



Tyme Management™

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Minimizing Unwanted Interruptions

Working parents may feel as though they'll never finish their project, phone call, or even their glass of water. What can they do to shed a more positive light on or rid themselves of unwanted interruptions? **Review these ideas:**

- ▲ Consider what interruptions say about you. Interruptions indicate you're needed by someone. They may also boost your creativity as they usually change your pace or thinking immediately.
- ▲ Determine how much uninterrupted time you're gifted with each day. If you know that you'll only have one hour before your boss, children, spouse and others start calling, make the most of it by accomplishing your highest prioritized tasks during that hour.
- ▲ Get back on track. Some people struggle to get back to where they were on a project before their interruption. To prevent this, jot a note down to remind you of what you were doing just before the interruption.
- ▲ Establish ground rules for your family. Ask them to avoid calling you at certain times to minimize interruptions.

Revive Your Family and Home Time

Working professionals should periodically devote their time to the challenges of home and family life. A well-organized personal existence and home life is one of the number-one keys to effective professional and office performance.

To revive your home and family life, consider these tips:

- ◆ Give your children a list of daily chores. Require these to be completed before fun activities are allowed.
- ◆ Break down your tasks into small, easy steps. Children may think washing dishes is too complicated unless they have a step by step manual for doing this task.
- ◆ Tag notes on areas in your house that need attention. A note, simply saying, "Please clean this up," may work better than confronting the guilty party.
- ◆ When you'll be visiting a store, post a list on your family's bulletin board for anyone to write in a desired item. You can make one stop to buy what everyone needs or wants. For those who forget to place an item on the list, they can wait until the next shopping trip or buy the item themselves.



- ◆ Hang a calendar in a central location. Ask everyone to schedule their activities on it. This will let those who drive know when and where they need to be and prevents events from conflicting.
- ◆ Use file folders for mail. Label folders with each family member's name and ask each person to retrieve their mail every day. This method allows anyone to pick up the mail and sort it for everyone. Children can also place school notes in their parents' folders.
- ◆ Have a yearly tickler file. Create folders for the 12 months of the year. Place all notes, "must-do's," and "don't want to miss this" items for each month into these folders. Car inspection reminders, birthday wish lists, theater tickets and other items can be stored in these folders.
- ◆ Prepare for the next day each night. Set out your clothes, complete ironing and sewing, set the table for breakfast, wash the dishes and set the coffee maker to brew coffee in the morning. When you wake up, you can get yourself ready and start your day relaxed.

Organize Your Time Efficiently

There's no single secret to reaching success in business. However, there's one factor that comes close to being the "secret" to success. All successful people share a common trait: They organize their time and use it well.

Managing time cannot be sufficiently reflected in printed words; you must live life to witness its power. How successful you become depends on how you manage time, your greatest ally in your pursuit of success. Learning to use time to reach your goals can move you into the ranks of those who enjoy success daily.

Here are 10 time management tips to get you started toward success:

- ❖ Start now. Tomorrow never comes; yesterday is but a memory; you can only live and work in the present moment. Avoid hoping for success to come tomorrow. Time won't turn failure into success. Success is in you now if you'll only let it emerge.
- ❖ Know when to stop. The time you allocate to completing tasks isn't negotiable. When the time you've allowed elapses, stop what you're doing. When you first begin this step, you may have to reschedule incomplete tasks but you'll soon work at a pace that exceeds what you schedule.
- ❖ Focus when making your schedule. List things that must be done today under your "Imperative" list; things that should be done soon under your "Important" list and things that can be done anytime into a low-priority file. Schedule imperative items on today's task list and file away important tasks until imperative ones are complete.
- ❖ Use timesavers. Maintain an idea file either on your computer or on a note page in your planner. Write down ideas you develop, read, or hear about.



Use any wait time while traveling from place to place to read, make notes, or dictate into a recorder.

- ❖ Spend your energy wisely. While time is money, it also has energy dimensions. Your physical, mental, nervous and spiritual condition all affect your time. Frustration, worry and fear drain energy. Worries and fears disappear when you take positive action by forgetting what you cannot change and changing what you can.
- ❖ Know the value of your time. Divide your present income by the number of hours you work. That's the measure of how much each hour and minute of your time is worth. Time is money and can make more money if you use it productively.
- ❖ Develop a plan. Every minute you spend planning will save you twice as much time in execution. Write a goal on paper. Break it into progressive, short-term steps and set a deadline for each step. Schedule on your planner the hours and minutes you allow for each activity. Forget each activity until its time comes. Then, do it. Delegate as many jobs as you can and focus only on tasks that move you toward your goals.
- ❖ Increase your work capacity. Keep your mind focused. Be alert, synchronize your thoughts and actions, and become aware of what goes on around you. You must listen to what you hear to succeed.
- ❖ Organize your time by the minute. This forces you to frequently check your progress and surroundings and act upon decisions made when you set your goals. It avoids time lost to procrastination, making excuses, or regretting past errors.



How to Market Your Uniqueness

Organizations usually form because they address a unique problem or produce a unique product or service. How is your organization unique?

Take time now to try and explain in 20 words or less how your organization is uniquely different from other organizations in the same market. You may want to adopt an organizational uniqueness statement such as "We are the only _____ that does _____ for _____."

Along with your uniqueness statement, you may want to try these other ways of becoming a unique organization:

- ◆ Write a thank you note to your clients. This is a great relationship builder and people tend to do business with friendly organizations.
- ◆ Trade services or products with organizations not in direct competition with you. Bartering is a great way to build up a base of customers. Sharing referrals, customer lists and other items saves you time and money.
- ◆ Send clients a monthly publication about your organization. It will remind customers of your concern for them and also keep you in constant communication.



The Nature of Things

Do you think that you're too busy to "get in touch with nature"? **Try these simple ways to appreciate the natural world around you:**

- Eat outside. Have breakfast on your porch, or pack a sandwich and take it to the park during your lunch hour.
- Exercise outside. Go jogging before work, or take a brief walk around the neighborhood after dinner. Walk to the nearest mailbox to drop off your bills.
- Plant a garden. Grow your own tomatoes, or plant a miniature herb garden in a window box.
- Follow the sun. Take a few minutes to watch for the sunrise and sunset each day.
- Get a bird feeder. Check out a bird identification book from the library, and make note of your visitors. Or, buy a tape of bird songs to find out the names of your new friends.
- Collect rocks, cones and flowers. Place them in bowls or on shelves to brighten indoor environments.
- Place a wind chime outside your window. Its rhythms can provide a gentle, soothing melody.
- Take pictures or draw nature scenes. Find a new perspective by using a magnifying glass to examine leaves, bark and soil.
- Study the night sky. Follow the phases of the moon with a calendar that notes them. When you're out at night, ask others to point out the constellations they know.

Clearing the Clutter in Your Closet

If you're not careful, your clothes closet can quickly become a museum exhibit of the history of fashion design. **The following are tips for streamlining your wardrobe:**

- ▲ Dispose of anything that doesn't fit. No matter how nice it is, don't keep it if it doesn't look good on you or make you feel good about yourself.
- ▲ Get rid of what you haven't worn within the last year. Allow exceptions only for items of sentimental value, such as the jersey you wore in the championship, or for things you're confident you'll wear again in the near future.
- ▲ Consider your lifestyle. Make sure the majority of your wardrobe consists of styles and fabrics that are appropriate for what you spend most of your time doing. For example, a closet full of silk shirts probably won't work for someone who spends a lot of



time with children.

- ▲ Reassess how much energy you're willing to devote to laundry. If the majority of your outfits require drycleaning or ironing and you never seem to get around to it, consider purchasing clothes made of fabrics that are easier to take care of.
- ▲ Give away what you don't need. Store clothes that you want but don't have

room for, such as seasonal items, in boxes in another location.

▲ Coordinate. Avoid buying new clothes that can't be worn with at least two things you already have in your wardrobe.

Look at your clothes for the colors and styles you tend to prefer, and then build from this base.

- ▲ Prevent the overgrown closet syndrome with the "one-to-one" rule. For each new piece of clothing you buy, find at least one item you have that you can give away.

Make the Most of Market Time

There's no better place to enjoy the taste of fresh fruits and vegetables than at an open air or farmer's market. **Here are tips for making the most of your time at the market:**

- ◆ Come prepared. Bring along a sturdy bag or basket to put your purchases in. Leave a cooler in your car for any perishables that you may buy, so you can keep them cool while you continue to shop.
- ◆ Arrive early. You'll get the best selection the earlier you go. Also keep in mind that exposure to the sun can cause produce to wither.
- ◆ Survey the selection. Do a quick inspection of the grounds to see what's available, and then figure out who has the best prices.
- ◆ Save delicate items for last. Wait until the end of shopping before buying produce that might get damaged if placed under other foods.

Quiet Office Noise For Productivity

If you're struggling to increase your concentration level and attention span but can't seem to succeed, you may be overlooking the main culprit. Often, offices have too high a noise level, yet employees rarely take this into account.

If your office is close to a multitude of activities, you quite possibly will be bothered by conversations, ringing phones, drop-in visitors and many other difficulties. **Barring soundproofing your office area, there are other steps you can take:**

- ◆ Maintain a "closed door" policy for the majority of the day.
- ◆ Find an empty office in the building and "hide out" there when you must do concentrated work.
- ◆ Complete work at home when you need quiet time for intense concentration.

Help Employees to Get Back Into Focus

Most employees have done their job so long that they no longer think about what they're doing; they just do it. If you can make them start thinking again, you'll be a long way ahead of your competition. Take a moment each day to look one of your employees or co-workers in the eye and ask them what their objectives for the day are. This simple question can trigger positive thoughts and boost productivity within your organization. Good results and more efficient work can result from this question but try not to ask it of one person too often as it can defeat their self-confidence when heard too often.

Keep Your Employees Smiling

If your organization has lost one or more employees with high potential to other organizations in recent months, make sure you haven't given your employees reasons to leave, especially over factors other than money. Too often, organizations look to money as the answer to keeping employees happy. But, there are other factors to consider. **How does your organization handle these areas?**

- Make public thank you's and praise a regular part of your business day. *"Positive strokes make positive folks."*
- Offer training and orientation for those interested.
- Spend time daily cultivating and making your direct-reporting co-workers feel like they're an important part of your team.
- Work with those who are highly motivated and talented but have personality flaws. Many of these are passed for promotions and delegation but could do the work well if given a chance. Become a mentor and help them overcome their flaw.



- Hold "gripe" sessions with your entire staff so frustrations and miscommunications can be aired.
- Have more frequent performance reviews. People work better when they know what to improve.
- Make good first impressions. Have a clean office and a clear job description awaiting them.
- Practice honesty. Avoid impressing prospective employees with "glamorous" jobs that aren't.
- Strive to give employees a raise yearly.
- Remember that salary isn't everything. Benefit packages that show what money you're "saving" your employees work well.

Practice Polite Time Management

Saving time by closing your door, remaining standing when someone visits your office, and timing phone calls to keep their length to a minimum are sometimes thought of as rude practices. **But, when these actions are accompanied by "polite" time management techniques, you'll come across as effective yet cordial:**

- Prevent long-winded conversations. Instead of rudely cutting others off in mid-sentence, suggest another time when you'll have more time to visit.

Politely state, "I have a deadline to meet this afternoon but I'd be glad to schedule lunch with you tomorrow. Is this okay with you?"

- Show appreciation to others. End all your conversations, both those in person and on the phone, by saying, "Thank You." This phrase along with the word, "Please," establishes your etiquette.
- Keep your promises. Honor your commitments to others. Make phone callbacks when you schedule them and be certain to meet with co-workers in a timely fashion.
- Use a friendly tone of voice. Keep your sentences short and your tone cheerful. Also, try to sound excited instead of bored.
- Start in a complimentary manner. "What can I do for you?" is cordial yet gets right to the point. Avoid saying "What's up?"



Making a Clutter-Free Future

One of the best ways to make a fresh start is to rid your home of needless clutter. **Here are tips for tackling major clutter areas:**

- ◆ Work in time chunks. You may never start if you set an unrealistic goal to get it all done at once. Instead, commit to work in 30-minute segments once a day or at least twice a week. Make this a serious commitment by scheduling it on your planner.
- ◆ Get ready. Find two large boxes, and label one “Relocate” and one “Give Away.” Also get a trash can and some garbage bags for the items that you’ll want to throw away or recycle.
- ◆ Start. If you don’t know where to begin, pick something that’s small and not intimidating. If you still feel overwhelmed, motivate yourself by picturing how wonderful the room will look when all of the clutter is gone.
- ◆ Time it. Set a timer for 20 minutes of sorting time, and don’t allow yourself any breaks.
- ◆ Sort. Pick up the item closest to you, and decide whether you want to throw it away, give it away, or keep it. Things to give away go in the “Give Away” box, and things to keep go in the “Relocate” box. Continue this process one item at a time.
- ◆ Make a “to do” list. Make a list of items that will require additional work, such as framing a picture or fixing a broken part, and put these items in a clutter-free corner to work on later.
- ◆ Wrap it up. When the timer goes off, use the remaining 10 minutes of your work time to put items in the “Relocate” box back where they belong.

Spend True Quality Time at Home

A healthy family is the result of more than just penciling in a “quality time” slot on your calendar. It requires a commitment to invest your time and yourself in the lives of your loved ones. **Here are ways you can begin spending true quality time with your family:**

- ▲ Make the commitment. Examine your schedule, and adjust it accordingly. Is the priority you place on your family reflected in the amount of time that you actually spend with them? Do superfluous activities and trivial pursuits eat up too much of your time?
- ▲ Recover from “work-aholism.” Do you stay late at the office or bring work home on a consistent basis? Are you approachable to your family members, or are you too busy with business, housework, or your own interests to be bothered? You may need to set boundaries on work time and allow for downtime that actively involves your family.
- ▲ Establish dinner as a family event. Families need a sense of stability and connection. Make sure dinner time is a regular, predictable ritual in your home that everyone can count on. If preparing a meal is too much of a burden, have everyone pitch in to help make it, or eat out.



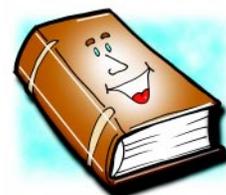
- ▲ Open your ears and listen. Ask questions to find out what’s going on in your family members’ lives, and be available to listen. Do chores together, or take walks outside. Have a special chair for your children to sit in just to be held and listened to.
- ▲ Watch television together. Use this as an additional means of interaction rather than a substitute for it. Choose interesting, thought-provoking programs, and discuss the important issues addressed, including ethics, morals and behavior.

▲ Practice consistent, loving discipline. Don’t be afraid to say no. Children need limits, and teens need as much parental supervision as toddlers do.

- ▲ Read together. Read to your children every night, and continue reading with them even after they can read unassisted. Talk with them about the books they read.
- ▲ Express affection. Nicknames that aren’t demeaning can be a special family tie. Show your affection with lots of hugs and kisses, and remember that even teenagers need regular displays of affection.
- ▲ Volunteer together. Being involved in helping others outside your family can be a powerful shared experience.

Use Driving Time as Reading Time

Looking for some time to read the paper or a new book? The next time you’re on the road with your spouse, use this driving time as reading time with the non-driver reading out loud something that both of you want to read.



Improve Sales with Trade Shows

When done right, trade shows can provide a profitable return for your time and money. The more planning and preparation you do in advance, the more you can maximize your potential for trade show success. **The following are steps to consider when planning for your next trade show:**

- ▲ Participate in shows that cater to your niche. A bigger show won't guarantee better results if it doesn't target the people who will want your products and services.
- ▲ Plan your promotional strategy. Decide how you'll get the word out about the show. Consider your options including advertising, direct mail, sales promotion and media relations.
- ▲ Proof all publicity materials for errors and missing information. Be sure to include your booth number and company address on mailers. Post your trade show schedule on your website, fax cover sheets and newsletters.
- ▲ Custom design press kits for the event. Design your materials to suit the specific audience. Most journalists recognize and tend to look down on canned, generic material.
- ▲ Ask the management company about free exhibit hall passes. Issue them to

your current and potential customers, as well as to distributors, suppliers, dealers, agents and resellers.

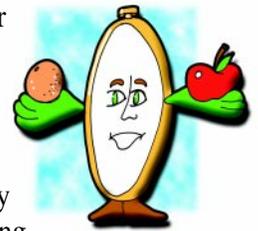
- ▲ Make arrangements for setting up your booth. Find out where electrical outlets will be. To cut costs, have your materials delivered ahead of time.
- ▲ Take advantage of the opportunity to gather information. Trade shows can be more than a time for accruing leads; they can also be a prime time to survey customers and test the market.
- ▲ Select prizes for drawings and giveaways carefully. Items should be valuable, but not given away too liberally. Bring extra forms to the show for people who didn't get one in the mail.
- ▲ Encourage healthy competition. Create a contest among your sales staff to see who can obtain the most leads at the show, and reward the person who can get the most.
- ▲ Assess your level of success. After the show is over, take some time to meet as a staff and discuss the results. What worked well? What could you do better next time?
- ▲ Create a systematic follow-up plan. Draft a tailor-made letter for each of the categories of prospects you met, and make contact with leads while the show is still fresh on their minds.



How to Handle Negative and Incorrect Remarks

When prospects make erroneous statements, how you respond can make or break the sale. While you can't disagree with them outright, you can discuss it with them in a way that will identify the source of the misunderstanding. **When people make a negative or inaccurate comment:**

- ◆ Be open to criticism. Avoid being defensive. Find out if the statement has any merit by asking them to elaborate. Say something like, "That's interesting. I've never heard anybody say that before. Can you please tell me more?"
- ◆ Ask them to be specific. This may help reveal the flaw in their reasoning. If they're comparing your product to another, for example, they may not know all the facts, or they may be trying to "compare apples to oranges."
- ◆ Identify the source of the information. You may discover that they have an unreliable source. Try saying, "That's interesting. Who told you this?" Or, underscore your credibility by saying, "Our company prides itself on staying on top of new developments in our industry. Where did you get this information?"
- ◆ Define the misconception. Once you've found the problem or misinformation, explain the situation and take steps to remedy it immediately. Keep this experience in mind to avoid similar misunderstandings in the future.



Keeping Customer Files

A customer profile can help you stay on the ball when doing business with your clients. Having important information about clients on hand can save you in a pinch when the salesperson who usually contacts them is unavailable. It can also help you refresh your memory before calling one of your own clients.

Information to keep in your customer files includes:

- Contact people
- Addresses and phone numbers
- History of the company-customer relationship
- Special agreements
- Billing procedures.

Making Diplomatic Moves After Making Mistakes

An apology or the acceptance of an apology can be the glue that makes teams work, makes managers productive after a mistake and enables leaders to get up after they've fallen. **Here's how to make a diplomatic apology:**

- ❖ Decide what apologizing means in a given situation. According to the dictionary, apologizing means an expression of regret for some fault, failure, insult, injury, or outcome, but it doesn't mean accepting responsibility for an outcome or failure. Therefore, you can choose to attach either significance to any particular situation – from expressing liability to avoiding it.
- ❖ Apologize specifically. The most frequent cliché in apologies is the blanket statement: "I'm sorry for any inconvenience this may have caused you." That comment makes angry people angrier. "For any inconvenience" implies that the speaker hasn't given any thought to how the person might have been inconvenienced. The choice of the word "inconvenience" implies that it was no big deal. "This may have caused you" implies that the situation may have caused no problem at all. In other words, translate the sentence this way: "I don't know or care how my actions could have inconvenienced you, but if they did, here's a blanket 'I'm sorry.'"

Instead of that blanket of inappropriate wording, be specific. Let the person know that you understand either the difficulty of the situation or the hurt caused by your actions or words. "I'm sorry for the delay in responding to your call. I know you were in a hurry for the information." "I'm sorry the package didn't arrive until Friday. I know we had promised you'd have it by Wednesday, and because of our late shipment, your own customer orders have been delayed." Such statements may or may not accept responsibility, but they do let the other person know that you are aware and concerned about the outcome.

- ❖ State any corrective action you plan to take or have taken rather than reminding someone of the problem. You can take the wind out of an angry person's sails by stating immediately that you have corrected the mistake or problem. In other words, move to the "punch line" – the most important concern – to let others know that they no longer have to fight to get their problem addressed. Once the issue is settled to their satisfaction, there's less will to continue discussing the details or disagreeing over whose fault something is.



- ❖ Explain the reasoning behind corrective actions. Giving an explanation of how a mistake happened adds credibility to your corrective action. If you can't explain your reasoning when you made an error in judgment, other people can't be sure that you'll handle future situations any better. An explanation lets them know that you care enough to investigate and that you've gained insight from your investigation or re-evaluation of the situation. Your explanation adds credibility for the future.
- ❖ Avoid making excuses if the mistake was due to your carelessness or insensitivity. When the situation is due to obvious carelessness or insensitivity, an explanation doesn't help. It sounds like an excuse. And your excuse will only elicit new accusations about the problem and escalate the whole affair. Own up to the insensitivity of the behavior without excusing what you said or did.
- ❖ Express regret for the results an inadvertent mistake caused. Even though your mistake or misjudgment may have been unintentional, the repercussions for the other person may be just as severe as if the mistake were a direct affront. Even if you couldn't have foreseen the problem your actions caused, you can express regret for the results.
- ❖ Be sincere. Sincerity comes through in tone, body language and word choice. For example, your boss stands with hands on hips and a grimace and says: "Look, I'm sorry I didn't tell you the due date was tomorrow. I've got 15 irons in the fire, okay? Gripping about working late isn't going to get it done any faster." Sincerity sounds like this (boss standing beside you with dejected, downcast eyes): "I'm sorry. I should have told you the due date was tomorrow. John told me, and I failed to pass it on. What can I do to help you get it done?"
- ❖ Re-establish rapport on a neutral subject. Coworkers need to "sign off" on the difficulty and move ahead. A good way to do that is to make an additional comment or two on a neutral subject before ending the conversation. That final effort on a new topic, or at least an unrelated detail of the current topic, serves as the final handshake and puts the relationship back to normal. This closure helps to prevent any awkwardness at the next encounter.



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TIMESAVERS

Return Your Calls

Return all phone calls at the same time daily. People who call you regularly will know when you're available and in your office and you'll avoid the many interruptions random phone calls provide throughout the day. Be sure to have a properly working answering service or machine during other times of the day.

Focus on One Task

Whenever you possibly can, concentrate all of your energy on one task at a time. This allows you to avoid distractions and disorganization. But, remember to focus on high priority items first.

Check That Label!

Instead of buying cars, furniture, clothing, electronic equipment and other items that require you to give special care on a regular basis, read the label before buying it. It may be tedious while shopping but your extra research can save you hour upon hour of time later. And, low-maintenance living means more time to pursue those things you truly enjoy.

How Long Should You Keep It?

People often wonder how long receipts, financial statements and other important documents should be kept. This is especially true of people in business since there are so many papers filed away every day.

As you decide whether or not to keep documents, **consider the following general guidelines:**

- ▲ Retain your accounting books indefinitely. This means the general ledger and journal and any other accounting records that haven't been transferred over to the current year's books.
- ▲ Keep documents substantiating your claim to fixed rates and assets indefinitely. Otherwise, you may lack necessary proof if the matter comes into question.
- ▲ Maintain purchase records for six years past the date on the document. This includes purchase orders, payment vouchers, and invoices.
- ▲ Retain financial statements used for

internal purposes about three years.

- ▲ Keep official corporate documents indefinitely. This includes certificate of incorporation, corporate charter, constitution, bylaws, deeds and other such documents.
- ▲ Maintain sales records for six years. Copies of invoices, remittance advices and like documents fall into this group.
- ▲ Retain financial documents from subcontractors for three years.
- ▲ Keep payroll and personnel records for about four years.
- ▲ Maintain canceled, payroll and dividend checks for six years.
- ▲ Keep travel and entertainment records for six years.
- ▲ Retain bank reconciliations, voided checks, check stubs and check register tapes for six years.
- ▲ Store income tax forms and other IRS documents indefinitely.

