

Six Simple Steps for Time Management

Step 1 : Touch It Once

If you touch it, take action. For work in progress organize the to do item under appropriate category.

Exercise 1

Figure out the impact areas of your business. Here is an example:

1. Distribution
2. Writers Platform
3. Social Media

Create a separate folder for each of these categories. Organize your to do list in these folders.

Step 2 : Make Lists

Make a list of six most important things you need to get done that day. You can keep a side list of running items that need to be done.

When you plan each day, you can go to your long list and use that as a menu of items from which to build your list of the six most important things for that day.

Exercise 2

Take a clean sheet of paper and write down the six most important things you need to get done tomorrow. Your list might look something like:

1. Item 1
2. Item 2
3. Item 3
4. Item 4
5. Item 5
6. Item 6

Step 3 : Allocate Time to Tasks

Plan how much time you will allocate to each task. Do not think about when you will do each task. Just determine the amount of time you will realistically dedicate to each task. If one or more items is too big to accomplish in one day, then write down how much time during that day you will dedicate to it.

What have you been putting off for years? What important initiatives are you just not getting to because they take too much time? Do them in small chunks of time.

Exercise 3

Next to each item on your list, write how much time you will realistically spend on it tomorrow.

1. Item 1 - 0.5 hour
2. Item 2 - 1.5 hours
3. Item 3 - 0.5 hour
4. Item 4 - 1 hour
5. Item 5 - 1 hour
6. Item 6 - 2 hours

Add up the total amount of hours for your 'productive tasks'. Here it comes to 6.5 hours. Your six most important things should take about six hours.

Step 4 : Plan the Day

- 8 - 8:30 Item 1
- 8:30 - 9:00 Item 2
- 9 - 10:30 and so on.
- 10:30 - 11:00
- 11 - 12:00
- 12 - 1:00
- 1 - 2:00
- 2 - 3:00
- 3 - 5:00
- 5 - 6:00

This is actually a 10-hour day, but only 6.5 hours is allocated to six most important things. Plan at least two half-hour slots of reactive time. This schedules some flexible time into your day, some blank spaces in your schedule.

Exercise 4

Write a plan for your day tomorrow that would give you enough time to cross off all six items on your to-do list and stay on top of your email and other tasks.

Step 5 : Prioritize

Put the most important task first. This simple step will give you a tremendous sense of control and accomplishment. Focus 80% of your effort on high-results-producing activities.

If you are a one-person army, then you personally must spend at least 2.5 hours per day growing your company.

Exercise 5

Look at your plan.

- How much of your day is proactive and how much is reactive?
- Where did you put the most important task for the day?
- At the beginning? In the middle? At the end?
- Rewrite your plan so that you complete the most important task on your list first thing in the morning.
- Group together all of your reactive work, including answering emails and returning phone calls.
- Make sure most of your day is focused on proactive work such as prospecting or closing deals.

Step 6 : Decide on storing the information

Ask yourself, "Will it hurt me to throw this away?". Could you get it again if you needed it? 80% of all filed or stored information is never referred again.

Conclusion

There are six simple steps to time management.

- Touch it once.
- Make daily lists of the six most important tasks to accomplish.
- Plan how long each task will take.
- Assign time slots for accomplishing each task.
- Focus on the difficult projects first.

- Ask yourself, 'Will it hurt me to throw this away?'

Master these six steps and you will be operating at maximum productivity.