



Tyme Management™

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Keeping It Simple

When you make a conscious effort to simplify your life, you step out of the hectic pace and harried mind-set that can distract you from enjoying a meaningful life. **The following are thoughts for keeping life simple:**

- ◆ Measure how much you can handle based on what you know about yourself. Stop comparing yourself to how much your family, friends, or coworkers are able to do.
- ◆ Before adding a new activity to your schedule, subtract a current one. Realize that you can't do it all and wouldn't want to even if you could.
- ◆ Plan regular, quality time to be with your family and friends. Instead of spreading yourself thin over several people that you never get to know well, deepen your relationships with a few select people.
- ◆ Focus your attention. Listen to others without watching TV or reading a magazine. Designate a "no phone" time.
- ◆ Remember to include time for yourself on your calendar. Getting a grip on a more reasonable schedule requires personal commitment. No one else can slow down your life for you.

Slow Down on the Highway of Life

For many people today, living life in the fast lane is the only way to go. Faster is better, and time is an opponent that people are relentlessly racing to beat. The constant pulse of technology makes the once natural breaks and unpredictable delays in life no longer necessary. And while the pace of life may have accelerated, its quality has not.

Learning to enjoy and thrive in life involves confronting and re-evaluating the assumptions that people make about time. Time, after all, is a human invention, and people haven't always measured life by speed and seconds. When you regard time in a more relaxed manner, your life will be more enjoyable as well as more productive.

Consider the following tips for adjusting your approach to time:

- Look at your life as a whole rather than as a "to do" list. Avoid focusing on the nitpicky details of everyday life. What are your overall aims and ambitions? If you wrote your own obituary today, what would it say about your life? Live each day as if it were your last.
- Consciously resist the push to rush. Allow yourself breaks within your day, and view delays as opportunities. Opt

for doing things the slow way occasionally, and ask yourself whether you need to rush in a given situation. Is it really worth the stress?

- Facilitate lucid thinking. Improve your concentration and effectiveness by doing one thing at a time rather than several haphazardly. Reduce background noise that may cause you a heightened sense of anxiety. Avoid trying to make use of every moment, which usually increases tension without improving your productivity.

● Work with your body rhythm. Your body runs on a different clock that varies according to age, mood, sunlight and season. Plan important work for your body's peak hours of operation, and listen to your body when it's telling you it needs a break.

- Limit the number and visibility of the clocks you have, and check your watch only when necessary. Take your watch off every once in a while, and absorb yourself in pastimes in which time doesn't matter, such as golfing, fishing, sewing, painting, gardening, or playing chess. Learn to measure your day not by the minutes that pass by, but by the moments you experience.



Making Conference Calls

As with other areas of business etiquette, common sense and courtesy are the rule when making conference calls. **When conducting a conference call, remember to:**

- ◆ Call at the designated time. Just as you would arrive on time for a face-to-face meeting, show respect for other people's time by calling on time.
- ◆ Keep background noise to a minimum. If you put the call on speakerphone, eliminate any potentially distracting sounds in the room.
- ◆ Clarify who's speaking. Before making a statement, give your name so that others will know who you are and won't mistake you for someone else.
- ◆ Avoid putting people on hold. If your phone system provides music or a recorded message when people are put on hold, this will disrupt the conversation. Place the receiver down quietly instead.
- ◆ Never interrupt when someone else is talking. Not only is this bad manners in a regular conversation, but it can be especially annoying when done over the phone.

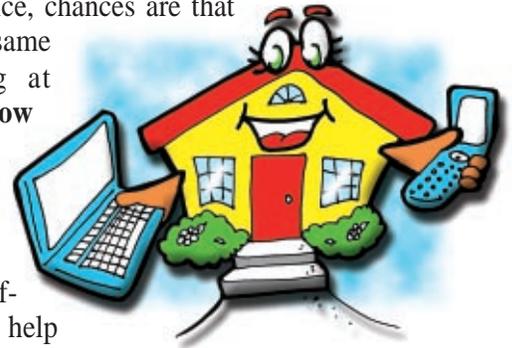


Working from Home

Whether you own your own business or telecommute, working at home can have its advantages. You save the commute time and have more flexibility in your schedule to work at the times you work best. On the other hand, these same advantages can create a potential time trap if you're not careful. If you had difficulty managing your time in a conventional office, chances are that you'll face these same

issues working at home. **Here's how to manage your time successfully from the home office:**

- Set regular office hours to help establish the boundary between work and non-work time. You may want to run the washing machine or dishwasher while you're working, but avoid letting housework or personal matters distract you when you should be working.
- Make sure to plan times to get out and about. If you spend too much time cooped up in your office, you may become isolated and lethargic. Arrange to meet clients somewhere outside the office and plan to run business-related errands while you're out.
- Keep your priorities on top. Learn to say "no" to projects, opportunities and social invitations that you don't have time for. If answering the phone prevents you from concentrating on your top projects, let your answering machine take calls and then return them when you're prepared.
- Schedule meetings in bunches. Since meetings often prevent you from getting much else done, schedule several for the same day. Allow adequate time between each meeting in case they run longer than expected, and look for opportunities to network with the people you meet.
- Create routines. Set aside a certain time each week for handling financial matters, up-dating inventory and filing paperwork. Use forms or computer software that allow you to keep track of data more easily.
- Hire part-time help. When you're in charge of your own business, you may feel compelled to do everything on your own, especially to cut costs. But by focusing your energy on only what you can do and delegating the rest, you'll be investing in the long-term profitability of your business.
- Take breaks. Taking breaks may take time, but you'll be able to work longer and more efficiently. Make sure to get enough sleep on a consistent basis, even during marathon work sessions.



Save Time with Manuals

Employee manuals can help everyone understand their jobs better. Manuals provide new employees a convenient reference for answering questions and save managers the time of having to answer questions over and over again. Current employees can also benefit from writing these manuals by refreshing their memory and clarifying the understanding of their own jobs. **The following are employee manuals that may be helpful:**

- ▲ *Organizational manual* – gives an overall understanding of the organization and outlines company and departmental goals and objectives. It may also include instructions on how to perform various tasks associated with different people's jobs.
- ▲ *Personnel manual* – contains information on each position's responsibilities, hours and break times, salary and pay range, benefits, holidays and vacation time, and schedule of performance evaluations. A company phone list could also be included.
- ▲ *Procedures and policies manual* – details the official rules and regulations of the company. These may include policies on dress code, personal phone calls, employee conduct, and alcohol and drug use, as well as ethical and safety standards.



Cultural Time

Time is in many respects a cultural concept, and the way people approach their work is often influenced by the culture in which they live.

Some cultures, such as those in North America and northern and western Europe, have a *monochronic* orientation toward time. Being punctual is important as is the precise time designated (for example, planning to meet at 5:45 p.m.). People generally plan things step-by-step and focus on doing one task at a time. The pace is hectic, and the mentality is more rigid. Things are geared around the individual and on completing tasks. People desire personal space and their own possessions.

Other cultures, such as those in Africa, the Middle East and other European countries, have a *polychronic* mind-set with regard to time. Punctuality and precision aren't supreme, and people think in terms of general or approximate time (such as meeting "after work" as opposed to 5:45 on the dot). People are more adaptable in planning and more easily distracted, working on a variety of projects simultaneously. The pace is relaxed, and the attitude is more flexible. Things are oriented around the group and pleasing people. People are willing to share their personal space and belongings, and they value building long-standing relationships with others.

Identifying such distinctions can be helpful in doing business with people from other cultures. However, keep in mind that they're generalizations at best and can't be applied literally to every person or situation.

Travel Time-Conscious Style

Your time-management skills are the first thing to pack with you when business takes you out of the office. Knowing how to plan well can turn a necessary trip into a productive enterprise. **Here's how to plan a time-efficient business trip:**

- ▲ Double-check that the trip is necessary. Make sure the purpose of the trip can't be accomplished another way, such as with a conference call or letter. When possible, delegate the trip to someone else who could gain valuable experience by going.
- ▲ Consolidate several trips into one. Plan your trip well in advance, so you can meet with several people in the area, as well as on the way to and from your destination.
- ▲ Determine which travel options are truly most efficient. The shortest route from one point on the map to another may not be the fastest when you consider traffic and stops.
- ▲ Avoid rush hour. When possible, try not to book flights during airports' busiest times, which normally include Monday mornings, Friday afternoons,



major holidays, and weekdays between 9 to 11 a.m. and 4 to 8 p.m. Traveling during off times such as mid-Saturday or minor holidays makes delays less likely.

- ▲ Investigate alternatives. Landing at a nearby airport may be cheaper and less crowded than landing at the more popular airport in the area. Find out if there will be any upcoming events that may crowd the city's airports and hotels with out-of-town visitors.
- ▲ Make the most of your time. To save time, ask people to meet you at the airport to conduct business, especially if you're stopping over in transit to somewhere else. Do intensive work on long flights, and save light reading and mundane tasks for time spent in waiting rooms or unwinding at the end of the day.
- ▲ Stay flexible. No matter how well-planned your trip is, be ready to change course when your circumstances or priorities do. Consult an updated pocket flight guide to plan alternate arrangements and connections when your flight is late or cancelled.

Save Time with an Idea Journal

Sometimes an idea journal can be a viable alternative to having yet another meeting. **To dialog with coworkers using an idea journal:**

- Write the topic for discussion on the cover of a notebook, and place it where people can access it easily.
- Tell each person who would have been at the meeting to plan a time to write his or her thoughts in the idea journal.
- Ask people to read the entries already written in the journal and to then record their own thoughts and suggestions about the topic.
- Encourage people to continue writing their comments for several days or weeks as they get new insights.
- Request that no critical remarks be made of others' entries until enough time has elapsed for several options to be generated, and then call for evaluations and plans to be added to the journal.

Your Assistant's "To Do" List

Depending on how industrious your administrative assistant is, he or she may fly through your assigned "to do" list with time to spare. **Here are additional things your administrative assistant can do once specific tasks have been completed:**

- ◆ Survey upcoming work. Review projects to come in the near future, and plan out the preparatory work in advance. Make a list of questions and topics to research.
- ◆ Take inventory. Check to be sure that all supplies are well-stocked and that equipment is functioning properly. Order missing or depleted parts and supplies.

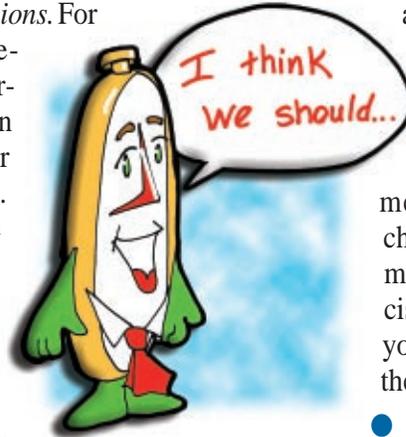


- ◆ Do minor housekeeping tasks. Clean and dust areas that maintenance personnel tend to overlook, such as computer monitors, keyboards and behind furniture. Water and trim plants.
- ◆ Create a job manual. Write a booklet describing the duties of the position and how to do them. This will provide a handy resource when your assistant is unavailable or no longer working for you.
- ◆ Reorganize to make the work area more efficient. Examine traffic patterns, and rearrange furniture and supplies so they're more accessible. Place items that aren't used often somewhere else.

Making Timely Decisions

Managers often have more than their share of decisions to make. Unless they become proficient in making decisions in a timely manner, they can consume too much time. **The following are guidelines for making timely decisions:**

- *Prioritize your decisions.* For each decision presented to you, determine whether it's an important decision or an unimportant one. Remember that the 80/20 principle also applies here. Only approximately 20 percent of your decisions will yield 80 percent of your worthwhile results.
- *Spend minimal time on unimportant decisions.* Delegate them if possible. If you can't delegate them, figure out which choice would be at least 50 percent likely to be correct, and make it at once. If you're deliberating for too long, toss a coin to decide.



- *When making important decisions, gather relevant data first.* You don't have to know everything to make a decision, however. Set yourself a deadline for the amount of time you'll wait to decide, and then act decisively on the information that you have available to you at that time.

- *Adjust your decision accordingly.* If you notice that the decision you've implemented isn't working, change it before it does more damage. If your decision is successful, double your efforts to maximize the results.

- *Avoid missing critical turning points.* Many crisis decisions can be avoided by staying aware of your present standing. Each month ask yourself: What potential problems or opportunities may be developing that I'm unaware of? What's working well and not so well, and why?

Managing Projects to Completion

When overseeing a group project, remember to:

- *Stay focused on the goals.* Your job is to keep the group mindful of these goals and the reasons behind them.
- *Keep track of people's progress.* Touch base with the people on the project whose jobs are essential for its success.
- *Assist people, but don't do their work for them.* If people are unable to carry out their assigned responsibilities, replace them.
- *Initiate productive meetings.* Maintain clear communication with your staff. Cover the essentials on your agenda, and keep the meetings punctual.
- *Avoid getting trapped in departmental politics.* Never speak negatively of people to others, and work on solving problems rather than blaming people.
- *Update everyone on the project's progress.* Keep people encouraged and motivated by informing them of the little successes along the way.
- *Grant recognition to contributors.* Thank people for the specific jobs they do, and let people's bosses know when they do an exceptional job.

Reaping More with Referrals

For the time and attention you sow into your customers, you can reap even greater revenue from the referrals they give you. Most satisfied customers are willing to pass on referrals, but you shouldn't wait for them to come to you.

The following are ideas for actively pursuing referrals:

- ❖ Ask for referrals when making a sale. Do so at the same time you're collecting customer information. Invite new customers to a prize drawing, or give them a discount on their next purchase. You can also ask when delivering a product or service or when a sale falls through.
- ❖ Offer current customers an incentive. Call or write customers to thank them for their business, and ask for a referral in exchange for a discount or gift. Insert referral forms in newsletters and business documents that you send to your customers regularly.
- ❖ Take advantage of meetings and events. Talk about your business at events hosted by civic or social organizations such as your local chamber of commerce. Or, host your own event, and give out prizes and questionnaires that request referrals.
- ❖ Exchange referrals with other businesses. Companies that are involved in a similar line of work can extend their reach by sharing referrals with one another. You can even trade referrals with your competitors when the prospect has a need that you or your competitor can't accommodate.
- ❖ Follow up on referrals promptly. Try to make contact with people within a day so that interested prospects won't have already taken their business elsewhere. Give prospects a discount to show that you appreciate their business, and be sure to send a thank-you note to people who give you referrals.



How to Outclass the Competition

What do you do when you discover that a competitor has slammed you or your company? **Here's advice from experts quoted in *Selling Power*:**

- Although you may have plenty to say about the offending party, stay calm and composed. Don't sling mud back at your offender and lower yourself to the same level.
- Your first reply is critical. Always be prepared, and stay cool. Prepare and follow a script for what you'll say in various circumstances, and practice it ahead of time.
- Know what to expect. If you're familiar with your competitors and their products, you can deal with their criticism in a constructive manner. Proactively offer information that addresses a possible criticism before it comes up.
- Bring the conversation around to your goals as soon as possible. Rehearse scenarios of what you would say if a customer mentioned the competitor's comments during a sales call.
- Generally ignore the criticism and continue with your message. This demonstrates that you're confident about your product or service without having to put down the competition.
- If the customer returns to the point, treat it like an objection. Use it as a way to discuss what's important to the person and how your product or service can help meet those needs.



Are Your Advertisements Accurate?

Truthful advertising is the cornerstone of a sales strategy that's marked by integrity. Integrity can't be bought or sold and is a priceless commodity in the eyes of your customers. **The following are aspects to consider when examining the accuracy of your advertisements:**

- ◆ Do they contain promises that you can't deliver? Anytime you guarantee something, you should mention that complete details are available upon request.
- ◆ Do they include any misleading inferences? Each individual statement in the ad may be legitimate, but when read as a whole, it may lead to a faulty conclusion.
- ◆ Can you substantiate the claims made in them? Facts and statistics should be current and have reliable sources. Comparisons should be reasonable.
- ◆ Are they clear and easy to understand? Avoid using asterisks and fine print. Never use asterisks to essentially nullify or contradict what's said.
- ◆ Are they showcasing what you intend to sell? Never "bait" customers with a discounted item in an ad and then attempt to sell them a higher-priced alternative.
- ◆ Can you deliver the products or services offered? Make sure that you have enough merchandise and personnel available to meet the expected demand.
- ◆ Are they in the best interests of your customers? When you put the interests of your customers first, they will in turn want to do business with you.

Source: *The Better Business Bureau*, www.bbb.org.

How to Take Effective Naps

Are you inclined to doze in the afternoon hours? Although you may think to blame it on your lunch or the summer heat, your slump in energy is actually a natural result of the dip in body temperature that occurs roughly 12 hours after the midpoint of your nighttime sleep cycle. Even when people aren't given any time cues, they will still sleep in one long period and one short one. **The following are facts to know about naps:**

- ▲ Stress can interfere with the amount of restorative sleep your body receives, hindering your ability to function well. It can even lead to depression and psychological problems. Naps and relaxation techniques can help counteract the effects of stress on your body.
- ▲ Naps consist of restful non-REM sleep and can help alleviate fatigue, improve your mood, and enhance your attention, memory and decision-making skills.
- ▲ If you nap for longer than 45 minutes, you'll wake up groggy – unless you nap a full two hours so that your body can go through the full sleep cycle and wake refreshed.
- ▲ When you anticipate having to stay up all night, take a nap *before* the sleepless night rather than after it to help make up for the sleep you'll lose.
- ▲ If you find yourself napping often or for long periods of time, you're probably not getting enough sleep at night or enough of the deep sleep your body needs.
- ▲ If you have trouble falling or staying asleep at night, avoid taking naps during the day, which may be disrupting your sleep cycle. Take 10 minutes to relax instead.

Making Time for Vacation

When work is hectic, you might conclude that there's no time to stop and take a vacation. But no matter how unremitting your workload may be, taking a break can be vital to your health and wellness. In fact, research notes that people who took frequent vacations were 40 percent less likely to die from heart disease than those who took no vacations at all.

And while not getting away from work can qualify you for burnout, it also leaves your staff with little opportunity to take greater initiative and responsibility to handle things on their own. When you return, you'll have fresh insight and perspective to improve both your job and your company. **To make a break and take the vacation you need:**

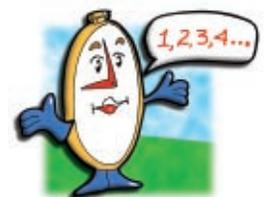
- ◆ Schedule it ahead of time. When there's always so much to be done, you'll never find the "perfect" time to take a vacation. If possible, try to plan for a time of year when business slows down somewhat. If there is no such time, designate a certain date, and then prepare for it in advance.
- ◆ Make arrangements for your absence. Appoint someone to act in your place while you're gone, and give this person full control and authority. Determine which work won't get done that needs to, and either delegate it, hire temporary help, or do it yourself before you go.
- ◆ Learn to trust your staff. If you feel that you can't leave things in the hands of your staff for a few days, is your lack of trust due to their incompetence or your need for control? Take a few hours away from the office one day to give your staff practice in dealing with problems without your help.
- ◆ Establish reasonable limits. Communicate to customers and contacts when you'll be gone, and let coworkers know the specific conditions that warrant contacting you while you're away. Distinguish between routine matters and genuine crises.
- ◆ Allow yourself to get away. Give yourself at least a few days to be completely removed from all thoughts of work. If you do need to stay in touch, choose a specific time to check your E-mail and voice mail, and let it pile up until then.
- ◆ Transition back to work gracefully. Make a list of the things you learned on your vacation and the ideas you have for improving work when you return. Give your staff well-deserved compliments for all of their hard work, and talk through the problems and mistakes that occurred while you were gone.



Stressed? Take a Breather

Try the following breathing technique to calm your body's fight-or-flight response when in a stressful situation:

- ❖ Breathe in slowly through your nose for six seconds.
- ❖ Hold the air in your lungs gently for three seconds.
- ❖ Breathe out for six seconds.
- ❖ Repeat the 6-3-6 technique several times until you relax.



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 informa-

tion 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

Types of Deadlines

Deadlines prompt you to action and accomplishment. When all your tasks are of equal priority, they can also help you determine which one to do first. **The following are different types of deadlines you may encounter:**

- ▲ Imperative deadlines set by someone else. These deadlines must be observed at all costs. For example, if you aren't on the airplane at the departure time, you'll miss it.
- ▲ Flexible deadlines set by someone else. These deadlines may or may not be high priority, depending on the authority of the person giving them or the time they allow.
- ▲ Intrinsic deadlines based on the nature of the task. Sometimes the task itself will require a certain time limit. Cooking, for example, often has specific time constraints.
- ▲ Self-imposed deadlines. These deadlines provide motivation and a means to measure your effectiveness and accomplishments. You may set these when you want or need results.

Looking Back at Your Week

Keeping organized is an ongoing process. By surveying the status of your work at the end of each week, you can stay on top of your schedule, your files and your inbox. **The following are things to review on Friday:**

- ◆ *Notes* – Glance over any notes you took at meetings, brainstorming sessions, or journal entries, and make a list of the actions you need to take on them. File them away appropriately.
- ◆ *Files* – File any paperwork that you don't need out anymore, and put files that have been left out back where they belong. Toss out any duplicate or unnecessary paperwork.
- ◆ *Stray papers* – Collect and sort scrap pieces of paper, business cards and other miscellaneous items that you've accumulated. File them away or put them in your inbox to handle later.
- ◆ *Calendar* – Look back at the past week for any action steps you still need to take. Examine the upcoming week and month for the projects and events you have ahead of you, and plan for them as necessary.
- ◆ *"To do" list* – Check off items that have been accomplished and delete the ones that have become obsolete. Write down any new items that you'll need to carry over from this week to the next.
- ◆ *Reminders* – Make sure you've taken care of everything you wrote yourself a reminder about. Check whether you have anything left that you must do today.
- ◆ *Projects* – Note how your current projects are coming along. Did you accomplish at least one objective on each? Are there any projects "on the back burner" that you need to start working on?
- ◆ *Pending items* – If you've been waiting on someone to respond before you take action on something, follow up with this person to check the status. If it's your turn to take action, make plans to do so.

