

Top Ten Strategies for Increasing Productivity

By Bea Fields

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Time is a very precious and costly commodity that many of us take for granted. Few people will readily admit that large parts of our working day are wasted through countless interruptions, procrastination, and clutter. Maximize your life through minimizing what is in it by starting with these ten creative strategies for managing and organizing a more successful enterprise.

1. Create a time management system that suits your lifestyle, preferences, and values.

Throw away all the expensive time management systems that do not work for you. We all have preferences about how, when, and where to complete certain tasks and activities. By honoring those preferences, it will be much easier to accomplish more in less time.

2. Establish visiting hours.

By establishing and announcing visiting hours (one hour per day,) you can reduce unnecessary interruptions while offering people the opportunity to communicate with you in a relaxed setting.

3. Create a brain dump.

Creative people need space and a place for recording sudden inspirations, ideas, and thoughts that are often distracting during task mode. Keep a notebook, tape recorder, or file on hand to record both complex and simple ideas. Be creative by recording music, sketching and drawing, or journaling through storytelling.

4. Assign a dollar value to the total time wasted in one day.

How much time do you spend per day: Locating papers? Looking for misplaced items? Duplicating efforts? Being annoyed because you can't find things? Dealing with interruptions that are unnecessary? Total this time, set a dollar amount per hour, and estimate what your time is worth. Cut wasted time in half, and pay yourself a weekly salary based on the time you saved. Reward yourself with something meaningful with the money earned.

5. Adopt a worst in, first out policy or delegate undesirable tasks to someone else.

Procrastination is one of the biggest enemies of a well-managed day. Often, we procrastinate because we do not like the task, do not have the right equipment, or we do not have enough information to make a decision. Handle the worst problems first, get them done, and move on to the fun stuff. If you continue to procrastinate, delegate the task or hire someone to take the task off your

hands.

6. Close the door.

For one hour each morning, close the door, turn off the phone, and place a sign on your door which reads: "Man or woman at work. Please return at 10:00." Use this hour as an uninterrupted time for concentrated work. Write this time on your calendar every day, and stick with it.

7. If you are in an open space or cubicle, rearrange your desk or chair to avoid easy eye contact.

People are less likely to interrupt you when they cannot make eye contact. If you cannot rearrange your desk or chair, place plants on the periphery of your desk to create a physical boundary between you and the open environment.

8. Establish a time management remodeling day one day per month.

Spend one day each month analyzing your time management system. Ask yourself what needs to be deleted, changed, modified, rearranged, enhanced, or minimized. Do you need more or less space, equipment, light, air, or beauty? This one day each month can provide you with the solitude needed for accomplishing your goals and dreams.

9. Practice saying "No" ten times each day.

More often than not, the act of saving time involves saying "no" to other people. If it is hard for you to say "no," practice a variety of responses ten times of day. Examples of appropriate responses include: "I would love to attend, but unfortunately, I cannot make it," or "I am flattered that you asked me, and I am unfortunately too busy to do justice to the project at this time," or "No, thank-you," or "No." By saying "no" you are honoring your own life and goals.

10. Keep a master travel checklist and a pre-packed toiletries bag.

For people who travel frequently, a master travel checklist should include a basic wardrobe and accessories (basic black is always safe,) plane or train tickets, passports, camera, medicines, mobile phone, and one small first aid kit. Keep a toiletries bag packed with soap, travel sizes of shampoo and lotion, cosmetics, toothbrush, toothpaste, etc.

This article was written and submitted by Bea Fields. Bea is a Business Coach, Consultant, Trainer, and Public Speaker. Her area of expertise is that of Environmental Design and Leadership Development for Executives, Managers, Small Business Owners, and Political Leaders. She may be contacted at bea@nonmanipulativeseducation.com or visited on the web at www.nonmanipulativeseducation.com

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