

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT



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“Two keys to success are time and attention. Present your results on time and be proud that you had the discipline to produce work that is worthy of appreciation.”

Where Does the Time Go?

THREE STEPS TO MANAGING YOUR MOST VALUABLE COMMODITY

Everyone knows that time management is about the amount of order and control you want in your life at home and in business. So, why is it so difficult? It’s difficult because life is happening all around us, distractions take precedence, and are a perfect excuse not to get started. Here are some questions to ponder:

- Have you ever produced a less-than-perfect report, proposal, or status update because you ran out of time?
- Have you ever misread a situation because you delegated a task to someone else and then didn’t have the time to follow up?

- Have you ever given a presentation that you know you didn’t put enough time into?

Managing your time is a personal activity that only you can change. It takes discipline, a desire to change, and the fortitude to stick with the “new” you for at least 30 days. So, let’s do this!

Plan

Plan your activities at the end of each day. By doing this, you know what you have accomplished already, you know what still needs to be done, and you have a sense of accomplishment so the rest of the evening can be enjoyed. Work and life balance are critical to clear thinking and happiness.

What needs to be done? Who can help you gather the supporting data? When is your

deadline? Those questions need to be answered as part of your plan to get started and reach your deadline. Any project should be completed at least three days ahead of schedule in order to accommodate unplanned interruptions.

Slice and Dice

Examine all of the elements of what needs to be done and break it down into pieces. When you are done, it should look like Swiss cheese. Why Swiss cheese? Swiss cheese has holes and that is what you are doing: slicing holes in your project. Do you have all of the information you need to support your recommendations? If not, who can help you provide the necessary data? Be sure to explain the scope of what you need and when you need it so you have all of your information in time for the completion.

Always ask for information well in advance of your deadline; you don't want to put yourself in a position to wait for someone else. Inspect what you expect! Check in with the person that is assisting you to ensure that they are working on it and understand your deadline. Examine all of the data to ensure that it is accurate and that nothing is left out. Remember to acknowledge the contribution of others to your end results. You are now ready to put it all together, which is the easy part. Delaying this final activity is delusional thinking – you are responsible for the results, not those who assisted you.

Execute

Carve out time in the beginning of your day to review the project in its entirety to determine if you have everything or if anything was omitted in error, and to proceed to the finish. This is a lot like painting a room; you don't want to be in a position to run out of materials in the middle of this project and interrupt progress by having to take a trip to Lowe's.

Place this project right in front of you either on your desk or on your computer screen. That way, when you are interrupted by events that can't be avoided, there is no question where you were. Get right back to it, stay focused, and finish.

So now you are done, right? Not so fast! Take yourself away where you won't be bothered and examine your results on paper. Yes, paper! That is where you will notice inconsistent formatting, data that is extra and doesn't support your recommendation, and any flaws that will be the topic of discussion. You want to be the person that others can count on for flawless execution, not the one who is sent back to the drawing board for further changes.

Two keys to success are time and attention. Present your results on time and be proud that you had the discipline to produce work that is worthy of appreciation. Now, go tackle your next project. Plan it, slice it, and execute it. Make yourself proud to be that person who can always be counted on. ♦

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