

The Collector Chronicle

North American Recovery

August 2023

America's Collection Authority

LAST MONTH'S WINNER

The lucky winner of our client prize for July is Southwest Skin and Cancer. They have been using our agency since 2002! We will be sending them a gift basket from the Chocolate Covered Wagon. Enjoy!



THIS MONTH'S PRIZE

This month we will be giving away a gift basket from the Chocolate Covered Wagon. Each client who sends new accounts during the month of August will have their name entered into a drawing. At the end of the month, we'll draw a name, and if it's yours, you'll win the gift basket!

***Don't miss out on your chance to win!
Send new accounts before the
end of the month!
Good luck!!***



**CHOCOLATE
COVERED
WAGON**

THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE UGLY WHEN IT COMES TO EMAIL

By: David J. Saxton

President, North American Recovery

We receive hundreds of pieces of mail each day. I'm talking about the good old-fashioned kind that's delivered by our friendly neighborhood mail carrier. (Kudos to my friend Jane.) 📮 They stop by the office once a day and drop it off. Now, imagine if you will, the post office delivering each piece of mail one at a time throughout the day. Our receptionist would be constantly interrupted—which she wouldn't like very much. And she wouldn't be able to do a lick of work either. Unfortunately, if gone unchecked, email can have the same effect.

While email has revolutionized communication as we know it, there are some drawbacks. This month I wanted to share some of the things we've done to reduce the negative effects of email.

As described in last month's newsletter, our employees' clock-in times coordinate with their break and lunch schedules to ensure uninterrupted work. Eliminating distractions and interruptions during these work blocks, is a critical component of their success. The physical set up of our office helps minimize distractions. We have high workstation walls, and this cuts down on interruptions from other employees' movements or conversations. However, there aren't any physical boundaries for email. And, unfortunately for most of our employees,



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email has become the number one distraction and time suck.

I conducted an investigation into just how much time an employee will waste when constantly stopping what they are doing throughout the day in order to read and respond to emails. My research found that an employee's productivity can be reduced from 25% to 50% based on the volume and frequency of email interruptions. It's that dramatic. And, as hard as it was for me to admit it, I was a big part of the problem. I was using email as my primary form of communication with our staff. While I still use email because of its many positives, I've dramatically reduced the number of emails I send, and I changed the timing of when I send them.

In addition to that, I created a system that only allows emails to be delivered at specific times of the day. The system still allows an employee to compose and "send" an email at any time during the day. But the actual transfer and delivery of email is limited to the pre-determined schedule.

From their perspective, everything still works the same. However, any message composed during an employee's work block, or sent to a given employee during their "quiet time" won't actually be sent or delivered until their "email window" opens up.

What's an "email window"? It's a period of time—usually just before or after an employee's break or lunch—when all emails for that employee are sent and received. Email windows are the only time during the day when email will be sent and/or delivered to an employee. This system keeps all the positives about email and eliminates the number one negative: constant interruptions.

If an employee has a thought they need to capture, they can still instantly compose and "send" an email, but the email won't be delivered to the recipient until a specific time.

Each email window is long enough to allow all employees ample time to receive, review, and respond to their email. (Note: Some jobs require more frequent access to email. Therefore, some employees have longer email windows.)

Once we made this change, we saw an immediate improvement in productivity. Our employees enjoyed uninterrupted worktime for the majority of their day. They were able to keep their focus on producing results—not reading and responding to emails.

Here is an example of how it works:

A collector on the first shift has a calling start time of 8:00 AM. However, the collector will punch in five minutes before eight, so they can listen to voicemail messages and reply to or compose email. Their morning email window will close at 8:10 AM. Since the collector punched in at 7:55 AM, they have fifteen minutes to send and/or reply to emails. Then, when the window closes at 8:10, the collector won't be interrupted or distracted by receiving any emails for the next two hours. In fact, the window won't open again until 10:20 AM. This will allow the collector to have a two-hour uninterrupted block of work time, go on break from 10:00 to 10:20, then, when they return from break at 10:20, they can reply or compose emails from 10:20 until 10:40. Once again, when the window closes at 10:40 the collector will have another two hours of uninterrupted time to focus on results.

Then, ten minutes before they go to lunch, their



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email window will open, and they will receive emails that had been sent over the past two hours. They will have ten minutes before lunch, all during their lunch, and ten minutes after they clock back in from lunch to send and receive email. The window will then close, and they will have their third two-hour block of uninterrupted time. Their last email window will open thirty minutes before they clock out for the day.

As you can imagine, some employees resisted having their email restricted at first. But once they got used to it, they agreed it was a great way to eliminate distractions and improve productivity. Some of us have the discipline to ignore our inbox when necessary. But for those who just can't resist opening, reading, and replying to an email, our system helps them save that activity for appropriate times throughout their day. I'd love to hear from you regarding this article. Feel free to send me an email. I promise I won't let it cause a distraction or interrupt me. I'll make sure I read and respond at the appropriate time. 😊

Thanks for reading. Have a great month.

— Dave



The Collector Chronicle is published monthly by NORTH AMERICAN RECOVERY for prospective and current clients. Please direct questions or comments to the editor, Dave Saxton, at DaveSaxton@North-American-Recovery.com.

1600 West 2200 South, Suite 410, West Valley City, Utah 84119 • 801-346-0777

www.North-American-Recovery.com