Helpful Ideas On How To Increase Your Productivity

Taking the time to organize and plan out your work day is the best way to use your time productively. ~ Dr. Donald E. Wetmore

Most of our work day is filled with unplanned phone calls and co-worker interruptions; but the real time suckers are emails, social media and internet surfing. The average employee checks their email every 36 minutes, which is at least 15 times a day. It takes an individual at least 16 minutes to refocus after each interruption. Below is a list of ways that experts have suggested to add more productive time to our work day.

7 Productivity Tips:

- Cale Newport is the author of *Deep Work: Rules for Focused Success in a Distracted World.* He has inspired workers all over the world to adopt the concept of "**deep work**". The idea is to block off long periods of distraction-free time this allows your brain to focus on your work. He says to treat this time like you would a meeting. You wouldn't stop in the middle of a meeting to answer a call or check your email, so don't interrupt your deep work time with these distractions either.

- Make a list of daily tasks and responsibilities. Find the common themes and group them together. Identifying the areas where you spend most of your time can help you balance your day. Design your time around what the most important tasks are. Don't forget to schedule the tasks that you enjoy, these are the parts of your job that help keep you energized.

- "Be honest with yourself. How much focused time can you devote to a task? Will you get burned out early?" Lauren Perkins, Founder and CEO of Perks Consulting says, she prioritizes her schedule by identifying which tasks offer the most benefits to her business. "And most importantly make sure that you are realistic in your goals".

- Set aside specific times to attend to the tasks that can be distracting. Block a time to check your emails instead of constantly monitoring your inbox. Take <u>scheduled</u> social media breaks and get rid of all of those pesky alerts & notifications that constantly pull your attention away from what you are trying to accomplish.

- Organize mental clutter by creating a To-Do list and stick to it. Every article I have read says <u>write things down</u>. Use whatever method you prefer OneNote or a pencil and paper. Free up your mind to attend to the important tasks instead of using it to try to remember what you have to do.

- The most important advice is you have to know how to say "**No**". Making too many commitments, is the easiest way to kill your productivity. The more things you commit to, the less time you have to work on the important matters. Here are a couple suggested ways to turn tasks down. Create an email template explaining how busy you are and why you can not accept another task at the moment. Practice reciting a few sentences, state what you are working on and that you are too busy to take anything else on.

If you are being pulled in too many directions and you feel like you are falling behind. It is important to assess how you are spending your time.   W.R.

How to Beat Stress

- Connect with others - Find the best people you can to collaborate with. Having the right team helps conquer challenges and stressful situations.

- Breathe - One of the most effective ways to calm yourself is the meditative practice known as mindful breathing. Inhale-Hold-Exhale By focusing your mind on your breathing you are stepping away from stress.

- Don't focus on email: Set aside two to three times per day to check and respond to emails. Then you can use the rest of your day to focus on the work you need to get done.

- Force yourself to take break: walk away and focus on something else. Coming back with a fresh mind can help overcome mental blocks or barriers.

- Use those Calendars! As things pop up prioritize what needs your attention urgently and schedule things that can be taken care later. Getting caught up in issues as they come in makes it easier to miss the more important tasks.

- Daily Mediation has been proven to improve mental focus. Exercise is good for every part of your body especially the brain!

Employees Are Letting Hackers Into Your Network ...

Cyberthreats are everywhere these days, hackers have huge arsenals of tools at their disposal, from automated bots to malicious advertising networks. But there is one "tool" that you may be putting directly into their hands: your employees. They can be fooled into clicking on a link in an e-mail or downloading unapproved software into a company device, allowing hackers access to your network. This is why it is so import that your employees are trained on cyber security. They should understand why it is in place and why they should only connect to your network using secured devices.

 1. Because phishing E-Mails are constantly evolving, it is extremely important that your employees are able to identify them. It used to be that the average phishing e-mail included a message littered with bad grammar and misspelled words. Hackers now disguise these e-mails and websites to look like legitimate messages, they might contain the name of your bank or use names from your contact list. Train your staff to pay attention to little details, such as inconsistencies in URLs in the body of the e-mail. These inconsistencies can include odd strings of numbers in the web address or links to YourBank.net instead of YourBank.com. Good training can help your employees recognize these types of red flags.

 2. Malware has also gotten very creative at tricking staff into downloading malicious software on their network computers. Your employee may think they are clicking on a legitimate security link or new program that will be helpful. Your security should be set up so that no one can download without the admin rights, and there should be strict rules set for getting approval before downloading anything. Malware can be introduced by staff connecting an infected device to your network. Don't let your employees USB thumb drives to transfer data from home!

 3. Another way to make a hacker's job easy is to is to never update your passwords or by using very simple passwords. Believe it or not people are still using weak passwords (PASSWORD or 12345). Appoint someone on staff to send out a "Time to Change Password" email every 30 days. In the body of your email, remind them to stay away from easy passwords and not to reuse old passwords.

 4. Endpoint protection across the board is so important. Every device on your network should be firewalled and have updated malware and ransomware protection in place. If you have remote employees, they should only use verified and protected devices to connect to your network. (They should also be using a VPN, or virtual private network, for even more security.)
These are just a few examples of how comprehensive IT and network security training can give your employees the knowledge and resources they need to help protect themselves and your business. Just remember, you do not have to do this by yourself! Good IT training programs are hard to find, and we are here to help.

Top Project Tips

Map out the project before you go to work. Give yourself and your team a plan to follow as you work through the project. As with any project, expect obstacles along the way and be willing to update your original plan.

We all need the right tools – Explore some of the many project management tools that are available. There is software and messaging applications that can give your team an open line of communication, allowing them to collaborate and stay organized.

Assign Accordingly . Be sure to delegate each section of the project to the team member based on his or her strengths. Schedule follow up meetings to track how things are going and who may need help or not.

WYANT WORD SCRAMBLE

Theresa Metcalf from Kingsley Forest Area Credit Union won the gift card drawing!
September's Answers:
Entrepreneurs, Challenges, Navigational, Hierarchy, Masqueraded
Survival, Sacrificial, Logical Bonus: Harvest Festival

HOMEPEVCNSIER

STINTCONEISN

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HINT: MAIZE PUZZLE

A Leader's Most Important Job

A leader's most important job is taking the time and effort to focus their team. Leaders must help their team members focus their time and expertise to complete the organization's most important work.

The most successful businesses are driven by profit, innovation, efficiency and effectiveness.

Your team's revenue and results are all driven by how people spend their time (effort) and expertise (knowledge and skills), and these are the keys to elevating your team's success. By doing these things and being a role model for your team, you can experience amazing results.

How To Elevate Your Team

1. **Passion**
Creating a vision requires passion. This passion elevates your own commitment and helps both you and your team be productive. It's unlikely that a leader will be fully immersed in their role, their organization or their team if they are not passionate about what they are doing.
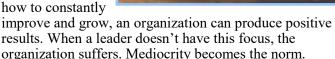
2. **Time Expertise And Motivation**
Everything is the by-product of time and expertise. When a leader invests both time and expertise into their team, the team grows. When time and expertise are invested wisely, the organization also achieves great success. By putting the time and expertise into your team members, you can motivate them to improve in their roles.

3. **Focus**

This goes hand in hand with time and expertise. By focusing on the strengths (and weaknesses) of a team and learning how to constantly improve and grow, an organization can produce positive results. When a leader doesn't have this focus, the organization suffers. Mediocrity becomes the norm.

A great deal of time and expertise is wasted in companies where employees are doing low-priority work or work that shouldn't be done at all. When a team lacks an effective leader, it is difficult for them to know what they should be doing instead.
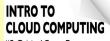
When a leader takes the time to show their team the importance of their work and how their work will achieve success, the whole organization grows. This commitment is what creates remarkable performances. You can learn more about this in my book The Encore Effect: How To Achieve Remarkable Performance In Anything You Do.

At the end of the day, it's most important for leaders to regularly take the time to focus on and elevate their team. Just as a conductor makes sure members of an orchestra are all playing the right music to the best of their ability, so does an effective leader do their job.

Mark Sanborn, CSP, CPAE, is the President of Sanborn & Associates, Inc., an "idea studio" that seeks to motivate and develop leaders in and outside of business. He's the best-selling author of books like Fred Factor *and* The Potential Principle *and a noted expert on leadership, team building, customer service and company change. He holds the Certified Speaking Professional designation from the National Speakers Association and is a member of the Speaker Hall of Fame.*

Good Time Managers do not allocate their time to those who "*demand*" it,

but rather, to those who "*deserve*" it. ~ *Dr. Donald E. Wetmore*

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PO BOX 153
ACME, MI 49610

Tools to Help With Time Management

We have posted several articles about how much time is wasted during a work day. I thought it would be helpful to see what kinds of tools are available for time management. Below is a link to a blog by Megan Marrs and she has done the work for us. Here are her top picks for "The 21 Best Productivity Tools to Add More Hours to Your Day".

https://www.wordstream.com/blog/ws/2015/03/26/productivity-tools

Some of Wendy's picks:

For time management there is **Toggl & Rescue Time.** These are 2 apps are designed to help by tracking what websites you use the most during your work day. And for those of us that lose too much time on social media, there is **StayFocused.** This is a free extension from Chrome that you can set up to restrict your access to "time-wasting websites.

Google Drive is one of the many tools she mentions and I have been using for several years, it has become my best friend. It is sharable, allowing you to chat and send notes to your team within a document. Although it only offers basic editing tools, it is cloud based so it is accessible from anywhere. Oh, and the best part, it is FREE!

She has a couple of editing programs on the list one of which I purchased **Hemingway,** which is an editing tool designed to help with sentence structure and grammar. A lifetime subscription is only $20. So far it has helped me with my run on sentences and lets me know when something I have written is hard to understand. It would be nice if there was something like this app, that could help me with my conversational skills. :)

There are many time saving tools on Megan's blog that I want to explore but first I have to find some spare time.   W.R.

The average person gets 1 interruption every 8 minutes, or approximately 7 an hour, or 50–60 per day. The average interruption takes 5 minutes, totaling about 4 hours or 50% of the average workday. 80% of those interruptions are typically rated as "little value" or "no value" creating approximately 3 hours of wasted time per day. ~ Dr. Donald E. Wetmore