

Information Management

By Tish Vincent

We live and work at a time in history when we are constantly bombarded with information in the form of e-mails, instant messages, tweets, snail mail, and research we actively pursue on topics of interest. This abundance of information quickly becomes overwhelming.

How do we deal with this avalanche of information? How do we discern which information might be valuable from that which can be discarded without compunction?

In the book *Find Your Focus Zone: An Effective New Plan to Defeat Distraction and Overload*,¹ Lucy Jo Palladino states, “[I]ndecisiveness or analysis paralysis occurs when [we] are overwhelmed by too many choices, [our] brain mildly freezes and . . . we wait and see.”

Attorneys who were asked how they cope with information overload shared these tips:

- Keep your office and computer desktop organized and clutter free.
- Consider e-mails and magazines you receive and delete or discard those that are unnecessary.

How do we discern which information might be valuable from that which can be discarded without compunction?

- Immediately respond to work-related e-mails and phone calls.
- Set limits on how much time you will spend on a project or online, and adhere to those time limits. Set a timer to remind you to stop.
- Find five things to discard daily—e-mails to delete, pieces of paper to shred, items that can be given away or discarded. Experts believe having a number in mind helps the process.

Adhering to these simple tips helps you feel in control and on top of the information flowing into your life. Those who are overwhelmed with information can start with this simple list of tips and add a few more organizational concepts into the mix.

Robert C. Pozen’s *Extreme Productivity: Boost Your Results, Reduce Your Hours*² advises professionals to think about their values and priorities when organizing daily tasks. The book contains a wealth of ideas about efficiently organizing your office, calendar, and work life.

Although younger attorneys raised in the era of computers and the Internet have developed many of these information-management skills, some older attorneys may benefit from learning techniques for coping with the onslaught of information. ■



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ENDNOTES

1. Palladino, *Find Your Focus Zone: An Effective New Plan to Defeat Distraction and Overload* (New York: Free Press, 2007).
2. Pozen, *Extreme Productivity: Boost Your Results, Reduce Your Hours* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2012).