

KB CommEntary

KB COMM • SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION

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Greetings!

Happy 2010!

Welcome to the new year's first issue of *KB CommEntary*, the KB COMM e-newsletter. At KB COMM, we provide mission-critical communication and learning services to clients in a variety of industries.

Last time, we offered some tips for using color to help organize information in Microsoft Outlook. This issue of *KB CommEntary* continues with suggestions for customizing views within Outlook.

What's Up at KB COMM?

Thanks to our established and new clients for keeping us fully engaged. Recent and ongoing projects include:

- Writing a company profile for use in promotion and marketing of a woman-owned construction company
- Developing a safety, installation, and use guide for a Scandinavian manufacturer of specialty windows
- Editing product portfolio copy for a healthcare diagnostics manufacturer
- Writing and formatting large, complex chemical residue studies intended for regulatory submission on behalf of a federally funded, cooperative research organization
- Writing supplements and formatting modules of electronic submissions to FDA for a pharmaceutical manufacturing company
- Formatting modules of electronic submissions to FDA for a medical device manufacturing company

KB Comm is a certified Women's Business Enterprise. We are officially qualified to participate in corporations' woman- and minority-owned vendor programs.

Please keep us in mind for your communication or training projects.

Tips and Tales

Changing Your View

In the last edition of *KB CommEntary*, we offered suggestions for using color to make interacting with Microsoft Outlook more efficient and productive. This time, we'll focus on the viewing options available within Outlook. By selecting the right combination of viewing options, you can customize the way Outlook presents information to suit your preferences and working style. When you combine the power of color-coding and view customization, you can create a highly personalized productivity management tool that, in effect, thinks the same way you do.

OK, maybe that's not such a good idea...

Note: These tips are for Outlook 2007, but most of them can also be implemented in earlier versions of Outlook.

Email Viewing Options

Let's begin with e-mail viewing options. When viewing e-mail, Outlook's default view automatically groups your messages by the time periods in which you received them. Whether or not you find this useful probably reveals something interesting about you. For us, Today, Yesterday, and Last Week sometimes qualify as helpful reminders, but a message that falls into Last Month means we've been putting something off for too long, and any message consigned to Older signifies abject failure!

Fortunately, it's easy to tell Outlook to stop nagging you. In the menu bar, select View > Arrange By. A drop-down menu appears. Down near the bottom, you'll see that Show in Groups is checked. Just click Show in Groups to make the check mark go away. All the group markers also disappear from your message lists.

Another default "feature" for Outlook e-mail is the Reading Pane. This is the pane that appears either at the bottom or right-hand side of the screen and displays the

text of whichever message is currently highlighted in the message list. We have met people who actually like the Reading Pane, but we would never invite them over for dinner.

To banish the Reading Pane, select View > Reading Pane > Off. Or, if you just want to change where the Reading Pane appears on the screen, select View > Reading Pane > Right (or Bottom). Likewise, if you turn the Reading Pane off and want it back, well, you get the idea. The Reading Pane option is always available.

There are many more options for customizing the way you view e-mail. Most of them are accessible under View > Arrange By. Just experiment a bit and you'll certainly discover some views that help you be more productive.

Calendar and Contact Viewing Options

The default view of the Outlook Calendar shows a single day divided into one-hour slots. That's great for the micro view, but what about the big(ger) picture? Just select View, and you'll notice you can also view your calendar by the work week, calendar week, or month. We find the Month view to be especially handy.

While we're talking about the Calendar, we need to mention a powerful tool for customizing your calendar setup. Select Tools > Options > Preferences > Calendar Options. In this dialog box, you can specify what constitutes a work week for you, add national and religious holidays, or even have your calendar display an additional time zone synched to your local time. The latter two options are particularly useful if you work with international colleagues or business partners.

Outlook Contacts likewise can be viewed in many ways. The default Contacts view is Business Cards (Address Cards in previous versions), which displays a list of contact cards organized alphabetically by contact name. The other view options appear under Current View in the navigation bar at the left-hand side of the Contacts screen (you can also see the view options by selecting View > Current View).

The By Category view is one we use frequently and recommend highly, but it requires some setup for each contact before you can use it. The idea is to specify one or more categories (i.e., useful descriptors) for each of your contacts. Outlook already provides some not-so-useful categories you can use, but you can also define your own--current customer, prospect, vendor, golf partner, play-time pal, or whatever is important to you. Once you have categories defined for each contact, you can then use the By Category view to sort and list your contacts by those categories. Pretty handy, we think!

Alas, the process for creating and defining categories for each contact was actually easier in earlier versions of Outlook. Oh well, time to make lemonade. Select the Business Card view and open a contact. Then select Categorize from the Contact tab on the Ribbon. A list of all the currently defined categories/colors appears. As we already said, the default list is not especially useful, but you'll notice that you can choose to define new categories as well. When you do, they too will appear on the list. Then select the appropriate categories for the contact and save the changes. Repeat this process with all your contacts, and you're ready to go.

Ideas?

To help us make *KB CommEntary* more useful to you, feel free to suggest topics you would like to see addressed. Send your idea to kathy@kbcommllc.com and we will consider featuring it in an upcoming edition of the newsletter.

And please remember, *when it has to be right*, KB COMM is here to help.

Sincerely,

Kathy

Kathy Breuninger

KB COMM

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