

TRANSCRIPT:

Episode 063: Suneera Madhani on Achieving Inbox Zero and Creating Systems to Streamline and Simplify Your Email

Intro Clip, Suneera Madhani: Inbox Zero is something that I practice religiously, I don't just check email all day long. I mean, it's so easy for you to get distracted on your phone, see something come in and respond to it. And sometimes that works. Sometimes you have those moments in the day, I'm not discouraging you from responding to an action. But I really believe in focus behavior when you're doing a certain behavior that you're fully present.

Shannan Monson: From CEO school it's Wine Down Wednesday, pour yourself a drink and join us for CEO happy hour as we share the messy behind the scenes, straight talk and real world advice to help you level up in leadership and in life. Cheers.

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Suneera Madhani: Hi, everyone. Welcome to this week's Wine Down Wednesday. This is your host Suneera Madhani, and I'm so excited for today's episode, because I'm gonna be talking about one of the most asked questions that I get is about my inbox process. So the amount of times that I've had to answer this on DMS, I decided to make a quick episode for you guys. So you guys can understand how I personally structure my inbox, manage my time and check emails.

So one of the things that I want to first talk about is just overload on spending time in places that just, you don't need to be spending time into emails are a great way to communicate. It's an incredible tool. It's how we operate our digital lives today and businesses today. But there can be an overload, even in your inbox all the time of things that just aren't important. So first, it's really important to declutter, it's so important to ensure that your inbox is has only houses information and only houses, things that are actually important, and that you're only sending emails when they are, there's email required, because there's so many different styles of communication that you could be using for your team.

So for us, you know, we use slack for all of our team communication. And that's a huge way for us to remove the load off of emails, not everything needs to be sent via email. However, there are things that if they are important, I 100% believe that email is the way to that you have that proper thread that you have the proper attachments, and you have things in it in its home. And so that is what I utilize email for is all things important. And all things communication just for business. So first and foremost, I have different inboxes, I have three different inboxes, I have my fattmerchant inbox, which is my primary work inbox, and it is all things only that merchant. And that's it.

And then of course, I have my CEO School inbox, which is for all things to school. And then I have my personal inbox, which is all communication with my family newsletters that I subscribed to, and all else. And so those are my three inboxes, the primary time that I spend every day is on my work inbox. And in my work inbox, I have very specific and strict guidelines. So first, I want to start by saying is, you have to get rid of everything that's not important and actually hit unsubscribe. So the first process that I would do to get to inbox zero, which is a concept I'm gonna be sharing with you here shortly, is unsubscribing, to all the things that you have subscribed to you have, it's not just a process of hitting Delete to say, oh, let me go look at these, like old maybe emails that are in my work email, and then delete them, it's actually about going into the email to hit unsubscribe and clearing through that clutter and removing that from your inbox from the future.

And so taking that time to get through your emails to do you know and spend spent, if this is a process that you're about to go through, I would like for you to spend an entire week to do this process. And because it's not going to just happen in a single sitting, I don't know if you have the time to do in a single setting. But getting your inbox to clear first step is to go through and remove all the junk. And it's not just about hitting that spam button is actually going in and unsubscribing to all the lists that you have subscribed to for so long. So that's step one.

Step two is to create rules in your inbox, right and so some people, and you can get really complex with this, I actually love a simplified inbox, I actually don't have very many rules, I have something that's really simple for me, which is things that are from my board or things that are from my leadership team, that they go to the top of the inbox, and so I just have a category for that. But other than that I don't have very, very complex folders or very complex systems, because I actually think that the more complex your inbox is that the less you'll actually be able to keep up with it. So start by one unsubscribing to if you need to create any rules or any folders to store anything, you can do that.

And then step number three and I would say the next step is to create a process around your email. So one thing we were literally it's so easy for you to get distracted by email. Email is actually a form of distraction to actually have you execute against the things that you need to execute it. So I set really clear structure about the time that I'm actually going to be checking My email. So I only check my email, or I tried to check my email two to three times a day max. And it's not actually first thing in the morning. And it's not actually last thing before I leave for work or at night, I actually have structure times in my calendar that I inbox zero.

And this concept of Inbox Zero, it goes like this. So I believe in a concept of Inbox Zero, where every single day, I clean through my inbox, and I either mark as unread or snooze on anything that I need to save for tomorrow or create action from tomorrow. But every single day, I clean through my inbox. And if it's if I've left it as unread, or if I've left it as a snooze, that means that there is an action tied to it, and that I must figure out a, I must actually get back to that auction. And so the only things that you'll find in my inbox are things that I still have to follow up on. I don't just hit unread, or I don't just hit Run, read and leave it and then go put it somewhere else.

So that is a very simple structure. For me that works really well for me is marked as unread. But every single day I hit inbox zero.

And what I mean by Inbox Zero, sometimes I have 10 tasks left or the 10 emails left for the day. Sometimes it's 20. Sometimes it's five, sometimes it's none. But at least I've read through every single email that has come through and I've done something assigned it, deleted it or snoozed it for later or left it as unread. And I absolutely love the snooze feature on Gmail, and you can literally hit it looks like a little clock, you can hit that and say remind me tomorrow, so that you can you can review it really quick. But you're like, hey, there's an action here. And I'd like to complete that action tomorrow. And so Inbox Zero is something that I practice, religiously. And no matter what by the end of the week, I make sure that I'm literally at zero. So I'm not starting the week off with a ton of emails that are, you know, that I haven't gotten to or action that I haven't taken in the week.

And so another rule that I just talked about is the fact that I don't just check email all day long. I mean, it's so easy for you to get distracted on your phone, see somebody come in and respond to it. And sometimes, and sometimes that works, sometimes you have those moments in the day, I'm not, I'm not discouraging you from responding to an action, but you're taking time away, I really believe in focus behavior. And when you're doing a certain behavior that you're fully present, when I'm in a meeting, I would like to be fully 100% present with my staff, the team that I'm with, I'm not seeing my inbox come through, and then just responding to emails at the same time.

So I believe in setting focused attention to the tasks that are at hand. And so I set these quick 30 minute blocks throughout the day, I have them scheduled on my calendar, my actually I'll pull up my calendar, it's actually at 10am. And it's at 4pm that are scheduled no matter what to sit down and actually do email. And then I sometimes usually check during lunch, so but I have a very systemized the furthest for those two blocks that that is my email time. And that is when I actually sit down and run through and start getting through email. And I promise you that once your inbox is organized, you take the time to declutter it, you take the time to actually get it organized and get it simple, simple is the key and you work on it every single day, it's actually not overwhelming. And that way you can get straight to your action items, you can get straight to your tasks.

And so that is how I manage my crazy inbox. And I have different rules for my other inboxes. Right I'm This is me explaining my daily fattmerchant inbox, I have different rules for my CEO School inbox and timings that I have for that. And then for my personal it's not something I check every day, I just don't have the capacity to check it every day. And so it's something that I do once a week to clean out in my inbox process to say, Hey, what's that what took place in there. And that inbox definitely has all of the newsletters and the the coupons and the 10% offs and all the things that end up in that junk folder.

But it's also important for you to clear that and unsubscribe to that, because it's noisy. And then you can never find anything that is actually important. So I encourage all of you guys to create a

system that works for you don't overcomplicate it, really hit that unsubscribe button, and create rules to actually sit and work on your email so you can actually get to focus and Inbox Zero is something that I've been practicing for years. I don't miss things most of the time because of that.

And you've heard me talk about I use Trello or using a project management tool I use monday.com as well. And using a tool to put in your action items so you can clear through that inbox is also beneficial. So creating structure, creating that process. You're gonna thank me later. I hope this helps you today. Share with me on Instagram on how you're cleaning up your inbox. We'd love to see the before and afters with Love to to talk you through your processes. So keep me posted. I'm so excited for you happy Wine Down Wednesday and cheers to Inbox Zero

Shannan Monson: Thank you so much for listening. We hope you enjoy the show. Follow us @ceoschool on Instagram for show notes, inspiration and exclusive behind the scenes that you won't find anywhere else. We also have an absolutely incredible resource for you. It's the seven lessons we learned building million dollar businesses. These are complete game changers and we want to give it to you absolutely free. All you have to do is leave a review of the podcast, why you love the show, screenshot the review and email it to Hello@ceoschoolpodcast.com and we'll send it your way