Email is not a tool, it's a platform

The new age startups would have you believe that email is dead and would convince you to move on and adopt a multitude of tools in its place. The truth though is that email is not going anywhere and that is because email is not just a businesscommunicationtool - it is a platform, a platform where you can market your business, attend to customer support, manage your projects, make cold calls etc.

It is a platform that, with right enhancements, can help you run your entire business, especially for small businesses and startups.

It is, in fact, an open, and a multi-faceted platform on which innovative things are being built.

Email is not dying but is transforming, tremendously. It has gotten much smarter and easier to use, without losing its interoperability or its ubiquity.

If you are wondering why the hell should I try and enhance email through add-ons and extensions when I can simply use tools that don't depend on email, consider this - instead of using a separate tool for each operation such as customer service, task management, email marketing etc., if you were to enhance your email and base your operations on this platform, it can serve as the common centre for all your business operations. Instead of having to shift from one tool to another, all the information you need will be right there, in your inbox.

Why do I call email a platform?

I call it a platform because of its ability to let us conduct multiple operations right out of the inbox.

Project management

Emails contain a lot of information essential to running a project. For example, a request from a client via email is a task you will assign to one of your team members. You will either do this by forwarding the email to the team member or by using a task management tool.

On that note, there are some innovative tools out there, which can partially or completely integrate with email and work in tandem with the inbox. These enhancements allow you to design your project management workflows, delegate tasks to team members, monitor the status of these tasks and more.

We anyway conduct most of our project management operations from the inbox; complementing this process with the right set of tools can help you perform better. In fact, you can run a whole bunch of virtual teams quite effectively, if you equip yourself with the right set of tools.

Customer support

We already conduct a number of customer support activities through email. Especially for small to mid-sized businesses, email is the go-to customer service platform. You can use an email response management solution to ease your job. You can also enhance your service by using simple features such as email templates (which maintain consistency across all reply emails) or use automation to follow-up on customers after you provide your customer service.

You can also make use of tools with features like Shared Mailbox which allow you to maintain a centralized inbox from where you can assign customer support emails to you team members.

Client management

Email is the best way to manage your relationship with your clients/customers. Here's why:

- It's ubiquitous - everyone uses email, you can be sure that all of your clients have an email ID.
- It's interoperable - doesn't matter which email client your customer is using (Yahoo, Gmail, Outlook etc), you can still reach them.
- Unlike other Instant messaging options like text messages or Whatsapp, email doesn't butt into the personal space of the customer/client (which can be quite annoying!)

Sales management

Sales management is another important aspect of your business and yet again, with the right set of tools and features, email can turn into a powerful sales management tool.

- Features such as email templates can make the job easy for your sales team and can help you maintain a consistent tone in all your email replies.
- Using email, you can maintain your relationship with old customers either through follow-ups or through email newsletters.

- It is definitely easier and more appropriate to make cold sales outreach via email than any other means.
- Personalization is an important aspect of sales emails and by equipping your inbox with tools like Rapportive, which provide additional information on a lead, you can personalize the content of the email.
- Tools with features like shared contacts allow you to maintain a centralized list of contacts for the team.

Also, consider this - email is well-suited to the mobile age.

Another remarkable aspect to consider is that email does mobile really well. Emails are generally lightweight and they can easily be downloaded in the mobile inboxes of the readers and they can respond to these emails (forward, reply, delete etc) with just a couple of clicks - very mobile user-friendly.

Also, for email marketers, the newsletters, if optimized well, will load without any format disruption as email is generally mobile ambient and convenient.

Wrapping up: Email is evolving rapidly and unbundling itself to meet the changing demands of the people and is absorbing more of thetechnologyaround it. More often than not, it's the simple email management tricks like using labels, filters etc. that can help you boost your performance by many folds.

Additionally, don't underestimate the power of using right tech tools that integrate with your Gmail. They can help you get through the day faster, manage email quite efficiently, communicate better, and run your business effectively.