Reducing Slack Noise to Keep Focus

Noise on Slack can be divided into two types:

- **Outbound noise** - the collective noise created by users (humans, bots, or workflows) posting in channels and sending DMs
- **Inbound noise** - the subset of outbound noise which reaches the individual (as inbound noise) in the way of different types of notifications

This guide provides tips to help reduce both these types of noise and allow you to keep focus on what matters.

### OUTBOUND NOISE

#### Channel Topic and Description

Set a channel topic and description to help users understand the purpose of different channels and make it easier for them to determine whether they should monitor the channel, contribute to the conversation, mute it, or even leave it.

#### Use Emojis Effectively

Use emojis to indicate functional responses e.g., the ✅ mark to indicate something is complete or a simple 🙇 to thank someone. Use ♻️, ⭕️ or 🦊 to indicate the priority of your request.

#### Enforce the Use of Threads

Encourage replying in thread to reduce messy channels that are hard to navigate. Use the 🧵 emoji to give a friendly reminder to someone replying out of thread.

#### Search First

Adopt a search first mentality to avoid posting questions that have already been answered, reducing the total noise.

#### Use Mixed Media to Communicate

Leverage features like Huddles and Clips to minimize the walls of texts in Slack. A two minute Clip or a five minute Huddles can replace dozens of messages, without putting another meeting on people's calendars.

#### Schedule Messages to Send Later

Be mindful of when you send messages to your colleagues. What may be working hours for you, may not be for the person you are messaging. When you have an important message to share in Slack but it’s not the best time to send it quite yet, you can schedule it. Select a date and time in the future and rest assured your message will be sent whether you’re at your desk or on the go.

#### Split Channels if Needed

If a channel that has previously served you well is becoming too broad, consider creating a channel hierarchy based on a few key topics, e.g. #sales-dealsupport, #sales-reporting and #sales-general. Creating several fit-for-purpose channels instead of one very broad one can bring clarity and reduce cluttering.
**INBOUND NOISE**

1. **Manage Notifications**
   Adjust your notification preferences to ensure you are only subscribing to information that is important to you and your job, adjust your notification schedule to be notified during specified working hours and pause notifications during times of deep work or meetings.

2. **Leave Channels**
   If you never interact with a channel, and you don't need to know what's being discussed there, don't be afraid to leave it to reduce the number of active channels in your sidebar.

3. **Socialize Your Availability**
   Update your status regularly to let your colleagues know you are out of office, taking a break, or have stepped out for the day. Set the Do Not Disturb feature to snooze notifications to allow you to focus on that important task/project without interruption.

4. **Mute Channels**
   Mute channels that are no longer important to your day to day, but that you still might use every now and then. The channel will no longer appear bolded on your sidebar looking for your attention.

5. **Customize and Organize Your Sidebar**
   Customize and organize sidebar using channel folders to collate your key channels into sections. This will help you prioritize channels that are important to your day to day responsibilities. Your custom sections are only visible to you and won't affect what your teammates see.

6. **Create Reminders**
   Create reminders to help keep track of those important messages that you may not have a chance to respond to just yet. This helps alleviate that feeling of being overwhelmed by information, and allows you to come back to a message or ask at a different time.

7. **Follow/Unfollow a Thread**
   Choose to follow conversations that are important to you and choose to stop notifications when you no longer need to be informed on the topic of discussion.

8. **Save a Message**
   Save messages that are important & useful for future reference without having to search through Slack. It saves you having to parse through numerous conversations and channels to find the information that you are looking for.