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Keeping a business inbox under control: folders, flags, Archive and a weekly routine

E-mail

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Keeping a business inbox under control: folders, flags, Archive and a weekly routine

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The short answer: a tidy inbox does not depend on having lots of folders, it depends on one simple rule: **the inbox only holds what still needs a reply or an action**. Everything else goes to **Archive**, to a customer folder or to the bin. Webmail has everything you need: folders, flags, the Archive button, the Spam button, search and filters.

The webmail tools

Tool	What it is for
Archive button	Takes the message out of the inbox without deleting it. It stays stored and search finds it.
Flag	Marks what needs action. At the end of the day, the flagged messages are your to-do list.
Spam button	Moves the message to the spam folder and teaches the filter, which beats deleting.
Folders	Few and broad: by customer, by project or by type (invoices, suppliers).
Search	Looks in the subject, the sender or the text, in one folder or all of them.
Filters	Move repetitive mail on their own, such as newsletters and automatic notices.

The Archive button uses whichever folder is chosen as Archive in Settings. If you do not see the button, choose (or create) that folder first: **webmail settings worth changing**.

The rule for each message

When you open a message, decide straight away. There are only four ways out:

1. **Reply now**, if it is quick, and archive.

2. **Flag it**, if it needs time or someone else. It stays in the inbox until it is dealt with.
3. **Archive it or move it to its folder**, if it is only for keeping.
4. **Delete it or mark it as spam**, if it is no use.

A weekly routine

1. **Go through the flagged messages** and unflag what is done.
2. **Unsubscribe from newsletters** you no longer read (the ones you signed up for; in spam, click nothing).
3. **Empty Spam and Trash**, after a quick look in case something good landed there.
4. **Check the space the mailbox uses** and, if it is growing fast, look for large attachments: **what to delete when a mailbox is full**.

Leave the repetitive work to filters.
Automatic notices, supplier invoices and newsletters can go straight into folders: **webmail filters**. For website sign-ups, a **plus address** makes filtering easier.

Archiving is not deleting, and deleting saves no space until Trash is emptied.
Archived messages still count towards the mailbox quota.

NEED A HAND?

Want help organising your team's mailboxes? Talk to us.

Open a support ticket →

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- Plus addressing: name+tag addresses to sort sign-ups and see who shared your address →

- Your mailbox is full: what to delete and how to stop it happening
- Webmail settings worth changing: time zone, reply style, HTML and refresh
- A shared address for a team: one shared mailbox, a forwarder or a mailing list
- Everyday e-mail habits for a business: To, Cc and Bcc, reply all, subjects and attachments

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