



# Avoid Information Overload: 4 Practice Manager Tips

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What happens when you're overloaded with too much information on a continual basis? You begin to feel overwhelmed, which leads you to feel overworked.

With shrinking medical practice staffs, most managers and administrators are facing more challenges today than in previous years. And keeping up is made harder by the onslaught of information received on a daily basis, most of which is not vital to your well-being.

Here are some ways managers and administrators can more efficiently sort through information, and reduce the likelihood of experiencing information overload:

## **1. Detect and Select**

You can't stay on top of everything, but you can determine in advance what is worth your time and attention.

I suggest opening your mail over the wastebasket; it's much easier to chuck items that way. If you get a magazine or journal, peruse it rapidly and tear out the articles or items that look like they'll be of interest, and recycle the rest of the issue.

Consider which items you can scan into your computer. The less physical paper you hold on to, the better. Be sure to use an accurate file name and place the scanned document in the best file folder, so that you can retrieve the document rather easily.

Also, collect all the junk mail that comes in for one month and assign someone to call or use a form letter to write back and say, "Please save a tree, DELETE us from your mailing list!"

## **2. Take a Stand**

Whenever you're faced with new information, ask yourself:

- What is the driving force behind this item?
- Do I need it, or do I simply fear not retaining it?
- Does it merely repeat what I already know, or what I already believe?
- Is it just an information crutch?

In this era, when information surges forth, you generally don't need to hang on to as many things as you do.

## **3. Pare down what you have.**

Continually pare down and let go of data you've been collecting. Prune your files. Muster the mental and emotional strength to let go of information that is only marginally valuable.

What are the best times to pare down? Any time when you're in the frame of mind that allows you to recognize that paring down, in itself, is a worthwhile activity and an adaptive behavior that helps you in your career and your personal life.

## **4. Acknowledge the reality, but don't let it stress you out.**

Every workday, for the rest of your life, you're likely to be besieged by more information, not less due to the changing nature of information exchange and the Internet.

That means you must be smarter about what, and how you take in, information. Thus far, you perhaps haven't acknowledged the full extent of the reality you're facing or drawn upon the resources you have available. Once you do, you'll be able to withstand the information deluge.