

THE EMAIL AND DOCUMENT USAGE MANAGEMENT

benchmark report



Email remains King:

Email dominates business communication but poor processes kill productivity and frustrate employees

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Researched and written by Mail Manager, part of the Arup Group

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Published January 2021

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this research by Mail Manager, part of the Arup Group, is to explore peoples' communication and filing habits and the frustrations they have with managing project information. The research, carried out in partnership with Sapio Research, set out to understand the pain points people have with email and document management.

We surveyed 1,002 people - 500 in the UK and 502 in the US - across a wide range of industries, from accounting, commercial real estate, finance, healthcare, and higher education to legal, manufacturing, oil and gas, and renewables. The survey respondents came from a range of business areas, industries, and ranged from small organisations to large enterprises.



Financial services

28%



Manufacturing

21%



Accounting

9%



Healthcare

21%



Higher education

11%



Legal

3%



Oil & Gas

3%



Property

3%

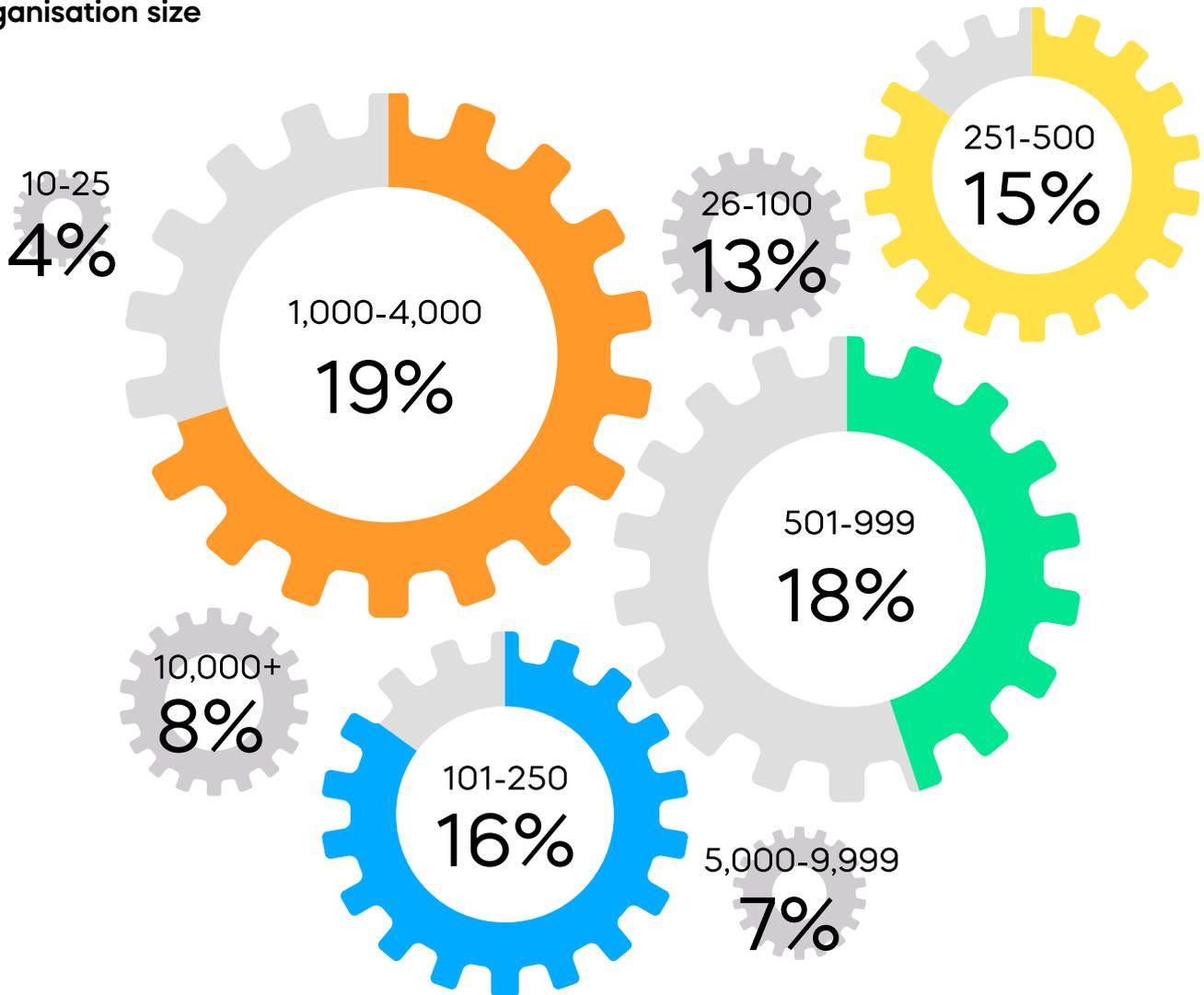


Renewables

1%

INTRODUCTION

Organisation size



Job title



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This research found that email remains by far and away businesses' most important communication tool. That's because the vast majority of respondents (91%) use email to communicate with their clients and 61% use it more than any other form of communication tool.

However, nearly half of the respondents (46%) find it difficult to find information in their inbox, which leads to nearly one-third (32%) spending one hour or more every day managing their inboxes. Furthermore, 70% of respondents believe that email is one of the biggest drains on productivity at their organisation and 84% said poor email management could have significant consequences.

"Email is the letter of today. Once upon a time, formal communication was carried out via a letter. That letter was posted back and forth. It contained critical information. Nowadays, very few people use letterheads and most communication is by email, but there is little difference between an email today and a letter back then. Before the digital era, businesses

would send formal correspondence as letters, which would be physically stored. Now, email is the tool for professional correspondence, but the need for filing and securely storing this communication remains, even though it's digital."

"While Slack, WhatsApp and other messenger apps are great for informal and internal correspondence and chat, but email has not been dethroned when it comes to formal communication, including client emails, internal announcements, HR correspondence and project work."

"Managing emails, however, is made more challenging by the vast abundance of emails being sent and received on a daily basis. Our research shows that despite the importance of email, businesses still aren't using tools that help their employees use it more efficiently. They're still struggling to find information easily and quickly, emails are still getting locked in individual inboxes, and information still isn't visible across organisations. Many business leaders simply accept a chaotic inbox."

“

The costs of this lack of effective email and document management software can be huge. For example, we calculated that Mail Manager's email management tool saves the average employee three hours per week, which adds up to monthly savings of more than £180,000 for an organisation with 1,000 employees. This research finds that employees are spending at least one hour per day managing their email inboxes, so the cost to their organisations is likely to be even higher.

”

Jacob Wardrop, Commercial Director at Mail Manager

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Email remains vital to business processes

Email remains crucial to people communicating and is still their favourite communication service, despite the rise of new collaboration and instant messaging tools.



91% of respondents use email to communicate with their clients and



61% say it is their preferred method of communicating with clients and colleagues.

Employees also recognise that good email management processes are crucial to organisations having good record management and quality management.



87% good record management



84% quality management

The day file of years gone by is not anymore. It all lies in email.

While email remains a vital communication service for users and businesses, continued inefficient use of the tool has made it a major time drain. Less than half of organisations use a formal, paid-for solution for email management and around one-third use one for document management. This is largely as a result of organisations having concerns around integration and the cost of software.

46%

paid-for solution for email management

35%

paid-for solution for document management

43%

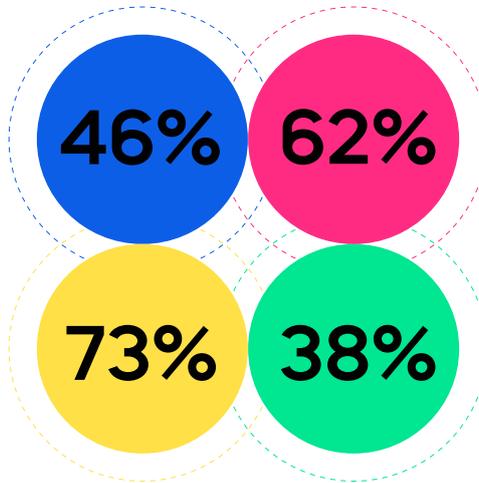
concerns around integration

40%

concerns on cost of software

KEY TAKEAWAYS

This ends up with nearly half of employees (46%) saving or storing less than half of their emails.

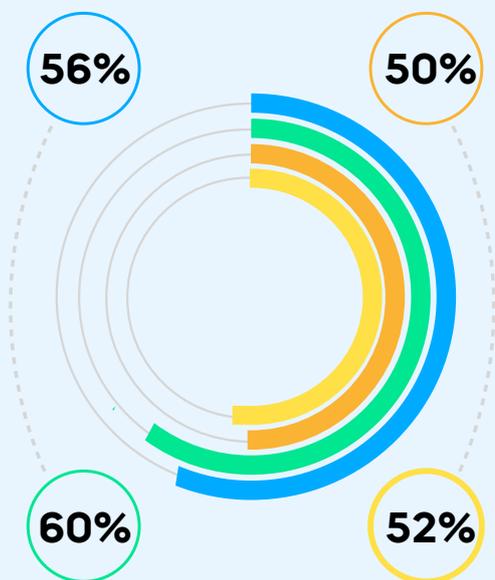


While more than three-fifths of respondents still keep hard copies of emails.

Nearly three-quarters of respondents believe too much time is wasted on trying to find emails and

of employees believe “it’s not very easy” to find information in their inbox.

They are left frustrated by not being able to find specific documents in their inbox, which ends up with them wasting time, being less productive and losing visibility of project information through the lack of a paper trail.



can't find specific documents

are less productive

wastes time to find email

have no visibility of project information

As a result, **1/3** spend at least **1 hour per day** managing their email inboxes

And **70%** think it's one of the **biggest productivity drains** on the workforce.

FULL RESEARCH FINDINGS

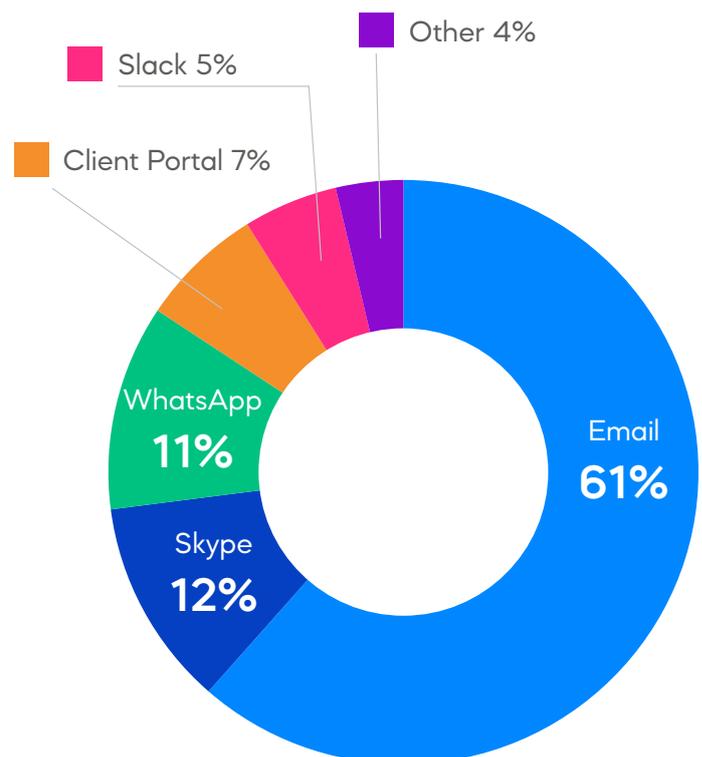
Email remains the dominant client communication tool

When asked which tool they use to communicate with clients, nine in ten respondents (91%) said they use email. That's well ahead of other tools like Skype (57%), WhatsApp (42%), other client portals (29%) and Slack (19%). Email is crucial to the oil and gas industry, in which 100% of respondents use email to communicate with clients, as well as the legal (97%) and healthcare and manufacturing (95%) industries.

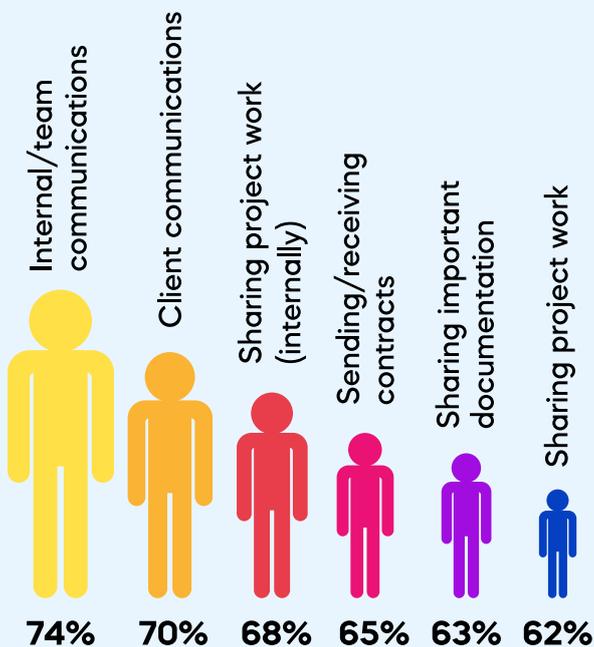


Employees much prefer using email to other communication tools

When asked which tool they prefer to use to communicate, email was by far the most-used communication tool. 61% of respondents stated email was their preferred medium. Other communication formats lag well behind, with 11% of respondents say they use Skype and WhatsApp most (both 11%), followed by a client portal (7%) and Slack (5%).



FULL RESEARCH FINDINGS

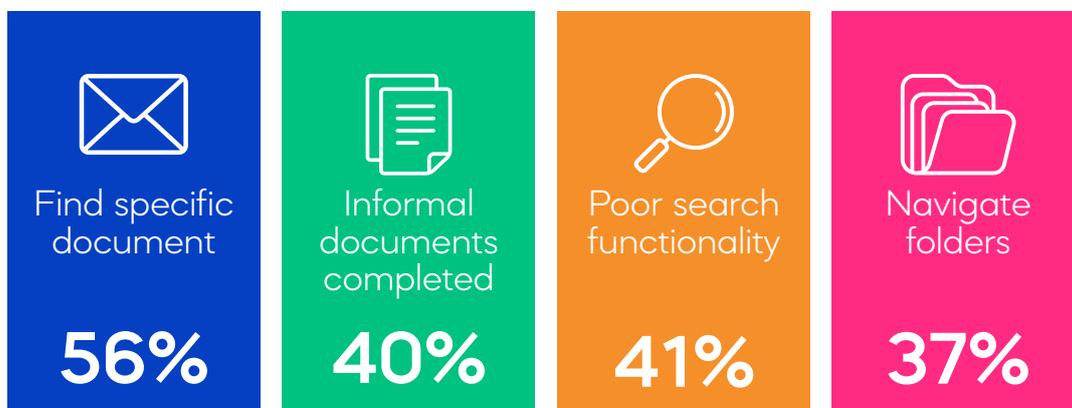


Email is crucial for internal and external collaboration

Email continues to be used for a wide range of business purposes, with the most common being internal and team communications (74%) and client communication (70%). It's also vital to tasks like sharing project work internally (68%), sharing contracts (65%) and important documentation (63%), and sharing project work with clients (62%).

Employees are frustrated by email functionalities

When asked about their biggest frustrations with managing their inboxes, respondents particularly frustrated by trying to find specific documents (56%) within their email inbox. Other issues include struggling with poor search functionality (41%), struggling to find information they need (40%) and not being able to navigate folders (37%).

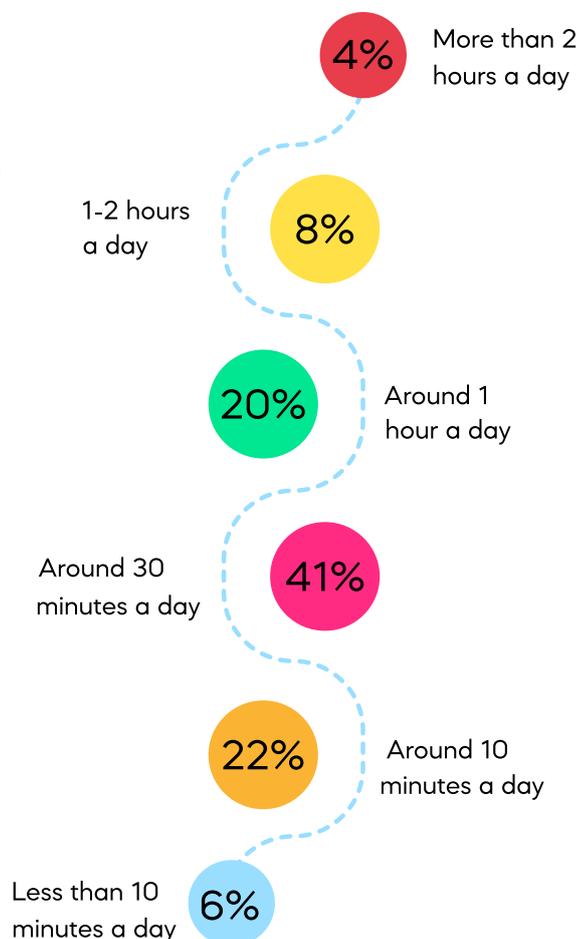


Nearly two-fifths of respondents (38%) also stated it's "not very easy" to find information in their email inbox, while only 18% find it "very easy" and 37% felt it was "easy."

FULL RESEARCH FINDINGS

Valuable time is being wasted managing email inboxes

We asked respondents to put a time on the time they spend managing their email inboxes. Nearly one-third (32%) said they spend at least one hour per day managing their email inboxes. One in every 25 people (4%) spends more than two hours every day looking for, filing, or archiving their email.



Email chain visibility is vital to employees

The vast majority of respondents (96%) recognised that it's at least somewhat important to have a visible email chain across their organisation. Of those, 71% believe it is either very important (44%) or extremely important (27%) to be able to see all emails across their projects and job tasks. A visible email chain is particularly important to the oil and gas industry (74%), as well as US respondents in the South West (86%) and Mid-Atlantic (87%).



71%

say is important to see all emails across their projects and job tasks



Being particularly important to the oil and gas industry and the US



FULL RESEARCH FINDINGS

Only half of emails are saved or stored

When asked about their email filing habits, respondents revealed that around 54% of emails sent and received are saved and filed for business purposes. Less than one in ten respondents save or store between 91-100% of their emails, while nearly half (46%) save or store less than half of their emails.



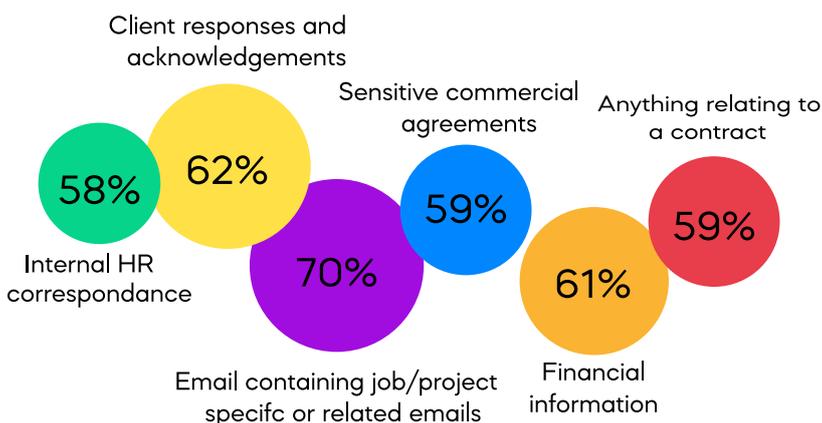
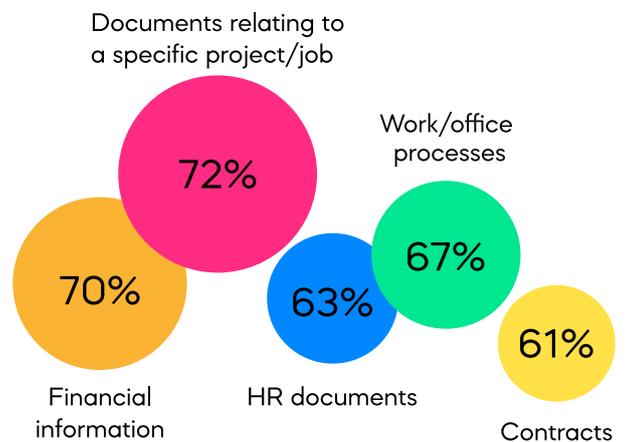
only **54%**
of emails are saved and
filed for business purposes



only **1 in 10**
respondents save or store
91-100% of their emails

Project or job-related information remains crucial

We asked respondents which information they felt was the most important to file. When it came to documents, 72% said anything relating to a specific project or job was most important. That was closely followed by financial information (70%), work and office processes (67%), HR documents (62%) and contracts (60%).

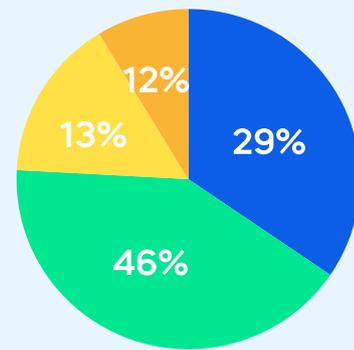


Emails containing project and job-related details (70%) were also identified as the most important to be filed. That was followed by client responses and acknowledgements (62%), financial information (61%), contract information (59%), sensitive commercial agreements (58%), and internal HR correspondence (58%).

FULL RESEARCH FINDINGS

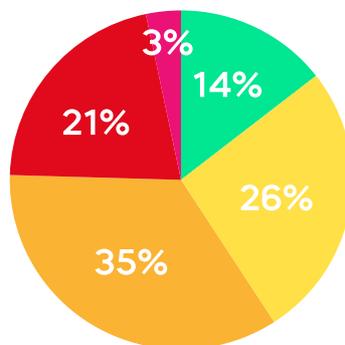
A lack of formal information management

When asked about their formal or informal information management, less than half of the respondents' organisations (46%) had a formal, paid-for software system in place to manage emails. Three in ten (29%) rely on formal corporate policies and process and 13% use informal guidelines. While one in eight employees (12%) is expected to use their own initiative to correctly file their emails.



- Yes, we have a formal, paid for software system in place
- Yes, we have formal set of corporate policies / processes in place
- Yes, we have a formal, paid for software system in place
- No, we expect employees to use their initiative

Just over one in three organisations (35%) use a formal, paid-for software system for document management. More than two-fifths (41%) rely on formal corporate policies and processes to manage their documents. 15% use informal guidelines and nearly one in ten employees (9%) need to file their own documents without any guidance from their organisation.



- Yes, we are exploring our options
- Yes, we have plans to implement this in the next year or two
- No, we have no plans to implement this but would consider it in the future
- Yes, we are currently implementing this
- No, we have no plans to implement this and would not consider it in the future

FULL RESEARCH FINDINGS

Many businesses don't plan to manage their emails

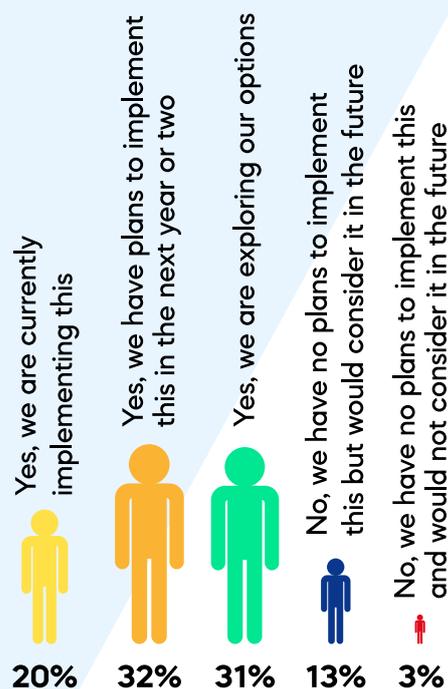
When asked about formal email management, three-fifths of the respondents (61%) plan to implement a solution. However, only 14% currently have a solution in place and one-quarter (24%) have no imminent plans to implement one. Healthcare organisations were particularly against the solution, with 37% having no plans to implement an email management solution.



Of the organisations that had no plans, half (50%) felt they didn't have a need for one, while others felt a tool was too expensive (33%), hadn't found one that fit their needs (33%), or thought it was too complicated (6%).

Document management lags behind

Only one in five organisations (20%) currently implement a document management solution. Nearly two-thirds (63%) are planning to or are exploring options but 16% have no plans to. Businesses that had no plans to implement a solution said they thought it would be too expensive (44%), didn't have enough of a need (44%), it was too complicated (17%), or hadn't found one that fit their needs (11%).



FULL RESEARCH FINDINGS

Time wasted tops email management concerns

When asked about the consequences of poor email management, respondents advised the biggest risk would be the amount of time wasted finding information (60%). Time wasted was a particularly big concern for people in the Commercial (77%) and Healthcare (67%) industries, as well as people in Scotland (76%).



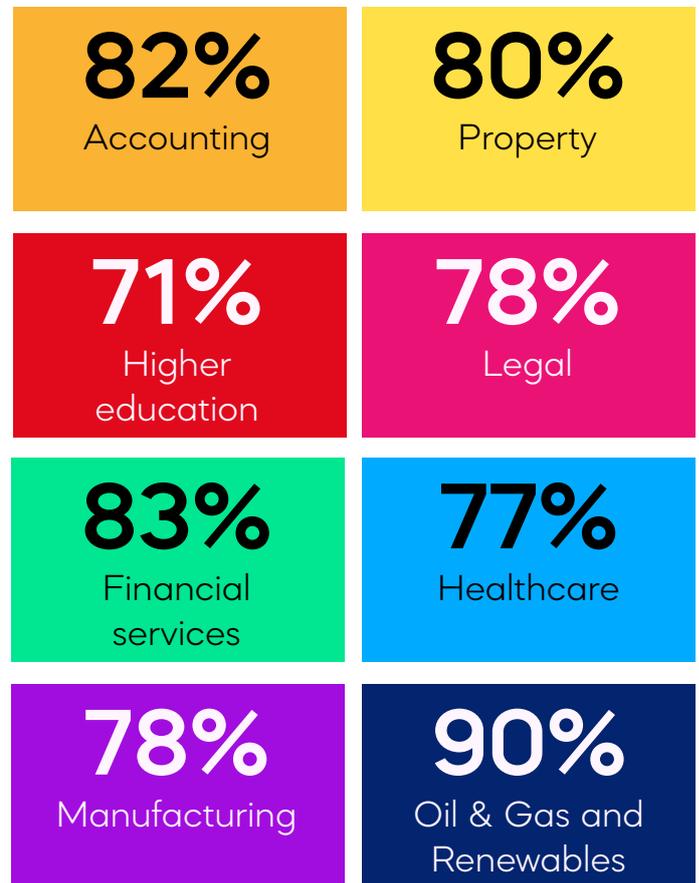
Other major consequences included not having a paper trail (52%), a loss of productivity (50%), struggling to share information with colleagues (48%) as well as missing client opportunities, providing poor customer communication, and offering inaccurate responses to client queries (all 47%). However, one in 25 respondents (4%) believed none of these would be a consequence of not managing emails efficiently.

FULL RESEARCH FINDINGS

Email filing mixed bag

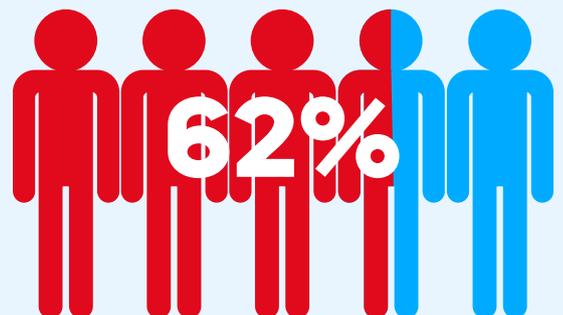
When asked about their email filing procedures, nearly one-quarter of respondents (23%) said email filing isn't part of their quality management procedure. In the UK, 27% of respondents said email filing isn't part of their quality management procedure. More positively, 79% of businesses have email filing as part of their record management policy.

Percentage of companies where email is part of record management policy, by market:



Hard copies of emails remain prevalent

Worryingly, more than three in every five respondents (62%) advised that they still keep hard copies of emails. This is a particularly prominent practice in the finance (71%), commercial and oil and gas (both 70%) industries.



FULL RESEARCH FINDINGS

Integration leads to new solution concerns

Businesses' biggest concern about investing in email management is whether a solution will integrate with their current systems (43%). This was particularly the case in the legal industry, where 78% of respondents had integration concerns. Two-fifths (40%) of all respondents thought email management solutions would be too expensive, with other concerns being a lack of user-friendliness (32%), too complicated (31%), email management not being enough of a problem (28%) and a lack of ROI (25%).

43%

Lack of integration with current software

40%

Too expensive

32%

Low user-friendliness

31%

Too complicated

28%

Not a big enough problem

25%

Lack of ROI

1% Other



86%

said email management results in better visibility



84%

said it's critical to quality management



87%

feel it's essential to delivering good record management

Email management benefits recognised

We also asked a series of 'agree or disagree' questions. Positively, 86% of respondents believe that email management results in better visibility, 84% said it's critical to quality management, and 87% feel it's essential to delivering good record management. Furthermore, 84% of respondents believe poor email management could have significant consequences for a business.

CONCLUSION

This research reveals that email is still the most-used communication tool and remains crucial to employees in businesses across all industries communicating with their customers and colleagues. There's a clear need for organisations to look to solutions that improve their email and document processes and the visibility of their information. They also need to make it as quick and easy as possible for every project team member to be able to find all critical client documentation, such as contracts and scope changes, regardless of when and by whom the information was sent or received.



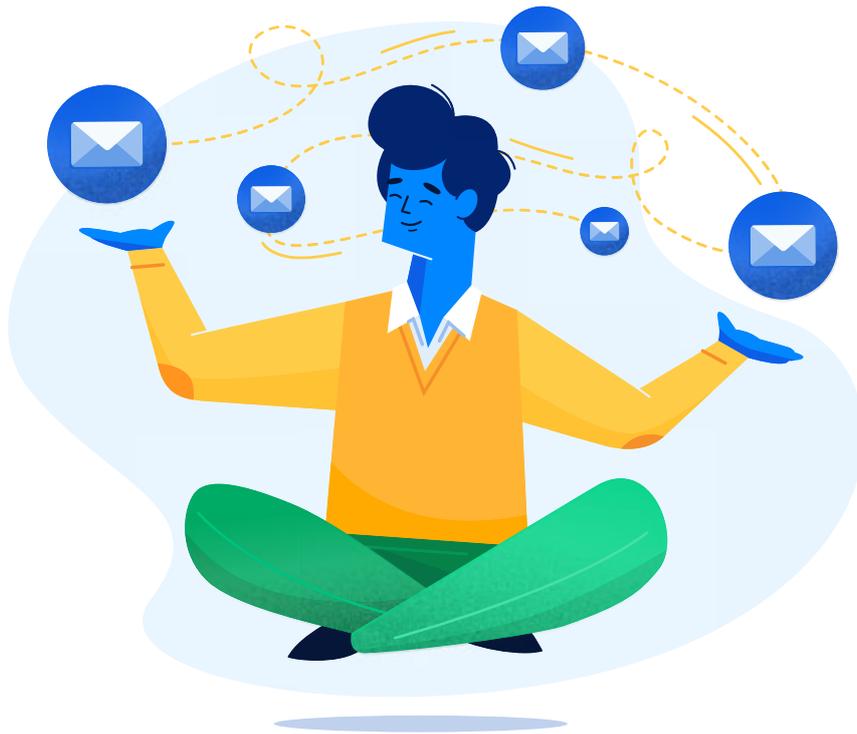
“This insight from businesses in the UK and the US shows they face common issues when it comes to email and document management. It’s clear that email remains vital to employees being as effective as possible and maintaining strong relationships with their clients. However, businesses still aren’t deploying effective email and document management solutions that make their employees’ lives easier and help them quickly find the documents and information they need when they need it. As a result, people are still being frustrated by wasting time digging through their email inboxes, which means they can’t be as productive as they and their employers want them to be.”

Jacob Wardrop, Commercial Director at Mail Manager

ABOUT MAIL MANAGER

Mail Manager is a leading email management solution, developed by Arup. Mail Manager works with more than 2,500 firms in 16 countries, with more than 50,000 users benefitting from powerful filing and search capabilities. For more information, visit www.mailmanager.com.

To book a personalised demo of Mail Manager, or if you have any questions, contact sales@mailmanager.com.



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