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## **I. Event 1 – Reading E-mails.**

### ***A. Situation***

One of most modern professional jobs minimum requirements is to handle and manage the World Wide Web [WWW] and communications such as Electric Mail [e-mail]. In my office all staff including, administration, marketing, management, and all levels of quantity surveyors, ranging from cadet to director must manage electric communication. One of many aspects in my professional development I have struggled with is managing my tasks dictated to me through e-mail.

My role in the office is to conduct progress assessments of building contractors claims for financiers or banks. Almost every claim is submitted to me through e-mail – previously they were mailed through the postal system and / or faxed, however e-mail has been the norm for many years now. The office requires all staff to manage e-mail without supervision.

Our companies fee submissions for our progress assessments state that the turnaround time is three [3] full working days, from the time the contractors claim is received. Most small contractors depend on a fast turnaround from us and the bank on the assessment of their progress claims. Payment to contractors is fundamental in maintaining smooth construction programs. Late payments to contractors can cause construction progress to stop.

Overlooking or not reading e-mails thoroughly, a simple task, causes one not only to not look unprofessional, but can also cause the firm as a whole to look unprofessional and undermine relationships with the financier and contractor.

### ***B. Task/event***

What is required of me is to read all my e-mails. With the amount of e-mails I receive a day I find it difficult to manage the tasks each require of me. A great deal of e-mails I receive require no action and a great deal do. I find some people in the office continuously send e-mails that require no action and when they do send though a task, I find I can fault.

Most of my progress claims are sent to me direct from an external e-mail. When they come through I can clearly decipher what action must be carried out. When a claim is sent to me by an internal e-mail I must conduct another process and that is whether the e-mail requires any action. Sometimes the action is unclear if the e-mail is sent with no clear heading or wording. I have dismissed these e-mails on quite a few occasions. I forget to look for the attachment and read the e-mail below that has been forwarded to me. Often these e-mails are sent to me from someone who will follow up by asking, "is this your job", and if I had missed actioning the e-mail I will know then. Often an unclear internal e-mail will follow with a phone call from the financier or contractor requiring action from the firm, which eventually comes to me for actioning – the missed e-mail is then found.

The problem is when an unclear e-mail I have dismissed does not include any personal following up. If a payment claim e-mail is dismissed and a period of longer than 3 day lapses the company has not meet the requirements it has been employed to do.

A progress assessment can be turned around in one [1] day if one has capacity to get it done and the director/associate has capacity to check the progress assessment – that is if the assessment is straight forward and requires no future information. Waiting for information, director/associate availability for checking and workload is what usually causes progress assessments to take the whole 3 working days to be processed.

A contractors claim that has not been actioned in three [3] working days will usually not be followed up by the financier or contractor. A claim that has not been actioned in five [5] working days will usually be followed up, a by personal follow up by the financier or contractor. The follow up is usually from an angry person, who has

contacted the messenger and then put the responsibility on myself and rightly so. I had acted unprofessionally as an employee and a person representing the firm.

### ***C. Action***

The action that must be taken to mitigate an e-mail that has been missed is speed and communication. Both the financier and contractor must be contacted and reassured that you have prioritised their job. A site visit must be completed that day. If I can't get to site that day, I will get someone else to go to site. If the report is missing information I will get the report out that day without the information and note that information is missing on the report. The next tasks are then follow up on the missing information and get it to the financier as so as possible.

### ***D. Result***

If quick action and good communication is taken to mitigate the late submission of a payment the financier and contractor may accept the late payment. Most professionals make mistakes and most people understand of that. The financier and contractor are usually happy that quick action was taken to fix the error.

### ***E. Learnt***

I am continuing to try and improve on managing my e-mail tasks. I am getting better at managing them, however I still need improvement. I know that it is unprofessional to oversee e-mail information. I am continuing to try and improve the way I manage electrical communication.