



Answering Emails

By David Gough

How long is too long?

You have a web site and you give your prospects and customers the resources to contact you by email. You go to all the effort of adding links to every page indicating "have a question? email us today". Then you don't answer your emails..... **Not answering your emails is like not answering the phone in your office.** If a prospect goes to the trouble of emailing you in the first place then chances are they would purchase from you. I can't fathom not checking my emails, this is where my business comes from. What if there are orders in there?? I understand that as online business people we get many emails and it is difficult to sort through them in a timely fashion. But we must. We need to find different ways of organizing our in boxes so we don't lose any prospects <we discuss organization further down>.

Format

I find that most prospect emails are a whole bunch of questions. For me the easiest way for me to answer these and not forget something is to answer within the body of the original message. What I do is bold my text and place the answer to each question under the question. This keeps things organized and eliminates forgetting a question. By bolding your text the prospect can easily see your answers within the message and allows the person to see the question as well. Works great for me because it gives me the opportunity to really think about each question at a time and formulate the best answer.

Organization

Today there are many different stand alone email programs out there as well as outlook plus outlook express comes on most computers now. The one thing they all have in common is that they all will allow you to set up filters. Filters are a way to tell the program what folder to put an email in. Most of us have more than one email for business info@....com (linked to where prospects click to ask questions) and sales@.....com (linked to any order buttons I have if I am not using a shopping cart) as well as our personal email addresses. Filters can take each email address and place the emails in folders you can set up. I have (4) folders set up. #1 is "prospects", all emails addressed to info@myphotogift.net go into, next is "orders", all emails addressed to order@myphotogift.net go here. Third is my personal email which is a different address then finally I have one folder for everything else. The advantage is when I open my email program I can see how many emails come from each address and look at them in order. I always go the the order folder first followed by prospects and finally my personal email folder.

Final Note:

In my opinion and from personal experience, if you don't answer an email within 24 hrs you have lost the prospect. I have many businesses I deal with on a daily basis, and many of them don't get back to me for days. Boy that really annoys me. If they treat their customers that way it is a wonder they have any. So in closing, answer your emails first thing every morning and last thing before you go home at night. Once in this

habit, you will never forget to check you email again. For more information on emailing check out [Email Basics](#).

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About the Author:

David Gough is owner of Gough's Stock Photography, established in 1997, growing to an ever-expanding Internet presence. Gough's Stock Photography deals with most areas of online product sales and business marketing. David the experience and resources he has accumulated over the past 7 years to help other small and home based businesses.