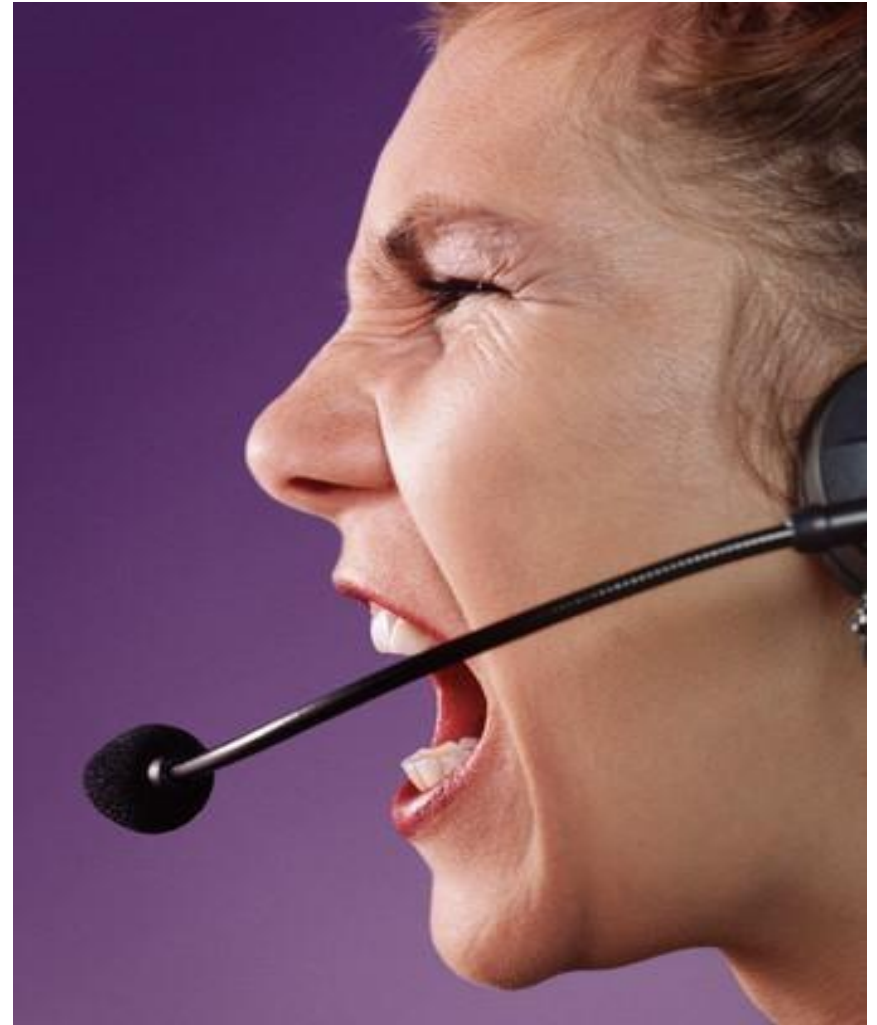
Do you get too many questions?

- ▶ What is the cost?
- ▶ Where do I find the form?
- ▶ When is the delivery date?
- ▶ Where's my stuff?
- ▶ Why did you overcharge me?



Are your customers complaining?

- ▶ You didn't get back to me!
- ▶ Where's my stuff?
- ▶ What are you going to do to solve MY problem?
- ▶ We need it yesterday!



Think...

Before you write. . .



Image: BartCo/iStockPhoto.com.

Follow a Plan . . .

Here's a plan that works:

The Action Plan

The Action Plan

Purpose

Why are you writing this email?

- To inform?
- To recommend?
- To solve a problem?

Audience

Who are your readers?

- How will they respond to your message?
- What information do they need?

Main Message

What do your readers want to know in the first paragraph?

- Did you solve my problem?
- What do you want?
- What are your findings?

This plan will help you . . .

- ▶ **Quickly** draft emails that customers and management will **really** read.
- ▶ Eliminate **endless rewrites**.
- ▶ **Focus** on the business transaction—the main message and readers' concerns.
- ▶ **Test It:** Compare the email quality and time it takes to write emails using **the action plan with your old process**.

Analyze your email purpose

- ▶ Why are you writing this email?
 - To respond to a customer or staff question
 - To solve a customer problem
 - To recommend a new process or solution
 - To inform management, staff, or customers of new procedures, pricing, products, etc.

**Your purpose determines your
main message!**

Analyze your readers'

Knowledge

- What do they already know about the topic?
- What information do they need to take action?

Reaction

- How will they react to the message (receptive, indifferent, resistant)?
- What objections do you need to address?

Use of information

- How will they use this information?
- What additional information (tables, attachments, etc.) will help them take action?



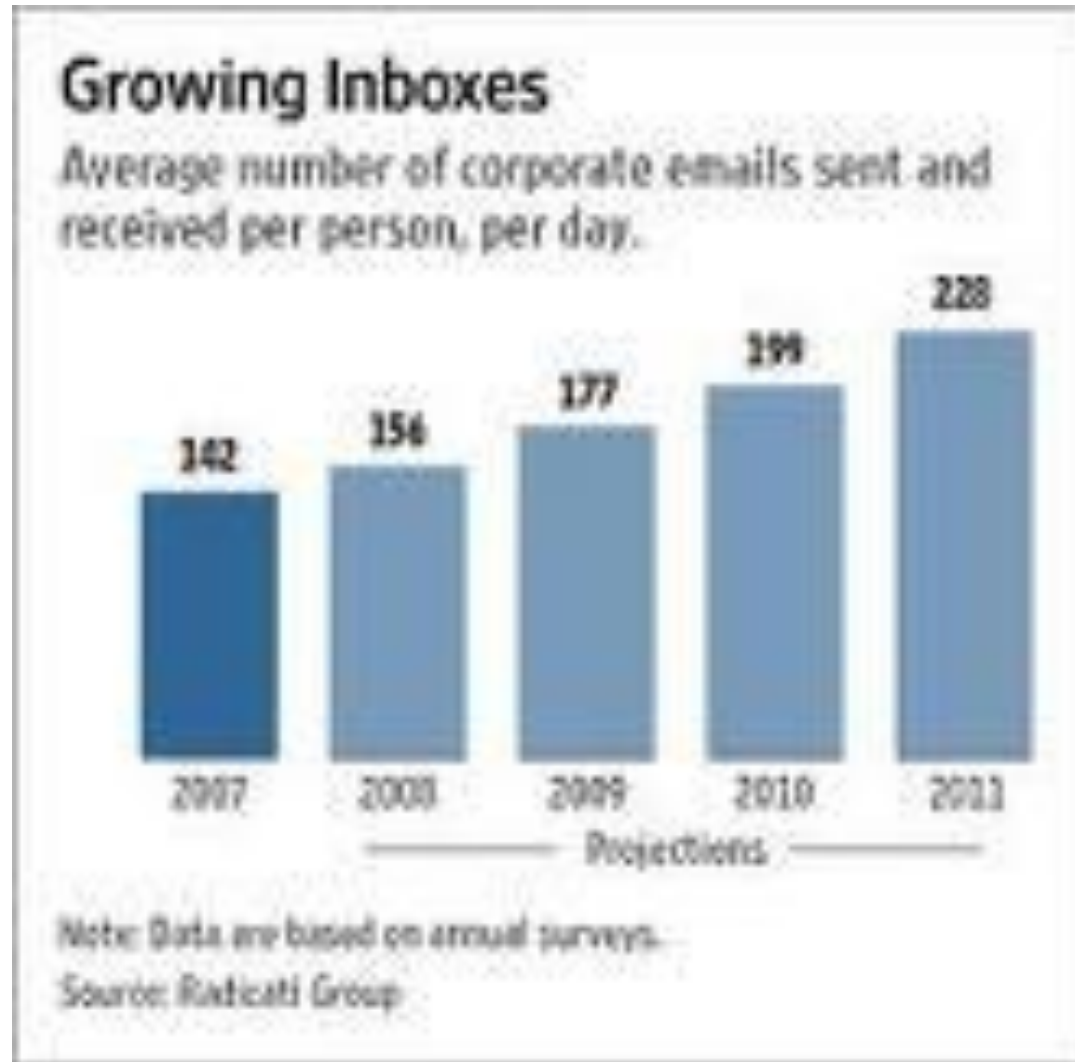
Determine what information your reader needs.

- ▶ Brainstorm the 5Ws/How questions readers might ask:
 - who, what, where, when, why and how?
- ▶ What information do they already know? **Don't bore** them **with tedious details.**
- ▶ What information is necessary so they can take action, make a decision, respond?

Remember...

Readers are **over**loaded with emails, information, and more...

Get to the point quickly!



Source: Chart from Robert Chien's blog

The secret of success. . .

State your **main
message** in the
first paragraph.

Tell them in the first paragraph what they want to hear.

I've solved your problem...
Here's how I did it.



Tell them in the first paragraph what they want to hear.

Here's a recommendation that will solve our problem with X.



Tell them in the first paragraph what they want to hear.

Our customer surveys show we need to improve our email communication.



Remember...

Readers *skim* emails

How to get your message across to skimmers

- ▶ **Subject line:** Make it descriptive, previewing your main message.
- ▶ **Salutation:** Use the proper salutation to set a polite tone.
- ▶ **Main message:** State this in the first paragraph.
- ▶ **Headings:** Use these to highlight main points.
- ▶ **Listings:** Help skimmers quickly grasp ideas.

Headings help readers

- ▶ **Focus** on the main points
- ▶ **Follow** your message's structure
- ▶ **Identify** points most important to them



ONLINE MARKETING



Listings

- ▶ Focus readers on topic points
- ▶ Help readers quickly understand the topic points
- ▶ Show readers how topic points fit into the overall categories or message

What's the next step?



Keep the transaction on track

- ▶ Tell readers who does what next
- ▶ Give them specific instructions for next steps
- ▶ Give them contact information
- ▶ Close with a kind goodwill statement

A review of the action plan

- ▶ **Plan** your message
 - Determine your **purpose**
 - **Analyze readers'** concerns and reactions
 - Select the information they need (5Ws/How)
- ▶ State your **main message**
 - Write a rough draft of your message
 - Identify the main message points and rewrite the main message
- ▶ Write **headings and listings**
- ▶ State **Next Steps**

Need more help?

Our *Effective Email* programs and workbooks provide instruction and practice in

- ✓ Focusing the business transaction
- ✓ Selecting content
- ✓ Developing a concise main message
- ✓ Organizing a persuasive message
- ✓ Adopting a clear, persuasive style

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