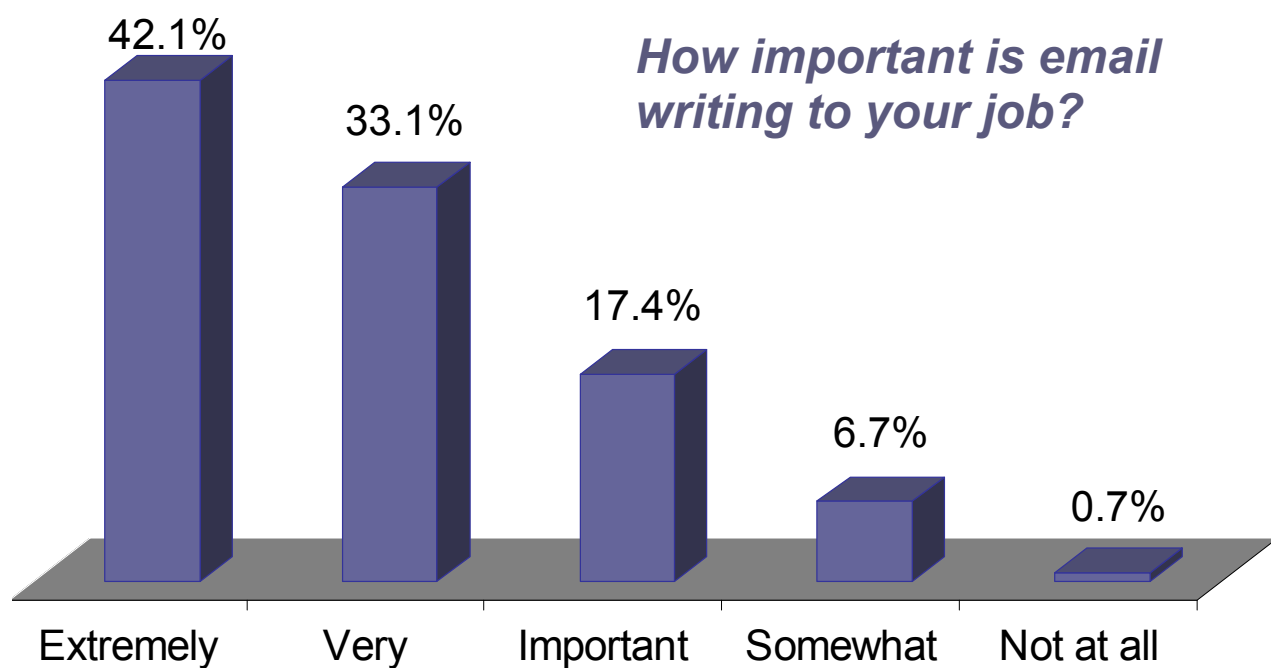


TACTICS

Does Email work for or against you?

Summary of TACTICS 2006 Survey Results



TACTICS

TACTICS Consulting is a blended learning solutions company enabling and enhancing the performance of our clients. Our solutions utilise our client's existing infrastructure, resources and skills.

For over 18 years, TACTICS has helped leading Australian commercial and Government organisations improve performance, solve information-intensive business challenges and achieve sustainable results.

Our experience with over 6000 projects has provided us with the expertise to analyse and address business information and learning needs.

Since 1991, we have been the sole Australian partner of leading Information Life Cycle solutions company – Information Mapping Inc (IMI). Our global Information Mapping® family has roots in the USA, Central America, South Africa, the United Kingdom, Europe and Japan.



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Background

In early 2006, TACTICS conducted an online survey “**Does Email work for or against you?**” The purpose of the survey was to help us understand how email is used in business. The survey ran for two weeks and received over 400 responses.

Results

This paper outlines the results of the 2006 email survey conducted by TACTICS.

Highlights of the results include:

- **75%** say email is extremely or very important to their job
- **76%** spend at least 1, and up to over 5, hours a day just reading emails
- **66%** have difficulty getting a response to their emails with the information or actions they need
- **46%** received over 25% of emails that are not relevant to the work they do
- **44%** receive emails they do not understand how to action

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Writing Emails – Survey Results

Question 1 On an average day, how much total time do you spend writing emails?

Hours per day	Responses	
	Percentage	Number
No time	0%	0
Less than 1 hour	27.4%	115
1 – 3 hours	54.8%	230
3 – 5 hours	15%	63
More than 5 hours	2.8%	12

Question 2 How important is email writing to your job?

Level of importance	Responses	
	Percentage	Number
Extremely important	42.1%	177
Very important	33.1%	139
Important	17.4%	73
Somewhat important	6.7%	28
Not important at all	0.7%	3

Question 3 What is the subject matter of the emails you write most often?
(Select your top three.)

Subject Matter	Responses	
	Percentage	Number
Announcements	15.7%	66
Meeting Requests	27.6%	116
Meeting minutes	5.7%	24
Feedback on something	51.7%	217
Requests for information	63.6%	267
Answers to questions	70.2%	295
Progress reports or status updates	34%	143
Policies	3.1%	13
Procedures	6.2%	26
Product promotions/marketing	7.1%	30

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Writing Emails – Survey Results, Continued

Question 3 (continued)

Subject Matter	Responses	
	Percentage	Number
Other	6.4%	
- Personal/Social		3
- Project Management of public affairs jobs		1
- Technical announcements/answers		3
- Phones Messages		2
- General communication		5
- Book meetings		1
- Training information/notification		2
- Managing supplier and staff		1
- Course offers		1
- Providing details for travel arrangements		1
- Communication of issues/ideas		2
- Queries		1
- Request for comment on draft documents		1
- E-Newsletter		1
- Clearance process		1
- Challenging		1

Question 4

What are the major challenges you face in writing emails?
(Select all answers that apply)

Challenges	Responses	
	Percentage	Number
Getting people to read my emails	23.3%	98
Getting people to respond to my emails with the information or actions I need	66.4%	279
Identifying the right level of content or detail for my intended audience	35.9%	151
Organising the content	17.6%	74
Writing succinctly and clearly	29.7%	125
Writing for multiple audiences and diverse needs	20.7%	87
Writing effective subject lines	13.3%	56
Knowing when to copy or forward an email	10.7%	45
Knowing when to use email verses other forms of communication	23.3%	98
Getting people to open attachments	10.5%	44

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Reading Emails - Survey Results

Question 5

On an average day, how much time do you spend reading emails?

Hours per day	Responses	
	Percentage	Number
No time	0%	0
Less than 1 hour	24%	101
1 – 3 hours	62.4%	262
3 – 5 hours	11.7%	49
More than 5 hours	1.9%	8

Question 6

What percentage of the emails you receive contain content that is not relevant to the work that you do?

Percentage	Responses	
	Percentage	Number
Less than 25%	54%	227
25 – 50%	32.6%	137
50 – 75%	11%	46
75 – 100%	2.4%	10

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Reading Emails - Survey Results, Continued

Question 7 What problems do you see in the emails you receive from others?

Problems	Responses	
	Percentage	Number
I can't understand why it was sent to me	25.2%	106
Content is not relevant to the work that I do	38.3%	161
Content is too low level	9.3%	39
Content is too long and wordy	37.6%	158
Content is disorganised	37.4%	157
Content has misspelled words or grammatical errors	30.9%	130
Critical information is missing or difficult to find	29%	122
It is unclear what I should do or how I should act on the information	44.3%	186
Subject line is missing, vague or unclear	24.5%	103
Other	83.6%	
- The sender hasn't answered the questions in the previous email		1
- People are getting good at this		1
- Means of dumping problems on colleagues		1
- Time to read them		1
- Junk mail/SPAM		6
- Forwarded emails full of >>>>		1
- Too much history included		1
- Poor English skills		1
- Receive too many CC's		2
- Sender hasn't read existing documentation		1
- Too many		1
- Emails that are sent company wide		3
- Message lost due to forwarding		1
- Hasn't been sent to everyone concerned		1
- Often another form of communication would be better		3
- Inflection is difficult to discern		2
- Too much advertising		1
- Too many topics included in one email		1
- Important issues buried under trivial ones		2
- Not enough clear instructions		1
- Staff prefer face-to-face		1
- Don't have the information to answer question		1
- Unnecessary duplication of previous messages included with replies		1

About You – Survey Results

Question 8 How many employees are in your organisation?

No. of employees	Responses	
	Percentage	Number
1 – 49	30.8%	129
50 – 99	6.7%	28
100 – 499	18.2%	76
500 – 999	8.6%	36
1000 - 4999	15.1%	63
5000 or more	20.6%	86

NOTE regarding Question 8

Two respondents left this question blank

Question 9 What is the industry in which you work?

Industry	Responses	
	Percentage	Number
Consulting	15.6%	66
Education	4%	17
Finance	10.6%	45
Government	25.3%	107
Health Care	2.8%	12
Hospitality	0.9%	4
Information Technology	11.1%	47
Insurance	2.4%	10
Manufacturing	1.6%	7
Pharmaceutical	0.2%	1
Property	0.9%	4
Retail	2.4%	10
Telecommunications	4%	17
Training	4.5%	19
Transportation	0.9%	4
Utilities	0.9%	4

NOTE regarding Questions 9 and 10

Three respondents selected two industries and no role in the organisation. Resulting in 423 answers to Question 9 and 417 answers to Question 10.

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About You – Survey Results, Continued

Question 9 (continued)

Industry	Responses	
	Percentage	Number
Other:	11.9%	
- Automotive distribution		1
- Brewing		1
- Charity/Church		3
- Community/Essential Services		3
- Construction		2
- Human Resources/Recruitment		1
- Information Logistics		3
- Infrastructure		1
- Legal		1
- Marketing/Advertising		4
- Media/Radio		6
- Medical Device		3
- Music		1
- Network Engineering		1
- Petrochemicals		1
- Relocations		1
- Rental		1
- Scientific Research/research support		1
- Security		3
- Sport		2
- Student		7
- Tax		1
- Travel		1

Question 10 Which of these best describes your role in the organisation?

Role in organisation	Responses	
	Percentage	Number
Director	12.5%	52
Manager	26.4%	110
Supervisor	2.9%	12
Professional staff	34.7%	145
Administrative or support staff	19.9%	83
Other	3.6%	
- Analyst		1
- Assistant Director		1
- Consultant		3
- Regional/Coordinator		2
- Head of Marketing		1
- IT Analyst		1
- Sales		2
- Senior Associate		1
- Senior Technician & Acting Supervisor		1
- Technical operations		1
- Trainer		1