

WHITE PAPER

THE BENEFITS OF

NEXT ACTION AND DUE DATE COLUMNS IN MANAGING INTERRUPTED WORK

By Michael Hoffman, CEO, LeanMail

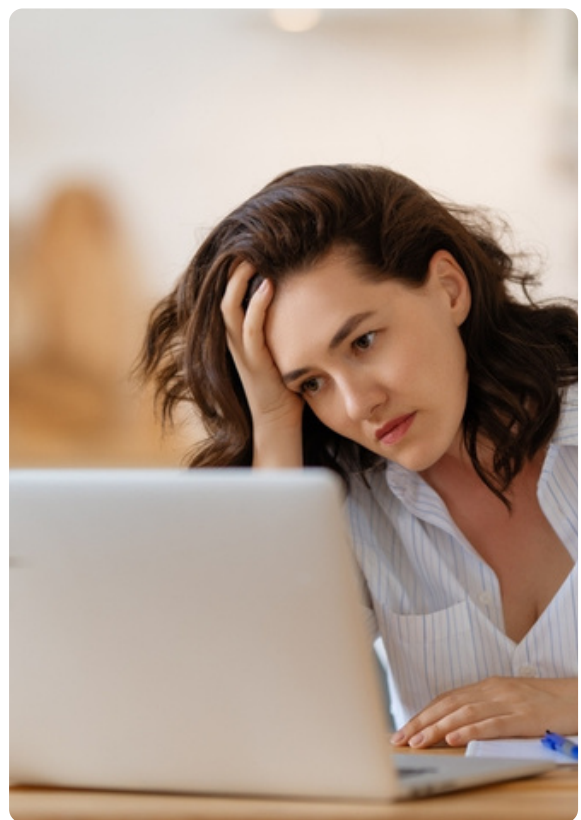
Introduction

Interruptions are a common occurrence in today's work environment, with negative effects on productivity, stress levels, and quality of work. Numerous studies have been conducted on the effects of interruptions, leading to the development of various systems to help people manage them. However, conflicting ideas exist on how interruptions affect work, and how to mitigate their negative impact. This paper explores the findings of an empirical study by Gloria Mark and colleagues[1] on the cost of interrupted work, and how LeanMail's next action and due date columns can enable focused work by allowing users to note next actions in a separate column next to the subject line and add a due date to the next column.

The Cost of Interrupted Work

Mark and colleagues found that interruptions do not necessarily affect the quality of work, but people complete interrupted tasks in less time, experiencing more stress, higher frustration, time pressure, and effort. These results suggest that people compensate for interruptions by working faster, but this comes at a price.

The study also found that individual differences exist in the management of interruptions, with personality measures of openness to experience and need for personal structure predicting disruption costs.



The LeanMail Solution

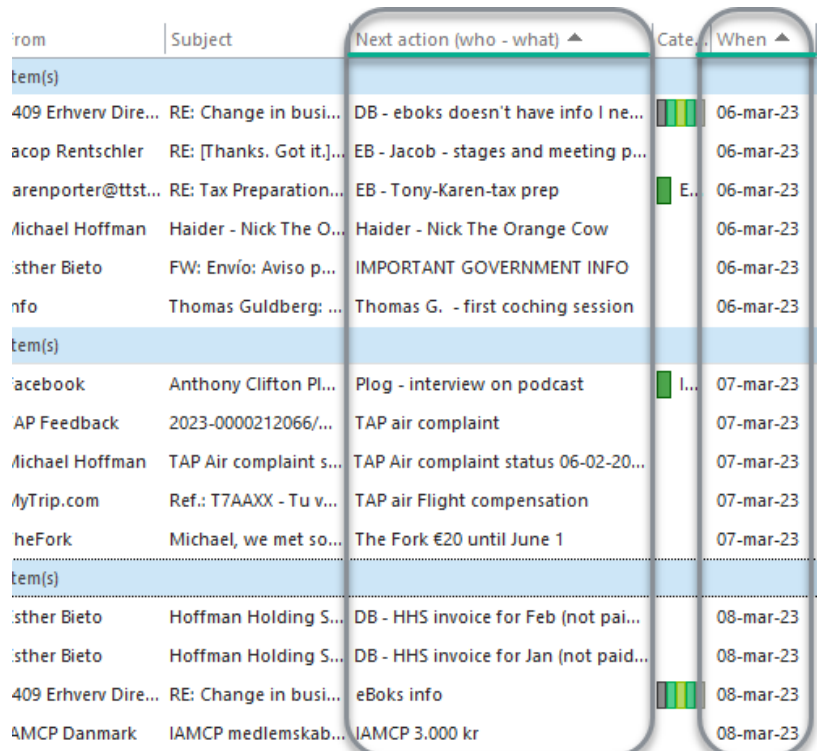
LeanMail is an Outlook add-in that offers a solution to manage interrupted work. The plugin adds a next action and due date column to the Outlook interface, allowing users to note next actions in a separate column next to the subject line and add a due date to the next column. This feature enables focused work by providing users with a clear overview of what needs to be done and by when, allowing them to prioritize tasks and avoid distractions.

[1] Mark, Gloria, The Cost of Interrupted Work: More Speed and Stress. ©2008

Benefits of Next Action and Due Date Columns

The next action and due date columns in LeanMail offer several benefits in managing interrupted work, including:

Improved task management: With the next action column, users can quickly note down the next action required for each email, providing clarity on what needs to be done. The due date column allows users to set a deadline for each task, providing a sense of urgency and ensuring that important tasks are not overlooked.



From	Subject	Next action (who - what) ▲	Cate...	When ▲
tem(s)				
409 Erhverv Dire...	RE: Change in busi...	DB - eboks doesn't have info I ne...		06-mar-23
acop Rentschler	RE: [Thanks. Got it.]...	EB - Jacob - stages and meeting p...		06-mar-23
arenporter@ttst...	RE: Tax Preparation...	EB - Tony-Karen-tax prep	E...	06-mar-23
Michael Hoffman	Haider - Nick The O...	Haider - Nick The Orange Cow		06-mar-23
sther Bieto	FW: Envío: Aviso p...	IMPORTANT GOVERNMENT INFO		06-mar-23
nfo	Thomas Guldberg: ...	Thomas G. - first coaching session		06-mar-23
tem(s)				
acebook	Anthony Clifton Pl...	Plog - interview on podcast	I...	07-mar-23
AP Feedback	2023-0000212066/...	TAP air complaint		07-mar-23
Michael Hoffman	TAP Air complaint s...	TAP Air complaint status 06-02-20...		07-mar-23
MyTrip.com	Ref.: T7AAXX - Tu v...	TAP air Flight compensation		07-mar-23
heFork	Michael, we met so...	The Fork €20 until June 1		07-mar-23
tem(s)				
sther Bieto	Hoffman Holding S...	DB - HHS invoice for Feb (not pai...		08-mar-23
sther Bieto	Hoffman Holding S...	DB - HHS invoice for Jan (not paid...		08-mar-23
409 Erhverv Dire...	RE: Change in busi...	eBoks info		08-mar-23
AMCP Danmark	IAMCP medlemskab...	IAMCP 3.000 kr		08-mar-23

Conclusion

Interruptions are a common occurrence in today's work environment, leading to negative effects on productivity, stress levels, and quality of work. However, the next action and due date columns in LeanMail offer a solution to manage interrupted work by providing a clear overview of tasks, allowing users to prioritize tasks and avoid distractions.

By using LeanMail's next action and due date columns, users can improve their task management, prioritize tasks, and reduce stress levels associated with managing multiple tasks simultaneously.

Michael Hoffman

CEO
LeanMail



Michael Hoffman is a renowned executive coach with a track record of working with leaders of Global 500 and Fortune 500 companies. He is also the CEO of LeanMail, a productivity solutions provider for email, meetings, and projects. Michael brings a wealth of experience to his role, having held various management positions, and worked with diverse people and cultures. His entrepreneurship experience stretches over 30 years.

As an executive coach, Michael focuses on providing skills and tools to individuals who are dedicated to achieving personal and professional excellence. He takes a pragmatic approach, emphasizing on work-life balance and a holistic mindset. His book, [*The Power of Coaching and Mentoring - A Human - Machine Collaboration*](#), is a must-read for those interested in exploring the world of coaching and mentoring. Whether you seek personal growth, professional development, or organizational improvement, this concise yet powerful book will undoubtedly inspire and empower you to unlock your full potential through the art of coaching and mentoring.

LeanMail, has partnered with more than 250 organizations, including six Fortune 100 companies, in order to improve their focus on profitability, lower stress, and reduce waste in the realm of internal collaborative communications, including meetings, messaging/email management, policy making, and change management.

In addition, Michael has trained first-year MBA students at IESE through a program called ScaleYOU, which aims to assist students in managing their time effectively, reducing stress, and leading more efficient and effective lives.

Specialties: General management, change management, negotiations, business process design, IT management. Strong leadership and communication skills enabling him to inspire employees, partners, and clients alike.