

Effective Time Management

Here are a few effective time management tips for you.

Ever since I've started using these methods, my productivity has soared. And my time wasted has diminished. The great equalizer among everyone, rich and poor alike, is that we all get 24 hours in a day. The difference between what we do with that time will lead us to our dream lives or sabotage us. This could truly be the single most valuable time management article ever written for that reason alone.

Every night, before you go to sleep, **plan your next day**. Plan what you want to get done. Before I implemented this method, I used to spend way too long in the morning figuring out what I was supposed to be doing. With a set agenda for the following morning, you can hit the ground running and start taking massive action to achieving your goals.

Be list-driven. Make and keep lists. I have a list to keep me organized for almost everything. It's so much easier on your mind to get things out of your head and onto paper than burdening yourself with the task of remembering every single friggin' thing you have going. This is especially useful if you're super busy.

Prioritize. Here's how to work most effectively. This may be the single greatest tip ever written. (No, I didn't come up with this tip although I wish that I did.) As you're planning your day, first put everything you'd like to get done on paper. Then, prioritize the tasks with the most important task coming first and the least important task coming last. Now, when you work, stick with the first thing on your list until you complete it. This is critically important! Don't jump around. Avoid skipping around to other tasks. Work on the most important things first until completion. Then move on to the next task on your list. At the end of the day, no matter what, you will have worked on the highest value tasks. Incidentally, the difference between high productivity people and low productivity people is how they spend their time.

Think on paper. Plan well. Time spent where you're planning is time well spent. It's so much easier to think through a project from start to finish and list the tasks involved than starting a monster project and then getting bogged down in, "What do I do now? What do I do next?" Balance this planning with "paralysis by analysis." Plan well...then take action upon the faith that you can get each individual task done.

Delegate. Here's a great exercise for you to do. Figure out what kind of annual income you want to make. Then do the math to figure out what your hourly wage must be. As you go through your day, track what you're doing. And next to what you're doing, put a dollar value amount for how much it would cost you to hire someone to do the activity for you. At the end of the day, look over all the tasks

that you could easily delegate, especially for little money, and do it! Save yourself to be the “money person” and do what is your specialty and most valuable to your company.

Track your time. For months, I’ve been tracking my time. And I’ve noticed my efficiency in working balloon. We can control what we can measure. I list the activities that I’m doing and how long they’re taking me. I track how long my total work day is. Doing this allows me to see if I’m improving or not, whether I’m efficient or slacking. It has been very instructive and I recommend it to you.

Mentally use time quadrants. There are four time quadrants. Every activity you do has two kinds of classifications. There are activities that are important and unimportant. AND...there are activities that are urgent and not urgent.

Here are the time quadrants:

Time quadrant 1: An activity that is URGENT and IMPORTANT

Time quadrant 2: An activity that is NOT urgent but IMPORTANT

Time quadrant 3: An activity that is URGENT but NOT IMPORTANT

Time quadrant 4: An activity that is NEITHER URGENT NOR IMPORTANT

Most people who run around like a chicken with their head cut off are living in time quadrant 1. It’s a place where they are constantly “fighting fires” and they can’t catch their breath to get anything done. Ideally, as an effective time manager, you’ll have an occasional Quadrant 1 activity pop up but the rarer, the better.

Quadrant 2 is where you want to be. You want to be spending your time on doing important things and getting them done before they’re urgent. The challenge is that it’s often easy for us to neglect these activities if we’ve conditioned ourselves to only serve four alarm emergencies (Quadrant 1). We have to wean ourselves off the idea of working in Quadrant 1. Just say no to the “under the gun” pressure of Quadrant 1.

For example, me writing this article is a quadrant 2 activity for me. It’s important and yet it’s not urgent. I could procrastinate writing it if I wanted to. But it needs to get done. So here I am, as I write this, working in quadrant 2.

Quadrant 3 is horrible (urgent but NOT important). You know what quadrant 3 is? Quadrant 3 is me jumping up to answer the phone while working on something truly important only to find it’s the receptionist at the hair stylist who wants to confirm my appointment for the following day. Resist the temptation to have a knee-jerk reaction and respond to things that are urgent but not really

important. Watch out for things that beg for your immediate attention but are not important. Say a bright colleague of yours asks for your help simply because of your availability...even though you know he/she could figure it out him/herself if you weren't around. That colleague stopping by your office is trying to box you into Quadrant 3. Resist the temptation. Let the bright colleague figure it out him/herself.

Quadrant 4 is the worst of all. Quadrant 4 is the set of all worthless activities. They are things neither urgent nor important. Go to great lengths to avoid these activities as much as possible. Fixing your already neat desk at work to avoid doing what needs to be done is a Quadrant 4 activity. Talking more than necessary at the water cooler, gossiping, etc. are quadrant 4 activities.

Track what time quadrants you're operating in. Work from time Quadrant 2 as much as possible. Eliminate Quadrant 1 activities by devising a better system to prevent these full-blown emergencies. Ignore Quadrant 3 stuff until you have some extra time to deal with it. Dispense with Quadrant 4 activities altogether.

Militantly guard your time. Be ruthless in this regard.

Now, you have a choice. So what Quadrant are you in while you're reading this article? Well, if you apply what you've learned here, this article will be important but it wasn't urgent that you read it. Quadrant 2. You could've read it later had you wanted to. But if you don't apply what you learned here, it'll be a Quadrant 4 activity because all this article would have done is sucked up your valuable time. If you read something and don't apply it, you get the same results as if you hadn't read it.

The bottom line...apply what you learn in this article.

There you have it my friend.

This is Kent Sayre signing off...saying...You are unstoppable!

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