

*Making Everything Easier!™*

# **Manage Your Life with Outlook®**

FOR  
**DUMMIES®**

## **Learn to:**

- Become more productive with e-mail
- Develop a process for managing daily tasks
- Organize your day with the Calendar, Tasks, and Notes functions
- Manage and share information more efficiently

**Greg Harvey, PhD**

*Author of Excel 2007 For Dummies*



# Manage Your Life with Outlook For Dummies®

## Table of Contents

### [Introduction](#)

[About This Book](#)

[How to Use This Book](#)

[Foolish Assumptions](#)

[How This Book Is Organized](#)

[Part I: Preparing for Personal Productivity](#)

[Part II: Making Outlook Your Key to Personal Productivity](#)

[Part III: Taking Control of Your E-Mail Inbox](#)

[Part IV: Developing Your Outlook Productivity Practices](#)

[Part V: The Part of Tens](#)

[Appendixes](#)

[Conventions Used in This Book](#)

[Special Icons](#)

[Where to Go from Here](#)

### [Part I: Preparing for Personal Productivity](#)

[Chapter 1: Planning for Better Balance between Your Work and Personal Life](#)

[“If I Only Had a Life . . .”](#)

[Checking out some typical warning signs of work/life imbalance](#)

[Making work/life balance your number one priority](#)

[Imagining what work/life balance would look like in your life](#)

[Exploring Common Excuses for Remaining Unproductive](#)

[I'm just not an organized person](#)

[I'm just not good with technology](#)

[Not enough time to get it all done](#)

[I experience too many interruptions to be productive](#)

[I just don't do all that well with self-help systems](#)

[Outlook and Personal Productivity](#)

[Chapter 2: Exploring Accepted Beliefs on Personal Productivity](#)

[When Organization Is King](#)

[Examining the relationship of clutter to productivity](#)

[Discovering why messy doesn't necessarily mean unproductive](#)

[When Time Management Is Key](#)

[Identifying your time traps](#)

[Mastering moment-by-moment management](#)

[Multitasking in the Mix of Personal Productivity](#)

[Harnessing the Power of Goals and Objectives](#)

[Exploring the importance of setting goals in achieving peak productivity](#)

[Exploring the importance of establishing achievable objectives](#)

[All you need is a good review](#)

[Flowing Like Clouds and Water](#)

[Doing tasks wholeheartedly](#)

[Appreciating the true goal of personal productivity](#)

[Chapter 3: Surveying Some Popular Outlook Productivity Systems](#)

[Getting Cozy with FranklinCovey's Planning System](#)

[Understanding Covey's seven habits of highly effective people](#)

[Examining the importance of planning in Covey's time management system](#)

[Understanding Covey's Time Management Matrix](#)

[Checking out FranklinCovey PlanPlus software](#)

[Having Fun with David Allen's Getting Things Done Productivity System](#)

[Looking at the five stages of the Getting Things Done productivity system](#)

[Doing away with your to-do lists!](#)

[Checking out the Getting Things Done Outlook Add-In](#)

[Seeking Out Sally McGhee's Productivity Solutions](#)

[Understanding the stages of the McGhee Productivity Solutions \(MPS\)](#)

[Getting to know the Integrated Management System \(IMS\)](#)

[Checking out the MPS Take Back Your Life! 4Outlook add-in](#)

[Getting in Line with Linenberger's Total Workday Control System](#)

[Looking at the eight best practices of task and e-mail management](#)

[Checking out the Information Management System Outlook add-in](#)

[Chapter 4: Defining Personal Productivity on Your Own Terms](#)

[Making the Most of Every Moment](#)

[Establishing your daily priorities](#)

[Applying some good old-fashioned 3D decision making](#)

[Anticipating interruptions](#)

[Getting it all down in writing](#)

[Too much information!](#)

[Keeping yourself ready for change](#)

[Finding Your Own Formula for Productivity Success](#)

[Knowing yourself](#)

[Considering productivity part of your self-fulfillment](#)

[Mastering your productivity tools](#)

[Getting yourself organized](#)

[Prioritizing your tasks](#)

[Always having a plan](#)

[Focusing on what you can do](#)

[Staying open to change](#)

[Avoiding information overload](#)

[Developing your interdependence](#)

## [Part II: Making Outlook Your Key to Personal Productivity](#)

[Chapter 5: Mastering Information Management with Outlook](#)

[Making Outlook Your Personal Information Manager](#)

[Getting Really Comfy with the Outlook Window](#)

[Outlook's medley of menus](#)

[Outlook's trio of toolbars](#)

[Outlook's plethora of panes](#)

[Using Outlook's Medley of Modules](#)

[Dispatching any illusions about the functions of the Mail module](#)

[Scheduling some time for the Calendar module](#)

[Getting in touch with the Contacts module](#)

[Understanding the responsibilities of the Tasks module](#)

[Remarking on the utility of the Notes module](#)

[Recording the uses of the Journal module](#)

[Making short work of the Folder List and Shortcuts in the Navigation Pane](#)

[The Outlook Shortcut Keys You Need to Know and Use](#)

[Switching modules and views](#)

[Creating new Outlook items](#)

[Taking the shortcut keys out for a spin](#)

## [Chapter 6: Giving Outlook a Productivity Makeover](#)

[Changing the Outlook Startup Module](#)

[Changing the Outlook startup folder](#)

[Automatically launching Outlook each time you start your computer](#)

[Customizing the Outlook Toolbars](#)

[Modifying the contents of a built-in toolbar](#)

[Rearranging buttons on a built-in toolbar](#)

[Creating your own toolbars](#)

[Checking out a recommended toolbar configuration](#)

[Adopting a New Point of View](#)

[Customizing the current view](#)

[Defining a whole new view](#)

[Have It Your Way in Outlook Today](#)

[Making Outlook Today your home base](#)

[Customizing the appearance of Outlook Today](#)

[Setting Up Categories That Are Just Your Type](#)

[Using category lists in Outlook 2003](#)

[Using category lists in Outlook 2007](#)

[Tailoring the Look of Assorted Outlook Modules with the Organize Pane](#)

[Customizing the Module Buttons in the Navigation Pane](#)

[Adding Outlook Gadgets for Windows Vista](#)

## [Part III: Taking Control of Your E-Mail Inbox](#)

## [Chapter 7: Doing Your Initial E-Mail Inbox Housecleaning](#)

[Getting Ready to Do Your Inbox Housecleaning](#)

[Using the Mailbox Cleanup Feature](#)

[Rounding Up and Deleting Unneeded Messages](#)

[Archiving Messages in Your Inbox](#)

[Organizing the Messages You Need to Keep](#)

[Creating Inbox subfolders for wanted e-mail](#)

[Rounding up and moving e-mail messages into their respective Inbox subfolders](#)

[Living with an Empty Inbox](#)

## [Chapter 8: Doing Your Ongoing E-Mail Inbox Housekeeping](#)

[Keeping Your Inbox Spick-and-Span](#)

[Looking at various strategies for effectively dealing with new e-mail](#)

[Prioritizing and dealing with messages that require a response](#)

[Creating message rules to automatically organize some of your e-mail](#)

[Setting your e-mail options](#)

[Using AutoArchive to automatically clear out older messages](#)

[Backing Up Your Outlook Data Files](#)

[Copying your .pst data files to a new drive or disk](#)

[Restoring your backup .pst data files](#)

## [Part IV: Developing Your Outlook Productivity Practices](#)

### [Chapter 9: Creating and Sending E-Mail Messages Like a Pro](#)

[Composing Effective E-Mail Messages](#)

[Punching up the Subject line](#)

[Making good use of e-mail abbreviations](#)

[Composing concise and to-the-point messages](#)

[To Cc: or not to Cc: — that is the question](#)

[All about attachments](#)

[Creating Your Own E-Mail Signature](#)

[Tracking Your Important E-Mail Messages](#)

[Requesting a delivery and read receipt for a single message](#)

[Modifying tracking options](#)

[Chapter 10: Using Calendar to Keep Yourself on Schedule](#)

[Keeping Up with the Calendar Module](#)

[Subscribing to and downloading Internet calendars](#)

[Navigating your Outlook calendars with the greatest of ease](#)

[Customizing the Calendar options](#)

[Adopting a New Calendar View](#)

[All About Scheduling Appointments and Events](#)

[Scheduling one-time appointments and events](#)

[Scheduling recurring appointments and events](#)

[Setting up a meeting and sending out meeting requests](#)

[Sharing Your Outlook 2007 Calendars](#)

[E-mailing your calendar](#)

[Publishing your calendar to Microsoft Office Online](#)

[Chapter 11: Using Contacts to Stay in Touch](#)

[Adding New Contacts Like a Pro](#)

[Organizing Your Contacts](#)

[Eliminating duplicates in the contact records](#)

[Customizing the Contacts module's views](#)

[Adding contacts to a distribution list](#)



[Putting Your Contacts to Good Use](#)

[Exporting Contacts to Other Programs](#)

## [Chapter 12: Using Tasks to Successfully Stay on Top of Your Obligations](#)

[What Makes a Task So Special?](#)

[Task Management with the Outlook 2003 TaskPad](#)

[Adding a new task in the TaskPad](#)

[Selecting a different TaskPad view](#)

[Task Management with the Outlook 2007 To-Do Bar](#)

[Getting Productive with the Outlook Tasks Module](#)

[Removing completed tasks from your task list](#)

[Adding a new task from any module](#)

[Specifying recurring tasks](#)

[Assigning tasks to others](#)

## [Chapter 13: Using Notes to Capture Your Ideas](#)

[Making Outlook Notes a Routine Part of Your Productivity Practices](#)

[Creating and Organizing Notes](#)

[Customizing and printing your notes](#)

[Using notes to create other Outlook items](#)

[Creating notes from other Outlook items](#)

[Searching Outlook notes](#)

[Sharing your Outlook notes](#)

[Successfully Using OneNote 2007 with Outlook](#)

[Inserting Outlook meeting details into OneNote](#)

[Creating Outlook tasks, appointments, and contacts from OneNote](#)

## [Chapter 14: Using the Journal to Keep an Eye on Your Activities](#)

[Understanding How the Journal Can Help You Be More Productive](#)

[Making the Most of the Journal Module](#)

[Using automatic journaling](#)

[Changing the Journal view](#)

[Manually creating Journal entries](#)

[Chapter 15: Outlook on the Go](#)

[Getting Outlook Data onto Your Mobile Devices](#)

[Sending Text Messages from Outlook to a Mobile Phone](#)

[Using Outlook with Instant Messaging](#)

## [Part V: The Part of Tens](#)

[Chapter 16: Top Ten Personal Productivity Strategies](#)

[Know Yourself When It Comes to Productivity](#)

[View Personal Productivity as Part of Self-Fulfillment](#)

[Master Your Productivity Tools](#)

[Get Yourself Organized](#)

[Prioritize Your Tasks](#)

[Plan for the Future](#)

[Focus on What You Can Do](#)

[Stay Open to Change](#)

[Deal Tactically with Information Overload](#)

[Develop a Healthy Sense of Interdependence](#)

[Chapter 17: Top Ten Outlook Productivity Techniques](#)

[Utilize Every Single Bit of Outlook](#)

[Organize Your Inbox](#)

[Keep That Inbox Near Empty](#)

[Send Really Effective E-Mail Messages](#)

[Make Outlook Today or the Calendar the Center of Your Productivity World](#)

[Share Your Calendar As Needed](#)

[Do Terrific Task Management](#)

[Take Note of Every Idea](#)

[Use Automatic Journaling to Evaluate Your Productivity](#)

[Take Outlook with You Wherever You Go](#)

[Appendix A: Personal Productivity Resources](#)

[Appendix B: Personal Productivity Self-Assessment](#)

# ***Manage Your Life with Outlook® For Dummies***

## **by Greg Harvey**



Wiley Publishing, Inc.

### **Manage Your Life with Outlook® For Dummies®**

Published by

**Wiley Publishing, Inc.**

111 River Street

Hoboken, NJ 07030-5774

[www.wiley.com](http://www.wiley.com)

Copyright © 2008 by Wiley Publishing, Inc., Indianapolis, Indiana

Published by Wiley Publishing, Inc., Indianapolis, Indiana

Published simultaneously in Canada

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning or otherwise, except as permitted under Sections 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act, without either the prior written permission of the Publisher, or authorization through payment of the

appropriate per-copy fee to the Copyright Clearance Center, 222 Rosewood Drive, Danvers, MA 01923, (978) 750-8400, fax (978) 646-8600. Requests to the Publisher for permission should be addressed to the Legal Department, Wiley Publishing, Inc., 10475 Crosspoint Blvd., Indianapolis, IN 46256, (317) 572-3447, fax (317) 572-4355, or online at <http://www.wiley.com/go/permissions>.

**Trademarks:** Wiley, the Wiley Publishing logo, For Dummies, the Dummies Man logo, A Reference for the Rest of Us!, The Dummies Way, Dummies Daily, The Fun and Easy Way, Dummies.com, and related trade dress are trademarks or registered trademarks of John Wiley & Sons, Inc. and/or its affiliates in the United States and other countries, and may not be used without written permission. Quicken is a registered trademark of Intuit, Inc. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. Wiley Publishing, Inc., is not associated with any product or vendor mentioned in this book.

**Limit of Liability/Disclaimer of Warranty: The publisher and the author make no representations or warranties with respect to the accuracy or completeness of the contents of this work and specifically disclaim all warranties, including without limitation warranties of fitness for a particular purpose. No warranty may be created or extended by sales or promotional materials. The advice and strategies contained herein may not be**

**suitable for every situation. This work is sold with the understanding that the publisher is not engaged in rendering legal, accounting, or other professional services. If professional assistance is required, the services of a competent professional person should be sought. Neither the publisher nor the author shall be liable for damages arising herefrom. The fact that an organization or Website is referred to in this work as a citation and/or a potential source of further information does not mean that the author or the publisher endorses the information the organization or Website may provide or recommendations it may make. Further, readers should be aware that Internet Websites listed in this work may have changed or disappeared between when this work was written and when it is read.**

For general information on our other products and services, please contact our Customer Care Department within the U.S. at 800-762-2974, outside the U.S. at 317-572-3993, or fax 317-572-4002.

For technical support, please visit  
[www.wiley.com/techsupport](http://www.wiley.com/techsupport).

Wiley also publishes its books in a variety of electronic formats. Some content that appears in print may not be available in electronic books.

Library of Congress Control Number: 2008935816

ISBN: 978-0-471-95930-4

Manufactured in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1



Wiley Publishing, Inc.

## About the Author

**Greg Harvey** has authored tons of computer books, the most recent being *Excel Workbook For Dummies* and *Roxio Easy Media Creator 8 For Dummies*, and the most popular being *Excel 2007 For Dummies* and *Excel 2007 All-in-One Desk Reference For Dummies*. He started out training business users on how to use IBM personal computers and their attendant computer software in the rough and tumble days of DOS, WordStar, and Lotus 1-2-3 in the mid-80s of the last century. After working for a number of independent training firms, he went on to teach semester-long courses in spreadsheet and database management software at Golden Gate University in San Francisco.

His love of teaching has translated into an equal love of writing. For Dummies books are, of course, his all-time favorites to write because they enable him to write to his favorite audience: the beginner. They also enable him to use humor (a key element to success in the training room) and, most delightful of all, to express an opinion or two about the subject matter at hand.

Greg received his doctorate degree in Humanities in Philosophy and Religion with a concentration in Asian Studies and Comparative Religion last May. Everyone is glad that Greg was finally able to get out of school before he retired.

For the past two years, Greg has been actively researching productivity in the modern workplace and the various ideas and systems developed for improving work/life, especially using Microsoft's Outlook software.

## Dedication

To Katie Feltman in great appreciation of her unwavering support for the concept and execution of this book

### **Publisher's Acknowledgments**

We're proud of this book; please send us your comments through our online registration form located at [www.dummies.com/register/](http://www.dummies.com/register/).

Some of the people who helped bring this book to market include the following:

#### ***Acquisitions, Editorial, and Media Development***

**Senior Project Editor:** Paul Levesque

**Acquisitions Editor:** Katie Feltman

**Copy Editors:** Virginia Sanders, Susan Christophersen

**Technical Editor:** Joyce Nielsen



**Editorial Manager:** Leah Cameron

**Editorial Assistant:** Amanda Foxworth

**Sr. Editorial Assistant:** Cherie Case

**Cartoons:** Rich Tennant ([www.the5thwave.com](http://www.the5thwave.com))

***Composition Services***

**Project Coordinator:** Katie Key

**Layout and Graphics:** Melissa K. Jester, Reuben W. Davis, Christin Swinford, Christine Williams

**Proofreaders:** Melissa Bronnenberg, Reuben W. Davis, Nancy L. Reinhardt

**Indexer:** Word Co. Indexing Services

**Publishing and Editorial for Technology Dummies**

**Richard Swadley**, Vice President and Executive Group Publisher

**Andy Cummings**, Vice President and Publisher

**Mary Bednarek**, Executive Acquisitions Director

**Mary C. Corder**, Editorial Director

**Publishing for Consumer Dummies**

**Diane Graves Steele**, Vice President and Publisher

**Joyce Pepple**, Acquisitions Director

**Composition Services**

**Gerry Fahey**, Vice President of Production Services

**Debbie Stailey**, Director of Composition Services

# Introduction

---

Make no mistake about it; the subject of this book is enhancing your personal productivity rather than using Microsoft Outlook. As far as this book's concerned, Outlook is merely a means to an end, and that end is simply to bring your professional and personal lives into greater balance. And the full expectation is that this greater balance will bring with it a greater sense of satisfaction and fulfillment to both aspects of your life.

Fortunately, when it comes to enhancing your personal productivity, Outlook can serve you quite well. Beyond its obvious e-mail capabilities, Outlook offers a whole array of tools you can immediately start bringing to bear in your effort to deal more effectively with both your professional and personal obligations. The pages ahead, then, are chock-full of ideas, suggestions, and practical techniques all designed to guide you towards making Outlook the principal toolkit you use in your pursuit of enhanced personal productivity, better work/life balance, and greater happiness.

## About This Book

Given that the subject of personal productivity has both its theoretical and practical aspects, so does this book. It consists roughly of one part vision and three parts application. The vision stuff in the first part gives you ideas on the current thinking of what it takes to achieve peak productivity as well as ideas on how to assess your own particular situation. The practical, Outlook-related information in the remainder of the book then gives you

the lowdown on how to mold this program to fit your work/life situation so you can actually realize your productivity vision.

This doesn't mean, however, that the book is meant to be read from beginning to end or from cover to cover. Although the chapters are organized in a logical order (progressing from the more theoretical aspects of personal productivity to the downright practical with Outlook), each topic covered in a chapter is really meant to stand pretty much on its own. It's really up to you to figure out where you need to go and what information will be of most help.

## **How to Use This Book**

This book is like a reference in which you start out by looking up the topic you need information about (either in the Table of Contents or the Index), and then you refer directly to the section of interest. I explain most topics conversationally (as though you were in my office). Sometimes, however, my regiment-commander mentality takes over, and I list the steps you need to take to accomplish a particular task in a particular section.

I do recommend you start, at the very least, by perusing the theoretical, assessment-type stuff in the chapters in Part I, even if you think you know exactly where you're coming from and are quite sure where you want and need to go. I say this because framing (or reframing) the problem and possible solutions are often tremendous motivators that can really help get you going and keep you going. This type of fundamental assessment can also prevent you from wasting time on exploring practical,

Outlook techniques in chapters in the later parts that really don't address your most pressing and immediate productivity snafus and conundrums.

## **Foolish Assumptions**

The only assumptions I make about you, dear reader (other than you're highly motivated to bring your professional and personal life into better balance), are that you currently use either Microsoft Outlook 2003 or, the latest, Outlook 2007 for taking care of your e-mail and that your computer is running some version of the Windows operating system. And, as a result, you run Outlook every day (whether or not your computer automatically launches the program at its startup) so that Outlook is readily available to you whenever you're at the computer.

As for your experience and skill level with Outlook, it really doesn't matter whether or not you've ever strayed any further than its Inbox or that you have loads of experience using its more advanced features and other modules. The important thing here is that you maintain a willingness to explore aspects of this program that are new to you and to adopt a new perspective towards those aspects with which you're already familiar.

Beyond that, you simply need to be open to developing habits that support and enhance your overall personal productivity. Remember that there are no gold stars for knowing more about Outlook and its hundreds of features. In fact, the only brownie points given are for knowing how to use those Outlook features that actually put you in greater control of your work and life.

# How This Book Is Organized

This book is organized in five parts. Each part contains two or more chapters with related content. Each chapter is further divided into loosely related sections that cover the basics of the topic at hand. You should not, however, get too hung up about following along with the structure of the book; ultimately, it doesn't matter at all if you find out how to manage your to-do list in the Tasks module before you find out how to do scheduling in the Calendar. The important thing is that you find the information — and understand it when you find it — when you need to explore a new aspect of personal productivity or use Outlook to achieve it.

In case you're interested, here's a synopsis of what you find in each part that follows.

## Part I: Preparing for Personal Productivity

The four chapters in this part set the stage for using Outlook as your personal information manager. They not only give you basic information on the current thinking on just what it takes to be truly productive in the modern work world, but they also enable you to take a good long look at your situation and come up with your own definition of personal productivity.

## **Part II: Making Outlook Your Key to Personal Productivity**

The two chapters in this part give you an overview of Outlook's complete capabilities as a personal information manager (far beyond just your e-mail and address program). Chapter 5 acquaints (or reacquaints) you with the modular setup of Outlook and how you can use its various features in your quest towards increased productivity. Chapter 6 then gives you suggestions on how you might customize Outlook so that it better serves your productivity goals.

## **Part III: Taking Control of Your E-Mail Inbox**

Increased personal productivity with Outlook starts and ends with taking control of your Outlook e-mail Inbox. The chapters in this part give you the lowdown on exactly how to do this. Chapter 7 shows you how to do a basic Inbox housecleaning and Chapter 8 then goes on to show you how to do ongoing housekeeping to keep your Inbox under your control.

## **Part IV: Developing Your Outlook Productivity Practices**

The first six chapters in this part cover Outlook productivity practices in detail across each of its major modules. The final chapter in this part then gives you suggestions on how to take your Outlook data with you

when you're on the go. Together, the practical information in this part is designed to give you everything you need to truly make Outlook your complete personal information manager.

## **Part V: The Part of Tens**

The two chapters in the Part of Tens give you access to two of my top ten lists. Chapter 16 gives you my top ten personal productivity strategies that encapsulate the attitudes that I think are essential for you to cultivate in your quest for increased productivity. Chapter 17 then gives you my top ten Outlook productivity techniques that you can use as a checklist in determining the types of new Outlook habits you should nurture.

## **Appendixes**

The two appendixes give you a guide to more resources on personal productivity along with a tool for assessing your needs and goals. Appendix A offers a list of print and online productivity resources that you can consult for more information on this fascinating subject. Appendix B acts as an assessment tool that you can use to record your vision, aspirations, and near- and long-term objectives for achieving greater personal productivity and better work/life balance.

## **Conventions Used in This Book**



Throughout the text, I give you keyboard shortcuts that you need to learn by heart in order attain top productivity. Most of these shortcuts are key combos that use the Ctrl in combination with other letters, although some use the Shift key as well. With these shortcuts, you need to hold down the Ctrl (and Shift key) as you type the letter.

When it comes to menu commands, this book uses command arrows to lead you from the initial menu, to any submenus, and finally to the command option you ultimately want. For example, if you need to open the File menu to get to the Open command, that instruction would look like this: Choose File⇒Open.

Finally, if you're really observant, you may notice a slight discrepancy between the capitalization of the names of dialog box options (such as headings, option buttons, and check boxes) as they appear in the book and how they actually appear in Outlook on your computer screen. I intentionally use the convention of capitalizing the initial letters of all the main words of a dialog box option to help you differentiate the name of the option from the rest of the text describing its use.

## Special Icons

The following icons are strategically placed in the margins to point out stuff you may or may not want to read.



This icon means the paragraph contains nerdy discussions that you may well want to skip (or read when no one else is around).



This icon alerts you to shortcuts or other valuable hints related to the topic at hand.



This icon highlights information to keep in mind if you want to meet with a modicum of success.



This icon indicates some suggestion or hint that you may find really helps you become more productive.



This icon alerts you to information to keep in mind if you want to avert some dire future problems.



This icon flags material that is specific to Outlook 2007, the latest version of the software.

## Where to Go from Here

I have a couple of suggestions for where to go from here (after you get a chuckle from the great Rich Tennant cartoons). You may want to go directly to the Part of Tens to check out my top ten lists; in Chapter 16, you find a list for general productivity strategies, and Chapter 17 offers a list with a particular emphasis on Outlook productivity techniques. Otherwise, I suggest you start out by taking a look at the material in Chapter 1 and using its information and suggestions to start devising your very own plan for becoming as productive as you possibly can with Outlook so that you can immediately begin to bring your professional and personal lives into greater harmony.

# Part I

## Preparing for Personal Productivity



### In this part . . .

Increasing your personal productivity to achieve greater work/life balance is not simply a matter of acquiring and applying new skills in Outlook. Before that, you need to do some assessment work. The chapters in this first part are designed to help you go through the process of understanding the place from which you're starting as well as visualize the place you intend to be.

# **Chapter 1**

## **Planning for Better Balance between Your Work and Personal Life**

---

### **In This Chapter**

Taking a good hard look at your personal productivity

Envisioning yourself as a happy, productive worker with a personal life to boot

Reviewing the excuses you have for not being productive now

Looking at ways you can use Outlook to achieve peak personal productivity

---

Before you have any chance of becoming more productive, you really need to take stock of where you're at now regarding keeping your personal life and work in balance.

In this chapter, you begin this process by taking a good long look at your current level of personal productivity on the job and the typical symptoms of imbalance, and from there you imagine how you might improve it so as to create a better equilibrium between work and your personal life.

Next, you get a chance to take a look at the most common reasons people give for not being productive — in other words, all those pitiful excuses that you have for

not being able to get it together in the productivity department.

Finally, you get the opportunity to look at some of the ways that Microsoft Outlook can help you become more productive at work and actually help you start making that goal of work/life balance a reality.

## **“If I Only Had a Life . . .”**

One surefire way to tell that your personal life and work aren't in balance is if you don't even think of yourself as really having a personal life. If your work not only takes center stage in your life but leaves little or no room for anyone or anything else, then I think you'd agree that you're in real need of regaining some kind of balance between your office and home. Another clear sign is if you always feel as though both at work and at home you don't have enough time to get all you have to do done, and therefore are decidedly dissatisfied in both environments.



In this age of the knowledge/service worker outfitted with anywhere, anytime Internet access, it can be especially hard to maintain even the smallest semblance of work/life balance.

As someone who's made a living as a self-employed author working principally in a home office setting, I encountered my first major problem with maintaining any real personal life early on in my writing career. It first showed up in the form of extended workdays that were all too soon joined by working weekends. And the moment I got my first laptop computer and realized that my writing

could now accompany me on holiday, working vacations immediately took their unrighteous place beside my working weekends and interminable workdays.

And although this unholy alliance may have contributed to my meeting many a book deadline, this came at a high cost to maintaining equilibrium between my professional and personal lives both in terms of personal stress and lost opportunities to unwind from the demands of the job.

## **Checking out some typical warning signs of work/life imbalance**

You may be wondering whether you're really suffering from work/life imbalance or whether the job you currently have is simply a really bad fit. To help you determine whether you should start applying the principles in this book instead of doing an extensive job search online, I've put together the following checklist.

This checklist contains the most common warning signs of the productivity problems that can lead to significant work/life imbalance. If you find that several items in this list apply in your situation, in all probability you need to start implementing steps to regain a sense of equilibrium between your personal and professional life:

You feel as though there's never enough time in the day to get all your work done.

You regularly work longer than normal hours and/or take work home with you.