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Speed Of Email Response Reflects How Well You Know The Sender

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We all try to respond to our emails within a reasonable amount of time, but sometimes our inboxes overflow and that becomes impossible. A new study by Brian Uzzi and Stefan Wuchty of Northwestern University shows your email response time, on average, is directly related to how well you know and actually care about the person you're corresponding with. Perhaps your average response time with certain people is the best way to determine which emails deserve the most of your time.

Jonah Lehrer, writing for Wired Science, explains the results from the study:

People reply to their close friends, on average, within seven hours of getting the email, the data show. Professional contacts take a bit more time: We don't hit send for nearly 11 hours. But the biggest difference came when the scientists looked at those people we barely know. On average, it took us 50 hours to reply. In other words, there's a surprisingly easy way to figure out how you feel about someone – just count the hours before you hit the "reply" button.

http://www.lifehacker.com.au/2011/12/speed-of-email-response-reflects-how-well-you-know-the-sender/

If you notice a lot of emails sitting in your inbox for longer than a 24-hour period, it might be time to consider those people less important in your life. On the other hand, if you find yourself responding to someone within the day you might want to try creating an inbox that just shows their messages (by creating a Gmail filter, for example). While email productivity is always going to be a challenge for most of us, this data suggests one way to at least focus more of your time on the messages that matter to you most.

The Science of Email [Wired]