

Time Management Tips

There are many different styles and personalities that are effective in the business world but there's perhaps one basic thing that all successful entrepreneurs have in common – they get a lot of stuff done.

As a business coach time management is one of the most common things that my clients ask me for help with. That's why I decided to put this guide together.



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Changing Your Environment

Changing your environment is the quickest and easiest way to change your behaviour. If something is an external change it doesn't rely on willpower and its benefits are realised immediately.

Turn off your phone and email

- If you aren't expecting any emergency calls turn off your mobile phone. If someone really needs to get a hold of you they can call your office phone.
- Turn your e-mail notifications off during certain periods of the day or commit to checking emails only 2 or 3 times a day at set times.
- Don't check your personal email while at work (or use 2 separate email addresses). You've got work to do now so personal emails can wait until you get home in the evening.

Have someone else keep you accountable

- Just like working out, having someone to encourage and motivate you really does help. Ask a coworker to check in and ask you for periodic status updates.
- Consider using a public team productivity log similar to <https://www.idonethis.com>

Disconnect from online distractions

- Download the Freedom App (<https://www.macfreedom.com>). This app is great for those of you who can't help logging onto your email, Facebook or instant messenger. The Freedom App disconnects you from the internet for a set amount of time, determined by you. I use this app when I'm writing my blog posts, otherwise halfway through I inevitably find myself distracted by something on my Facebook or Twitter stream.
- Other alternatives are: Anti-Social (<https://anti-social.cc/> - more features), Self-Control (<https://selfcontrolapp.com/> - free, Mac only), LeechBlock (<https://www.proginosko.com/leechblock.html> - free, Firefox add-on)

Silence is Golden

- Silence will give you a clearer mind. Invest in some earplugs. Not only do they come in handy when trying to sleep, but also earplugs (or noise cancelling headphones) can be used during the day to keep out the chatter of your noisy coworkers.
- If you have a separate room for your office, and have something very important to get done, shut the door. You can tell your coworkers you're sorry and not trying to be rude, but you're just extremely busy. *An open door welcomes people to pop in for a chat.*

Managing Your Energy

Not all time is created equal. You can get more done in one morning of focussed work than in a whole day of lethargic unmotivated work. Therefore, manage your energy as well as your time.

Physical exercise and sleep

- The first and most obvious thing you can do to boost your energy levels is to ensure that you're always getting 8 hours sleep per night and doing 30 minutes of exercise per day.
- Everybody knows they should be doing this but for some reason a large proportion of people don't make it a priority.
- If you think you can't spare the time – remember that the massive boost in energy, productivity and mood you gain will easily make up for the work you miss by taking just 30mins out of your day to exercise or go to bed on time.

Food is energy

- It is very easy to skip meals while you're working hard, but it may have more of an effect on your productivity than you think.
- Studies show that glucose levels in the brain have a big impact on your ability to concentrate and exert self-control. When you're hungry your brain is incapable of concentrating properly so keep some snacks next to your desk and keep it properly fuelled.
- However avoid sugary, processed snacks because they cause blood sugar to spike and crash – instead stick to low GI foods like lean protein, nuts, beans, whole meal grains, fruit and vegetables.

Recharge Your Batteries

- In order to maintain high energy levels you must take time out to replenish your energy reserves.
- At some point during your working day give yourself 10 minutes of 'me time' – get away from your work entirely. Go for a walk, take a power nap or listen to your favorite song.
- Always make time during the week to do something you genuinely enjoy. Catch up with an old friend, play a game outdoors or take a trip to the

countryside. Failing to take time out like this very quickly leads to burn out and loss of motivation. I see it happen all the time.

- Regularly take time out to re-connect with your sense of purpose as it relates to your work. At least once a week, stop and think about the people you help through your work, the people that rely on you and the long term goals and ambitions you're working towards.

Prioritising

How much you get done is less important than *what* you get done. Making progress towards your long term goals is your priority not crossing items off your to-do list in order to make yourself feel productive.

Multitasking hinders productivity

- Stick to doing 1 thing at a time.
- Jumping back and forth between one task and another wastes time and energy, as you have to constantly refocus and figure out where you left off.

Get the biggest task of the day done first

- It's human nature to put off what you don't enjoy doing. However, if you put off the biggest thing until the end of the day you won't have the strength or patience to do it come the very end of the day.
- So instead of having the biggest task sit over your head like a giant raincloud all day finish that task first.
- After getting it done, you will feel like you can accomplish anything and you will be on a roll for the rest of the day.

Create a Stop Doing List

- This may not work for everyone, but it's helped me and many of my coaching clients.
- For example, several years ago I put face-to-face networking on my stop doing list, which felt strange as networking has been one of our most successful lead generation strategies over the years. However one of my goals was to eliminate travel time, plus I could delegate networking to someone who was even better at it than me.

Use a default diary

- A default diary is a weekly schedule consisting of blocks of pre-defined time each dedicated to achieving a particular goal.

- It looks something like this...

Time	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri
08:30	Daily Attitude Journal	Sandler Presidents	Daily Attitude Journal	Daily Attitude Journal	Daily Attitude Journal
08:45	Sales Huddle	Club Training		Sales Huddle	Sales Huddle
09:00	Monthly (1 st) /		Team Meeting: Sales		
09:30	Weekly (2 nd 3 rd 4 th)	Sales Huddle		1-2-1s / Perf. Appr.	Prospect / Client
10:00	Planning / KPI Rev.				Meetings /
10:30		Prospect / Client			Seminars /
11:00	Marketing	/ Strategic Partner	Marketing	Meeting: Team (1 st)	Marketing
11:30		Meetings		Retention / Ops (3 rd)	
12:00					
12:30	Lunch / Admin	Lunch / Admin	Lunch / Admin	Lunch / Admin	Lunch / Admin
13:00					
14:00	Marketing	Prospect / Client	Marketing:	Marketing	Marketing
15:00		Meetings	Email / Social		
15:30					
16:00	Customer Pro. Mngt.	Customer Pro. Mngt.	Customer Pro. Mngt.	Meeting: Accounts	Customer Pro. Mngt.
16:30	Emails / Calls	Emails / Calls	Emails / Calls		Emails / Calls
17:00	Update Daily KPIs / Plan Next Day	Update Daily KPIs / Plan Next Day	Update Daily KPIs / Plan Next Day	Update Daily KPIs / Plan Next Day	Update Daily KPIs / Plan Next Day

- It's a way of ensuring that the correct amount of time gets spent on the correct activities and strategic goals
- First decide what percentage of your time you ideally want to spend on what responsibilities and then set out a fixed schedule that will ensure you spend your time as you've promised
- In the example above the split is: 30% Marketing, 25% Sales, 25% Partnerships and Client Work and 20% Meetings and Admin.
- Yours will be different but the point of the default diary is to make you consciously plan how much time you spend on what activities instead of simply leaving it up to chance.