

Success Strategies: Time, the Only Un-renewable Resource!

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Time. Tick, tick, ticking away. This moment ... gone. Never to return, never to be experienced again. The next moment ... coming up and soon to pass by.

When you take a few moments to contemplate the moments, you suddenly realize that there really isn't any way to get them back. We can renew energy, paper, plastic, glass, even money! But not time. Which begs the question: How are you spending the one thing you can't get any more of?

There are myriad "systems" to help you organize your time. Day planners, day runners, Outlook, Act, Goldmine, Teatime, online calendars, off-line calendars, PDA calendars, clocks, alarms, GPS-PDA-NFL-miracle watches! Regardless of which one(s) you use, I'll bet you \$100 that you are spending WAY too much time on "low value-low return" activities.

What do I mean by that? Well, let's do a little exercise first. Let's find out how much your time is worth. Now you may have done this calculation, but you haven't done it my way.

First, the "now." Take your annual earnings and divide them by 52 to get your weekly earnings. Don't divide by 40 or however many hours you think you work per week. Think about how many hours per day you actually work. Is it 5 hours? 4 hours? Think about it and use an honest number for your daily activity. Multiply by 5 and divide that into your weekly number. That's what your current time is worth. Now do this: Do the same calculation with the income that you want to be making. Now you have two numbers and a difference between them. How are you going to get from "now" to "where you want to be?"

One way is to increase the number of effective hours that you work. To get more of those, you need to offload those tasks that can be done by someone at a lower cost per hour than your time is worth! Here are some quick strategies for doing just that:

1. **Manage Your Phone.** Set specific times to either take calls or to return them. If you have voice mail ... use it! And let people know when you'll be calling back. If you have an assistant, have him or her schedule your return phone calls with the caller. You'd be surprised how well this works and how little we really need to be "instantly available."
2. **Get A "Virtual Assistant."** What's a virtual assistant (VA)? An assistant that you use on demand and only have to pay for the actual hours worked. A VA can do

just about anything that an in-person assistant can do, but you don't have to pay wages or worry about employment issues. Here's a link for you to get a free report on all of the really cool ways that you can get a VA to work for you: Team Double-Click, Inc. - 41-Page Free Report "101 Ways to Work With a Virtual Assistant"

Close The Door To Your Office. And leave it closed for long periods of time so that you can work on an uninterrupted basis. If people knock, don't answer. If they come in, stare at them and say that you're busy. Just like the phone, schedule times for people to speak with you and ask them to bring up all of their issues then.

3. Respond to Emails Once Per Day. Nowhere is it written that you have to respond to emails immediately. Let them accumulate until you can close your door, turn off you phone, and have your VA go through all of the junk. THEN respond to ones that really need attention.

4. Turn Off The Cell Phone. OK, this is really a blend of #1 and #4. If you don't manage your time, then other people will! Again, call back when you have time, can focus on the call, and have all of the resources you need for that call at hand.

I hope that you find these useful. Since I've been using them my productivity has increased dramatically. Try them for a week and let me know how it goes for you!

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