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CARE's *WorkLife* Solutions Monthly Wire Six Ways to Reduce E-Mail Overload

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This month's Wire is taken from one of the many articles found on our website. The article, "How to be a Leader at Work," relates to our September Webinar topic, "Information Overload," which is attached. To access this article, log-on to www.caresworklivesolutions.com, click on the World Icon and enter your unique company password. (If you do not have a company password, contact CARE's *WorkLife* Solutions to request a temporary password.) Next, click on the Site Search tab on the right, enter "Overload," and you will find this article and relevant Skill-Builder.

Six Ways to Reduce E-Mail Overload

If you're spending more time responding to e-mail than doing actual work, it's time to reclaim your life! Here are some helpful tips from *The Hamster Revolution: How to Manage Your E-Mail Before it Manages You* (Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2006).

Send fewer messages. Reducing the amount of messages you send will result in fewer responses.

Communicate the old fashioned way. Rather than engage in endless back-and-forth online banter, it may be quicker to pick up the phone and have a conversation or walk across the hallway and actually talk in person.

Be clear. Writing messages that are clear and specific the first time reduces the amount of follow up questions you receive. Review your messages for clarity before hitting send.

Use subject headers effectively. Use the subject header line to succinctly reflect content and requested action. (If you can't summarize in a sentence, rethink your message!) The authors suggest using one of the following terms: action, info, request, confirmed, or delivery.

Incorporate shorthand. Introduce your colleagues to the shorthand terms EOM (end of message) and NRN (no reply needed). Placing these after your subject allows recipients to delete messages immediately.

Choose the proper recipients. Before hitting *respond all* or *cc*, ask yourself who really needs to receive your message. If no response is requested, no reply is necessary.

Reference: Song, M., Halsey, V., & Burrell, T. (2006, December). *The hamster revolution: How to manage your e-mail before it manages you*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.

Fee, S. (2007, February). Personal tip sheet: Six ways to reduce e-mail overload. *Communication Tip Sheet*, February 2007, ed.