10 BEST PRACTICES
to Reduce Email Overload

1. **Email is Not For Everything.** Before you send, ask yourself if email is the best way to communicate or track the information, because the more email you send, the more you may receive in return. Other options include verbal communication (in-person or phone) or IM.

2. **End the "Endless" Email Chain.** If an email chain goes back and forth two or three times, consider having an in-person or phone discussion. Keep this in mind when you have complex topics, need nuanced discussion or decision-making, or are developing ideas that require each other's deep understanding.

3. **Ask Yourself: Does this Email Require a Response?**
Not every email does. Sometimes, you can let the email chain end or discuss next steps verbally. Also, your colleagues may be interested in forgoing "thank you" or acknowledgment email responses if it means fewer emails in their in-box.

4. **Think Before Hitting "Reply All."** Does everyone need to receive this information? Think about why you're sending to each recipient. Consider pulling colleagues out of the email chain if the information is irrelevant to them.

5. **Convey Responsibility.** Clearly convey who is responsible for the action or response needed. Including someone in the To: line indicates you are seeking a response, while including someone in the CC: line indicates you are not. Names in the salutation can also convey responsibility.

6 **Use Descriptive Subject Lines.** Including FYI, Action Requested, Response Requested, Read Only or Decision Needed in the subject line helps recipients prioritize email and respond appropriately. If you are using email for one line communications, include the information in the subject line and "End of Message or EOM" so colleagues know they don't have to open the email.

7 **Use the P.A.S.S. Model.** Draft emails that are quick to read and take in critical information. The P.A.S.S. model helps us remember to include the **P**urpose of communication, any specific **A**ction needed and due date, **S**upporting or background information, and a clear **S**ubject line.

8 **Make Action Requests Clear.** And be explicit. Note whether your email requires a response and by when. This can be accomplished through descriptive subject lines, using the P.A.S.S. model, or through a concise statement in the email body.

9 **Use Email Tools.** For example, route mail efficiently using mailbox rules or group similar messages in your cabinet folders. Use the Out of Office Assistant when going unplugged or not responding to emails for a significant period of time, and include details about when you will respond and contact information for your back-up. You can also turn email into calendar appointments with a right click of your mouse.

10 **Prioritize, Prioritize, Prioritize.** Consider which emails need to be read and responded to right away, and which others can be read and responded to later, archived or deleted.