

**Dianna Booher**

Bestselling Author of *Creating Personal Presence*

***FASTER,  
FEWER,  
BETTER  
EMAILS***

**MANAGE  
THE VOLUME,  
  
REDUCE  
THE STRESS,  
  
LOVE  
THE RESULTS**



## **Praise for *Faster, Fewer, Better Emails***

“Email has become an omnipresent part of our professional and personal lives, so it’s easy to treat it carelessly. This book is a great reminder of how email impacts not only your productivity but your professional reputation and even your security and that of your company. I’ll be implementing Booher’s strategies for me and my team.”

—**Brian Chase, Director, Future Vertical Lift Enterprise Alignment, Bell**

“The incredible Dianna Booher has done it again, providing her unique wisdom and remarkable insights in the ways that only she can. Bravo!”

—**Catherine Blades, Senior Vice President and Chief ESG and Communications Officer, Aflac**

“Dianna Booher has written a must-read book for all those drowning in their email box. She provides practical advice and tips to master your email in today’s digital world.”

—**Virginia Harnisch, Chief Compliance Officer/Managing Director, SMBC Capital Markets, Inc.**

“Finally, a way out of email jail! Seriously, the strategies in this book can cut your email time in half—and improve communication flow.”

—**Kim Campbell, Senior Manager, Customer Advocacy, TXU Energy**

“If you’re a busy executive, have your team read and implement the strategies in this book. The productivity increases for you—and them—will be startling.”

—**Harold R. Loftin, Jr., Chief Legal Officer and General Counsel, GuideStone**

“This book will open your eyes to a whole new way of thinking about email—its purposes, structure, improper uses, security risks, and productivity strategies.”

—**Marshall Goldsmith, author of the *New York Times* #1 bestselling *Triggers*, *Mojo*, and *What Got You Here Won’t Get You There***

“Booher delivers another winner: practical strategies and tips to manage email volume, reduce the feeling of being perpetually overwhelmed, and promote clear communication.”

—**Brian Tracy, author of *Eat That Frog!***

“Dianna Booher is the master of her craft, the communicators’ communicator, the go-to person for getting your point across memorably, efficiently, and effectively. With *Faster, Fewer, Better Emails*, she’s delivered another winner and one you can put to use immediately. It’s got a clear and concise format, practical tips, relevant examples, and a sound strategy for saving time and aggravation. Read this book now and earn immediate thanks from your colleagues and business from your customers.”

—**Jim Kouzes, coauthor of the bestselling *The Leadership Challenge* and Fellow, Doerr Institute for New Leaders, Rice University**

“Practical strategies and tips to get real 24-7 communication gains from email and eliminate the productivity drain it all too often creates. . . . Another hit from Booher.”

—**Ralph D. Heath, former Executive Vice President, Lockheed Martin Corporation**

***FASTER,  
FEWER,  
BETTER  
EMAILS***

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## **OTHER BUSINESS BOOKS BY DIANNA BOOHER**

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*Communicate Like a Leader*

*Creating Personal Presence*

*What More Can I Say?* (Perigee, 2015)

*Communicate with Confidence* (McGraw-Hill, 2011)

*Booher's Rules of Business Grammar* (McGraw-Hill, 2008)

*The Voice of Authority* (McGraw-Hill, 2007)

*Great Personal Letters for Busy People* (McGraw-Hill, 2006)

*Your Signature Work* (Tyndale House, 2004)

*Your Signature Life* (Tyndale House, 2003)

*From Contact to Contract* (Kaplan, 2003)

*Speak with Confidence!* (McGraw-Hill, 2002)

*E-Writing* (Pocket Books, 2001)

*Good Grief, Good Grammar* (Ballantine, 1989)

# ***FASTER, FEWER, BETTER EMAILS***

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Manage the Volume,  
Reduce the Stress,  
Love the Results

**Dianna Booher**



Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.

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# *Introduction*

I do love email. Wherever possible I try to communicate asynchronously. I'm really good at email.

—**ELON MUSK**, founder and CEO of SpaceX,  
cofounder and CEO of Tesla and Neuralink

Lorenzo, a colleague of mine, emailed me to say he needed to find a regional distributor and asked if I'd put the word out to my network. The "ideal distributor" would build a sales team, receive a commission of regional sales, and have an equity position in the company.

Culling my contact list, I emailed him a few prospects for consideration. He connected with all three candidates by phone. Bingo, one showed immediate interest and had all the right credentials—that is, until Lorenzo and the potential distributor began to exchange emails.

Lorenzo emailed detailed information about the distributorship to the candidate, Amy, and asked her to respond with her plans to grow the region. Amy sent back a cryptic email from her smartphone:

Interested , , , traveling very excited sending more  
when back in office.

Two weeks later, Amy followed up with another cryptic email. It, too, sounded as though she'd emailed while dashing through an airport security checkpoint, with an unpunctuated stream-of-thought message, grammatical errors and misspellings, and incomplete information.

That's when Lorenzo forwarded Amy's two emails to me with this question:

"Am I overreacting about this person's ability to communicate? Read her emails (below) and tell me if I can afford to

partner with someone like this to represent our company at a senior level? Although she'll eventually be managing and not selling, at the beginning, she will have direct client contact. Can I trust this person to communicate with clients?"

I read the email string Lorenzo forwarded to me. Candidate Amy's excitement about the distributorship potential came through strongly. But her emails looked as if they'd been written by someone just learning the language. In addition to the errors, she rambled on with vague generalities, falling short on specifics.

"Maybe it's a fluke," I responded to Lorenzo. "Maybe she's not feeling well. If she has all the right sales and marketing experience and management credentials, why don't you tell her bluntly how important writing is to the partnership. . . . Just see what she says."

So Lorenzo tried that approach. He mentioned his concerns about her writing, but said he was otherwise thrilled with the growth plans they'd originally discussed on the phone.

Amy's reply? Another rambling, error-filled email.

Lorenzo gave up and moved on to the next candidate. To put it in his words: "I have too much invested in my brand and business to have a distributor who can't compose a simple, clear email!"

## **CONSIDER IMAGE, SECURITY, LIABILITY**

Email matters NOT just because of credibility and clarity. Email also poses security risks and legal liabilities. All that adds up either to big pluses or big minuses, depending on how well your email works for or against you.

For more than three decades, I've been reading emails to and from people at all levels in client organizations across myriad industries—hundreds of thousands of emails. My firm analyzes why the original versions don't work and why the edited versions get better responses.

And the most revealing thing in our work? "Impact" sto-

ries. The lawsuits based on sloppy wording. The loss of clients because of insensitive remarks. Inaccurate payments caused by missing information. Frustration and missed deadlines because of inconsistency in filing important attachments.

This entire book could be a collection of such blunders and their associated career and organizational costs. But that would only cause more stress for the reader. Instead, this book aims to make email work FOR you. The goal is to fix these problems!

### **STOP THE STRESS AND PRODUCTIVITY DRAIN**

I knew we'd reached "email overwhelm" one holiday weekend when my parents were at our home for dinner, and I invited them to stay a little longer. My elderly mom sighed wearily, "Sorry, I guess we'd better go. I need to get home to do email."

Unfortunately, whether employed or retired, most of us are still tapping away. On vacation. At the airport. At the soccer field or gym. At the beach. From a hospital bed—yours or that of a loved one. At bedtime. At sunrise. Over lunch. Chances are, your email habits drain you, both mentally and emotionally. That spells lost productivity for your organization and stress for you. We were told more than two decades ago that email would revolutionize the way we work and save us an enormous amount of time. While email has many benefits, it has also engulfed us and created other productivity drains.

My organization, Booher Research Institute, recently commissioned a survey about email communication habits and productivity from the Social Research Lab at the University of Northern Colorado.<sup>1</sup> Here's what a representative sampling of knowledge workers across multiple industries reported about their email habits (among other things discussed later in this book): Thirty-seven percent spend 1 to 2 hours per day reading and writing email; another 25 percent (one in four workers) spend 3 or 4 hours a day on their email. And, to the question, How often do you *check* email?, 55 percent

(more than half) answered that they check email either hourly or multiple times per hour.

Earlier studies confirm our recent research. According to those studies, the average white-collar worker receives 111 to 131 emails per day and spends 2 to 2.5 hours handling incoming and outgoing email. Earlier studies also report hours that people log on during personal time to check work-related email. Some of the studies depended on self-report; others were based on physical sensors, time logs, and email traffic reports.

While some experts predicted back in the 1990s that communication technology could *potentially* improve our productivity by 20–25 percent, a McKinsey Global Institute study found that, in actuality, technology reduces our productivity by 28 percent for any number of reasons—interruptions, distractions, disorganization, and not finding information to reply with.<sup>2</sup>

To calculate the cost to an organization, I'll take a \$75,000 salary as an illustration.

### White-Collar Worker's Salary at \$75,000

1. Multiply the base salary by 1.4 to account for benefits.

$$\begin{array}{r} \$75,000 \text{ (annual salary of employee)} \\ \times 1.4 \text{ (salary plus benefits)} \\ \hline \$105,000 \text{ (total annual cost of employee salary \& benefits)} \end{array}$$

2. Multiply total employee cost by percent of time spent on email. Roughly 30 percent of the average worker's time is spent on email, since 2.5 hours/day  $\times$  5 days/week = 12.5 hours of a 40-hour week.

$$\begin{array}{r} \$105,000 \text{ (annual employee cost)} \\ \times .30 \text{ (percent of time spent on email)} \\ \hline \$31,500 \text{ (total cost to do email 2.5 hrs/day—one employee)} \\ \$315,000 \text{ (total cost to do email 2.5 hrs/day—if 10 employees)} \\ \$3,150,000 \text{ (total cost to do email 2.5 hrs/day—if 100 employees)} \end{array}$$

To figure out how much of your own salary you “spend” on email, plug your salary into the above formula. It’s easy to see the payoff for learning to tame the email monster and reclaim uninterrupted work time for an employer. The same goes for you, your work success, and your personal life.

### **WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM THIS BOOK**

Besides saving money and time, in the seven chapters of this book, you’ll learn how to:

- Identify and stop email clutter—what to stop sending and receiving because it’s either counterproductive or harmful to your image
- Compose *better* emails quickly
- Reduce email length so your messages get action
- Organize common-sense files so you can quickly find documents and emails to attach and send
- Avoid security risks and legal liabilities
- Present a professional image when you email clients and colleagues

Today, most substantive correspondence takes place through email. In essence, how you handle email determines the trajectory of your career. Master your emails—make them faster, fewer, and better—and you’ll stand out as a clear communicator. And clear communicators become effective leaders in every industry.

So let’s get to it. Here are the seven keys to getting through your inbox faster, . . . focusing on the fewer important emails, . . . and writing better emails that build career success.

—*Dianna Booher*

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# ***How to Work with Dianna Booher and Booher Research Institute***

## **KEYNOTES AND CONSULTING**

**If you have any of these challenges or goals, Dianna and her team can help.**

- “Our people are working harder and longer hours. The email is killing us!”
- “Our next group of young leaders lack executive presence.
- “Our salespeople make face-to-face presentations and they need more polish.”
- “People say there’s no communication around here, yet we send them plenty of information, hold regular staff meetings, and update our intranet. We have no idea what they mean!”
- “We get far too many customer complaints about our communication. It’s costing us time and money to respond.”

## **PERSONAL COACHING ON EXECUTIVE PRESENCE, SALES PRESENTATIONS, OR BOOK WRITING AND PUBLISHING**

- We will design an individual coaching program to fit your needs and schedule.
- If your speakers for an upcoming meeting are experts in their field but are not necessarily

engaging speakers, we can help them structure and deliver a dynamic presentation.

- If you're an entrepreneur, CEO, consultant, or other professional wanting to establish your credentials by writing and publishing a book with a major publisher, Dianna can coach you through that process. Go to [www.GetYourBookPublishedCoachingProgram.com](http://www.GetYourBookPublishedCoachingProgram.com).

After consulting and coaching executives at more than one-third of the Fortune 500 organizations, Dianna and her team have the research, expertise, and practical techniques and tools to help you reach your goals.



## ***For More Information***

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[www.BooherResearch.com/blog](http://www.BooherResearch.com/blog)

Go to **[www.FasterFewerBetterEmails.com](http://www.FasterFewerBetterEmails.com)** to download *Your 10-Step Implementation Plan for Email Productivity* to “spread the word” in your organization. You’ll also find a Discussion Guide and other learning resources.

**This material has been excerpted from:**

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**by Dianna Booher**



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