Disruptions Log

Answer

One thing that gets in the way of effective time management is disruptions. Whether these disruptions come in the form of people approaching your desk, a phone call or email, they all prevent us from managing our time and getting things done. Disruptions can be frustrating, and we often waste a lot of time dealing with them.

There are a lot of ideas out there on how to deal with disruptions, but before you manage or minimize them, it’s a good idea to find out where they are coming from and why.

Step 1:

Each time you get disrupted (meaning each time you have to stop a task because your attention is drawn away) fill in the Disruptions Log. Here is what to record:

* Time – What time did the disruption occur?
* Type – What exactly was the disruption?
* Action – How did you deal with the disruption?
* Why – Was the disruption valid or urgent?
* Duration – How long did it take to deal with the disruption?
* Impact – What was the impact of the disruption on you?
* Reflection – How would you manage the disruption differently next time?

Do this for at least one day, preferably up to five days and then analyse the data. Look for trends and also look at how much time you have spent dealing with disruptions. Use the data to proactively put fixes in place to reduce or remove as many disruptions as you can. This will go a long way in improving your time management so you are more focused and productive.

Tips for getting the most value recording a personal disruption log.

* Record as much detail as possible about the disruptions.
* Update your log as a disruption occurs – don’t try and remember all the disruptions at the end of the day.

Day 1

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Time | What was the disruption? | How did I deal with the disruption? | Was it valid or urgent? | How long did it take to deal with it? | What was the impact of the disruption? | What would I do differently next time? |
| 08.40 | Colleague stopped at my desk to say hello. | I had a quick chat with them. | No | 10 mins | Was nice to have a chat, but I had just started working through my emails for the day, so it stopped me and then I had to remember where I was up to. | Suggest we catch up at lunchtime. |
| 09.25 | LinkedIn notification  on my phone. | I quickly looked at the notification and commented on it. | No | 10 mins | It broke my concentration on the presentation that I was writing.  Then it was hard to start back again. I then went and made a coffee as I was already distracted. | Turn off notifications during the workday and check at the end of the day. |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Step 2:

Analyze your Disruptions Log. What trends do you notice? What does your Disruptions Log tell you?

Step 3:

How will you manage or minimize disruptions more effectively? What specific strategies will you put in place?