

## Case Study

# Email Hell to Email Heaven at a typical hospital trust

How one hospital trust cut stress, saved time, got people talking again and helped them do what they are *supposed* to be doing – all in 60 minutes

“

*The training was exceptionally useful and provided practical tips and advice on the effective use of email and email etiquette (something which is not taught to anyone). ”*

“ *The hints and tips, particularly the square brackets and dealing with emails immediately have made the biggest difference.*

*I am finding that my staff have started to use the brackets as well*

”

(Quotes from participants)

**Return on Investment: £110,036**

**Potential extra Rol: £12.7 million**

**Extra 2.4 staff “recruited” at £516 p.a.**

# Executive summary

## Changing the email culture

On the 28<sup>th</sup> of November 2012 two sessions on “Email hell to email heaven” were delivered to a total of 26 staff at a typical hospital trust in southern England.

All participants received surveys on email use before and after. We compared 38.5% of the delegates both before and after.

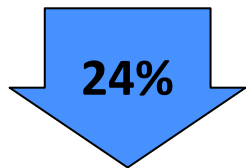
This summary shows very positive changes across the group as a result of the programme.

## Results

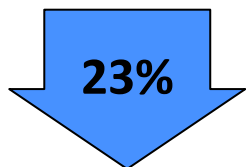
- People **spend less time on email** – usage has dropped by **23.7%** (an average saving of **39.5 minutes** each per day)
- Storage of emails has dropped 38.9%
- People send **fewer unnecessary replies/CCs**: down 35.9%
- 89% who had stress from email now feel **less stressed**.
- 32.1% **less compulsive checking**
- 80% **talk instead** of emailing more
- 100% send emails that are **easier to understand**
- 93.7% have **changed their email behaviour** since the session
- 100% of respondents have passed on a tip to at least one other person
- 100% of respondents **recommend** the session to others

## Results at a glance

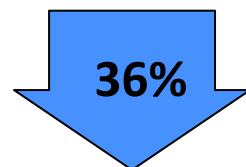
After a 60-minute session...



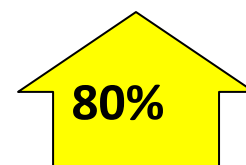
**People spent less time on email**



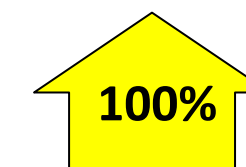
**They receive fewer unhelpful emails**



**Unnecessary replies / CCs drop by over 1/3**



**People talk more instead of emailing**



**Their emails are easier to understand**

**100%**



**Everyone recommends the session**

# Return on Investment

The return on investment is £110,036 for the 26 people attending

The time saved (39.5 minutes average each per day) in stage one stacks up to **4.3 weeks more** every year for everyone who came along.

- These 26 people have generated the equivalent of 2.4 staff posts (10% more) by reducing inefficient email use.
- Equivalent costs for these posts are £110,036 p.a. (assuming a total average FTE cost per head of £45,000 p.a.).
- The investment was £1,240 giving a proportionate return on investment of 1:89
- The time to break even on this investment was 2.6 days.

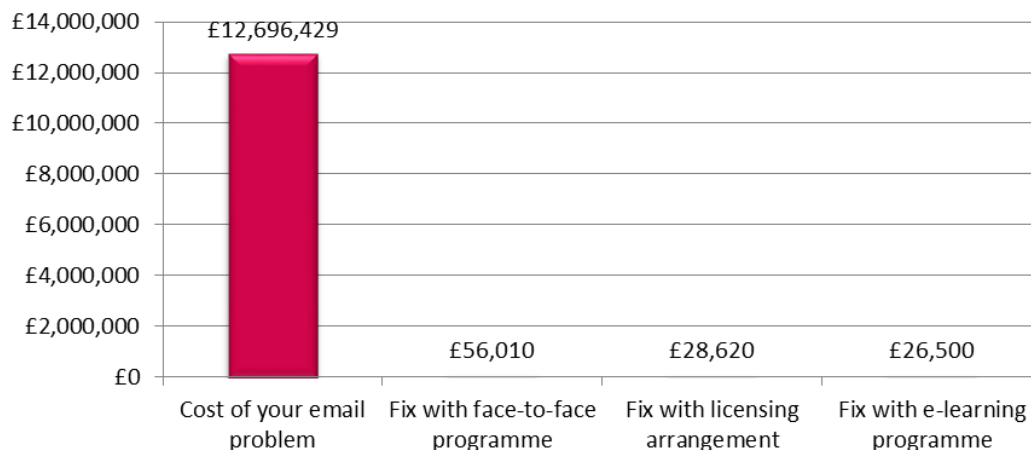
## Next steps

Extending good practice across the remaining users will reap rapid benefits.

- If the same savings are scaled to another 3,000 email users at this trust the potential return on investment is £12,696,429.

The graph shows the costs of Expert Messaging's solutions compared to the cost of doing nothing. As email traffic tends to grow, if people do nothing, the pain grows.

## Relative costs for 3,000 people



Measured against doing nothing (£12.7 million lost productivity for 3,000 email users), a train-the-trainer and licensing programme will break even in 0.5 days with an investment of £9.54 per head.

The less-easily quantified benefits of the organisational wide roll out programme are increased productivity, a happier workforce, less stress, more manageable email traffic, a more consistent public profile and much clearer communications.

## Delegates' comments on the session

People were asked if they would recommend this session to others – and why.

Answer	No. responses
Yes	15
No	0
Blank	1

Why?

Yes Really useful to learn how to manage emails appropriately.

Yes The training was exceptionally useful and provided practical tips and advice on the effective use of email and email etiquette (something which is not taught to anyone).

Although those who have attended the course can try to lead by example to influence others to use email more effectively/productively, this training will only be truly useful when more individuals attend and adopt the changes suggested.

I felt I already used email in an effective manner; however I feel my use of email has still been improved as a result of the training - for many other staff in the organisation the changes are likely to be even more profound.

Yes Useful

A: to think how to maximise the impact / effectiveness of the emails I send.

B: to check grammar, spelling and professionalism.

C: avoid sending un-necessary ones

Yes It was very practical & gave hints that help me focus in order to filter emails more efficiently.

Also made me think about how I use email, the purpose & responses I am seeking.

Yes Puts a different perspective on email, it seems less important somehow. The hints and tips, particularly the square brackets and dealing with emails immediately have made the biggest difference.

I am finding that my staff have started to use the brackets as well

Yes It can help individuals to take control of their email traffic and manage the responses they need better, which in turn helps to reduce the pressure felt by the volume

Yes To minimise disruption to their day, help with email writing, organisation and gives them control over time

Yes Focus the mind on what is important

Yes Because this is great – there just are not enough of us doing it yet to have maximised the benefit.

I think it should be mandatory for all senior management too!

Yes The training gave very good strategies on how to manage emails and I have implemented rules to prevent 'junk' emails

Not sure. It didn't really show me anything new, and if it's going to work then the whole organisation needs to attend.

Yes The more people who do it the more it would improve the emails

Yes There are easy to apply tips that can make a difference and once used by some will be used by more and more people

Yes Because it makes you think

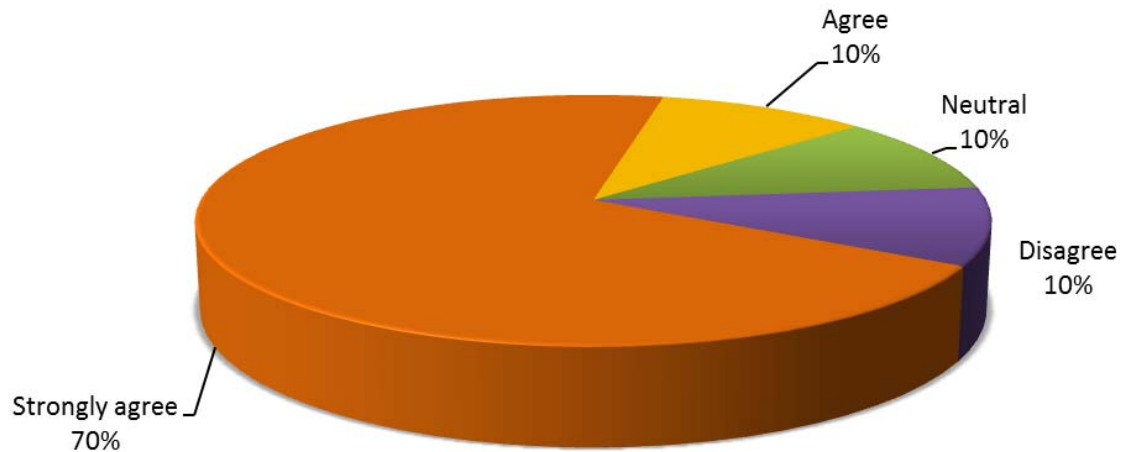
Yes Any small steps to make time efficiencies with e-mails have a significant impact on a large number of people

Yes To understand how to do emails properly and manage them

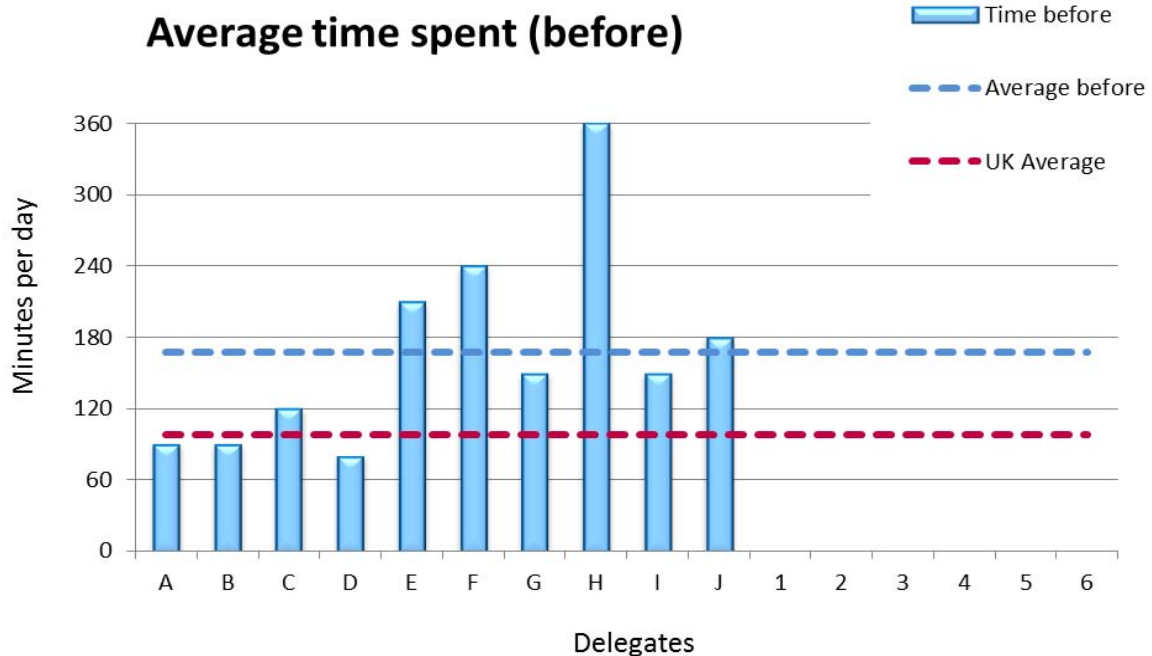
## Email use before the session

Email use was much higher than the UK average.

### The first thing I do at work is check my email (before)



90% of delegates said the first thing they do at work is check their email.



Email users spent on average 167 minutes per day on email, which was 70.6% above the UK average of 97.9 minutes per day.

Against this background, the sessions produced very positive changes in behaviour.

## A “Wordcloud” the email culture

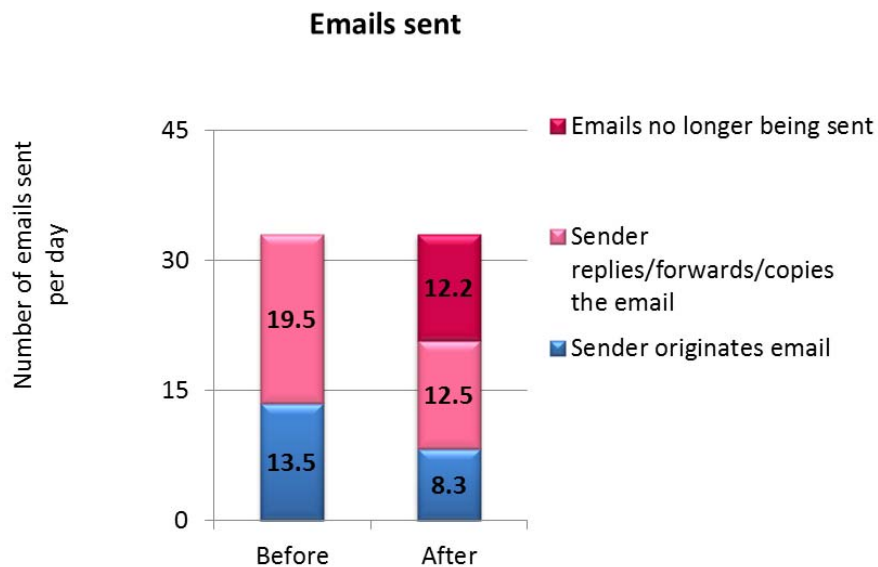
Delegates are asked for “Three words to describe your email culture.” These are shown in a wordcloud: the larger the word, the more frequent the occurrence.



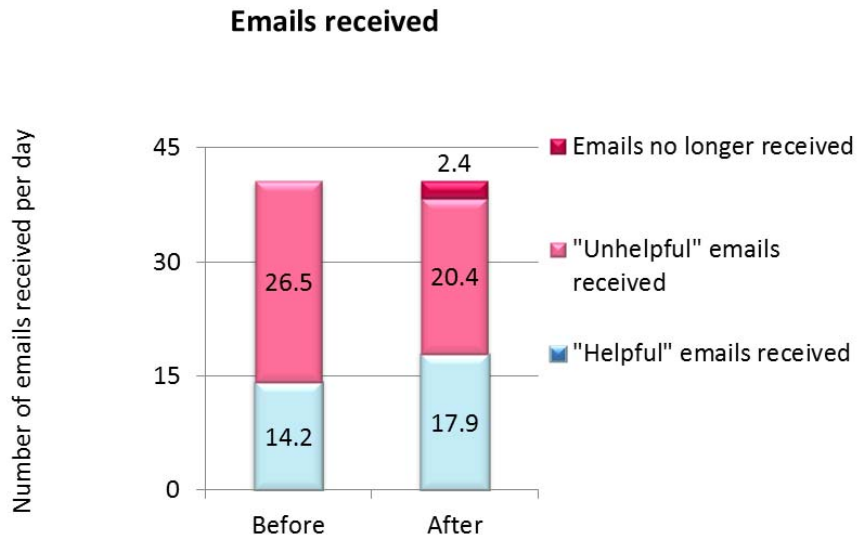
The more common descriptions of “Dependent, prolific, relentless, overused” have all been positively impacted by the sessions.



## Now: fewer emails sent and received



Users are sending 35.9% fewer unnecessary replies/CCs and originating 38.5 fewer emails.

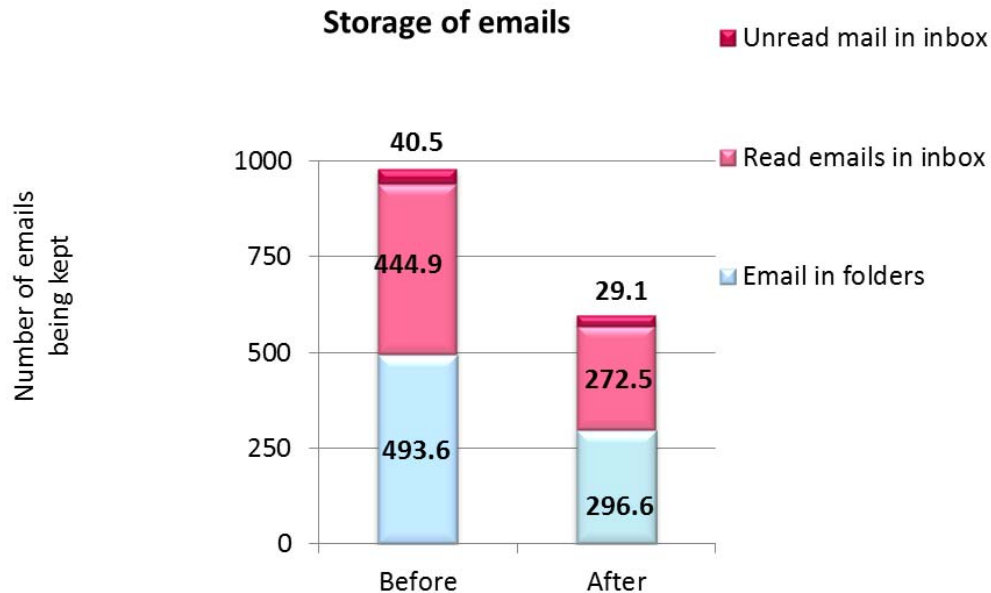


They are also receiving 23% fewer “unhelpful” emails.

### Key benefits

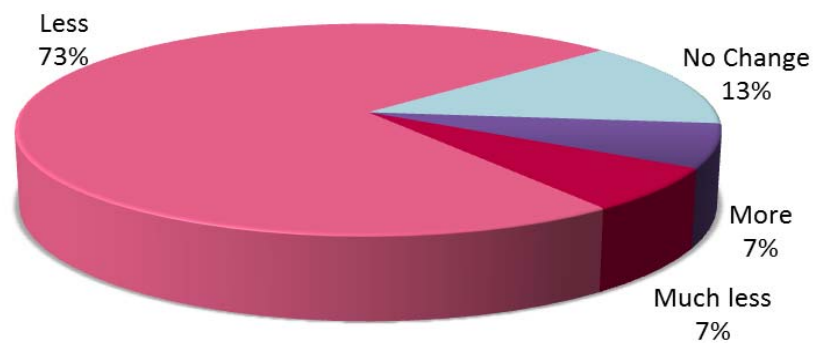
- Fewer CCs gives greater focus on relevant messages
- Receiving less traffic gives greater time saved

## Now: clearer inboxes and people speaking more



Overall folders have been cleared out by 38.9%.

### I email when I should phone or speak (after)



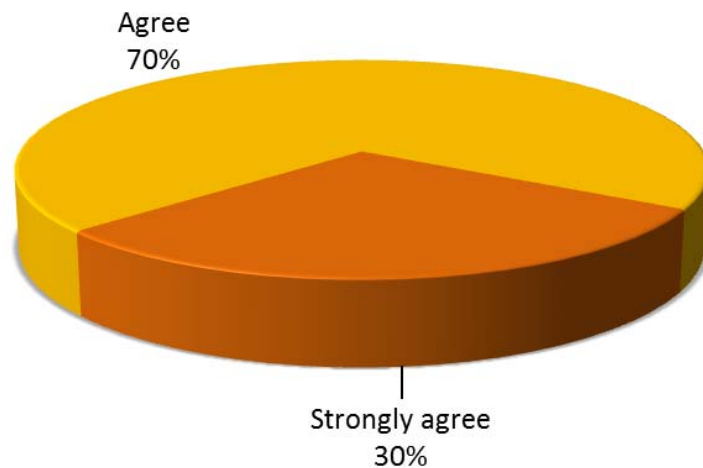
After the session 80% of respondents said they now speak to their colleagues more.

#### Key benefits

- Clearing out old emails frees up server space and makes it easier to find useful messages
- The benefit of speaking more is improved working relationships and clearer communication.

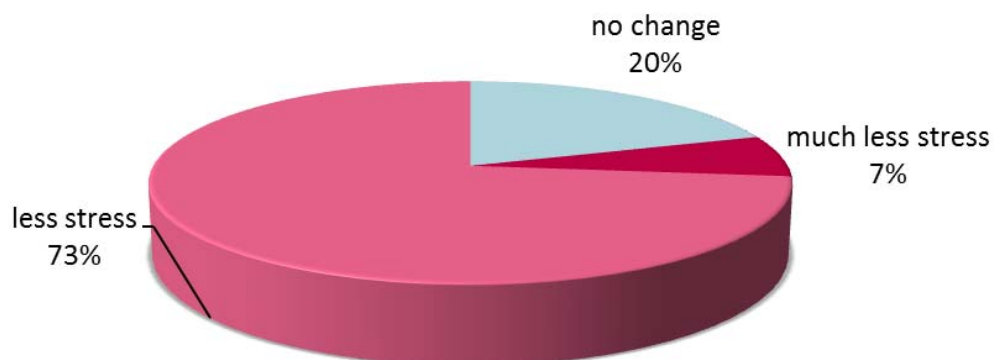
## Now: less stress

### Email often causes me stress (before)



Before the session, everyone reported some level of stress...

### Whole sample: Since the training, email causes me...



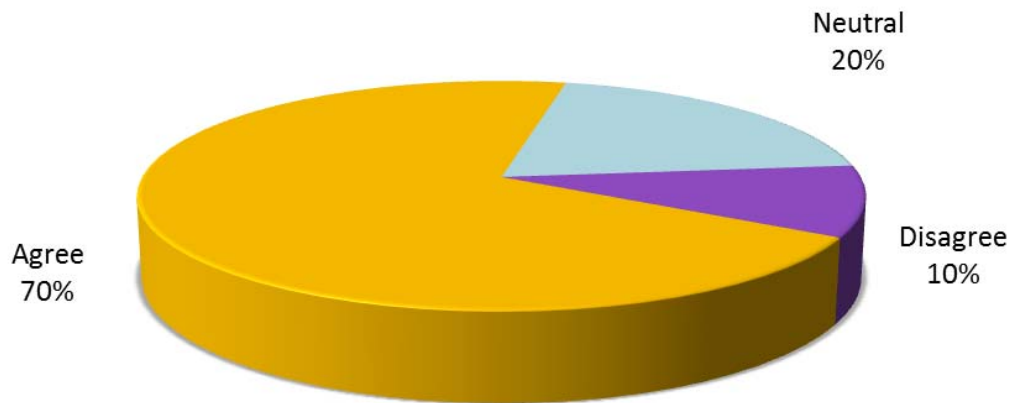
...and after, 80% reported an improvement

#### Key benefits

- The benefits of less stress at work are well documented and include less sickness absence, higher morale, greater productivity and lower staff turnover.

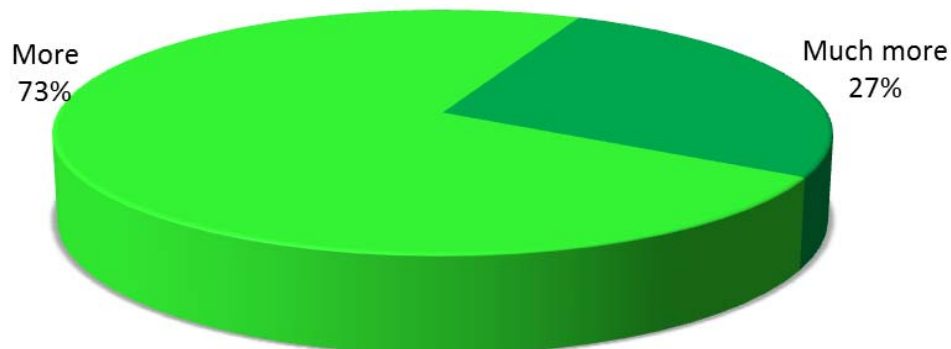
## Now: clearer emails sent

**All the emails I send are easy to understand (before)**



70% felt all their emails were easy to understand before the session...

**The emails I send are easy to understand (after)**



... and 100% feel they are easier to understand after.

### Key benefits

- As well as reducing misunderstandings and misinterpretation, writing clearer emails saves time and boosts productivity.

## Changing Behaviour

93.7% of respondents have reported changing their email behaviours.

I use suffixes. I have rules on emails from external company's so they don't clog up my inbox. I view my calendar and tasks before my emails each morning.

Improved message in the subject line

Using my out of office better, added on my working availability on my signature, entering suffixes in the subject line.

Better subject headings, [instructions], deadlines. Set calendar as my outlook opening default

Controlling email, writing in the subject the issue with the suffix

Managing emails immediately and not letting them fester in the inbox. Not opening the emails first thing, checking staff are ok and calendar for the day takes priority. Attempting to talk to people on the phone, or go to their office to discuss things

Less focussed on email. Using [suffixes] in my subject box. Have shared some of this with others in my area and plan to discuss benefits at next management meeting

starting to use [suffixes]

I feel different about emails – I am less stressed about them. I have put information on my signature about my working week to reduce expectation of immediate responses

I tried to be different but unfortunately the people who generate all the unnecessary emails I receive didn't attend the session!

Subject header use improved

Subject of email is much clearer and only emailing to those who really need to have it

As much as possible

1. Added times/days at work to my signature.
2. Starting to use suffixes.
3. Thinking more about effective and economical use of e-mails.
4. Popping through to team office a bit more, rather than send e-mail.
5. Looking to put a cluster of messages into one e-mail rather than send multiple e-mails.
6. Looking to improve my message filtering.
7. Looking to blind copy some messages, although I often want to generate discussion within my team; eg on improving a particular procedure.
8. I have turned off my message alerts.
9. Trying to handle more messages once only, but sometimes cannot face tackling a large task now so mark back as unread once know content of message.

I have begun using subject lines more effectively, re-organsied my Inbox and email folders, turned off my email alerts, used the phone more and allocated time each day to check and respond to emails

Changed alerts, change outlook so I look at my calendar, putting title and suffix in emails

## Spreading the revolution

100% of respondents have passed on tips to other people.

This is how we spread the revolution.

The three things that I have done following this session

Improved message in the subject line, less e-mailing, be specific with a deadline

All of the above plus shared the website address

Subject headings and [Action], I've also been asked to give a brief overview to my colleagues

Signatures, how to suffix, removing the notification envelope etc.

Being clear in the title what is in the email

Expiration dates, using [suffixes]

[suffixes], professionalism & precision

Creating rules, adding information in the strap line, adding information about my working week

Suffixes to subject lines

Move current inbox to folder and move over as appropriate

To be able to log in to your diary first

All of it. Did a session with my team today.

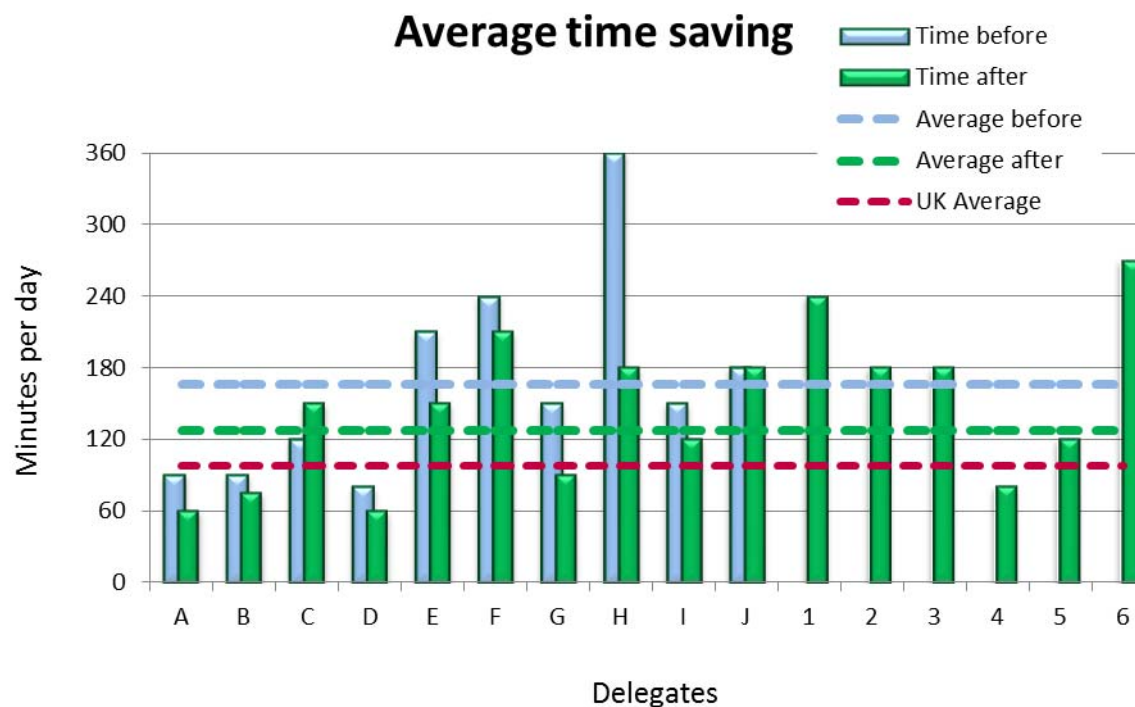
I will feedback key learning points to my team at next team Meeting (12/12/12)

The more effective use of subject lines

Titles in emails, suffixes

## Saving time

Only people providing figures both before and after are included in these averages.

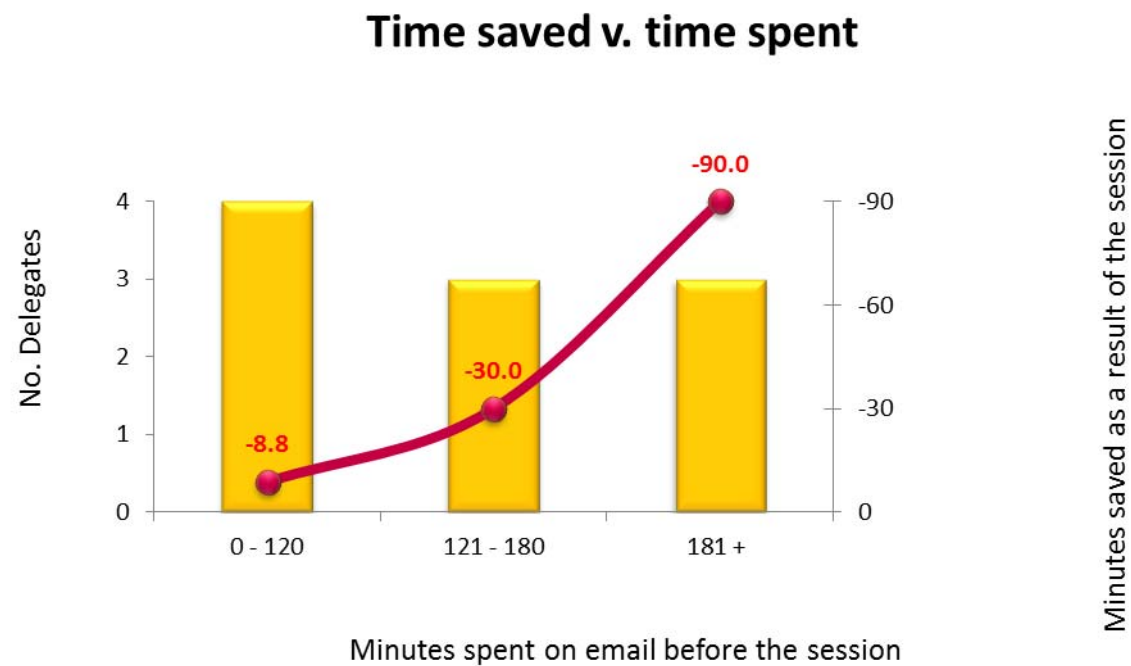


On average people are spending 23.7% less time on email every day. This 39.5 minute saving gives everyone 4.3 weeks more every year.

### Key benefit

- Time saved on email means greater productivity in the “real” job.

## Saving time



The more time people spent on email, the greater the time saving. People who spent up to two hours each day on email are saving 8.8 minutes daily. Those who spent between 2 and 3 hours a day are now saving 30 minutes every day. High users who spent over 3 hours are now saving 90 minutes.





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