



It's What We Do.

Personal Productivity

Hire ❖ Develop ❖ Retain

Personal Productivity

We all face this daily challenge: too much to do and not enough time to do it. Sometimes we wish there was more than 24 hours in a day. Do you feel overwhelmed by your workload? Do you wish that you could just stop the flood of emails, voicemails, interruptions and meetings?

That is why this course on personal productivity is all about helping you find better ways to effectively get your work done, achieve more, and decrease your stress.

By the end of this half-day course you will be able to:

- Identify ways that you use time effectively and ineffectively
- Set SMART goals and achieve tangible results.
- Identify and set priorities – and stick to them
- Organize your day and eliminate clutter
- Cope with interruption overload
- Reduce procrastination
- Prepare an action plan to improve personal productivity

Topics

- Personal Productivity Self-Awareness
- Managing Our Commitments
- Time-Saving Guidelines and Techniques
- Productivity Killers and Solutions
- Bad & Good Meetings
- Time Saving Technology
- My Action Plan



Personal Productivity Activity

How might you spend \$86,400 in one day BUT you cannot save a dime.

- ***“Shopping Spree”***

- ***“Time Waits for No One”*** - video clip notes:



Where Are You Now?

Below is a list of areas considered important for achieving maximum personal productivity. Rate your skill level for each of these areas using a 10-point scale with 1 being poor and 10 being excellent.

- ___ Setting Goals
- ___ Prioritizing
- ___ Planning & Scheduling
- ___ Curbing Interruptions
- ___ Meetings/Team Time
- ___ E-mails
- ___ Procrastination
- ___ (other?) _____

1. **What are your strengths?** You probably do better in some areas than others. There is a tendency to concentrate so much on your weaknesses that you can overlook areas of strength that can be improved, too. For a balanced approach to improving your personal productivity, keep analyzing your strengths and weaknesses. Keep asking yourself, how can I build on my strengths or use them to compensate for my weaknesses?
2. **What areas do you want to improve?** Think of the lowest ratings as opportunities to improve your personal productivity. Which areas are most critical for your success?
3. **Don't try to change everything at once.** You didn't get this way over night. Focus on the areas you believe you can control or can change the most.



Managing Our Commitments

Someone once said,

“Ordinary people think of merely spending time. Great people think of using it.”

“It’s not how much we do, but what we get done that counts the most.”

Goal Listing Exercise

List your 8 most important personal and professional goals in any order.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

Taking Action with Your Goals

- Clear goals are SMART goals.
- Document your goals and read them every day.
- Keep asking yourself, *“Is what I’m doing right now helping me achieve my goals?”*
- When conditions change, you may need to modify your goals.

SMART Goals

S = Specific

M = Measurable

A = Achievable

R = Relevant

T = Time-Bound



Is it SMART?
or, What's Missing?

1. By the end of the third quarter, I'll reduce shipping errors to my international customers by 5 %.

2. Dispose of old items quickly and efficiently to prevent my customers from receiving outdated materials.

3. Enhance my knowledge of industry trends through publications, journals, and on-line data.

4. By the end of the year, complete all special projects that are not part of my regular job.



Action Steps for Prioritizing

Once you decide on your goals, you then determine what activities must be done to reach them. These are your top priorities. The challenge is to allocate the right amount of time and effort to achieve your goals. That requires a balance between the important and urgent activities you face every day.*

Important things are those that contribute significantly to our objectives – they have high value.

Urgent things require immediate attention. They may or may not relate to your objectives or make significant contributions.

Yes U R G E N T No	Q1	Q3
	Q2	Q4
	Yes	No

IMPORTANT

*This matrix tool will help you manage your time according to urgent/important task response, prioritizing and planning. It's based on Stephen Covey's, Seven Habits of Highly Effective People.

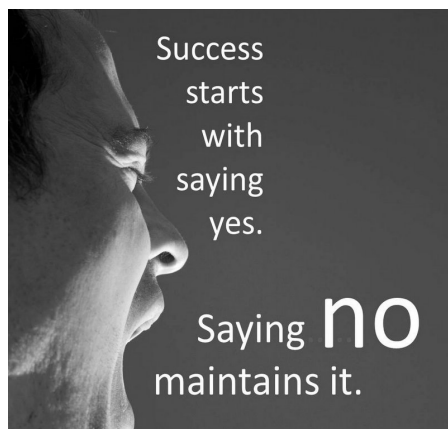


- **“Big Rocks”** – video clip notes:

- **80/20 Rule** - Twenty percent of what you do yields eighty percent of the results. This can be related to the important-urgent grid from the previous page. Important but not urgent items are usually part of the 20 percent that contributes to 80 percent of your results. Learn to concentrate on your high-value 20 percent and master those activities.



- Most people start with quick, easy, enjoyable things first. If you realize this is what happens to you, start focusing your efforts on the important things first whenever you can.
- Learn to distinguish between important and urgent.
- **Learn to say “No”** to someone else's request if it's at the expense of your own top priorities.



- When you have to say “NO”**
- Don't start with the word NO
 - Adjust your attitude
 - Listen without interruption
 - Express empathy
 - Decline with reason
 - Suggest alternatives
 - Repeat if necessary



Time-Saving Guidelines and Techniques

If you keep doing what you're doing, you'll keep getting what you're getting.

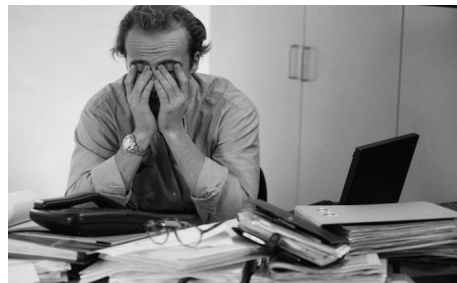
Given the demands and fast pace of work today, getting more done gets harder and harder to do. We all want to enjoy our work and personal lives which at times seems impossible if we're working too hard.

What follows are proven tips, guidelines and techniques to help you get better organized and productive by working smarter not harder. These are easy to do and will not only enhance your productivity, but increase your personal satisfaction, too.

Plan to Get Things Done

What's on your mind? If you're like most of us, too much! It's filled with things to do that you want to get off your mind. Until that happens, you feel out of control, stressed out, unfocused and stuck.

Most of us are doing more than we were hired to do. That's because work is changing: goals, products, customers, markets, and technology.



1. You must clarify exactly what has to get done and what you have to do to make it happen.
2. Once you've decided on all the actions you need to take, you must keep reminders of them organized in a system you review regularly.



There are several types of tools that can be used to collect all the stuff that comes into your day/life.

- Physical in-basket
- Paper-based note-taking devices
- Electronic note-taking devices
- Voice-recording devices
- E-mail



What's the Next Action?

Too often we fail to think about our work when it shows up, and in turn, wind up thinking about it multiple times.

The critical question for anything you've collected is, what's the next action? To effectively get control, it's important to look at your collection bucket list, clarify each item's meaning, and make a decision on the next action you need to take to make progress toward fulfilling it.

You only have four choices for action:

D___ it

D_____ it

D_____ it

D_____ it

If we don't get in the habit of using a disciplined approach to handle work when it shows up, that means our action choices can sometimes be wrong.



- ✓ **Do It** -- When work shows up in your world, and you can deal with it in less than 2 minutes – **just do it**. But keep it to two minutes! Letting 2 minutes turn into 10 minutes is a way to let work keep piling up.

- ✓ **Defer It** - -These are actions you need to take, but you either can't, or don't have the time to do them right now. These actions fall into two different buckets:
 - **Calendar** -- Only place things on your calendar that have to happen on that day. This is the 'hardscape' of your day and should not be cluttered up with general to-do items. If you place non-date specific items on your calendar AND you don't get them done, you either have to write them down again, or they get lost once you turn the page or click to a new week.

 - **Next Action Lists** – These are the lists that you use non-stop, every day, all day. These lists contain the physical next actions you must take to move projects forward. Think of a 'Next Action' list as your personal working 'punch' list. It's a picture of easily understood, clearly defined options for action that you can scan and quickly accomplish.

Examples of Next Action

- Call Mary regarding tel. # for the printer she recommended
- Draft thoughts for the budget-meeting agenda
- Talk to Angela about the filing system we need to set up
- Review material for supervisory program

Creating, maintaining and using effective Next Action Lists is the secret to personal productivity.



- ✓ **Delegate It** – Delegation today is different than it used to be. It's no longer only used as a vertical process, flowing downward through the chain-of-command from the boss to staff. Today, with a growing emphasis on self-directed work teams horizontal delegation is as important as vertical delegation. Horizontal delegation involves delegating to peers or others whom you have no authority.

Ask for help when needed. It's no secret that we can't do everything on our own. So don't be afraid to ask for help or



delegate when needed. If you have a team you work with, be honest and ask for help when meeting a specific deadline.

Why?

- You can't get everything done by yourself
- You don't want to create indispensable people
- You must try to compensate for your physical limitations

My Delegation Check List

- Set a clear objective
- Assign task with a deadline
- Provide necessary information and resources
- Provide feedback

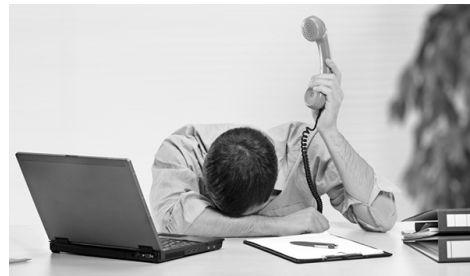


Productivity Killers and Solutions

Interruptions –

Research shows that people can lose up to 2.1 hours per day to interruptions. In high interruption environments people switch tasks every 3 minutes.

Responding to a customer's need is not an interruption. That's your job.



Interruptions most often occur when someone else is trying to get something done and decides to get you involved in their priorities.

So, you can decide whether to participate or not. Here are some possible cures. Place a check mark next to those actions you plan to take:

- Don't answer the phone. Let it go to voice mail.
- Don't say 'yes'. Tell the interrupter that you're busy right now and while you'd like to help them, you need to focus at the moment. When can you get back with them?
- Send a clear signal that you're not to be disturbed. Create signs like stop lights, 'Men Working', to post on your office door, cube entrance, or back of your chair. While humorous, they will send a clear message to all but the most determined visitors.
- Explain the rules. Let your team know that there are times when you need to focus and to do so, you can't be disturbed. Ask that they respect your priorities and wait until you've come up for air to come to you with their request. Don't abuse this and just hide in your work area all the time.
- Explain when you can be interrupted. What's the definition of an emergency or high priority? Let them know.
- Walk the talk and don't interrupt others if your request can wait.

You can't stop all interruptions...it's part of your job. But, you can slow them down:

1. Plan on interruptions
2. Track & trend
3. Keep interruptions short
4. Practice prevention like firefighters...

Distractions

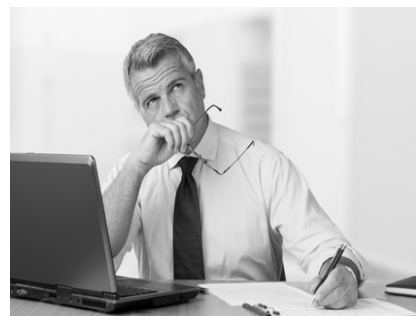


There can be any number of distractions in your workplace – whether working at the office, on the plant floor, or at home. It's crucial that you are aware of your surroundings and make note of what distractions affect you the most. Find those distractions and, if possible, address or remove them. Avoiding distractions is a nuisance that even the most dedicated employee suffers from. Ignoring a ringing phone is not easy, so how can workers battle such distractions? For example, take your phone off the hook, place an auto-reply on your email telling everyone that you're not replying to email today, turn your back on visual distractions, sit in a quiet area, close your instant messaging apps, even work from home – there are no colleagues there who will stop you at the coffee machine!

Perfectionism

This is a productivity killer that we do to ourselves. It can sneak up on us under the guise of 'quality'. We know a report is due but even after its written we look for 'one more quote' or spend an hour or so playing with the formatting. We check and over check some data even though we know a perfectly competent person has already verified the accuracy.

While you don't want to be sloppy, you



need to make sure that you are spending your time on truly value-added activity. The cure for perfectionism is asking yourself if you really know what 'done' looks like. Make sure you know the standards for the outcome and meet those standards, don't obsess over details that may have no impact on the overall outcome or usefulness of the project.

Procrastination

Procrastination is another productivity killer that we do to ourselves. All of our work either attracts or repels us. So, we will put off a project that we dread doing or that seems too big to tackle. You've probably heard the expression 'I work better under pressure.' People that 'work better under pressure' use deadlines to create a higher level of 'arousal' to give them the energy to move on a project. The result of putting things off though may be poor quality or creating emergencies for others.

The cure for procrastination is simple – next actions. When we clearly define a next action it helps us go after those projects that look to be too hard or too big. A next action can also help us 'squeeze' in some work on a project to keep it moving when we only have a few minutes – but progress is made!



Emails

Electronic communications spill over into our personal time. Technology has caused our work to creep into all areas of our lives. Emails provide us information which seems to be the life blood of any organization. Without it, we couldn't conduct business. But it grows so fast that it creates communication overload.



Discussion: What are your 'pet peeves' with email?



Bad & Good Meetings

Most people complain that meetings are major time-wasters. Although they don't complain about effective meetings because they enjoy them. It's just the unproductive meetings that cause us so much stress.

Common reasons for unproductive meetings:

- No real purpose
- Ambiguous objectives
- Wrong people present
- No agenda
- People aren't prepared
- Agenda isn't followed
- Too many people present
- Starting late
- Ending late
- No results or decisions
- Poor follow-up
- other? _____



Actions to Improve Meetings

Consider these actions if you run meetings. If you don't run the meetings, consider how you could help with these actions. Or, offer these ideas (tactfully) to someone who does run the meetings for everyone's improved productivity:

- ❑ Clarify the purpose. Be sure it is really necessary.
 - *“At the end of this meeting we will have,,, (decided, created something)”*
- ❑ One-way communication does not require meeting. Consider emails, conference calls, postings
- ❑ Make an agenda and stick to it
- ❑ Set time limits for each agenda item
- ❑ Be prepared for the meeting
- ❑ Try holding stand-up meetings...get more done in less time.
- ❑ Prepare follow-up plans
 - *“What's the next action and who is responsible?”*
 - Note what must be done, who will do it, and when it is due.
Give a copy to everyone at the end of the meeting.
- ❑ Ask for feedback on effectiveness of the meeting



Virtual Meetings

- **Notes on video clip: “A Conference Call in Real Life”**

- **Best Practices:**

Planning

- Create a list of participants' phone numbers, e-mail addresses, and mailing addresses, and provide a copy to all participants with the agenda.
- Send reminders 24 hours before meeting and how to come prepared
- Test technology in advance
- Ask remote participants to connect 10 minutes early
- If participants call in late, do not stop the meeting to get their introduction. Simply acknowledge their arrival and continue with the meeting
- Provide participants with some tips for reducing background noise, such as muting the microphone when no one at the remote site is speaking
- For video conferences, use visual cues such as raising hand to get your attention, thumbs up for 'yes' or thumbs down for 'no'
- Select simple signs (such as '!' and '?') that people can type during data conferences or e-chats to get your attention
- Give a contingency plan if anyone experiences technical problems
- Keep your virtual meeting shorter because it is harder to hold their attention



Facilitating

- Call the roll at the beginning of the meeting and after breaks
- Define meeting ground rules such as identify self when speaking
- At the beginning of the meeting help participants get to know one another by asking them to share some personal information
- For video-conferences, look at the camera if different from the monitor
- Check for understanding and prompt people to participate more often than you would in a face-to-face meeting
- Set time limits for responding to ideas and suggestions
- Place marks on your roster by the names of people who speak to keep track of who is participating and others you may need to encourage

Follow Up

- Send an email message with meeting notes
- To promote consistency and availability of information, create a folder on a common web site where documents can be stored
- Make sure participants understand how to report progress on action items, i.e., posting reports on web site
- Send an email or voice mail to meeting participants to ensure satisfaction and gather feedback on what went well and what could be done differently next time



My Action Plan

To help improve my personal productivity, here is what I plan to start, stop, or continue doing as a result of this training workshop:

I'm not going to overwhelm myself by trying to focus on everything at once. Instead, I'll begin my improvement plan one day at a time with actions that I consider most important and urgent.

The old habit(s) I want to change or eliminate:

The new habits I want to develop:

Steps I will take to be sure I begin strongly:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____



Membership



Talent Acquisition



HR Consulting



Background Checks



Training



Organizational Development

