

Email for Realtors



How to Treat Your Inbox Like
Your Most Valuable Real Estate



written by Baydin

*Special thanks to the realtors who
contributed their knowledge to this eBook:*

*Matthew Tringali, Group 15 Real Estate, Charlotte, NC
www.Group15RealEstate.com*

*Bob Pisa, Downing-Frye Realty, Inc., Naples, FL
www.BobPisa.com*

*Olga Lapidous, Coldwell Banker, Campbell, CA
www.RealEstateWithOlga.com*

*Copyright © 2014 - [Baydin](#), Inc. All rights reserved.
All images used are in the public domain.*

Table of Contents



Introduction: Why Inbox Zero is a Mirage.....	1
Step One: Get Less Email	3
<i>Bonus: How to Get Others to Meet Expectations</i>	6
Step Two: Send Better Emails	8
Step Three: Actionize Your Workflow	10
<i>Bonus: What is GTD?</i>	12
Tips for Searching Your Inbox.....	13
How to Use Labels/Folders Effectively.....	14
How to Use Keyboard Shortcuts.....	15
Using Gmail as a CRM (with Boomerang)	17
How to Use Boomerang for Realtors	19
<i>Bonus: Track Emails; Get Engagement</i>	21
Pause Your Inbox & Get Back to Work.....	22
Writing Great Email Signatures.....	23
More (Mostly Free) Tools for Winning at Email.....	25
A Word on Email Marketing	27
Conclusion & Email Statistics.....	30

intro:

Why Inbox Zero is a Mirage

We all have goals, and we all visualize certain tokens of those goals. You know, the signifiers that you've "made it."

For example, if your goal is to become a top luxury real estate agent, some of the signifiers might be...a swanky office with a chandelier and a fireplace. (Even if it's in sunny Los Angeles.) A very expensive, tailored suit jacket. A designer-stamped purse. A star-studded clientele list, and so on.

Sure, if you have any of those things, you might be the best luxury real estate agent in the country—or you might be a newbie spending a little bit too much to impress clients with your Louis Vuitton iPad case. You might be in that swanky office...but serving coffee. Additionally, when you are the top real estate agent in the country, your pride isn't going to come from the chandelier! It's going to come from your talent and tenacity.

Get the picture? The token is not the goal.



Now, what's all this got to do with email productivity?

If you want to be the perfect hybrid of realtor & email productivity guru...

You have to let go of Inbox Zero. It's a token instead of a goal.

And it's probably making you feel horribly stressed out, too.

Popularized by a productivity expert named Merlin Mann, the idea of Inbox Zero is used in popular vernacular to refer to the practice of keeping your inbox empty or almost empty at all times via a rigorous maintenance plan. After drinking the Kool-Aid, if you're not at Inbox Zero, you're failing.

The problem is that, **by endlessly pursuing Inbox Zero just for the satisfaction of it, you cede too much power to others.** You delete your last email and then BAM! Some marketer ruins it by making demands on your time without your permission...again.

Sometimes, Inbox Zero practices can do more harm than good.

A lot of people who try to achieve it end up checking their email very often, when research has shown that it takes an average of **64 seconds** to fully recover and get back to work after every email interruption. Inbox Zero is a token of productivity, but it is not always productivity itself.

One theory about why achieving Inbox Zero might feel so satisfying is called the Zeigarnik effect. It states that people remember uncompleted or interrupted tasks better than completed ones. When the Zeigarnik effect is at work, something buzzes around in your head. The 10 emails left. So annoying. Must get them done. However, what's really going on is the sub-conscious mind is asking the conscious mind to make a plan, rather than to "get them done" by responding to all those emails.

In this eBook, we'll teach you how to manage your inbox without the pressure of Inbox Zero.

An effective inbox management plan can calm the Zeigarnik effect and restore your peace of mind without actually requiring that you get to Inbox Zero. Leaving a certain amount of key emails in your inbox is part of an effective plan!

You will learn to keep two types of email in your inbox: unread emails, and up to 7 emails that require urgent attention.

"Inbox Seven" may not sound as sexy as "Inbox Zero," but if you want a catchphrase to describe your new email lifestyle...how about **Inbox Hero**?

We'll still follow the critical rules of David Allen's Getting Things Done set-up, making all instances of "checking" your email into the more action-oriented "processing" your email. You'll often still get to zero (or a few) emails in your inbox, but we'll let go of perfectionism and stress together.

Keep reading to find out the why and how details of the new workflow, and thank you for jumping onboard. From managing leads and transactions to communications with your colleagues, **using our best practices for email workflow will turn your inbox into your most valuable real estate.**

- Baydin

Step One: Get Less Email

The first step to handling an out-of-control inbox is to get less email.

Remove the junk.

Use the free website <http://unroll.me> to unsubscribe instantly from all of the junk email you never want to see again, at once.

For the manual route, get in the habit of opening annoying subscription emails, scrolling to the bottom, and hitting unsubscribe. After a few days of this, your email load will be much lighter.

If there is no unsubscribe link, mark the message as spam.

Manage preferences on social networks to only get notifications you care about.

- [Facebook](http://www.facebook.com/blog.php?post=171619937130) (<http://www.facebook.com/blog.php?post=171619937130>)
- [Google+](https://plus.google.com/settings/plus) (<https://plus.google.com/settings/plus>)
- [Twitter](https://twitter.com/settings/notifications) (<https://twitter.com/settings/notifications>)
- [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/settings/) (<https://www.linkedin.com/settings/>)
- [Quora](http://www.quora.com/settings) (<http://www.quora.com/settings>)
- [Pinterest](https://help.pinterest.com/en/articles/change-email-preferences) (<https://help.pinterest.com/en/articles/change-email-preferences>)

On industry news...

We often subscribe to newsletters in an attempt to stay current or up to date with industry news...but never get around to them, anyways. Here are a few alternative ideas for staying up to date:

Put all of the websites where you get your news into one bookmark folder on your browser. Check the site when you can, rather than getting notifications in your inbox.

Use a free, online RSS reader to subscribe to updates from your favorite websites, and go in there to stay updated when you can. One example of a free RSS reader is <http://feedly.com>.

Consider person-to-person ways of staying updated: what office practices do you have for this? Can every person be responsible for providing a 2 minute update on a certain sector at the weekly meeting?



Filter out notifications.

If there are notifications you do want to look at eventually—say, Twitter mentions—but don't want them clogging up your inbox and distracting you from important emails, set up a filter rule.

Follow the links for instructions on how to set up filters for some common mail clients—commonly done through the settings: [Gmail](#), [Outlook](#), [Apple Mail](#), [Thunderbird](#), [Yahoo](#)

For example, set all emails that arrive from the Twitter notification email address to be archived with the label "Twitter." Set a time in your day or week to check all Twitter emails in that label.

Send fewer emails.

One of the most important basic principles is the following: the fewer emails you send, the fewer you will receive.

Be mindful about the necessity to send an email. Email is inherently a larger burden on the recipient than the sender; so, always consider the recipient's perspective when sending an email.

Know when to delay responding to some emails, or when you don't have to reply at all.

Obviously, only you can set these priorities, but some emails resolve themselves, as a client actually finds what they need on your website for themselves and email you back with a "nevermind."

When you do or do not have to reply to your colleagues is also a matter of setting in-office priorities.

Start using NRN: No Reply Needed.

Let people in your office know that NRN means No Reply Needed, and then start tacking it onto the end of emails for which that is the case. Just two examples:

- If you send someone a report, and you don't need the reply of "Thanks, got it."
- When you are letting someone know the direction of an idea you're thinking about, but you don't need their full, fleshed-out reply yet.

Use meetings effectively.

Make sure that you are not thinking about emails as "the real work," whereas meeting time gets wasted because you want to get back to your inbox. In-person communication can and should be used to clarify confusion much more quickly than email. Obviously, this is targeted towards communication with colleagues rather than clients, with whom email may be the primary form of communication.

Establish your preferred communication method, verbally.

Maybe it would be easier for both you and your client (or colleague) to communicate small things (like a confirmation of the time you're meeting) by phone call or text rather than email.

Does your office have a group IM / do you have one with key colleagues? Instant messaging is a great way to resolve issues quickly, with brevity, without clogging your inbox.



bonus:

How to Get Others to Meet Expectations

You may be an email productivity guru, but maybe your genius hasn't rubbed off on everyone around you yet. You might still find yourself receiving 10-paragraph emails or wondering if your co-worker got the message that you sent a week ago.

Unfortunately, the only person you can fully control is you. However, encouraging other people to meet expectations is simple:



Be a role model, and communicate expectations clearly.



That can be hard to do, especially with tact and kindness.

Here are a few scripts to help you communicate expectations in various situations. Feel free to adapt them as much or little as you want.



When you get a long email and you would rather talk on the phone:

Hi there _____,

Thank you so much for taking the time to write to me.

I can see you have a lot of good questions about _____, and I would be happy to answer them.

How would you feel about talking on the phone soon? I want to make sure that I'm really addressing your needs, and I would love to chat at any time that works for you.

My phone number is XXX-XXX-XXXX, so feel free to give me a ring. I am usually free to take phone calls at _____.

Since I have your number, if I don't hear back by _____, I'll give you a ring to get those answers to you. Don't hesitate to let me know if you do prefer email.

Talk to you soon,

When someone’s not responding to your emails consistently (although you might need to have this conversation offline):

Hey _____,

Hope you’re having a nice week.

I’m just emailing to check-in about whether email is your preferred communication strategy. Sometimes when I need to reach you, I’m not sure if you see my emails as they arrive or whether they’re getting lost in the shuffle.

Would you prefer to communicate by phone call or text, or is there a way we can make email work better for us?

If you are feeling a bit overwhelmed by your inbox (I know I used to), I have some systems that really worked for me that I could share.

Thanks, I really appreciate your time.

Best,



When you’d like to share your new email practices with people you work with (adjust these as needed):

Hey everyone,

Hope you’re having a good day. I’m just writing to share a few things I’m going to start doing with my email, so that I don’t cause too much confusion.

Feel free to adopt any practices you like!

- I’m going to try to keep emails at five sentences or less, because brevity is so often clarity.
- If I write EOM at the end of a subject line, that stands for “End of Message” and there’s no content in the email body.
- On the other hand, NRN stands for “No Reply Needed.” Kind of like an FYI, but even more clear.
- I’m going to work on processing my email for ten minutes at the top of every hour when I’m in the office, and avoid checking it otherwise so that I can get into the flow of work.

If you need to reach me urgently or want to discuss something at length, feel free to text or call me at XXX-XXX-XXX or even stop by my desk. I’d love to talk on the phone or in person.

Let me know if you have any questions, and see you around.

Best,

Step Two: Send Better Emails

Model the behavior you want to see...

Be concise. If your email is longer than five sentences, consider whether another medium of communication like a phone call could be more appropriate. If you want to challenge yourself and evangelize the cause, you can include a signature from <http://five.sentenc.es>.

Q: Why is this email five sentences or less?

A: <http://five.sentenc.es>

Brevity might feel brusque sometimes, but it is always appreciated. Feel free to open with statements like "I'm writing today because..." or "I want to honor your time, so I'll cut straight to the point..." to stay charming and efficient.

Be precise: use declarations or questions with specific options.

Rather than writing about an idea and then saying "so, what do you think?", try saying "I think we should _____. If you agree, write back saying YES so I can take the next steps."

When a choice needs to be made, try to present specific options as much as possible to prevent too much back-and-forth. Rather than asking a client, "Where do you think we should go to lunch?", say "How about Blue Line Pizza or Tigelleria Ristorante? Let me know which one you would prefer." Decision fatigue is real, so the person you're asking will appreciate it, too.

Tame email threads: Limit your use of reply all.

Fact: important decisions made by email are usually made one-to-one.

When you get an email with a lot of people included on it, consider whether your reply is still useful information to every person on the list or whether replying to an individual or two would be more effective.

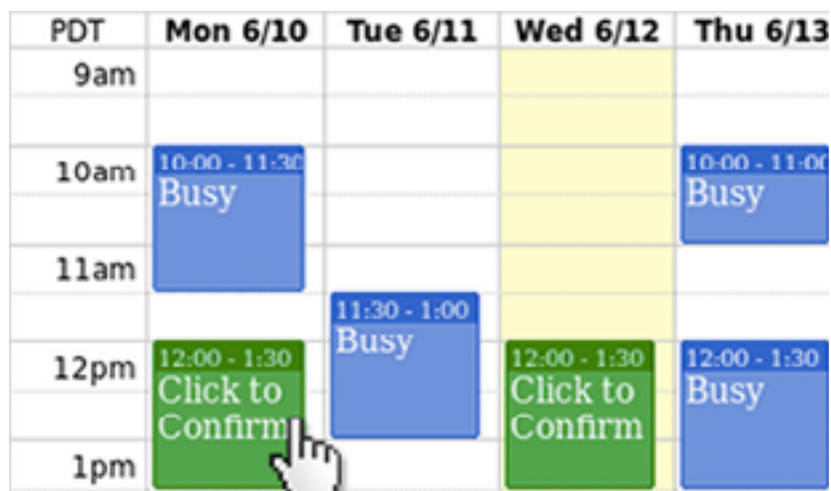
When emailing a large group, specify when you want people to send their responses only to you rather than for each person to reply all.

Avoid using CC as an FYI.

If you are CC-ing someone new onto a long thread as an "FYI" so they can be updated with what's going on, consider writing a one- or two-sentence email to them yourself with the summary of what's going on, instead. They'll definitely appreciate it rather than having to catch up with a long thread.

Use good scheduling practices. Trying to schedule a meeting by email can be a back-and-forth headache. If you have shared calendars at work, that's great. In case you know nothing about the other person's schedule...

Make sure to propose a few dates and times that work for you in an email. If you use Google Calendar and Gmail, [Boomerang Calendar](#) is a free simple scheduling tool that lets you schedule appointments in one single email (see more about how to use Boomerang Calendar on [page 18](#)).



PDT	Mon 6/10	Tue 6/11	Wed 6/12	Thu 6/13
9am				
10am	10:00 - 11:30 Busy			10:00 - 11:00 Busy
11am				
12pm	12:00 - 1:30 Click to Confirm	11:30 - 1:00 Busy	12:00 - 1:30 Click to Confirm	12:00 - 1:30 Busy
1pm				

Use canned responses when necessary.

If you find yourself getting the same type of email a lot, set up email templates or 'canned responses'* (enable in Gmail Labs, if Gmail is your email client) to answer quickly. **canned responses are not an officially supported feature, so they may disappear or not work like the rest of Gmail*

Step Three: Actionize Your Workflow

We're finally approaching the jackpot: now that you're getting less emails and sending better emails, we can talk about what you should do with every email that comes into your inbox.

The most important rule: **archive (almost) everything.**

The "Archive" (popularized by Gmail) is one folder into which everything goes out of your inbox. Archiving removes emails from your inbox, but the emails don't disappear like they do when you delete them. You can always use 'search' to find anything and everything in the Archive. If you are not using Gmail or a client with an archiving function, simply create one folder and label it Archive to move all of your emails to.



The inbox should only contain:



- Messages that haven't been read yet
- A limited # of messages needing prompt attention (less than 7!)

Why only 7? Research has shown that people can only focus on up to 7 things at one time (think of the standard phone number).



When should I check my email?

Good question. That's a personal decision, but the main point is that **every time you "check" your email, you should be "processing" it**—AKA taking action to deal with it.

One suggestion is to check your email at the top of every hour—say, for 10 minutes—and then get back to work.

Check out [page 22](#) for how to use [Inbox Pause](#), which can help you do exactly that—pause your inbox until you're ready to deal with incoming emails, if the temptation to check them is too much to handle.

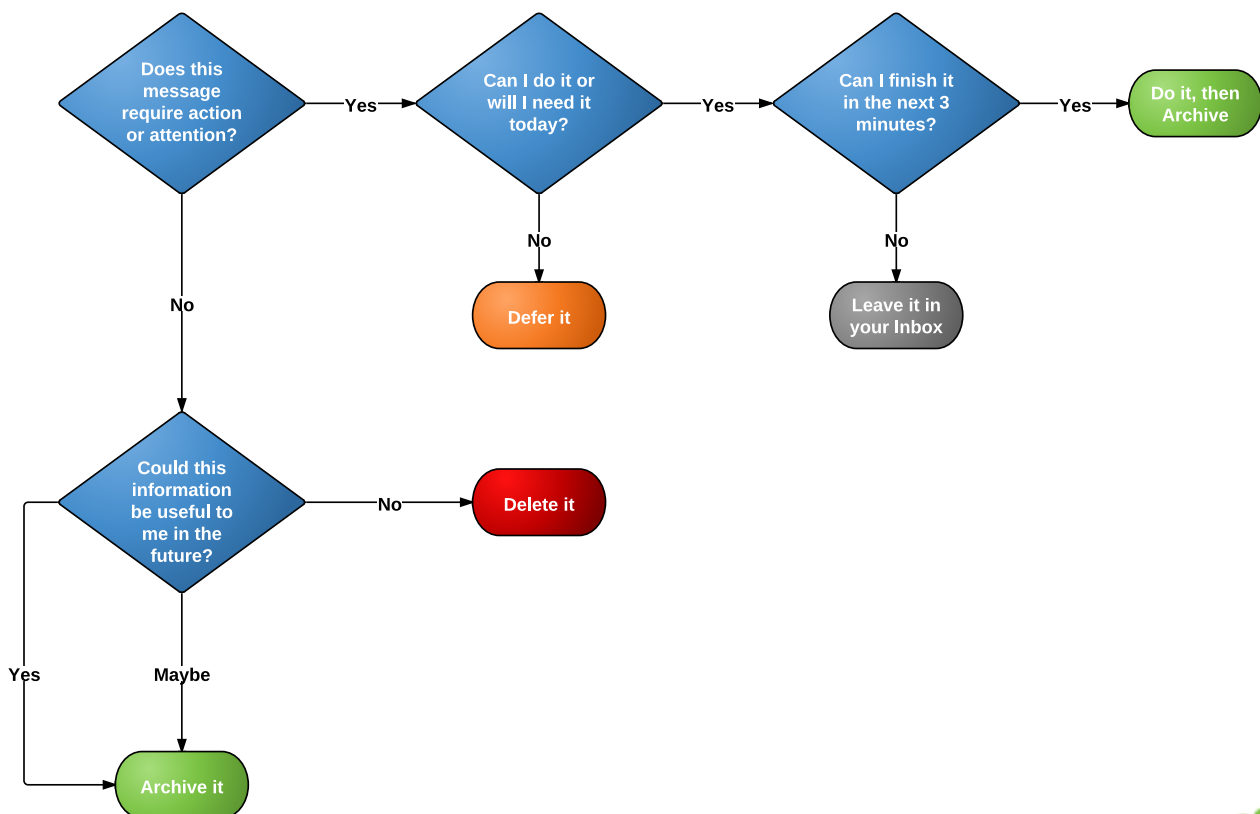
When an email comes into your inbox, here's what you should do:

If it requires no action from you, delete or archive it. Delete when you know you'll never need it again (spam, social notifications, etc).

If it does require an action, pick one...

- Do it (if the action is under 2 minutes)
- Delegate it to someone else (by forwarding)
- Defer it (to a better time when you'll be able to respond, or to a time when you need to be reminded of it)—learn how to defer emails on [pages 19-20!](#)

The Revive Your Inbox Ultimate Email Workflow



<http://www.reviveyourinbox.com>

bonus:

What the Heck is GTD?

You may have heard of “GTD” and wondered what people are talking about.

It stands for “**Getting Things Done,**” and it is a productivity system that productivity consultant David Allen elaborated in his book with that title.

One of the main points of GTD is that rather than spending time on remembering what you should be doing, you could be taking action instead.

Taking summary to the extreme, it’s about keeping a record of your task list outside of your brain (whether on paper or in a tech app), and then breaking your tasks down into smaller action items and accomplishing them. The GTD system also incorporates a regular review of your task lists and the priorities they represent.

Actionizing your workflow, as outlined in the previous pages, embodies part of the GTD philosophy in a way.

The goal is to take action on every email as it comes in.



Don't rely on your own memory to extract the most important to-do list items from a messy inbox.



Tips for Searching Your Inbox

Here's a shocking statistic: **using the search toolbar is 2x faster than any other method of finding emails** (like scanning through folders or labels), but it is only used 18% of the time. Let's fix that, by using special keywords to use search to its maximum capacity.



Basic keywords that most mail clients will recognize:

- **from:** Search messages from a specific sender name or email address
- **has:attachment** Search for messages that have files attached to them
- **label:** Search for messages within a certain label, using hyphens between words for multi-word labels (Gmail only)
- **before:** Search for messages sent before a certain date
- **filename:** Search file names of attachments or extensions (jpg, doc, etc)

Don't put a space in between the keyword's colon and your search term. [Here's the link](#) to an exhaustive list of Gmail keyword search terms.

For more keywords for Gmail and Outlook, feel free to print out these cheat sheets and keep them on your desk until you are used to using them.

- [Search cheat sheet for Gmail](#)
- [Search cheat sheet for Outlook](#)

Sign up for our free [Revive Your Inbox](#) program to access more great content and useful cheat sheets like these; by investing 20 minutes a day for 21 days, you'll clean up your email habits in no time.



Pro-tip: If you search but the item you're looking for still doesn't show up, note that the default search in email clients often ignores messages in the Trash and Spam folders. In Gmail, remember to use the command "in:anywhere" to include Trash and Spam. In Outlook, access Search Options and check the setting that says "include messages from the Deleted Items folder."

How to Use Folders Effectively

As we discussed earlier, searching, rather than scanning through messages in a folder/label should be your primary method of locating emails.

However, using labels can be effective *when you are using a label to add contextual information that is not found anywhere in the text of the email.*

For example, if you're tracking all the purchases you've made on behalf of your company, there is no good way to structure a search to find all of those messages.

Adding a label or copying all those messages to a "Purchases" folder adds **unique, non-generic, searchable information** about the contents of those messages—information that is nowhere in the messages themselves.

The same principle applies to tracking things like contractor recommendations, research papers that are relevant to a project, or documents related to a specific property you manage.

Before you create a folder, consider whether or not you could already find all of these messages using a search. If so, don't create the folder. You should also ask yourself if multiple folders would apply to this email message. If so, your folder structure is too generic.

On [page 17](#), we mention how one way of organizing contacts is to apply labels like "Prospect" or "Past Client" to emails — that's another example of unique, non-searchable information that would make an effective label.



Keyboard Shortcuts

The best way to use keyboard shortcuts is to memorize up to 7 critical shortcuts, and use the mouse for everything else.

At Apple headquarters in the 1980s, \$50 million of studies showed them that while people think that using keyboard shortcuts is much faster than using the mouse, the opposite is true. Using a keyboard shortcut is a “recall” task, which is much more complicated for our brains than the “recognition” task of using the mouse to select an option from a menu.

However, because our working memory can hold up to 7 items at a time, learning a very small set of keyboard shortcuts can actually make us faster.

Here’s what to do:

1. Look up your email client’s keyboard shortcuts, and make sure to enable them in your settings if you have to.

- [Shortcuts for Gmail](#)
- [Major shortcuts for Outlook](#)
 - We also highly recommend creating a custom keyboard shortcut to archive mail in Outlook. In Outlook 2010, this is easily done by creating a Quick Step and assigning a shortcut key to it during the creation process. In Outlook 2007 and 2003, it's more difficult, but technically-inclined users may find [these instructions](#) helpful.
- [Shortcuts for Yahoo](#)
- [Shortcuts for Apple Mail](#)

2. Pick 7 actions to memorize the shortcuts for. Pick something...

- That you do very frequently (for example, Archive or Reply)
- That is hard to access in menus (for example, Select-All is only available via a shortcut in Outlook)
- That you do repeatedly when you do it (for example, the Find Next function when you’re searching for a word in a webpage)

3. Print them out and keep that paper by your computer until you’ve got them memorized.



Day 19 of the free Revive Your Inbox program includes a tool to make handy **keyboard cheat-sheets** with 7 shortcuts of your choice.

Sign up at <http://www.reviveyourinbox.com>. If you invest 20 minutes a day for 21 days, you'll clean up your email habits in no time. Here's a cheat-sheet for 7 Gmail keyboard shortcuts (of our choice)...

Name	Shortcut	Action
Compose	c	Composes a new message
Move to newer conversation	k	Moves your cursor (if in inbox) or your view (if message is open) to a newer conversation
Move to older conversation	j	Moves your cursor (if in inbox) or your view (if message is open) to an older conversation
Archive	e	Archives your conversation from any view
Archive and next]	Archives your conversation and moves to the next one
Reply	r	Replies to the message sender
Forward	f	Forwards the message

Using Gmail as a CRM

with Boomerang!

A CRM (customer relationship management) software that you might buy generally has a lot of functionalities, meant to help you keep track of and keep in touch with potential contacts and leads.

Believe it or not, a combination of Gmail, [Boomerang](#)*, and Google Drive can replace a heavyweight CRM system and keep most of your data on the cloud (accessible from any device and easy to transfer to other systems).

*In the interest of transparency, we at [Baydin](#), the writers of this eBook, make Boomerang and recommend it because it works better than anything else we've found for solving this problem. While we do benefit from selling subscriptions to the service, we will not use any revenue from eBook sources to torture small animals or prop up dictatorships across the world, we promise.

Here are some functionalities that you look for in a CRM, and how to accomplish them on Gmail, Boomerang, and Google Drive.



To organize contacts into categories (e.g. prospect, client, etc.):

1) You can use labels in your Gmail inbox to associate incoming emails with categories of people.

2) You can also make a spreadsheet on Google Docs with different tabs for different types of clients and notes about them.

3) In Google Contacts (<http://google.com/contacts>), you can...

Create groups and add your contacts to them (and then in your inbox, just type in the group name in the "To"/"CC"/"BCC" field and all of their email addresses will be inserted—e.g., "Past Clients").

Pull up an individual contact and click "More" and "View recent conversations..." to be taken to those messages in your inbox.

Add notes like "looking for a 2 bedroom, 2 bath house in Mountain View by the fall" to any individual contact, as well.

To log notes about contacts:

The best place to log notes would be in Google Contacts as described on the previous page, or in your contact spreadsheet.

If you set up a Google Voice phone number, you can have voicemails emailed to you and you can input them into any organizational system you have. <http://google.com/voice>



To set up follow-up reminders for yourself:

Check out [How to Use Boomerang for Realtors](#) on the next page!



To schedule appointments on a calendar:

Use Google Calendar to organize your life, for free—you can share calendars with others, send people invitations to meetings or events, access your calendar on your mobile device and offline, set reminders, and more. <http://google.com/calendar>

Use Boomerang Calendar when you're inside Gmail to schedule meeting times with people in one single email, rather than going back-and-forth. It intelligently understands when people write to you saying "can you meet on Thursday at 2" and lets you know whether you're free or busy without even leaving your inbox. Share next week's schedule in one go, visually, rather than writing a novel about it. Plan group events like magic. Install for free at <http://boomerangcalendar.com/>



If you do have a CRM, integrate emails with Boomerang...

With [Boomerang Premium](#), you can set up automatic BCC-dropbox integration to associate incoming emails with client accounts in your CRM system (Salesforce, Zoho, etc). Never forget to track an email again, and this works with any email client (not just Gmail).

How to Use Boomerang for Realtors

Use [Boomerang for Gmail](#)* to...

Schedule emails to send later.

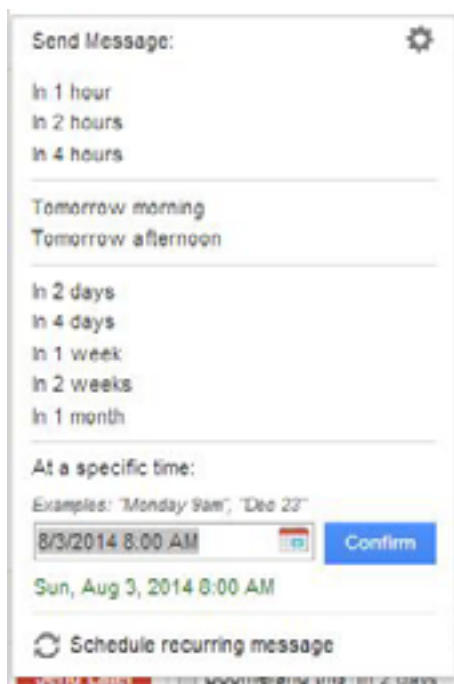
“Don’t forget to print more open house flyers.” — Schedule it to send to yourself (or your colleague) on Tuesday; get it on Saturday morning.

Write and schedule a follow-up email to be sent to your clients one month after they move into their new house, checking in on them when you’ve already moved onto the next project.

Similarly, when you’ve met a prospect (say, at a conference!), go home and schedule a follow-up email for a few days later. Never lose a prospect to forgetfulness again.

When you’re working in the middle of the night, send your client emails at a more reasonable time of day.

Send yourself reminders from the mobile app when you’re on the go and need to accomplish something when you get back to your desk.



Send yourself (or someone else) recurring emails.

How about an email for once every three months to get the oil in your work vehicle changed?

Boomerang messages back into outer space and return them to your inbox when you need them, to get tasks done.

A client asks you to come up with a list of upcoming open houses to see in X school district. Boomerang it for later in the afternoon, make the list, and reply when the email comes back to you as a followup. Make sure you don't move onto other emails and forget.

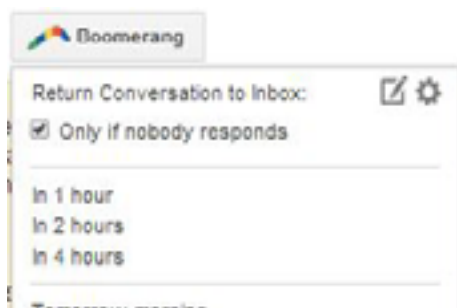


Have an email that you sent returned to you.

Every time you send an email, you can choose to have it returned to you in a certain time period, if...

- No one replies
- No one clicks on the links in the email
- No one opens the email
- Regardless

For example, in a time-sensitive situation, you might want to get an email back within 3 hours if no one replies so you can call them instead!



*There is also [Boomerang for Outlook](#), but its main feature is Boomerang. The full set of features (including Send Later or Recurring Messages) is found on [Boomerang for Gmail](#).

bonus:

Track Emails; Get Engagement

The [Boomerang for Gmail](#) Personal, Pro, and Premium plans include “**read receipts**” and “**click tracking**” as features. What does that mean?

Well, when you send an individual email, **you would know whether the recipient opened your email and/or clicked on a URL you included.** (Although, the recipient can choose to opt-out of sending a read receipt.)

For example, you meet someone who mentions that they want information on a 4-bedroom house in Sunnyvale and you send them an email about it, including a link to the MLS listing.

By requesting a read receipt (which is noted at the bottom of the email they receive), *you are more likely to get a response from the recipient.* It’s like a Jedi mind trick.



By requesting a read receipt, you are more likely to get a response from the recipient of your email.



That can be the beginning of a dialogue or relationship where you can send them info on other houses, even if that one doesn’t work out!

Also, once a person responds to you individually, Gmail and other email clients won’t mark future emails from you as spam—creating a better chance for a lasting relationship.

All new Boomerang plans come with a 30-day free trial of Boomerang Professional, and there is no credit card information required to sign up...so you can easily [try out read receipts and click tracking for free!](#)

Pause Your Inbox & Do Work

Inbox Pause is the most self-evidently named email productivity tool out there: it, well, pauses your inbox. (<http://inboxpause.com>)

You get a blue button in your Gmail screen that says "Pause" — hit that, and all incoming emails will be sorted into an Inbox Pause folder not visible in your inbox. When you "Unpause," all those emails will rush right back in.

You can even turn on an auto-responder while your inbox is paused (perhaps with your cell phone # for urgent contacts), and schedule your emails to be paused and unpaused at certain times up to 24 times per day.

If you need to, you can go into the Paused label and look at emails that have come in while you paused your inbox.

How realtors can use Inbox Pause:

Your email answering schedule is, of course, up to personal preference but a few suggestions are:

Pause your inbox when you go home/end work for the day until your start time the next morning so that your offline time isn't interrupted by email notifications.

While you're in the office, schedule "Unpause" for the top of every hour, so 10AM, 11AM, etc...and spend 10 minutes at those times processing your emails. Then, get back to uninterrupted work time for 50 minutes until the next round of messages is released. If hourly delivery seems excessive, you can schedule Inbox Pause to fit well in your workday!



Research shows that it takes ~ 64 seconds to fully recover from an interruption like getting an email.



Writing Great Email Signatures

An 'email signature' is a block of text that you set to automatically come up at the end of every email message you send. Not having an email signature is akin to networking without a business card – you must have one!

The key is to keep the formatting simple, staying within ~ 4 lines and only including your most important contact information.

As fun as they are, many realty experts suggest avoiding motivational quotes; you never know what impression an element like that will give your recipient, potentially ending your email on an unintended note.

Below are **standard elements of an email signature for realtors**. Some also include their real estate license number.

- A small photo of yourself*
- Name
- Brokerage name
- Brokerage's physical address or city and state
- Cell phone # & Fax #
- Email
- Website
- Up to 3 social media profile links (only if they're professional!)

Bonus: Try turning your website link into a call to action: e.g.,
"Download free California market updates: www.janesmithrealty.com"

Remember, several items can be combined into one line, with elements like :: or | for separation. Here's an **example of a simple text signature:**

Name
Green Pine Realty || San Francisco, CA
cell: 111.111.1111 || fax: 222.222.2222
janesmith@greenpinerealty.com || www.greenpinerealty.com
get my local market updates at twitter.com/janetherealtor

*If you are okay with avoiding it, try not to include images in your email signature. They increase the file size of the email and are often misplaced or not read correctly by email clients.

If you do have to include an image...

Definitely make sure it's your professional headshot rather than a logo; marketing research has shown people respond better to faces.

Make sure to include "alternate text" in the HTML code, so that someone who does not see the image will see its placeholder text. Switch to the HTML editor of your email signature and make the image show up with a simple line of HTML code like the one below. Simply replace the link with the URL of your image (after uploading it your website's media folder, so you have a URL for it) and alter the size and alternate text as needed.

```
<img src = "http://myrealestatewebsite.com/files/uploads/email-logo.jpg" width = "300" height = "250" alt="Jane Smith's logo">
```

Free services like WiseStamp (<http://www.wisestamp.com>) can help you format a nice email signature; it's especially helpful if you need to include a photo. They have a few realtor examples here: <http://branding.wisestamp.com/signature-for/real-estate-agents/>



mostly free!

More Tools for Winning at Email

Just a friendly reminder that we do not have any affiliation or partnerships with any of these services; some have been recommended by real estate agents, and some have been discovered as we trawled the Internet in a quest to help you win at email.

Rapportive - <http://rapportive.com/>

A free add-on to Gmail that shows you everything about your contacts in your inbox, via information from LinkedIn and other social networks.

WiseStamp - <http://www.wisestamp.com/>

Get yourself a custom email signature, with links to all of your online footprints (or not). Free version & premium version available.

Google Drive & Google Docs - <http://drive.google.com>

If you're not using it already, Google lets you store documents, photos, videos, and more online via Drive, as well as create and collaborate on documents, spreadsheets, presentations, survey forms, and more via Docs. You start with 15GB of storage for free. Access from anywhere (your phone, desktop, laptop, tablet, etc.) as long as you're online.

Dropbox - <http://dropbox.com>

Another cloud storage service; you have to pay above 2GB of storage.

SortMyBox - <https://www.sortmybox.com/>

If you're using DropBox, especially if you're sharing it with team members, SortMyBox automatically sorts files into folders according to rules that you create. For example, you can have it move all files that contain the word "contract" in the name to a file called "Contracts" - and all moves are tracked, so you'll never lose a file.

AwayFind - <http://awayfind.com>

While it's not free, AwayFind seems useful - integrated into your mail app, you can set up alerts to be notified of important messages via your phone or other means. For example, you can step away from your inbox for hours, knowing that if your boss emails you, you'll get a text message about it.

HelloFax - <https://www.hellofax.com/googledrive>

HelloFax lets you send and receive fax messages online – if you integrate with Google Drive, you can get 50 free fax messages to send per month for free, while there’s a pricing plan for other options at the main website (including receiving faxes). It also has an e-signature component.

Google Voice - <http://google.com/voice>

Using a free Google Voice number can be useful in certain ways; it transcribes voicemails for you (although it’s not always perfect) so you can see voicemails when you couldn’t listen to them and you can also search for info through various voicemails later. You can also share voicemails you receive with others by email, which is hard to do with a regular phone.

MightyText Chrome App - <http://mightytext.net/>

Free app that lets you send and receive SMS texts via your existing Android phone number, on your computer directly from Gmail (like a chat window).

EverContact - <http://www.evercontact.com/>

App that scans in the background of your emails for contact information and updates it in your address book on Google Contacts or Outlook Contacts. Not free.



Canned Responses - found in Gmail’s Settings under Labs; (how to)

<http://www.wikihow.com/Use-Canned-Responses-in-Gmail>

In case you missed it in the “Send Better Emails” section, Gmail Labs’ Canned Responses feature lets you write and save template emails you can reinsert and send to answer commonly-asked questions and more.

Undo Send - also found in Gmail’s Settings under the Labs tab

Gives you a 5-second ‘panic button’ to take back your words or that email you accidentally pressed ‘send’ on before finishing.

Send and Archive

Used to be a product of Gmail Labs; now under general settings in Gmail, enabling this lets you reply and archive the thread in one click.



bonus:

A Word on Email Marketing

This eBook is about managing your inbox with less stress—and part of that stress may come from handling email marketing campaigns.

This isn't an eBook about how to build your subscriber list, but the **basic steps of running an email marketing campaign** are:

- Identify a target audience.
- Build a list of subscribers.
- Make a schedule of how often you'll contact them; consistency is one of the keys of looking like a pro.
- Send them genuinely helpful content in a newsletter.
- They'll think of you when they need to sell or buy.

Which of the above steps is the most important? No, it is not to build a list of subscribers; it is *providing content of genuine value*.

If someone learns something new from your every email, they will share with friends and your list will grow. Whereas even if you have a large subscriber list, you won't gain new clients if your content is irritating.



Treat email marketing like a sacred opportunity.



People have invited you into their inboxes, their virtual homes, when they are probably already overwhelmed by tons of junk and have little desire for more. You must be pretty special to gain their trust like that—don't break it.

If “marketing” brings up dread and slime in your mind, remember: **email newsletters are simply an online medium for a very real connection.**

Hopefully, you are passing on valuable knowledge to your client or prospect, and their trust in your expertise and integrity will deepen.

If you are ready to start or improve your email marketing campaign, read on for some tips and ideas.



The basic rules of email marketing:

- Have an informative & attention-grabbing subject line.
- Send from a personal account, rather than info@yourdomain.com, to be more personable.
- Comply with the [CAN-SPAM act](#) in the US or your country's anti-spam legislation: you must include a valid physical address (whether your business or a PO box) and an unsubscribe link in each email. You can only email people who have given you consent. While you can do unsolicited physical mailings in the technique known as "farming," you are not allowed to do unsolicited email marketing.
- You should also link to your privacy policy in each email. Many email marketing service providers require you to do so.
- Target specific groups of customers. You might not send the same email to a young person looking for a loft in the city as you would to a family looking for a house in the suburbs. Some content marketing pieces might be interesting to a variety of people, but new listings may need to be more customized.

Ideas for creating valuable content:

Ok, you get it—you don't want to be "that guy" sending out "new home listings" emails to your client who just bought a house, or constantly sending the same "low interest rates in your area" email. The answer?

Content marketing. Content marketing is meant to help, not sell (at least, not directly), and builds much-needed trust in your relationship.

Say you plan to send out a basic newsletter 2x per month. Sit down for 30 minutes to an hour right now and write out 24 bullet points of content ideas. Feel free to alter them as you go along, but BAM! You have a year's worth of unique content planned out. Read on for a list of ideas...

Here are a few ideas for **fresh content for your email newsletter**:

- DIY home decor project ideas or renovation tutorials
- Examples of and how-to's for excellent open house staging
- A list of fun, upcoming local events and/or attractions
- Energy-saving tips when the weather changes
- New residential and commercial construction in your area
- Holiday features: decorating for holidays, cookie recipes, etc.
- A Q&A feature: answer a good question your client asked that might be helpful for others to know (shh...you can make up questions!)
- An architectural history of your area
- Common mistakes people make in...closing a deal, negotiating, looking for a house, etc.
- What to watch out for on the final walkthrough
- Moving tips...if you have a small child, if you have a pet, etc.
- Day in the life of a realtor
- My favorite real estate apps
- Contract chronicles: dissect the legal-ese of buying a home
- And more!



On choosing an email service:

There are several online tools out there to help you design and send email marketing campaigns, as well as track results, like:

- ConstantContact.com
- iContact.com
- aWeber.com
- VerticalResponse.com
- Campaigner.com
- MailChimp.com

Look into which one suits your needs best, but MailChimp has the most capacity for free—up to 12,000 emails to up to 2,000 subscribers.

Thanks for reading!

So, you've made it all the way through **Email for Realtors: How to Treat Your Inbox Like Your Most Valuable Real Estate.**

Thanks for entrusting us to take you on this journey!

According to The Radicati Group's [Email Statistics Report, 2014-2018](#):

Business users send and receive an average of 121 emails a day in 2014, and that will grow to 140 emails per day by 2018.

*2014: 4.1 billion email accounts & 2.5 billion users.
2018: 5.2 billion accounts & 2.8 billion users.*

Email is the most widespread form of business communication.

As we send you off into the world with our best wishes for efficiency in your inbox, success in your real estate business, and happiness in your life, here's a reminder of the main points you have learned:

- That Inbox Zero isn't a goal in itself
- How to get less email, send better email, and make your workflow about taking action rather than remembering what actions to take
- A number of tools that can help you along the way, like [Boomerang](#), [Boomerang Calendar](#), and all the functionalities of Gmail (as well as similar ones for your non-Gmail email client!)

Happy emailing, and thanks again for learning with us!
tweet us at [@baydin](#) & like us on [Facebook](#)

This eBook has been brought to you by the folks at [Baydin](#) over in Mountain View, California; we are the makers of [Boomerang for Gmail](#), [Boomerang for Outlook](#), [Boomerang for Android](#), [Boomerang Calendar](#), [Inbox Pause](#), [Revive Your Inbox](#), [My Wedding Reminders](#), [My Tax Reminders](#), and whatever else we make.