



# MONDAY MOTIVATOR

CREATED BY PERFORMANCE STRATEGIES  
MANAGEMENT CONSULTING GROUP

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## TIME MANAGEMENT - 201

Welcome to another edition of The Monday Motivator. In this issue, we're going to explore TIME MANAGEMENT just in time for one of our bi-annual presentations here at our executive coaching center. When we think of time management what we're really addressing is task management with time slots assigned to the tasks.



The people most famous for managing time are the guys who adjust this giant clock in London, England and perhaps the famous mythical character from the H. G. Wells novel The Time Machine.

In the movie version of The Time Machine, the film stars Guy Pearce as Alexander Hartdegen, a brilliant mathematician who hopes to use Einstein's earliest theories to build a machine to travel through time. He is in love with the beautiful Emma (Sienna Guillory), but on the very night when he proposes marriage, a tragedy happens, and he vows to travel back in time in his new machine and change the course of history. But we are not talking about this kind of time management.

What is time management? As it turns out we can't really manage time at all. Time marches on no matter what we do. Every person has 24 hours per day to make

any choices they want to make and do what they want to do, or avoid doing what they do not want to do.

When we refer to “getting things done” the term “time management” comes up. The reality is we use time to keep track of where (when, actually) we are in our day to day activities and to help us coordinate events that require more than one person to be in a certain place at a certain time. This is how every corporation or institution is synchronized. The



same is true for every military function. Time, it turns out, is critical to the success of human endeavors from theatre curtain calls to the launch of a rocket or to where you are on the planet. GPS (Global Positioning System) is all about pinpointing where a GPS receiver is with amazing accuracy. The way it works is dependent on atomic clocks used to measure the time it takes to move from one place to another, and your GPS unit reveals your new location on the Earth. Here are FIVE key points about time management any business owner can use immediately.



## THE TO-DO LIST

Every successful time manager has a to-do list of some sort and entrepreneurs are no exception. Sir Richard Branson believes in lists so much that he adorned the inner sleeves of his biography with them. To-do lists are typically done daily and are meant to help us focus on what's urgent

and important. Time management expert and business consultant [Mike Gardner](#) recommends writing a to-do list at the same time every day. "It's generally agreed that they should be done at the same time every day, for me it's the night before," he says. To-do lists are great for left-brain logical types, but for some they can be a problem. However, an action list of three things, which can only be done by the individual, should work for most people, he says. "I recommend that people write down three things they want to achieve and focus on those first. Take it as far as you can and then move on to the next thing."

### ONE TASK AT A TIME

Concentration works best when it is focused on a task in hand. Constant interruptions break our train of thought and increase the time it takes to do tasks. It's not always possible to prevent every interruption, but don't float between tasks. Also, try to limit distractions and persuade others to leave you alone when you're busy. "A two-minute phone call takes away about 15 minutes of productivity if it interrupts an important task. Similarly, emails are very distracting," says Gardner. "I recommend only checking emails three times per day, in the morning, midday and evening. Also, I let calls go to voicemail if I am busy. In truth, most people can do this. We wouldn't respond if we were in a meeting or at the hospital, so it is doable. Often, it's about training others as to how you work and taking control," says Gardner.

### AUTOMATE WHERE POSSIBLE



With new online tools emerging all the time, our personal and time-based working practices quickly become old-fashioned. A regular review of your current methods might reveal ways of improving your efficiency through automation. "If you've done it more than three times then create a system to do it for you," advises Will Robertson, founder and CEO of the Orange

County, CA coaching company Performance Strategies, Inc. "Creating a list of things to get done can easily be counter-productive if you know in advance you cannot possibly address more than three or four out of a list of twenty. It also sets you up for a negative experience. The negativity comes from feeling that you are overwhelmed by your own job and can't measure up to your own expectations." It's better to get a little coaching on this issue and dedicate yourself to changing your habits where time use is concerned. Consider this; 7.5 billion people are all doing something every moment of every day all at the same time. Only what you do is important.

## PARKINSON'S LAW

"Work expands to fill the time available for its completion," declared British civil servant Cyril Parkinson. It's a point which many have taken exception to over the years, but there does seem to be some truth in it. It's remarkable how much we can all achieve when pushed, so cut down on your workload by slashing the time spent doing it. Jay McDowell, President of Performance Strategies, Inc. reckons that if we really enjoy a task we tend to stretch out the time it takes to complete it. There is where a great deal of procrastination starts in the workplace. "Sometimes we should say: 'that's good enough'. It's not that we should not do good work, but that often we achieve 80 % of the task in 20% of the time we spend doing it. The rest of the time is spent attempting to perfect it, when really we should stick to time limits and complete the task."

## TAKE A BREAK

The final rule of time management is the most paradoxical of them all - do nothing. If we work around the clock, we become less productive, less creative and prone to making costly mistakes. Everyone needs sleep, some time off and a little time to step back and think about things. Angela Muir, head of leadership and people practice at Ashridge Business School, says all business owners need to take breaks, although the exact amount of time required is a personal decision. "There's no 'one size fits all' approach for holidays. The key things are about autonomy and control," she says. Muir also says that business owners that get too sucked into the world of work can dramatically reduce their effectiveness. A lack of sleep can reduce productivity by as much as 80% and mistakes are bound to follow.

In summary, time management is all about task management. Attending one of our two public presentations per year will help with organization, planning and task mastery. Call to learn more.

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