



# MONDAY MOTIVATOR

CREATED BY PERFORMANCE STRATEGIES  
MANAGEMENT CONSULTING GROUP

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## Management Focus

Welcome to another edition of Monday Motivator. We had great interest in our edition # 19 on FOCUS. The feedback we got suggested new ideas that created this NEW edition on the topic and we're calling this one MANAGEMENT FOCUS.

When you're managing a team for any purpose there are key issues that impact team results. For example, have you ever noticed that when you're engaged in an activity that there is a nagging feeling that your time is not being used in a productive way? You're not alone. Most people pay



more attention to their inbox than their bank account. Instead of focusing on delivering a paying value proposition many managers focus on feel-good activities that provide a sense of being busy but not of being productive.

So where does all that time go? By 5pm on most business days the "to-do" lists that so

many carry with them day after day just don't get done. There are three reasons for this:

1. **Unrealistic expectations.** Let's start here; most people think tasks will require half as much time as they plan for and cost half as much as end up costing. Examples are everywhere. One interesting example involves one of the world's largest aircraft manufacturing companies. Back in 2000 they gathered up the smartest aircraft experts in the world and set about building the largest airliner ever built. Of course we're talking about the Airbus A-380. This monster airliner was designed to carry 850 passengers in unsurpassed luxury. The research and design budget alone was set at \$10.7B (billion!). It ended up being \$16B. The actual total additional cost hit \$6.1B by the time all the kinks were worked out. One of the biggest problems was the 530Km of wires, cables and wiring harnesses weaving their way throughout the airframe. With more than 100,000 wires and 40,300 connectors performing 1,150 separate functions, the Airbus A380 has the most complex electrical system Airbus had ever designed. In addition to the cost overruns the delivery of the first passenger-ready aircraft was delayed by two years! Okay, one can argue that creating the world's largest commercial airliner can be a little different than planning a relatively simple 8 hour day. So let's get back to the ordinary work day most of us face each morning.

- a. Travel to and from someplace other than your residence. Travel time can be useful if you use the time to make phone calls providing you have an in vehicle

system that allows you to do this without touching your phone. You can also listen to CDs or Pod Casts to learn while your drive. Whatever you do, stay safe and pay total attention to the road in front of you. When you rear end someone it's usually your fault unless someone rear ended you first. Stay safe!



- b. Meetings; most meetings are not effective. They tend to start late, run long and usually the agenda is not clear cut so the conversations ramble with little real decision making getting done. Keep them to a minimum when possible.
- c. Phone calls. We can't avoid them and if your team is in any sort of sales the phone is the ruler of the desk! But even they can be more on purpose and to the point while avoiding too much chatter and idle talk about things not connected with being productive.



- d. E Mails; there's no getting away from these either but you can have your team only check them each two to four hours instead of jumping each time a little sound happens to let you know you have mail. As a manager you should try this yourself... stay on purpose, on track, focused and determined to finish what you're working on at the moment. Teach your team to do the same thing.
- e. Regular mail; there may be less of this these days but we need to learn to touch it just one time. Toss it, file it or put it into a box that gets attended to later. So next time you get 3 magazine renewal notices in the mail just put them away. The magazines will not go out of business if you don't return that notice right this minute.
- f. Sales calls; this is the main reason about one third of Americans get up in the morning. Making sales with a phone call or in person is critical to personal and corporate success. Make time for them and stay focused on how many and how far your team members need to go to get the job done.
- g. Management conferences; these are different than office meetings. Here we are talking about trade shows, conventions, etc. Only attend them if being there will have a positive impact on your sales. I've known companies to spend nearly a million dollars only to make an impressive showing but earn less than ten percent of that for the effort.
- h. To do lists are highly ineffective. Sorry to say it but it's true in this modern age of computers. Use an electronic calendar that syncs with both your computer and your phone. You can always print out a day or week or even month if you feel the need for the printed version. The important thing to remember here is that "to-do" lists nearly never get done. The national average seems to be about 40% of what's on a "to-do" list actually gets done. Even that varies wildly depending on how much time and task discipline you apply to all the other activities going on in your day to day life.



**2. Unplanned interruptions.** Here we are talking about those times when someone simply stops by for a "quick visit." Effective managers simply close their doors. Some will even put a note on the door that says "Busy

until 3 pm” or something similar. Others with administrative assistants will request that all calls and visits are to be put off until a project gets done based on the time frame set up for it. Here is a great online source of additional data on this topic: <http://www.fastcompany.com/3044667/work-smart/the-hidden-costs-of-interruptions-at-work>

3. **Unintended consequences.** Now we’re talking about issues that happen because something else happened that had nothing to do with being productive. A good example took place just this week in the north bound lanes of the Interstate 5 coming out of San Diego. Yes, Sunday traffic is slow anyway in the north bound lanes but a construction crew had left LED signs lit up stating that construction was being conducted ahead when in fact, there was nobody there. They all had Sunday off but nobody thought to turn off the LED signs so people started slowing down, expecting lane changes up ahead. This slowed everyone up behind them until the backup was about 12 miles long. If you’ve ever sat in traffic moving 5 miles per hour you know what a stress inducer that can be. Similar unintended consequences can happen at the office as well as in the community. Such activity takes the focus off the tasks at hand. Managers have their hands full as it is and adding pop up emergencies or other distractions is like a drip of water coming down from the ceiling; not that big a deal but you cannot ignore it. Managers are better advised to say something like “Okay folks ... the show’s over so go on back to your desks.” And it helps if you can do it with a John Wayne accent.

Until next week, if you know of any business that would benefit with a little coaching in the areas of organization, time and task management, social media, sales, marketing, customer service, operations, HR, leadership or team-building, have them give us a call at 562-577-7000 or send us an email. We will keep you in the loop on how it’s going.

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