



MONDAY MOTIVATOR

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So Many Tasks, So Little Time!

When we sit down with a cup of our favorite beverage and get out a pad of paper what comes to mind? Is it a “to-do” list? We get more than a few requests for tips on time and task management, so we’re devoting this edition to that illusive source of stress.



Most of us have way too many things to do to fit them into one day. I was at a restaurant the other day and the waitress came over with a glass of water as I was looking at the menu. She asked me if I needed a little more time. My natural reaction was to say “yes” and keep reading the menu. On her second request, I ordered a lunch salad and then thought about the humor in her first request.

Who among us would not like a little more time? Would that come in handy if you were arriving at the airport with thirty minutes to catch your plane? Or how about being stuck in traffic on your way to an important client meeting? The idea of more time comes from racing the clock; that is, having more to do than time permits. Most of us start our days with good intentions, so adding a few additional errands, details or tasks to the “to do” list does not seem that bad. The problem is we also tend to do the easy or fun tasks first and leave the harder, more important tasks until the day is nearly over. The

result is lack of productivity, slow progress, personal irritability over feeling rushed and the stress of being in a hurry as the day wears on.

Many experts on the topic of both personal and business time and task management agree on the following key considerations for improving time use and task efficiency:

1. Use a “to-do” list but do it correctly. Try to keep the list down to no more than ten tasks then label them A, B or C. The A’s must get done today, no exceptions. The B’s can get done today or tomorrow, no problem. The C’s need to be delegated to someone else.

2. Set personal goals for both your personal and business objectives. It's not enough to tell yourself you want to lose weight or earn more money. You need to have a date by which you want to achieve any goal, even if it's a fraction of the bigger goal you want. That way you stay on track and your self-esteem gets a pat on the back as you progress.

3. Manage distractions. If ever there was good advice on time management this has to be it.



We live in a massively distraction oriented world. Your computer alone has the ability to burn up many hours per day with useless distractions that do nothing to help you achieve your goals. Surfing the web will distract anyone who dares start, and the time used can be more than you think. Now add drop in visitors, phone calls, the phone itself, TV, radio, newspapers, magazines, books, malls, restaurants, pubs, movie theaters ... well, you get the point. Focus is the name of the game if you want to reach your goals.

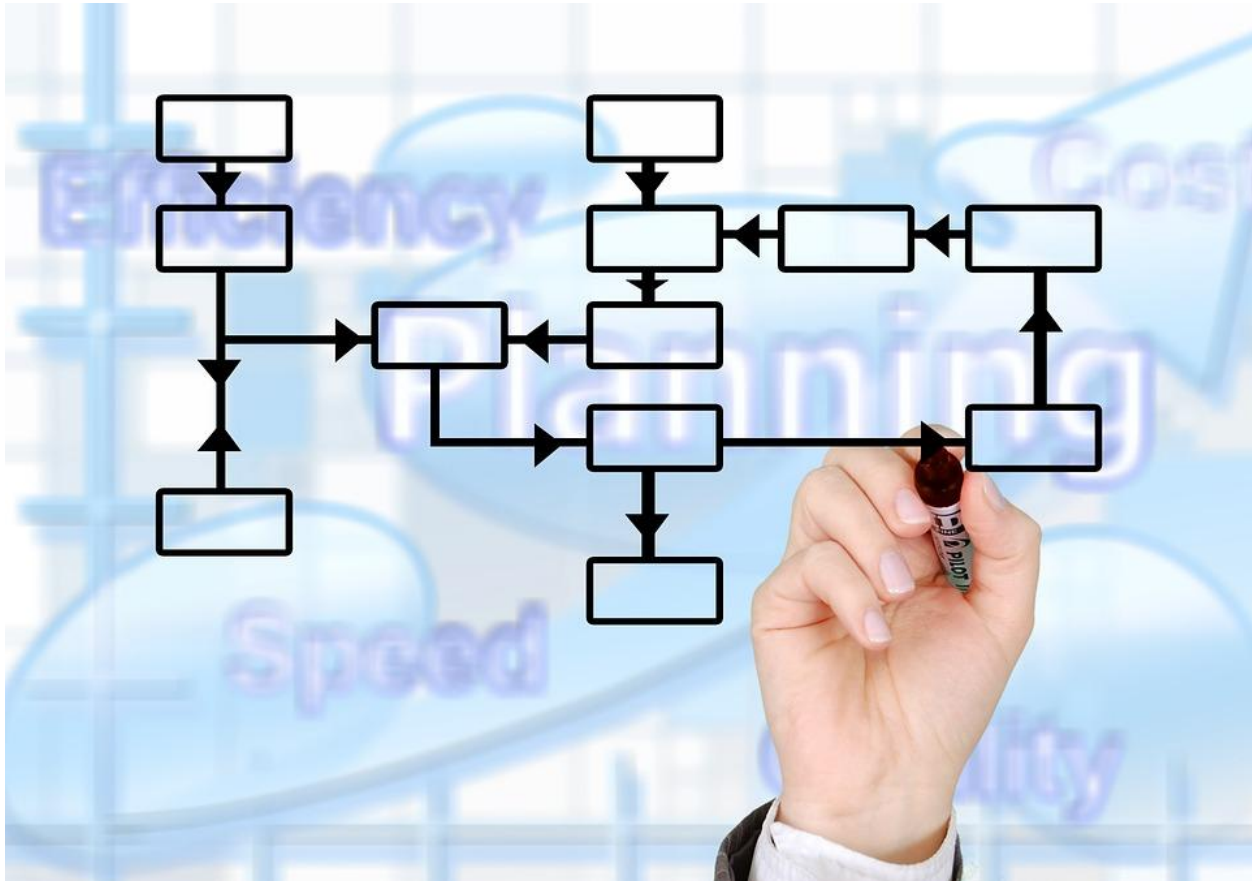
tomorrow or the next day. Remember, if it's an A then do it now. The B's and C's can wait.

4. Overcome procrastination whenever you get that feeling that you can put it off until

5. Say NO now and then. It's human nature to want to be of help to others. So, the tendency can be to agree to do this or that for someone else, even when it has nothing to do with helping you reach your goals. The end result is you over commit to tasks that are not on purpose for your objectives. We get used to waking up every day thinking we have all the time in the world. In reality our hours are numbered. The more of them we waste, the harder it is to regain lost time. The next time someone asks you to do something as a favor just say that you are on a deadline and won't be able to help out for the next few days. Nobody gets their feelings hurt and you get your tasks done on time.

6. Avoid multitasking. This means don't try to write an email while talking on the phone, as one example. People get irritated quick when they're talking to you while you are doing something else. Common courtesy requires that if you are going to answer the phone or make a phone call, you pay attention to the other person. Otherwise your writing will be full of typos and your phone call will end badly. People perform better when they are doing one thing at a time.

7. Take a break every couple of hours. Some people feel good about working nonstop for 8 hours in a row, passing up breaks and taking only ten minutes for lunch. In reality, your brain and your body need a rest now and then. If you overwork either one you risk the quality of your work plus the quality of your health. Sick people don't produce much.
8. Task scheduling can make a big difference. Some tasks are better done before noon, while others can be done better after a lunch break. I notice that my writing is much more focused in the early hours of the day. Research or software study is much easier for me in the afternoons. By balancing out these two time frames I get more done and with less stress.



There is some good news about this subject and that is the large number of seminars, workshops and webinars on this very topic. In fact, here at the Coaching Center offices of Performance Strategies we are putting on a Time Management workshop every few months for those who want to learn strategies and techniques for managing time more effectively. Call Jay McDowell at 949-422-1167 for details.

Other sources of support can be found online and in classrooms in just about any town or city you call home, and there are countless books on the subject. Here are a few of our favorite sources of support for this important skill”

<http://gettingthingsdone.com/>

https://www.amazon.com/dp/B011Q1EXV8/ref=dp-kindle-redirect?_encoding=UTF8&btkr=1

https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01LBRS42G/ref=dp-kindle-redirect?_encoding=UTF8&btkr=1

https://www.amazon.com/dp/B00606F80A/ref=dp-kindle-redirect?_encoding=UTF8&btkr=1

Another, newer source of support for both time and task management is in the form of software that gets better all the time. At Performance Strategies we like a relative newcomer to the ranks of collaborative applications called “Purpose.” We offer this excellent solution to our clients and get praise for the way it allows entire companies to reduce their most key strategic operations to a single sheet. Call us for details about this highly effective management tool.



In summary, time management is not really about managing time as much as it is about managing ourselves. Time ticks by no matter what any of us are doing. The idea that we can outrun the clock is absurd. With proper planning, prioritizing, focus and determination any of us can get more done in less time by simply being aware of how valuable time is. How we use it determines whether we own the railroad or mop the railroad station floors.

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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Our consulting and coaching focus supports management, sales, customer service and operations. Included are sales and management assessment surveys as well as leadership, teambuilding, sales operations efficiency and tracking projects. Our other team members bring additional disciplines as well. We will showcase them in future editions of this business journal. We are all committed to driving the results you want.