

Getting Organized for Success

By Elena Fawkner

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Elena Fawkner
jan@ahbbo.com

A Home-Based Business Online <http://www.ahbbo.com>

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Email, sales letters, email, phone calls, J.O.B., email, kids, conference calls, mentoring and sponsoring, errands, personal time, email, website updating, writing articles, email, search engine positioning, ezine publishing, advertising, email. Oh, and sleep. And did I mention email? Sounds like your day, right? Yours and everyone else's who runs a business part-time around their REAL life.

There's always so much to do and so little time. Or so it seems. But is that really true? You may be surprised to find what you can really accomplish in a day if you were to take the time to get organized. What do I mean by organized? Simply knowing how many hours a day you have available and allocating that time efficiently.

How many hours a day do you have available to you? Well, let's say you sleep for 8 hours. That leaves 16, right? OK, how do you make the best use of those 16 hours? By managing your time effectively. Here's how.

This is your Sunday night activity. Start with a grid (for those of you who are computer nerds, by all means use an Excel spreadsheet). Your grid is eight columns across and 30 rows down. Label your eight columns like this:

Time Mon. Tues. Wed. Thu. Fri. Sat. Sun.

Then, in the rows under the "Time" heading, enter half hour blocks of time starting at 6:00 am and ending at 10:00 pm (or whatever your "awake" time is). Your grid should look like this:

Time Mon. Tues. Wed. Thu. Fri. Sat. Sun.

6:00 - 6:30 am

6:30 - 7:00 am

...

9:00 - 9:30 pm

9:30 - 10:00 pm

Decide on a code for your grid - whether color-coding, letters, whatever, so you can see at a glance where your time is going.

Now, using your code, block off unavailable, non-discretionary time. This is the time you spend working at your J.O.B., the time you spend getting ready for work in the morning, commuting in the morning and evening, taking the kids to and from school/daycare, participating in conference calls hosted by your network marketing company, etc. This is any time that you have *no choice* about. Although you have to run errands, for example, you do have a choice about when to do them so this doesn't go in here.

All the white space is time that you have available to you for discretionary activities. By "discretionary" I don't necessarily mean stuff you don't have to do at all if you don't want to, I mean stuff that you can schedule for a time of your choosing. For example, we must all shop for groceries and put gas in our cars once a week, but we have a choice when we do so.

Make a list of your discretionary activities. This includes weekly errands and chores, the time you need to spend keeping your web site up to date, writing articles, search engine positioning, reading and responding to email, mentoring and sponsoring your downline, publishing your ezine, writing ads, etc. And don't forget to schedule recreation/family time and time for yourself to do what you want (even if that's absolutely nothing).

OK, now that you know what you have to do, and the time you have available to do it in, when is your peak concentration time? Are you an early morning person or a night owl?

Schedule the activities that require the most concentration for these periods. Enter them into your grid. For most people, these will be things like writing articles and salesletters - activities that require thought, concentration and a reasonable amount of *uninterrupted* time.

On the other hand, reading and responding to email, monitoring and tweaking your search engine positioning and web site updating don't usually require peak concentration to be effective, nor do they require a continuous block of

time to accomplish. So schedule these activities for time other than your peak concentration time.

As a general rule, try and get as much done as possible in one sitting during your peak concentration time. The other stuff that doesn't require much in the way of concentration can be squeezed in during your spare half hours here and there between other things.

The first step in managing your time is understanding it. Understanding where it is and how best to utilize it. By taking the time to work up a weekly grid every Sunday night and allocating your discretionary activities for the week to your discretionary time in a way that takes maximum advantage of your peak concentration time, you can't help but work more efficiently and, therefore, more productively.

If you don't have a plan for your time, what's the first thing you're going to do at 6:00 am on Monday morning in that precious hour of peak concentration time you have to work on your business before you have to start getting ready for work? Yep, that's right. You'll download and read your email. What **should** you be doing with that hour? Writing an article for this week's ezine.

You can read and respond to email any time during the day. It doesn't require peak concentration! So you've just blown that hour. And in the evening when you're tired and your concentration's shot, think you're going to write that article then? Hardly. What you're going to do is turn on the TV right? And not even remember what it was you watched when you wake up at 6:00 again the next morning and do the same thing all over again.

And then, of course, when the weekend rolls around and you still haven't written that article and you have to send your ezine out on Sunday night, you're spending your weekend writing your article (in between running errands) and before you know it, Sunday night's here, it's time to send out your ezine again and the **weekend's over** already and you don't know where it went and tomorrow's Monday and you're so behind and frazzled that you don't work up your grid for next week and so Monday rolls around and you get up at 6:00 and you don't have a plan so what do you do? Yep, you download and read your email ...

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"To know what has to be done, then do it, comprises the whole philosophy of practical life." Sir William Osler

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Stop the spiral. Be smart. Take CONTROL of your time.

Don't let it control you. Time can be your greatest friend or your greatest enemy. Don't let it slip through your fingers with nothing to show for it. Schedule time every Sunday night to work up a time grid for the coming week. Who knows, you may even be able to enjoy next weekend!

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