

City of Helena



Tyme Management™

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Keep A Time Diary

You could save a lot of time if you begin the habit of keeping a current calendar to plan and record your days. It's best to keep this "time diary" in a planner that includes both an overview of the entire month and daily planning pages. But, no matter what system you use, you can generate increased effectiveness by...

- ◆ noting all your time commitments as you schedule them. Fit commitments together like you fit pieces into a puzzle.
- ◆ avoiding scraps of paper and individual notes. Schedule meetings and other items only on your planner to cut down on lost appointments, forgotten meetings and conflicting commitments.
- ◆ looking at the upcoming year as a valuable resource which you can use to your benefit. Decide now how you will spend about 10 to 20 percent of the new year and commit that time on your planner today.
- ◆ noting everything you do each day and reviewing your time use at the end of each week. Try to catch wasted time, errors you made and time you misused so you can learn from these and use your time better in the coming weeks.

Resolve to Control Your Time

Habits are extremely important to your success. Habits are great time savers; they help you react almost automatically to recurring situations. Without well-established habits, your day would be an agonizing succession of analysis and decision making.

You may recognize and appreciate the functions of your habits. But, you may fail to recognize that other actions and reactions are equally dependent upon habit. Some people, for example, made early choices to reject any suggestion of change. Consequently, when anything new is suggested, they automatically refuse to consider change without a long process of persuasion or pressure from someone else.

At the opposite extreme, some people are doormats: they have the habit of always accepting any suggestion for change, even before examining the situation. Operating from either of these two extremes could produce knotty problems that would require a great deal of time to untangle.

By becoming aware of the habits that govern your choices, decisions and behaviors, you can modify your time behavior to increase your success.

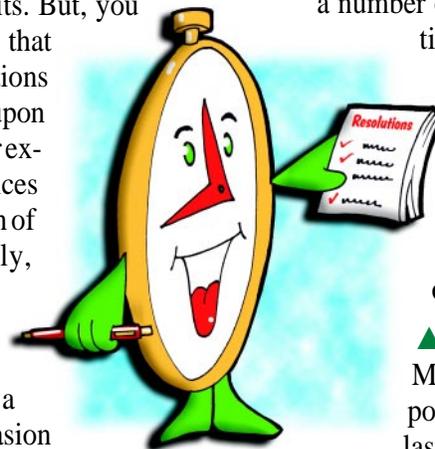
Every choice you make results from a plan either to gain a benefit or to avoid a

loss. A definite plan must first be based upon a specific, positive statement of a desired goal. The second step is to list any obstacles you could encounter in development of the new habit.

Once you've listed your obstacles – such as your feelings, old habits, the actions of others, and so on – you may see a number of solutions and alternatives you may employ to

overcome these obstacles. **For example, solutions you might list to overcoming the obstacles in decision making include:**

- ▲ *Review past successes.* Make a list of the most important decisions you made last year. Label each one Poor, Fair, Good, or Excellent, according to their results.
- ▲ *Set deadlines.* When a decision must be made, set a specific deadline for its accomplishment. Then schedule the steps that must be done to make the decision. List the steps on your Imperative/Important list.
- ▲ *Make a commitment.* Tell someone else – partner, subordinates, or boss – when your decision must be made. Then stick to your commitment and make the decision by that time.



How to “Get Moving” on Your Tasks

If you struggle to get started on your tasks, **here are some ideas to get you moving:**

- ◆ Identify the first step to be taken and do it.
- ◆ Determine the most time-consuming part of the task and do it first. You’ll have more time to do the other parts and you won’t have the lengthiest part looming ahead.
- ◆ Work on the parts of the task that are similar at the same time. This way, you can accomplish more than one step at a time.

Do What's Most Important Now

In order to determine what’s most important in any situation, **you might complete this step-by-step process:**

- ◆ Develop clear goals for the situation and then write them down to clarify them.
- ◆ Review those goals regularly to keep them in mind.
- ◆ Divide a long list of goals and priorities into manageable chunks.
- ◆ Prioritize the tasks at hand to make sure you’re doing what’s most important now.
- ◆ Regularly evaluate and update your goals and habits.
- ◆ Write ideas down immediately upon thinking of them.

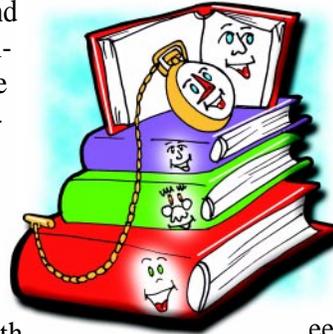
Keep a Spare Set Available

Place a set of your house keys in every suit coat and sport jacket you own. This will ensure that you’ll never run out of your house without your keys when you’re in a rush to a meeting. Keys are frequently forgotten in a rush.

Educate Employees on Effectiveness

Effective executives are almost the perfect model for employees to exemplify. Executives have usually achieved quite a bit in their business career and have honed their goal-achieving plans to the point of ultimate effectiveness. **The four main points effective executives can teach to employees include:**

- Stay in touch with people working on projects with or for you. Pass on information you receive to others so everyone stays on



top of things.

- Remain in touch with the progress made on your well-made plans. Reconsider and restart those plans that aren’t proceeding forward.
- Gather relevant information from those around you as often as possible. Having this information will help you to make timely decisions.
- Delegate authority along with projects. Let your employees, or co-workers, complete assignments you delegate in their individualized way. But, be certain you gain the results you desire.

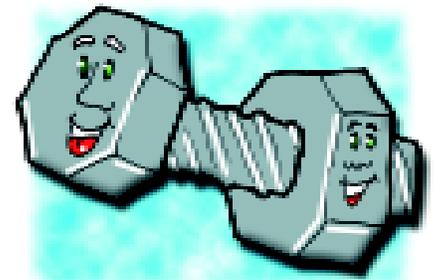
Record Your Interruptions

To learn how often, when and by whom you’re interrupted, keep a log of your interruptions by recording them in writing each time you’re interrupted. You should be able to identify your main time-wasting times of the day, what seems to spur on interruptions most often and who interrupts you most with this interruption log. Use it to eliminate these items as best you can from your working day.

The Nuts and Bolts of Calmness

When you’re under close deadlines and intense pressure, you need to tighten the nuts and bolts of your calmness and resolve. To do so, consider these tips:

- ▲ Make a list of the causes of your unease. Include all that you must complete and those items you’d like to complete. Schedule out your time to handle and complete all these concerns.
- ▲ Identify the source of your pressure. If this source is unavoidable and short-term, consider cutting some of your activities to lighten up your load so you can meet the deadlines.
- ▲ Stop to smell the roses. Have fun and enjoy yourself when you’re away from



the office. Continue to do your recreational activities and lead a full life away from the office. Otherwise, burn-out may visit you.

“Success is the maximum utilization of the ability that you have.”

– Zig Ziglar

"Per Your Request"

Place a suggestion box in a high traffic area of your building. Welcome suggestions covering anything from office decor to the organization's vision or mission. Ask that employees include their name and department on their suggestion and provide a desirable reward for those that are used. Desirable rewards can include bonuses, time off, trips, gift certificates, or whatever you and your employees devise. Usually only about 20 percent of the employees on a staff will take part in suggesting things but you'll have more input into the employees' feelings and ideas nevertheless.



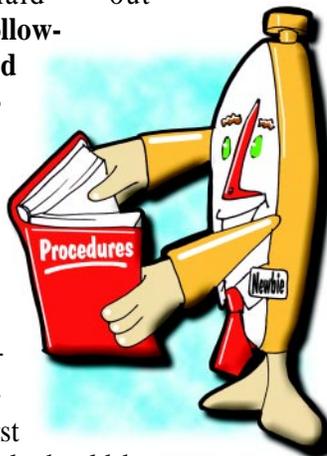
Read Faster Step By Step

- ✓ Step One: Learn to pre-read. Look at headlines, table of contents and indices.
- ✓ Step Two: Read phrases instead of words.
- ✓ Step Three: Concentrate intensely so you won't have to read back over important items.
- ✓ Step Four: Find software or a book that contains reading drills. Check yourself for timing and comprehension.
- ✓ Step Five: Skip and skim material instead of "reading." You don't have to read everything; just the main points.
- ✓ Step Six: Broaden your vocabulary. Try to learn five new words weekly.
- ✓ Step Seven: Practice your reading. The more you read the faster you'll become; so read often.

Good Time Habits For New Hires

Time management is learned behavior. That's why managers with long-time employees have a tough time implementing improved time use methods. Bad habits have already set in. But, the new employees who start with your organization should have time management rules laid out for them from the start. **Following are the suggested guidelines for a time effective work policy:**

- ◆ Be prepared for meetings. Agendas should be passed out to all attendees at least one day before a meeting. Make sure all meetings are succinct and swift-flowing.
- ◆ Deal with things the first time around. Paper work should be thrown away, filed, sent to someone else, or acted upon when it first crosses your desk.
- ◆ Communicate clearly and concisely. Long-winded memos, reports and E-mails won't be tolerated. All written materials should be written in an



easy-to-understand and quick-to-read format.

- ◆ Question all faulty procedures. If you know a way to simplify a system, please share it with your supervisor.
- ◆ Know the difference between working hard and working smart. Pride comes from a job well done, not just from one that's finished. Place quality before quantity.
- ◆ Practice delegation every day. Everyone can delegate to someone. Find others who can complete the tasks you're weakest at better than you and either delegate that task or trade for one from your delegate.
- ◆ Understand the organization's commitment to good time management. Time management books, newsletters and programs will be available to all in the company library. And, daily planners and other time management assistance measures are expected to be used.

Grow Stronger in Your Writing Skills

Writing often spells the downfall of many people's high self-esteem and confidence. Many people lack the confidence to improve their writing skills or feel that writing isn't important. However, writing is an important contributor to your success.

Start today to approach writing and other tasks with a "grow stronger" attitude. **Consider these suggestions:**

- ▲ Remember your audience. If you use a word or abbreviation that may be unfamiliar to those who will read your writing, define or explain it.
- ▲ Organize your writing. Make an out-

line before beginning and end with a summary.

- ▲ Use active and colorful words to keep your audience interested. But, know the precise meaning so you don't cause confusion.
- ▲ Write succinctly. Get to the point as quickly as possible.
- ▲ Check your punctuation. A missed comma or period could ruin an otherwise perfect document.
- ▲ Read your writing out loud. If you hear anything that sounds unfamiliar, check it out.
- ▲ Keep all writing concise.



Keeping Kids Focused

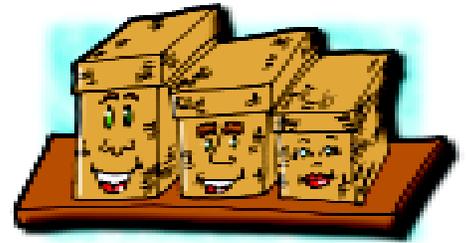
You don't have to be an adult to master the art of procrastination. Kids can be excellent at putting things off until the last minute, whether it's cleaning their rooms, taking the trash out, or doing homework. **The following are reasons why kids may procrastinate:**

- ◆ *Time-management skills.* When kids don't know how long it takes to do something and to plan in advance, they'll continue to end up with too much to do in too little time. Until they recognize the cause-effect connection between their time use and their results, they'll continue to blame it on other things. Poor schoolwork is a prime example of this. They may give the excuse that they forgot to do it or that they didn't understand the assignment.
- ◆ *Organization skills.* If their belongings, school supplies and room are disorganized, kids will probably handle their other responsibilities in the same haphazard manner. Learning to organize things can help them learn to organize their time and activities as well.
- ◆ *Goal-setting skills.* Without goals, kids have little motivation to accomplish anything. When they set a goal, however, finishing tasks at home and at school becomes necessary to getting what they want. Kids must also learn to outline the steps to take along the way, or they won't see how to reach their desired goal.
- ◆ *Resistance.* When kids feel hurt and angry with their parents, they may express their feelings by refusing to do what they're told. This is their way of fighting back when they feel no sense of control. Some kids can carry this problem over to every authority figure in their lives, resisting their teachers, coaches, or babysitters.
- ◆ *Lack of interest.* If kids take no interest in the projects or tasks required, they won't want to do them. This may be the case for those who say they didn't do the homework because it was boring or stupid. Kids must be challenged and stimulated to learn and grow, but they also need a healthy sense of discipline to complete what needs to be done even when it's not always fun.

Cleaning Up Clutter Quickly

The room's a mess, and you don't have the luxury of unlimited time to clean it. So how do you clear the clutter without it devouring your time? **Here are several strategies to cope with clutter:**

- ▲ *The junk-chair method.* Endless piles strewn out all over the room can be discouraging. To get motivated, centralize the mess to one location – such as on a chair or bed – to clear the rest of the room, and then begin sorting and putting away items one at a time.
- ▲ *The destination method.* Gather objects that belong in the same room together by putting them in a basket or on a cart or trolley. Return them to their original location, and then come back and begin collecting items that belong in another room. Stay focused on returning things to a room, and leave cleaning and organizing them until later.
- ▲ *The camouflage method.* Keep a decorative container in each room for hiding junk in temporarily. Baskets, chests, crates, toy boxes, or antique luggage are possible options. When unexpected visitors arrive, stash things in your hidden container until they leave.
- ▲ *The clock method.* Begin at the door of the room, or “12 o'clock.” Work your way around the room clockwise, putting away the objects at one o'clock, two o'clock and so on until you make it back to 12.



Cut Corners Off Your Time

- ❖ Take advantage of laborsaving devices whenever possible. Get a dishwasher and a self-cleaning oven to save kitchen time. Find easy-care materials for clothing and carpets, and choose wrinkle-free fabrics to eliminate that extra step of ironing when doing laundry.
- ❖ The next time you want to start a new hobby, consider how much time you'll actually have to devote to it. If you still want to try it, drop at least one activity that you're currently involved in first.
- ❖ For one week, time how long it takes you to do various household chores and errands. Not only does timing yourself create built-in motivation to stay on task, but it also gives you a realistic assessment of how much time it takes you to get things done.

The Key to Problem Solving: Do Something!

The next time a tough problem has you stumped, don't just sit there – procrastination is the worst enemy of the problem solver. **Consider these suggestions:**

- ◆ Write out the problem as simply as you can. Study what you've written and write down some choices you have in the matter. Utilize the power of visualization.
- ◆ Put the problem on the back burner for a while. Pick up something you've wanted to read that has nothing to do with your problem. Reading material such as this will sometimes help you find a key word or concept you can apply to the business problem you have.
- ◆ Brainstorm. Gather a group of peers and talk it over. This verbalization helps you to clarify what you're trying to do in your own mind.
- ◆ Sleep on it. Be certain to keep a pen and paper beside your bed for those middle of the night ideas. Then, approach the problem refreshed first thing in the morning.

Make Productive Use of Your "Wait" Times

It really is amazing the amount of "stuff" you can get done while waiting on others. In the 10 to 15 minutes you wait for your children in the school parking lot or at soccer practice, you can catch up on personal correspondence or reading. Take along some note cards on which to write your thoughts and brainstorm ideas to advance your organization. Or, simply file your nails, clean out your wallet or purse, or practice deep breathing or other relaxation exercises. Your time spent waiting alone could become your most productive time.

Being Flexible Builds Morale

If your firm already has a flextime plan, you're aware that it's a program that allows employees to select their own working hours within certain limits. Usually, there are some hours each day – normally from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. excepting lunch – at which all employees are expected to be present. But, within those limits, employees often arrive early or late. Then, they leave as soon as the full day's hours have been put in.

If your organization doesn't now have a flextime program, here are points to ponder:

- ◆ Flextime builds in "Quiet Hours." By setting up definite hours when everyone is "in," you create "built in" Quiet Hours – times when employees can be left alone for concentrated work – at the beginning and end of each day.
- ◆ Flextime eases the stress on commuters. Employees can skip rush hour traffic if they so choose. And, they thereby avoid arriving at the office tense and drained by the delays, crowdedness and traffic jams of

commuting.

- ◆ Flextime eliminates the morning "chat room." This room is better known as the break room but, in the morning, it's often a chat room because many gather around the coffee machine and chat. With flextime, each employee arrives at different times and gets to work without any undue socializing.
- ◆ Flextime improves morale. Employees feel they have some control over their work hours and can plan their appointments, children's school conferences, and other matters without having to go into long explanations or calling in sick.
- ◆ Finally, flextime lets employees choose to work at their peak working hours. Morning people can use their early morning peak to work from 6:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. while night owls who stagger out of bed in the morning can still make it to work by 10 a.m. and stay on the job until they peak between 3 p.m. and 7 p.m.



Give Team Spirit a Good Boost

How much time have you and your peers in your organization wasted arguing points of little or no importance? The desire to be "right" and to win the argument is a horrendously big time waster. Instead of arguing, try to build on the things you and your peers agree on for a productive experience without the bog-downs that occur when arguments are repeated and amplified over and over again.

Another item to remember: Refrain from debating who's at fault for mistakes. "Who's at fault?" discussions quickly degrade into all-out fights that can leave permanent employee relations problems. Absolutely refuse to allow these discussions to get started in your department meetings. Instead, get down to the business of the problem and decide how best to solve it – it matters not who caused it but who can fix it.



Spend Some Time Slowing Down

Every day, people frantically rush from place to place. What are they in such a hurry about? Most people probably couldn't tell you. It's just a way of life – a stressful way of life.

Instead of this hurried lifestyle, determine to be different. Take your time and spend little moments slowing down.

Try these methods:

- ◆ Instead of picking up the phone on the first ring, let it ring a couple of times before answering it. At home, let the answering machine take your calls when it's more convenient.
- ◆ Drive leisurely. Enjoy your trips to and from work. Drive the speed limit, take a new route to the office, or notice new things on your usual route.
- ◆ Take your time getting out of your vehicle. Finish listening to a song or news report on the radio.
- ◆ Relax when you first arrive home after work. Give yourself time to unwind. Talk to your family, take a shower, read the newspaper, or play with the family pet.



- ◆ Wait a few seconds before diving into your meals. Look at what you're eating. Chew slowly and enjoy the smells, texture and flavor of the food.
- ◆ When leaving to go somewhere, take your time gathering what you need to take with you. Double check that you have all your belongings, take a deep breath and walk at a comfortable pace to your vehicle.

The key is to always seek small, simple ways to slow down and enjoy life more. Encourage your friends and family members to do the same!

Enjoy a Moment to Yourself

When you have a moment to steal away and relax, there's an unlimited number of things you can do. **Here are just a few hints on ways to spend personal time:**

- ◆ Take a walk and enjoy nature.
- ◆ Clean out a closet.
- ◆ Write a letter.
- ◆ Learn a new hobby. Take a class in something new like karate or cake decorating.
- ◆ Go to a sports event.
- ◆ Play a musical instrument, or learn how to play one.
- ◆ Write a poem or song.
- ◆ Arrange a photo album.
- ◆ Read.
- ◆ Experiment with a new recipe.
- ◆ Go to a play or movie.
- ◆ Catch up with an old friend.
- ◆ Take yourself out to lunch.
- ◆ Spend time with your family.

Motivate Your Mind with Music

Medical experts have long accepted music as an alternative medicine. It affects pulse, blood pressure and the electrical activity of muscles. Music can also contribute to good mental health.

The following are types of music that can help you get into the right frame of mind for various moods and tasks:

- ▲ Energetic. If you need a lift, pick music with a fast beat, and turn it up loud.
- ▲ Inspired. For inspiration, select music that has an infectious uptempo beat and swinging and soaring arcs.
- ▲ Creative. To push your mind to create, choose music rich in imagery that plays with your expectations and takes surprising turns.
- ▲ Focused. Complex music, like many classical pieces, boosts your abstract reasoning, language and logical functions. It's important to listen to complex music before the task that you want to concentrate on.
- ▲ Relaxed. To relax, find slower music that provides warmth and imagery.



The Scientific Scoop on Chicken Soup

Chicken soup has been a remedy for colds that dates all the way back to the 12th century. But why does sipping chicken soup actually make you feel better when you've got a cold or the flu?

Here are scientific reasons:

- Fluids are lost via runny noses, fever sweats and diarrhea. Drinking soup and other fluids helps to keep the body hydrated.
- Steam from the soup moistens dry airways, relieving sore throats.
- Soup is nutritious and easy on the stomach. A better nourished body is better able to fight off infection.

Focusing on Skills that Promote Career Growth

Too many people work hard at their jobs – and not hard enough at their careers. That’s a problem because jobs come and go, but careers control your future.

People looking to move up in their careers must be constantly reinventing themselves, determining what skills they possess, acquiring new skills they need, and broadening their career goals.

Human resource professionals agree that executives consider the following skills and attitudes among the most important in promoting career growth:

◆ Communicating Your Ideas and Intentions Orally

Most executives consider this the most valued skill. Your speaking ability either generates confidence or doubt about your work. Others only “see” what you’re able to communicate to them. In addition to relaying needed information, speaking skills are crucial because they prevent your work and its value from going unnoticed.

What you say is who you are.

◆ Communicating Your Ideas and Intentions in Writing

If speaking is the most prized skill, writing runs a close second. Clear, concise and well-written documents have high impact and staying power. While listeners are bombarded with phone calls and face-to-face interruptions, written messages, on the other hand, can be read, reviewed, verified and contemplated for later use.

Good writing means not only good content, but also an appropriate style. The employee who can think clearly and logically and communicate that in written form is in high demand.

◆ Knowing How to Access and Analyze Information and Resources

Keeping informed on facts and trends in your business is critical to career advancement. Today, the question isn’t, “Do you know X?” but, “Do you know how to find out about X?”

The real skill is in knowing how to access the latest information quickly, assess its usefulness logically and act upon it promptly.

People are racing down the information highway. If you’re not up to speed or commandeering the right vehicle, you’re likely to get run over. In this data age, facts drive the world.

◆ Managing Resources Wisely

Whether it’s your time, money, energy, skills, paperwork, files, or staff, you have to stay organized. Good organization depends on clear thinking, consistent decision-making and decisive action.

Mismanage your time, and you lose business today and opportunities tomorrow. Mismanage your data (the total body of information doubles every seven years), and you become uninformed and obsolete. Mismanage your employees, and you risk being inefficient and ineffective, if not losing your top performers to better run companies.

Managing your resources is managing your career.

◆ Putting a Premium on People

While money and machines may move industry, it’s people who handle the money and machines that move industry. Whether you’re selling lemonade on the street corner or wheeling and dealing on Madison Avenue, you’ll find that business is a contact sport.

Knowing how to meet, relate to, develop, motivate and empower those you work with will determine where you fit in on the organizational food chain. Business may be getting bigger and more technical, but it will always remain personal.

Organizations have decided that they’re no longer paying for face time; they’re paying for results. As long as you have the prerequisite skills, attitudes and traits, you can turn a wayward job into a successful career.



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TIMESAVERS

Relax Your Mind to Refocus Thinking

After a stressful morning with your phone ringing off the hook and numerous unexpected problems to deal with, you've finally gotten back to the point where you can concentrate on your goals for today. But, your mind seems to be in such a state of upheaval, that you still cannot concentrate.

When you feel this way, quiet your mind with these tips:

- ▲ Make things as quiet as you can. Shut your door, close your eyes and focus on your breathing.
- ▲ Ease your mind away from outside noises or bodily sensations, concentrating only on your breathing.
- ▲ Count your breaths if you have trouble keeping your mind focused on your breathing. But, avoid the tendency to concentrate on the counting. Let your thoughts and mind remain on your breathing.
- ▲ When you find yourself in a very quiet state of awareness in which you're not even aware of the movement of your breath, you've achieved a quiet state of mind.

Resolve to Phone More Efficiently

Wasted telephone time is often hard to reduce because your telephone is such a great time saver. But, since it's a new year, it might be wise to take a closer look at your phone usage. **Consider these points:**

Do you take the time to justify every phone call? Instead of reaching for your phone without thinking, pause just long enough to verify that a telephone call is your best move. Avoid calling for things that need to have confirming paperwork anyway, complex items that require a lot of thought before you can expect a confident reply, or important items that have to progress through several levels of approval before instigation.

Do you separate business calls from personal calls? Business calls are kept strictly on track. It shouldn't take more than 30 seconds to set up a conversation appointment for later. Avoid chit-chatting with prospects and clients as this wastes time for both of you. Make personal calls at home, during lunch, or after hours.

Do you save calls for scheduled times? Effective time managers schedule specific times to return calls. Before your call, write down all the items you need to discuss so you can cover everything with one call. Work effectively during the rest of your day without making any phone calls.

Do you have a policy regarding being placed on hold? You can either avoid it and call back later, or keep paperwork near your phone so you can accomplish something while on hold. Otherwise, you're losing all the minutes that tick by while you're just holding for your desired party.

Do you practice "quick endings"? Quick endings are statements made that encourage others to want to finish the conversation and move onward. After you accomplish the mission of your phone call, lead the conversation to a finishing point with some of these statements:

"You probably have a million things to do so I'll let you get back to your worknow."

"Well, I think we've accomplished our goal, I need to prepare for a meeting I must attend at (specific time)."

