

Organized and Prioritized: Time Management for Today

Jeanne Baer
Creative Training
Solutions



Copyright 2008 NSLP

1

What you will learn today

- How to banish 25 time wasters and four unnecessary activities from your life
- Ten ways to prevent or handle interruptions
- Five steps to plan and prioritize effectively
- Five techniques to “get it done”

2

Banish time-wasters

3

Get organized

- Sending email or voicemail messages with so little detail that the receiver can't take action or get the information you need
- Responding to phone and email messages the moment they come in
- Not using "prime time" for priority work

4

Acquire and practice skills

- Writing ineffectively so that too much time is spent rewriting
- Communicating unclearly
- Not actively listening
- Worrying instead of actually solving a problem or making a decision

5

Acquire and practice skills (cont.)

- Be able to recognize nonverbals
- Worrying instead of actually solving a problem or making a decision

6

Apply more self discipline

- Constantly checking and answering voice mail, email and your cell phone
- Spending time on internet and social networking sites which bombard you with interesting, but unessential information
- Taking over-extended lunches and breaks

7

Apply more self discipline (cont.)

- Socializing versus sticking to business issues
- Not having self-imposed deadlines to propel you forward
- Reacting to crises as they arise instead of thinking “what if” and making contingency plans

8

Apply more self discipline (cont.)

- Shuffling papers instead of filing them, tossing them, or taking action
- Searching for never-filed or misplaced items
- Filing too much and throwing away too little, so that eventually it takes too long to find *anything*

9

Increase your confidence and assertiveness

- Waiting too long for other peoples' feedback or approval
- Procrastinating
- Maintaining a perfectionist's standards

10

Increase your confidence and assertiveness (cont.)

- Doing work others could or should do
- Not delegating when you should
- Allowing upward delegation

11

Increase your confidence and assertiveness (cont.)

- Allowing yourself to receive copies of emails you don't need to see
- Allowing constant interruptions from others (or yourself!)

12

Twenty five time wasters conclusion

- Don't try to tackle all 25 at once
- Pick one at a time and focus on it
- Practice until you master it

13

Is this really necessary?

Avoid spending time on the following:

- Writing reports that are no longer needed
- Attending meetings that don't require your input
- Following procedures that no longer apply
- Generating correspondence that serves no useful purpose

14

Questions?



15

Ten ways to prevent or handle interruptions

- Sit *not* facing the door
- Post a sign: "I'm unstoppable until..."
- If someone comes in anyway, postpone and reschedule
- Don't create too welcoming an environment

16

Ten ways to prevent or handle interruptions (cont.)

- Use nonverbals such as standing up, close your folder, checking your watch, picking up paperwork, or walking person to the door
- Encourage email for short items
- Send "termination" messages to visitors

17

Ten ways to prevent or handle interruptions (cont.)

- Have an assistant "gate-keep" for you, or swap gate-keeping services with colleagues
- Set a time limit with a drop-in visitor at the beginning
- Work away from your usual area


18

 We guarantee it.
National Student Loan Program

Ten ways to prevent or handle interruptions (cont.)


- Change your attitude about interruptions
 - Bottlenecks and delays cost processes and projects precious time
 - Whenever possible, make decisions and handle situations as they arise

19

 We guarantee it.
National Student Loan Program

Five steps to plan and prioritize effectively

20

 We guarantee it.
National Student Loan Program

“Failing to plan is planning to fail.”

1. Get your thoughts in writing, so you can begin to plan
 - dump everything that’s on your mind
 - use paper or software program

21

2. Decide if the activities you have recorded are urgent, important, both, or neither, and plan and act accordingly
- needs that are urgent will grab *you*
 - needs that are important are ones *you* must address

22

3. Mind-map all of your projects
- discover the smaller tasks you need to do to complete the project
 - assign deadlines to these tasks

23

4. Plan a week ahead and a day ahead
- a week to get a sense of context
 - a day ahead to “get real” about what you can accomplish
 - block out time to plan, or it won’t happen
 - you can always change your plan, but only once you *have* one

24

5. Ask yourself two questions before making a final commitment to your plan:
- Must you *do* this task?
 - Must *you* do this task?

Urgent Tasks

- Responding to them makes us feel...
 - stressed, exhausted
 - exhilarated, important, validated, and successful
- Accomplishing them brings instant results and instant gratification
- Once addicted, we *seek* crises to feel powerful and vital

Important Tasks

- Contribute to our purpose
- Give life meaning, richness
- Don't pressure us
- Don't act *upon* us, so they are things we must *act* upon

Urgent and important activities

- Crises
- Pressing problems
- Deadline-driven projects, meetings, preparations

28

Important (but not urgent) activities

- Planning
- Preparation
- Anticipation and prevention of problems
- Relationship building
- Recognizing and seizing new opportunities

29

Important (but not urgent) activities (cont.)

- Professional development and skill building
- Doing them increases our knowledge, skills, and abilities
- Ignoring them leads to stress, burnout, and urgency

30

Urgent (but not important) activities

- The noise of urgency creates the *illusion* of importance
- Phone calls, meetings, drop-in visitors, which meet *others'* expectations and priorities

31

Not urgent or important activities

- Time-wasting or “anesthetizing” activities
 - trash novels or TV
 - water cooler gossip
 - trivia
 - busy work

32

Focus on what's important

- Filling a jar - a metaphor for priority management
- Urgent and important - do yourself, ASAP
- Important, not urgent - do yourself, after composing goals and setting deadlines
- Urgent, not important - delegate
- Neither urgent nor important - ignore

33

Focus on what's important (cont.)

- What are the activities that will make the most significant contribution to the goals and values of your organization, and to your own development?
- See slides 29 and 30 for ideas
- Remember, urgent activities will *find you*; you must *seek out* important activities

34

Five techniques to “Get It Done”

1. Post visual reminders of your goals, but put distractions away
2. Take the “ten minute plunge” into dreaded tasks
3. Build in at least 20 minutes a day to slay leftover monsters

35

Five techniques to “Get It Done” (cont.)

4. Build in rewards with short activities you enjoy
5. Track (and celebrate) your progress

36

To Learn More

- *First Things First*, by Stephen Covey, A Merrill and R. Merrill
- *Prioritize Organize: The Art of Getting It Done*, by Jonathan and Susan Clark
- *Time Management*, by Marc Mancini (may be available as an e-book)
- *Time Management for Unmanageable People*, by Ann McGee Cooper
- **Not recommended:** Trying to read, digest, and apply hundreds of Web articles and blogs

37

Questions?



38

More Information

National Student Loan Program
1300 O St., P.O. Box 82507
Lincoln, NE 68501-2507
800-735-8778
www.nslp.org



Jeanne Baer, President
Creative Training Solutions
800-410-3178
jbaer@cts-online.net
www.cts-online.net

39
