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Time management for executives with no time to waste: Tips on increasing your productivity

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Productivity is simply put: the devotion of time for useful activities.

Devotion-Love what you do and do it whole heartedly. If you do not love what you do...find something to do that you love. Be devoted to time since this is one thing we have a finite amount of.

Useful-Something that is appreciated and necessary in order to achieve a goal or end result. Things that you consider useless or not necessary should be delegated or not done at all if you can avoid them.

Activities-Focus on action items and goals not on to-do lists. Use visualization to imagine accomplishing these activities.

Productivity is also defined as the ratio of quantity and quality of units produced to the labor needed to produce it divided by the time it takes to produce it.

Productivity = (Quality) (Quantity) Labor

Quality-Something that works, lasts and looks great. People generally want quality and are willing to pay a premium, for it.

Quantity-How many units of the item can be produced. Obviously, the more the better provided that there is a market for the product or service.

Labor-People, computers and/or machines that make the product or service. The cost of human labor is a factor in the bottom line but sometimes, machines are more productive than people.

Knowing these basic concepts can help us manage time better but here are some practical ideas to help you on your way:

Learn to love your job by seeing the good that comes out of it and be happy with your accomplishments no matter how small.

Work with people and clients you like and enjoy working with. Create harmony in the workspace and create peace in your work environment.

Devote yourself to what you do and if you can't, try doing something else that you can feel devoted to.

Find your job useful and meaningful. Find that what you do makes a difference in the world and that you will gain personal satisfaction from helping and serving others.

Understand that your time is the most valuable thing you have to offer. Avoid wasting time on useless activities like gossiping, reading personal e-mails, going on social web sites, daydreaming and being interrupted by e-mails, phone calls and drop-ins.

Set a certain amount of time each day for certain activities and do them regularly and habitually. Answer all your calls from 2-3, read all your e-mails from 3-4, manage your staff from 4-5 for example.

Avoid to-do list and task lists but reword them to activity lists. Instead of writing: file paperwork for

permit, try: fill out form for permit and meet with expediter to explain and answer questions. This further clarifies the goals by allowing you to visualize and imagine the outcome of what you need to get done.

Take tasks, transform them to activities, place them in your calendar and treat them like appointments. The concept is that you block out time to do these activities and don't let other things get in the way. Make them important by categorizing them into priorities: urgent and important; important; urgent; not urgent but important; not important but urgent. A few discoveries from this: important is always a higher priority than urgent. If your main client needs something and says take your time, but a salesman wants to see you immediately, what activity would you take care of first? I hope you would do the billable work.

Always remember that you are working in order to make a living so the rate of return for your activities should always be a determining factor in setting priorities unless you are independently wealthy. Keep a record of your time and income and figure out what your hourly rate is: you may be surprised to realize how much money you are actually making on some of your activities. You are sometimes better off working on smaller projects that are easier to do than the larger ones that take forever and you end up making far less on an hourly basis.

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