

THE NEW NEW INBOX

How Email and Social Media Changed Our Lives—*The Survey Results*

Extracted from the full report which is available at
www.people-onthego.com/surveyreport



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the survey participants who took the time to answer the survey and contributed to this effort. For this survey to take place and for this report to be published, a lot had to happen before, during, and after the survey. There are many people to thank and too many to mention here. I still would like to mention some of these productivity evangelists who have contributed tremendously and in a variety of ways including spreading the word about the survey within their organizations and beyond, contributing their insights to the survey results, and continuing to support this effort. This includes in alphabetical order: Adam Christensen, Andy DiPaolo, Bill Denyer, Jackie Alcalde, Jared Goralnick, Jeff Fanselow, Jenny Blake, Jerry McCreary, Mark Bennett, Mary Ellen Kassotakis, Pamela E. Evans, Peggy Wolf, and Opinder Bawa.

Putting this report together would not have come to a successful conclusion without the persistent help of my friend and colleague Steve Loosley whose insights were invaluable and whose reviews and edits shaped the report. And big thanks to longtime supporter Rick Colosimo for his encouragement during this effort and his review of the report, his comments and suggestions, and valued business insights. I also would like to thank the People-OnTheGo Social Media Coordinator Brandy Scoggan, whose efforts in compiling survey data and charts were key in moving this project forward.

Big thanks to my friends and family who continue to support my effort and especially my wife Susanne whose support, engagement, and patience are most instrumental to the completion of this yet exciting journey.

I hope you enjoy reading this report and find it useful in helping you better assess how e-mail and Social Media are impacting our work and personal lives and what needs to be done to address the accompanying challenges and harness the potential.

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Chapter 1: The New New Inbox



We are caught in an e-mail vortex, a death-trap, and no one knows how to escape. Wait a minute! Did I say e-mail? It is not only e-mail. It is now Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, blogs, YouTube, Google and Yahoo groups, RSS feeds of all kinds, Delicious bookmarks, and the list grows indefinitely. E-mail and Social Media have become resilient and ever-growing forces that continue to reshape our daily work and personal lives for better or worse. There is no end in sight! These forces bring tremendous opportunities and yet incredible challenges. With all the excitement about these channels of communication we have delved deep into them and are now suffering from serious challenges that are leaving our workforce scattered and dis-oriented, and shrinking the bottom line. We have not yet mustered the wisdom and the tools to address these challenges and hone in on the opportunities. This is bound to change!

While we are in the midst of complete upheaval in corporate communication, as the influence of our generation wanes, the next generation of professionals and managers will redefine the tools, channels, platforms that we use to communicate. If you'd like to learn the in-depth story about how e-mail and Social Media are used in the workplace today, and what the future might hold, this survey report does just that. It closely analyzes the results of an extensive survey and draws valuable insights.

The New New Inbox

I still remember the days when the inbox meant internal e-mail only. I was in Southern California at a technology company with about 100 employees at the time and everyone had access to Microsoft Outlook and used it for internal e-mail and for scheduling internal meetings. The external world was not "visible" to us. There was no Internet if you can imagine. Only a few people had access to MCI and a few others to CompuServe. These privileged people who were able to connect to the external world had to jump through hoops to do it.

Then came the Internet and suddenly the "new" inbox was born. The New Inbox is connected to the whole world. It brought amazing opportunities and also an unprecedented e-mail overload. And soon after came the invasion of mobile devices and e-mail on the go. Now the New Inbox is with us everywhere and all the time.

Then Web 2.0 and Social Media snuck up on us! Now we are all part of the creation process and part of the conversation. Like never before, we can share information, participate in conversations, and build social networks. We are in direct contact with people who once were difficult or impossible to reach. We are no longer just in our New Inbox. We are now as often or even more often on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, blogs, Yahoo Groups, Google Groups, YouTube channels, Delicious bookmarks, StumbleUpon articles, and you name it: All together, this is the New New Inbox.

The New New Inbox includes our e-mail and Social Media feeds altogether. It is emerging as a powerful force and even the most authoritative search engines are re-inventing their search approach to include its fresh and lively content. This inbox brings exciting new opportunities and some rather unique challenges as well.

On the opportunities side, we are now able to connect with millions of people in real time, learn about them and from them, share our knowledge, and have relevant conversations. This translates into a myriad of business applications including market research, public relations, marketing, recruiting, co-creating new ideas, undertaking new business ventures, and having valuable exchanges of all sorts.

On the challenges side, we are presented with more information than ever before, and we constantly interrupt our work to keep up with this constant inflow. We also face legal and security risks that we are not accustomed to. We have to make new decisions about how to manage and balance work and personal use, at the office and at home too. These challenges mean that we often fail to leverage these platforms effectively and instead get sidetracked by the chatter. As businesses, we may even lose ground to new competitors who are harnessing these platforms more efficiently.

About the Survey

As the adoption of these platforms continues to surge and reshape our work and personal lives, I designed this survey to explore further the impact that these platforms are having in the workplace and better qualify and quantify the underlying opportunities and challenges. The goal is to better understand the attitudes and behaviors of today's workforce as it relates to the use of e-mail and Social Media in the workplace, and to understand how these attitudes and behaviors vary by generation, by personality type, by function, and by company size.

The survey identifies the platforms that are most in use and to what degree. It also pinpoints the time spent on e-mail and Social Media and how much of this time is spent on personal versus work-related activities. It also examines the tools that business professionals use to manage these platforms. Most importantly however, the survey identifies how strategic they are in using these platforms and therefore whether their efforts are aligned with their business goals. Finally, the survey explores interruptions and the extent to which these platforms contribute to interruptions and diminish our ability to focus on important tasks.

1000 business professionals participated in the survey. The largest segment (49.7% of the participants) is from organizations with 1000 or more employees, followed by participants from organizations with less than 1000 employees (28% of the participants), and then independent consultants and contractors (22.3% of the participants). The participants represented a broad range of industries. In terms of their functional areas within the organization, professional services, administrative, and marketing were the largest segments, followed by top management, product development, and sales. In terms of the generations, Gen X and Baby Boomers were the largest segments. This report presents the key findings from the survey as well as the details of the survey results shown by generation, by personality type, by function, and by company size.

Who is this survey report for?

- **Executives** who want to learn how their organizations use e-mail and Social Media and the potential impact on the top and bottom lines.
- **Managers** who want more information about how their teams are using these platforms so they can be more effective in guiding this effort.
- **Human Resources professionals** who want to better leverage these platforms and manage the legal risks associated with their use.
- **IT professionals** who want to optimize the tools used and minimize related security risks.
- **Sales and Marketing professionals** who want to leverage these platforms in their effort.
- **Social Media practitioners** who want additional insights and current data on the use of Social Media in the workplace.
- **Myers Briggs® professionals** who want information about how their audiences approach these technologies to address related issues with them.
- **Trainers and coaches** who want to be more effective in helping clients from different generations and personality types.
- **Tools vendors** who want to optimize their products and design new products to help business professionals enhance their use of e-mail and Social Media.
- **Market analysts, reporters, and writers** who watch trends, assess opportunities and challenges, and report on them.

How to get the most out of this report

If you are interesting in reviewing the results and making your own conclusion first before you review our conclusions, chapter 2 is the place to start. It explains the reasoning behind each survey question and then shows the results for that question presented visually using charts and tables. However if you are mostly interested in a summary of the findings and conclusions, chapter 3 is the place to start.

Chapter 3 is the core chapter which presents the key findings and conclusions and then provides commentary about each survey questions and results. Chapter 3 includes also comments from industry influencers who have reviewed the results and contributed their insights.

Chapter 4 through 9 slice and dice the survey results by generation, by personality type, by functional area, and finally by company size. You can refer to these chapters selectively when you are curious about a specific survey question and want to learn in more detail how different segments answered this question. Or you might read the specific chapters that are relevant to your interest or responsibilities. For instance, if you are an HR professional dealing with the issue of generations in the workplace, you might want to read chapter 4, or if you are a trainer coaching individuals and teams on team communication, you might want to read chapters 5 through 8.

The last chapter is the “so what” chapter. It brings the survey findings and conclusions to a format that enables business professional to begin to put them into action.

Additional offerings from People-OnTheGo

To support our customers and readers in their effort to better manage the use of e-mail and Social Media in the workplace, People-OnTheGo offers a number of programs that are available in a variety of formats. Here are a few highlights; please contact training@people-onthego.com for additional information:

The Survey Report Corporate Package

For organizations who want to study this report in more detail and have access to the underlying data so they can perform additional analysis, we offer the Survey Report Corporate Package, which includes:

- An electronic copy of this report that can be distributed freely within the organization
- Online access to the survey data for further analysis

Visit www.people-onthego.com/surveyreport for more details.

The “Accomplishing More With Less” Workshop and Workbook

This workshop deals with today's most pressing workplace issues, covering topics relating to managing time, priorities, interruptions, e-mail, calendar, and to-do lists, as well as organizing electronic and paper documents, and most importantly being invigorated and re-energized in the workplace and elsewhere. This workshop can be delivered in person, via web or video conferencing, as well as in Virtual Worlds for virtual teams.

Download the description and outline at www.people-onthego.com/accomplishingmore for more details.

The “Accomplishing More With Social Media” Workshop

This workshop deals with today's most popular Social Media platforms (LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, blogs, wikis, and more) and how they offer extraordinary capabilities and unique opportunities to yield significant business and personal benefits. With their tremendous growth, it is imperative to better understand these platforms, become skilled at using them strategically, and learn how to fully leverage them in the work environment. This workshop can be delivered in person or via web conferencing.

Visit www.people-onthego.com/socialmedia for more details.

The Productivity Webinars

Our productivity webinars cover a broad range of topics that can help business professionals take their skills to the next level in managing information and data as well as collaborating with others. Topics include the most popular desktop applications such as Microsoft Outlook, Word, Excel, and PowerPoint, and the collaboration technologies such as Microsoft SharePoint, wikis, and blogs. Most sessions are 90 minutes; some are 2 hours. After each session, participants get access to the corresponding self-paced class so they can review and revisit the content at their own pace. Organizations can join our membership program and make our frequent public webinars accessible to their employees at a significant discount.

Visit www.people-onthego.com/webinars for more details.

The Complimentary Lunch and Learn Webinars

Our complimentary lunch and learn webinars are held on Thursdays at 12:00 pm Pacific Time for 45 minutes. They are intended to educate business professionals about important and pressing topics relating to productivity and effectiveness in the workplace. Our guest speakers share their knowledge and expertise to help advance knowledge and best practices.

Visit www.people-onthego.com/free-webinars for more details.

Visit the “Accomplishing more with less” group on Facebook to view recordings of previous webinars.

How to stay in touch

We invite you to join us and become part of the Accomplishing More With Less community, which includes thousands of professionals who want to be more effective and more fulfilled at work and beyond, by contributing more fully to their organizations and their communities. Here are ways in which you can become part of this community:

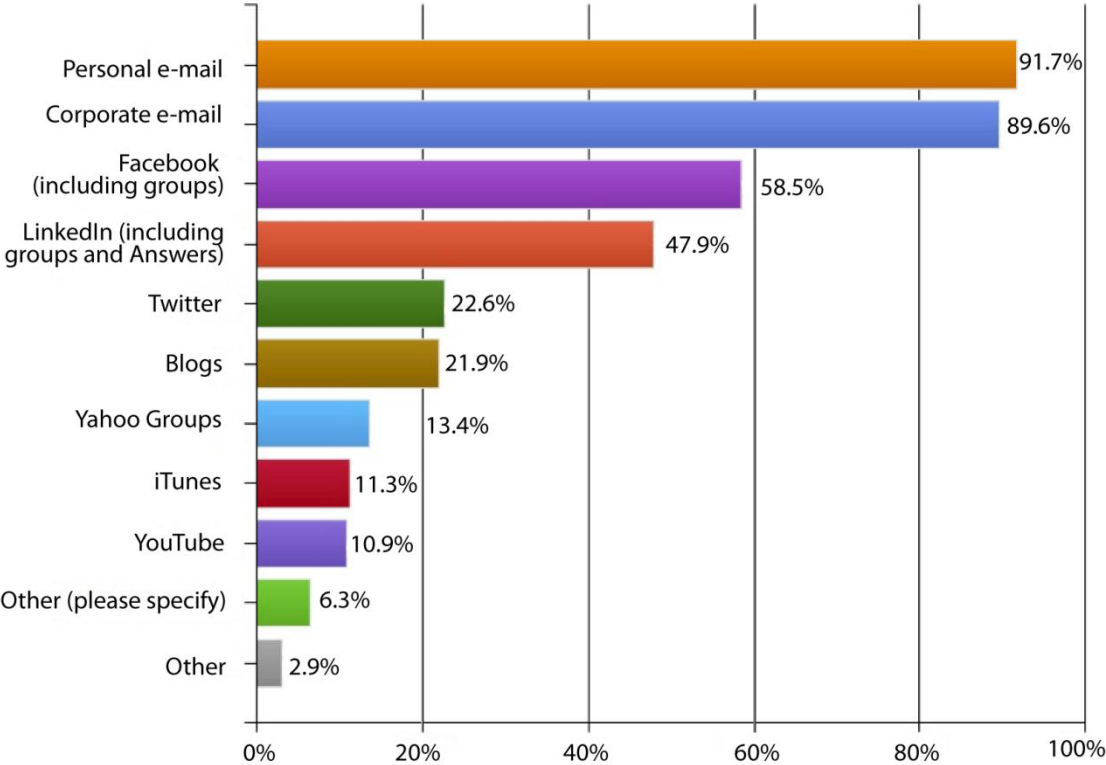
- Join the “Accomplishing more with less group” on Facebook
- Join the “Accomplishing more with less group” on LinkedIn
- Join our complimentary lunch & learn webinars every Thursday at noon Pacific Time: www.people-onthego.com/free-webinars
- Subscribe to my blog at www.people-onthego.com/blog
- Follow me on Twitter (@pierrekhawand)
- Contact training@people-onthego.com for additional information

Chapter 2: The Survey Results

1. Which of the following "inboxes" do you check regularly?

About this question: This question is intended to see how many of these platforms have become part of the daily life of the participants. This is a multiple choice question to allow the participants to select multiple platforms. An answer such as 92.1% (see "personal e-mail" in the graph below) indicates that 92.1% of the participants checked their personal e-mail regularly.

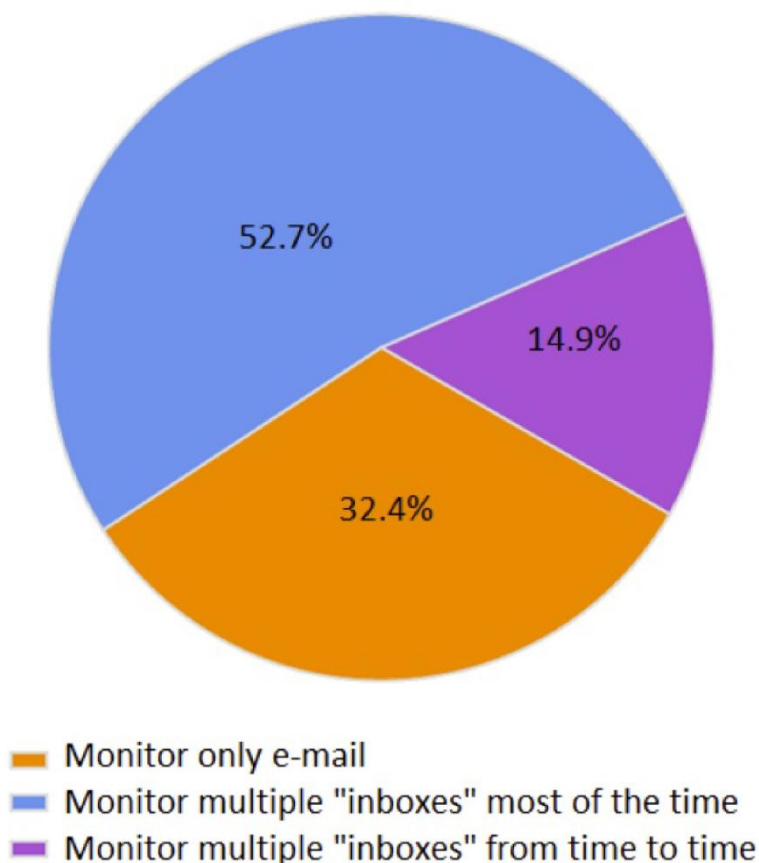
The survey results:



2. Which best describes how you handle these "inboxes" (those defined above)?

About this question: This question is intended to highlight two aspects. First, how many of our participants are still mostly pre-occupied with e-mail and not yet monitoring Social Media much (the more traditional inbox as we knew it before the advent of Social Media). Second, for those who are monitoring E-mail and Social Media (the New Inbox), how frequently did they monitor them (most of the time, or only some of the time). Overall this question is intended to show how entrenched Social Media has become in our lives (in this case mostly work life, but also an indication of how entrenched it is now in our personal life).

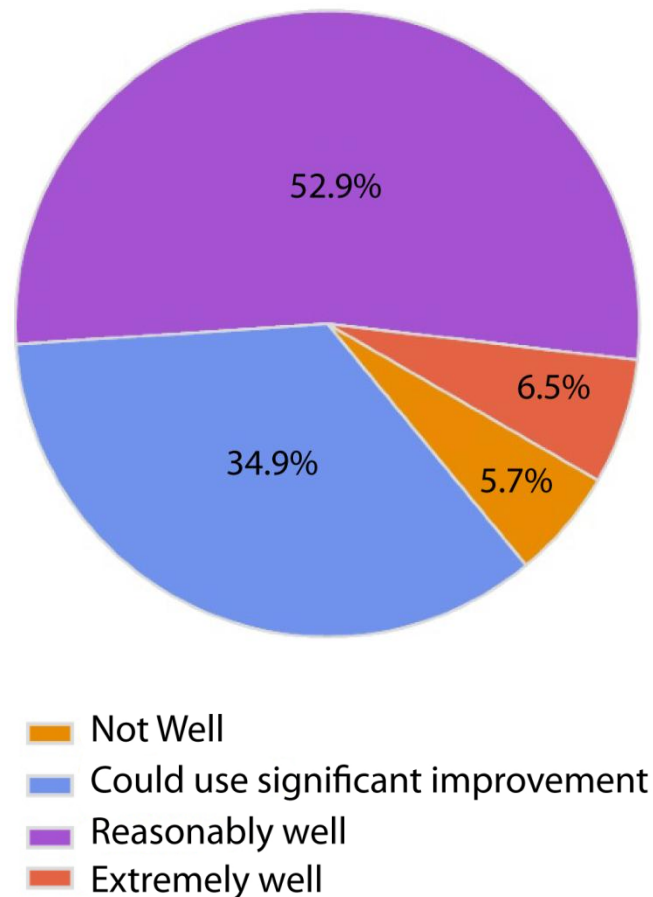
The survey results:



3. How well do you think you are managing and leveraging your "inboxes"?

About this question: This is a self-assessment of how the participants believe they manage and leverage their E-mail and Social Media activities (the New Inbox). This question relates to two related but distinct aspects: “Managing” and “Leveraging”. It is partly a question of how satisfied they are with the way they are working with E-mail and Social Media (the “managing” part) and it is partly a question of whether they are getting the most out of it and seeing some results (the “leveraging” part).

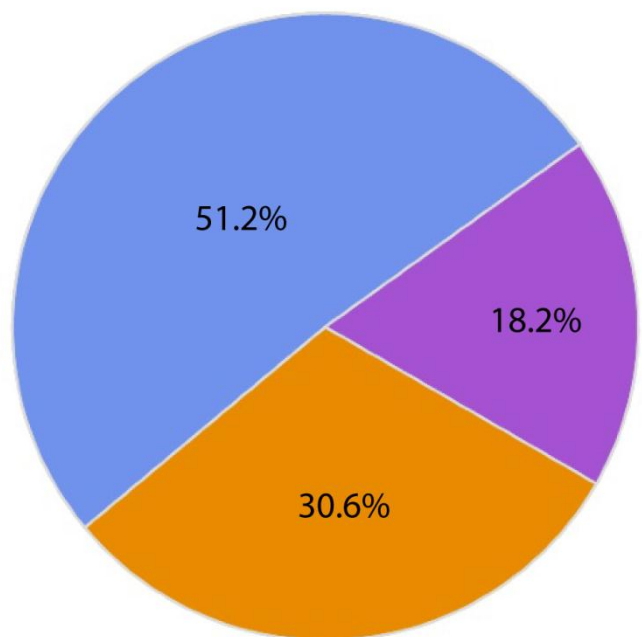
The survey results:



4. Do you have a strategy behind how you manage your "inboxes" or do you do it in an ad-hoc fashion?

About this question: This question goes beyond the self-assessment question above to explore the degree to which the participants are “strategic” in using E-mail and Social Media. This reflects how well they have thought through their use of E-mail and Social Media. The more they've thought it through (i.e. those who have a “Defined Strategy”), the more likely their activities are leading to more measurable business results. The more ad-hoc they are in their usage the less likely they will get such results.

The survey results:

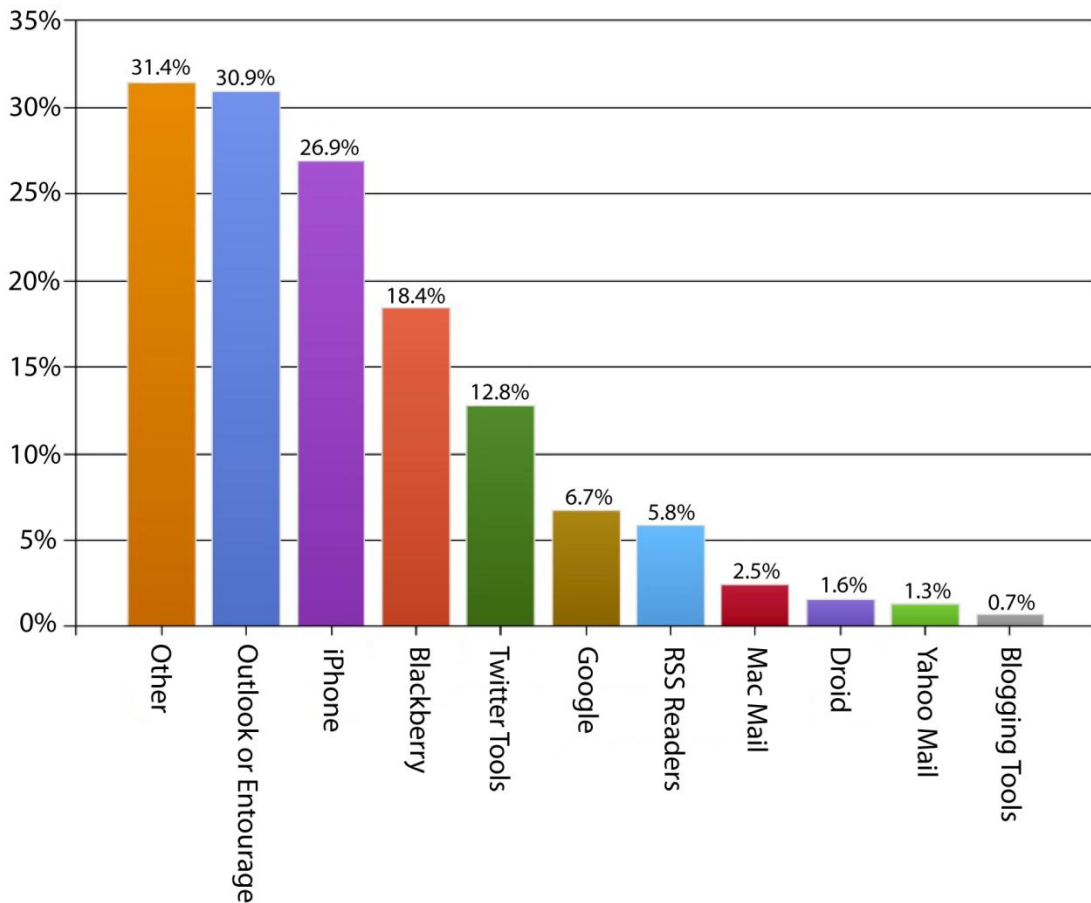


- Ad-hoc
- Light strategy that is not well defined
- Defined strategy that I can easily articulate

5. What tools (software tools, add-on applications, mobile devices) are you using to help you manage these "inboxes"?

About this question: This question intends to identify the key tools that participants are using in managing E-mail and Social Media. This question was asked as a free form question to allow participants to indicate a broad range of tools and not limit or direct their choices. The graph below indicates the most common tools that the participants mentioned in their answers.

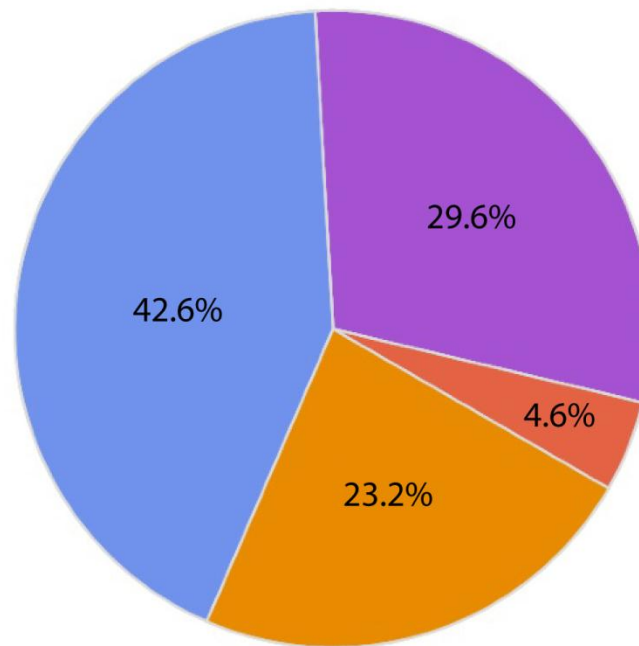
The survey results:



6. How often do you interrupt your work to check your "inboxes"?

About this question: While question 2 above identifies how entrenched E-mail and Social Media are in our daily work life, and question 3 identifies how satisfied we are with managing and leveraging these platforms, and question 4 explores how strategic we are in using them and therefore how likely it is that our usage is aligned with our business results, question 6 focuses on the core issue of interruptions and therefore productivity. Interruptions as we have shown in Results Curve™¹ are one of the most serious problems in the workplace today. This question is intended to explore how serious this problem is and how the New Inbox is contributing to it.

The survey results:



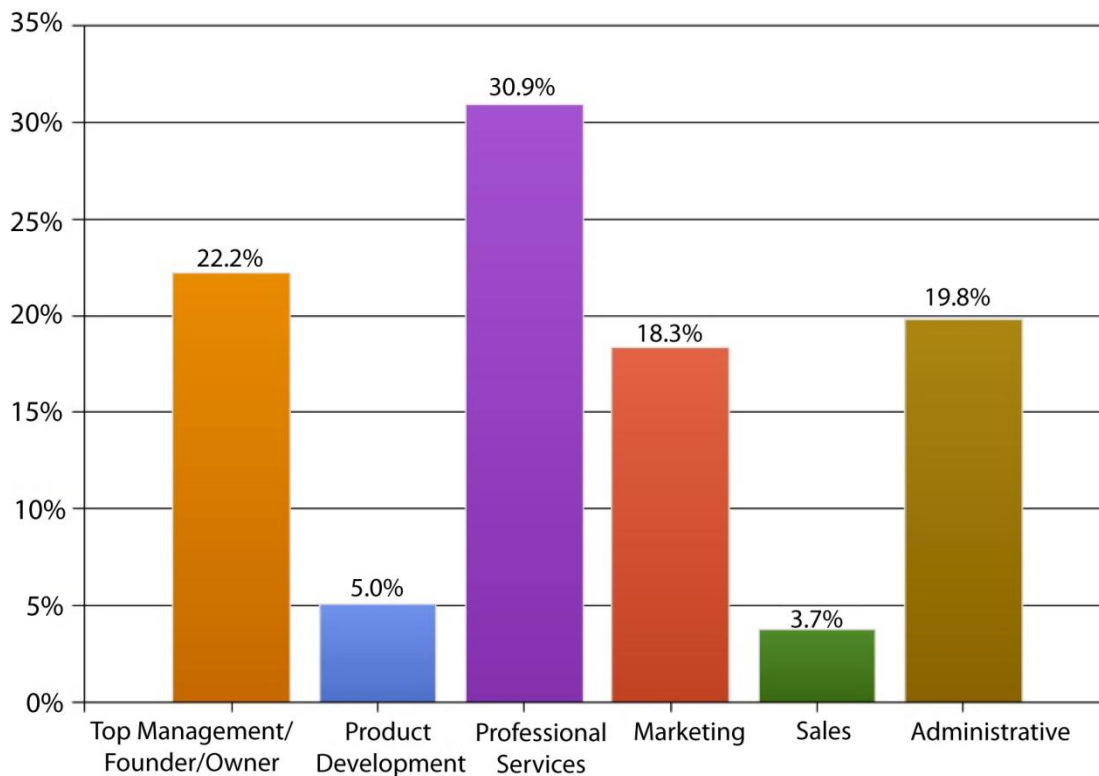
- Constantly as soon as new information shows up
- More often than I would like to
- From time to time but not excessively
- Rarely

¹ The Results Curve™: How to Manage Focused and Collaborative Time was published in 2010 and is available as a free eBook at www.people-onthego.com and also available in paperback.

7. Your function?

About this question: This question is intended to identify the roles that our participants play at their organizations and therefore allow us to report on how the trends vary by function, and examine if there are noticeable differences. The actual results by function are included in a later chapter in the book.

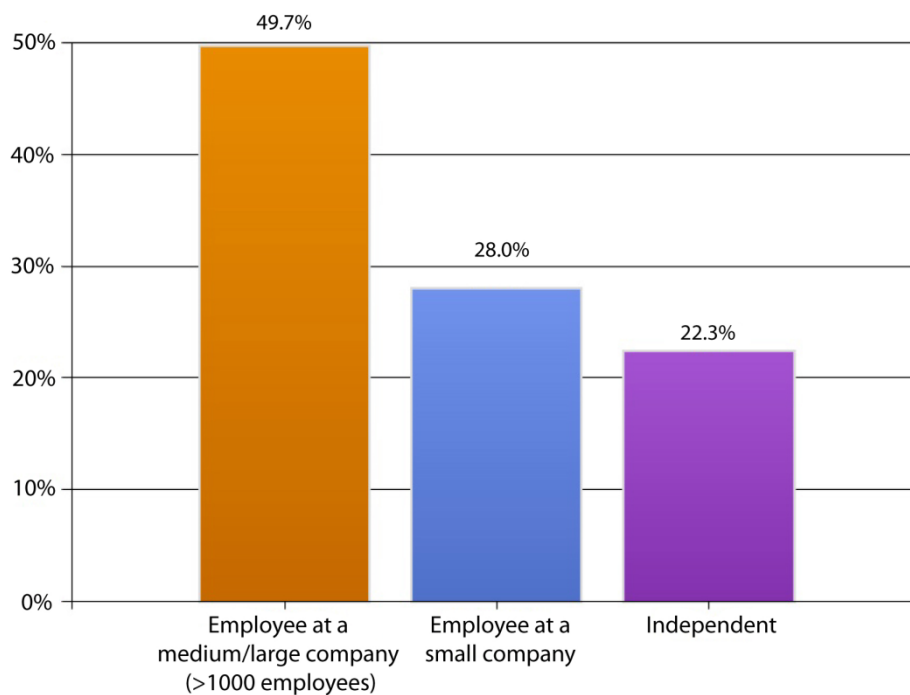
The survey results:



8. Your status?

About this question: This question is intended to identify the size of the companies that our participants work at and therefore allow us to report on how the trends vary by company size, and examine if there are noticeable differences. The actual results by function are included in a later chapter in the book.

The survey results:



9. How much time do you spend on your "inboxes" per day?

About this questions: This question is intended to measure the amount of time spent on E-mail and Social Media and therefore quantify how entrenched these platforms have become in our work life. This question also compares e-mail to the Social Media platforms.

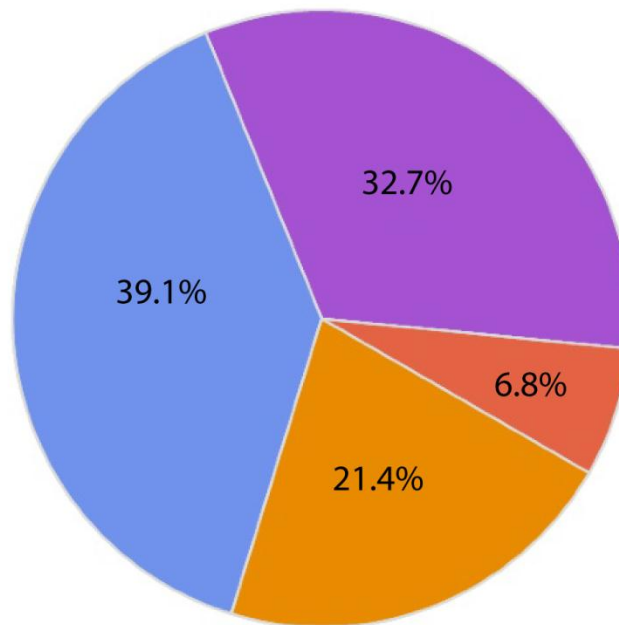
The survey results:

	Less than 30 minutes	Up to 1 hour	Up to 2 hours	Up to 4 hours	Most of the day
E-mail	5.1%	20.6%	33.6%	21.9%	18.8%
Social Media	53.2%	27.4%	12.4%	4.1%	2.9%

10. How much of your Social Media is for work versus personal reasons?

About this question: This question is intended to identify how much of the Social Media effort is for business versus personal reasons. It is exploring how many of our participants think of these platforms as business tools versus tools for personal socializing and leisure.

The survey results:

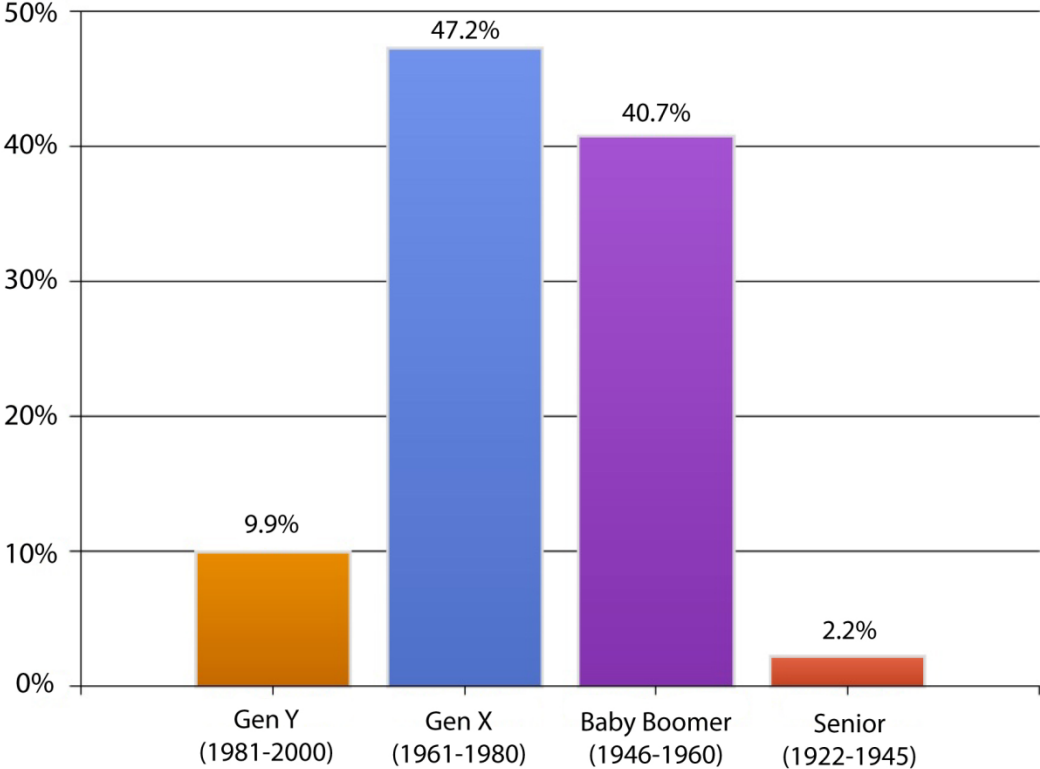


- All personal
- More personal than work
- More work than personal
- All work

11. Your Generation?

About this question: This question is intended to identify generations that our participants belong to and therefore allow us to report on how the trends vary by generation, and examine if there are noticeable differences. The actual results by generation are included in a later chapter in the book.

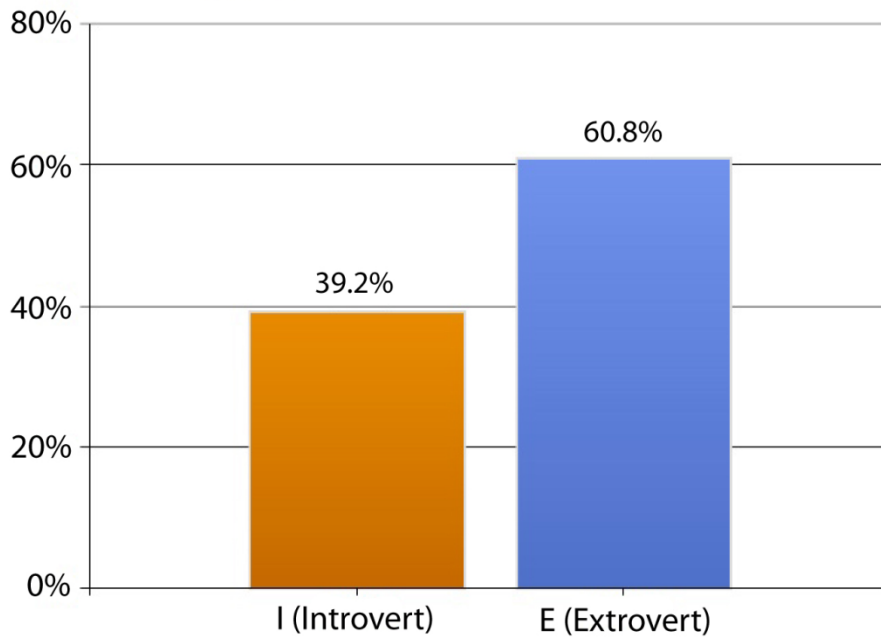
The survey results:



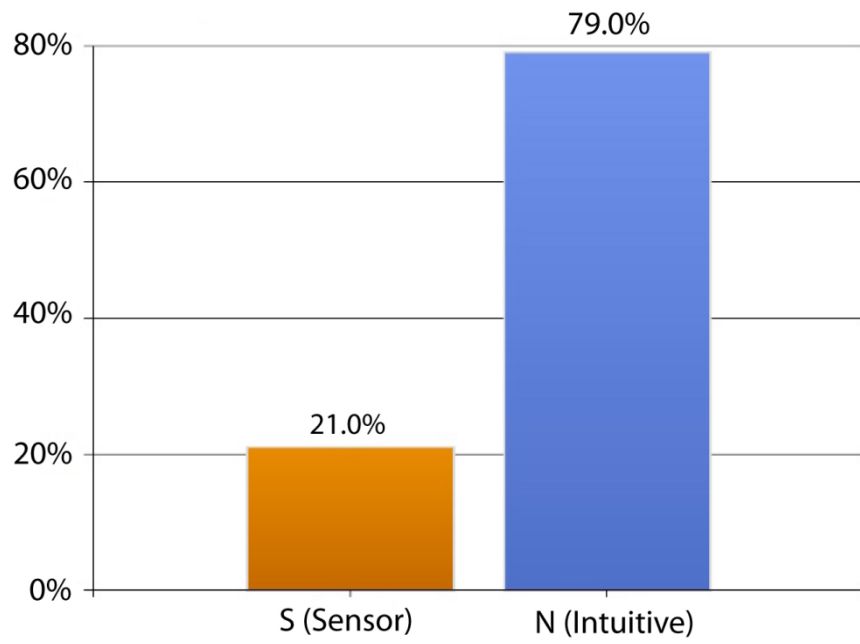
12 to 15. Myers-Briggs Type Indicator® if you happen to know it?

About this question: This question intends to identify the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator®² of the participants. The graphs below display the results in each of the 4 main areas of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator®.

The survey results:



² Refer to <http://www.myersbriggs.org/> for more information about the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator®



Myers-Briggs Type Indicator® (continued)

