

Time Management



4.3 Time Management: Staying in control of your working day (and keeping your sanity!)

Today's IP attorneys are torn apart every day as they attempt to cope with a flood of emails that demand instantaneous replies to often-complex questions from associates and clients while simultaneously trying to find the time for the concentration that tortuous prosecution and litigation tasks require. Partners in large firms will have to add to this the management of a team of professionals and of support staff. This session will present solutions for how to conquer the plethora of different tasks that all compete for your precious time.

MODERATOR: Dr. Karl Rackette (DE)
SPEAKERS: R. Danny Huntington (US),
Louis Lagler (CH)

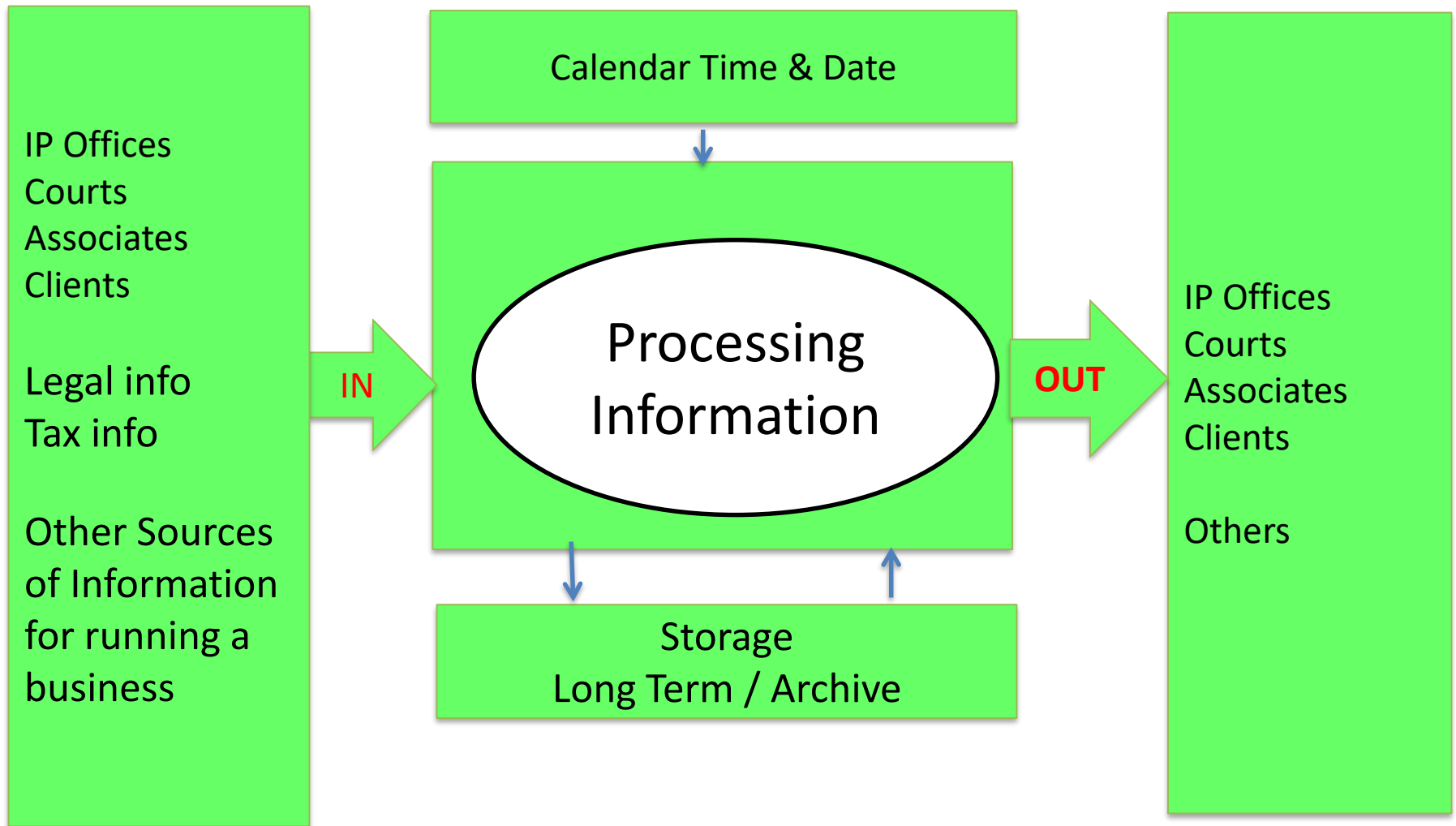
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IP Attorney Information Flow



Your Tasks as an IP-professional

- **Emails:** Process flood of emails from associates and clients.
- **IP-Work:** Find time for the concentration that tortuous prosecution and litigation tasks require.
- **Management:** If you are partner, manage a team of professionals and support staff.
- **Direct communication:** If you are the contact person, communicate with your clients.



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Questions:

- What is your most difficult challenge in managing day-to-day work?
 - External interruptions stopping planned activity (fragmentation due to an external distraction)
 - Planning what to do and really get this done (fragmentation due to an internal distraction)
 - Fragmentation due to task switching (internal distraction)
- How often do you check email:
 - Once a day?
 - Twice a day?
 - Every two hours?
 - Once an hour?
 - As they arrive?



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Communication

Before

- No immediate correspondence (except by telephone or in-person meetings)
- Relatively small number of interruptions
- Reaction time: several days
- Limited to working hours

Today

- An increasing number of emails daily directly to you
- The risk of a large number or almost constant interruptions
- Reaction time: Less than 12 hours
- Not limited to working hours



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Questions:

- Preferred mode of communication with people:
 - Inside your firm
 - Synchronous
 - In-person -Phone
 - Asynchronous
 - Voicemail -Email -Text messaging (SMS) -Fax -Letter
 - Outside your firm
 - Synchronous
 - In-person -Phone
 - Asynchronous
 - Voicemail -Email -Text messaging (SMS) -Fax -Letter



Challenges in the Near Future...

...it will not stay the same

- More and more digitalization in IP-Firms (paperless office)
 - Increasing complexity in data exchange (internal / external)
 - Other changes (e.g., filing platforms; demands of clients, e.g., with respect to invoicing; the end of the fax machine)
 - Speed
- Increasing demand for enhanced technical skills and know-how



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Questions:

- Is cloud computing becoming more important for running an IP firm?
 - Yes
 - No
- Do you believe that patent applications can be drafted by an AI system within the next 20 years?
 - Yes
 - No



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Information Stress

- **Technology** can generate information far faster than most people can process it.
- **Information overload** originates from both our own requests for information, and information received passively.
- **Email** is identified as the major contributor of information stress.
- **Positive:** The continuous availability of information *can decrease* work delays due to quick access to information which leads to increased organization.
- **Negative:** The same continuous availability leads to an increase in work interruptions, and in turn to increased disorganization.



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Email-Communication Today...

- Unless controlled in some manner, **emails constantly compete for attention** and interrupt our work.
- Few people have the **discipline to structure the day** to plan fixed times to deal with email.
- Answering email is rarely part of our job description, but more an underlying assumption of functioning in today's organizational life.

Source: <https://cyberpsychology.eu/article/view/4233/3277> (2010)



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Statistics on Emails per Day

Business Email	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Average Number of Emails Sent/Received per	122	123	124	125	126
Average Number of Emails Received	88	90	92	94	96
<i>Average Number of Legitimate Emails</i>	<i>76</i>	<i>76</i>	<i>76</i>	<i>76</i>	<i>77</i>
<i>Average Number of Spam Emails</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>19</i>
Average Number of Emails Sent	34	33	32	31	30

Source: THE RADICATI GROUP, INC., CA, USA, 2015



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Questions:

- Should your email system automatically indicate by a bounceback message when you are absent?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Only in exceptional cases
- What is or should be the “normal” reaction time to an email?
 - A few minutes?
 - An hour?
 - Half a day?
 - One day?
 - Two days?
 - Five working days?



Efficient Email Communication

- Provide reference numbers
- Put important results / summary at the beginning
- Keep it short
- CC-copy only those who really need to know
- Use tools to organize and file emails (e.g., simplyfile from Techsmith)



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Interruptions

- **Definition:** Any distraction that causes you to stop the planned activity and switch to another.
- **Result of task switching:** A delay before engaging effectively in a new task, even if you have been previously engaged in the task.
- **Increase in total time needed:** Each fragmentation of a task adds to the total time required to complete it.



Questions:

- Phone calls
 - Should phone calls be scheduled?
 - Yes -No
 - Are you really saving time when you send an email to schedule a phone call?
 - Yes -No
 - Are spontaneous phone calls:
 - Rude because they interrupt the planned flow of work?
- OR
- A time saver.



Work/Life Balance

“Everything changed the day she figured out there was exactly enough time for the important things in her life.”

Brian Andreas



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Important Principles

- Experiences bring happiness, not things
- Schedule personal time in your calendar
 - Exercise
 - Vacations
 - Hobbies
- Disconnect on evenings and weekends



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Important Principles (Cont'd)

- Volunteer to do non-IP activities
- Talk to people in your office about things other than work
- Don't eat at your desk
 - Go outside for a walk
 - Eat with others, but don't talk about work



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How To Improve Your Balance

- Limit your workload to the most important things, and the things you like to do
- Become more efficient



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Limit Your Workload

- Say no sometimes (but who dares?)
- Share responsibilities - Delegate early and often (especially things you do not like to do)
- Transfer clients to someone else in your firm
- Reserve buffer time: Do not schedule 100% of your work time



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Limit Your Workload (cont'd)

- Establish boundaries with clients - e.g.,
 - don't always provide your cell phone number
 - limit the hours during the day when you are available for telephone calls
 - have your assistant screen calls and incoming email and let the client know if you will be delayed in responding



Organize

- Don't try to remember anything that you can write down and schedule
- Keep various task lists on your smartphone
 - Next day (prepared at the end of the previous day, but with no more than 3-5 items that you will without exception at least start the next day)
 - For review one day each week (e.g., Monday or Friday)
 - Long term goals



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Increase Efficiency

- Avoid unnecessary interruptions
- Structure your day
- Be disciplined
- Keep your desk organized with a minimum of clutter
- Use tools that increase your efficiency (search tools, email handling tools, PDF-tools)



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Focus

- Turn off or minimize email, and only check it at regular intervals
- Turn off news pop-ups
- Don't multitask
- Work in short bursts (e.g., 45-50 minutes followed by a 10-15 minute break)
- Have calls go to voicemail or an assistant, and then return telephone calls at scheduled times



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Simple, But Effective, Organization

- Avoid random searching
- Remove unused and outdated documents from your storage
- Structure and order your files in a logical manner, such that you and your colleagues can work with each other's files
- Use logical file names (e.g., put date first, followed by name and location)
- Work with shortcuts



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Questions:

- Where do you store emails?
 - Locally
 - In a centralized repository
- Do you use a document management system (DMS)?
- Do you have paper files?
 - yes
 - No
- Do you believe a paperless office is feasible?
 - Yes
 - No



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Questions:

- What do you print out or have printed out?
 - Selected emails to review during your commute so you can plan your work at your office
 - Prior art documents so you can study them
 - All documents received
 - All documents sent
 - Most documents received / sent
 - Some documents received / sent
 - Nothing
 - Except ...?



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File names to simplify searching (Samples)

Bad

- Final Version / very final version / this is the version to be filed.
- No date.
- Ambiguous versioning.

Good

- Put a date in the front (inverse format) → natural search order
- Put file reference in the file name



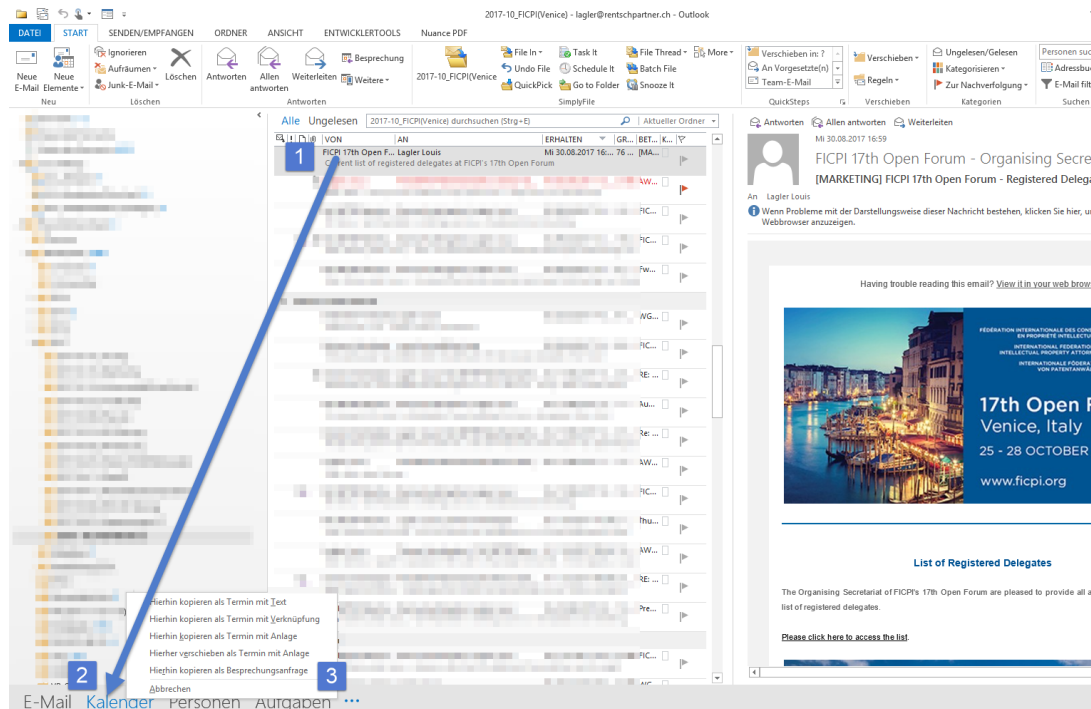
Outlook shortcuts...

- Ctrl+Shift+M → New Message
- Ctrl+Shift+A → New Appointment
- Ctrl+Shift+C → New Contact
- Ctrl+Shift+N → New Note
- Ctrl+Shift+I → Go to Inbox
- In Email:
 - Ctrl+R → Reply to selected message
 - Ctrl+F → Forward selected message
- In Calendar:
 - Ctrl+G → Go to specific date
 - Alt+(1..10) → Display a specific number of days (1-10)



Outlook: Organize By Dragging Emails

- Add a meeting to your calendar; Create a new task; Create a contact; Generate a note...



Inform Yourself About the Possibilities...

A lot of useful information can be found, e.g., on YouTube (sample):

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8MsBWk0p7_M



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Articles and Resources

- **Compartmentalize and Integrate: Five Ways to Handle It ‘All’**

By Jamie Spannhake , August 18, 2017

<https://www.attorneyatwork.com/compartmentalize-integrate-5-ways-to-handle-it-all/>

- **Balancing Parenting and Work Stress: A Guide**

By Daisy Wademan Dowling, March 9, 2017

<https://hbr.org/2017/03/balancing-parenting-and-work-stress-a-guide>

- **5 Things to Do on a Sunday for a More Productive Week**

By Kathryn Wheeler, February 6, 2017

https://www.jdjournal.com/2017/02/06/5-things-to-do-on-a-sunday-for-a-more-productive-week/?utm_source=MMNA&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=t_17740--dt_20170206-cid_34271-Did_5100190-ad_JDJ~MMNA-logid_%5BMCTS_CESLOGID%5D



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Articles and Resources (Cont'd)

- **How Smart People Work Less and Get More Done**

By Dr. Travis Bradberry, February 1, 2017

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/how-smart-people-work-less-get-more-done-dr-travis-bradberry>

- **Making It Work**

A monthly column in which lawyers share how they manage both life's challenges and work's demands.

http://www.abajournal.com/topic/making_it_work

- **Difficult Clients – What To Do And When To Let Go**

By Tracy Schorn, May 2017

<http://washingtonlawyer.dcbbar.org/may2017/index.php?startid=2#/24>

- **The Impact of E-mail Communication on Organizational Life.**

By Derks, D., & Bakker, A. (2010).

Cyberpsychology: Journal of Psychosocial Research on Cyberspace, 4 (1), article 4.

Retrieved from <https://cyberpsychology.eu/article/view/4233/3277>



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Articles and Resources (Cont'd)

- **Why time management is ruining our lives**
By Oliver Burkeman, February 1, 2017
<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2016/dec/22/why-time-management-is-ruining-our-lives>
- **Time Management for Lawyers**
By Meg Spencer Dixon
Webinar about time management
<http://www.timemanagementforlawyers.com/about-time-management/>
- **MYN: Master Your Now! System**
By Michael Linenberger
Videos and books about control of email and time management using mobile and software solutions, including helpful ideas about using Outlook for planning and email control
<http://www.michaellinenberger.com/>



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THANKS!

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