

Ten Time Management Tips from Wildfire

Techniques to tackle time management.



Studies suggest we are interrupted 73 times per working day and it takes 20 minutes to regain concentration. So how can we use time better?

1. Do less emailing and more speaking. Face-to-face and phone communication is more effective and unless you're a supersonic typist, faster as we speak at 125-175 words per minute!



2. Plan your meetings. Eradicate disorganised, unplanned meetings with un-itemised agendas, with no minute-taking protocol and lack of an in-charge chair! Think Plan, Process and Protocol!

3. Get tidy and de-clutter. If everything has a place, systems are simple and the workspace is clean, you'll use it properly and lose less. Getting your workspace to work for you can save hours per week.

4. Check email only 3 or 4 times a day. Checking email mid-morning, after lunch and late afternoon normally captures most incoming and urgent emails and allows you to react appropriately to a timeframe suitable to most senders. And you're left with loads of uninterrupted time for trickier tasks.

5. Say "no" and do less. Learning to say "no" can be a relief. When people know you find it hard to say "no" then you're an easy target to delegate to, whether it's a "favour" or with real authority. Try prioritising your tasks first. You don't gain credit for completing someone else's work.

6. Use To Do Lists and allocate task time. Without a To Do List your time can be used haphazardly according to what interruptions and distractions are thrown at you. A project usually takes up to twice the time we allow for it because of unforeseen hurdles thrown in. Use a To Do list to prioritise, free up the brain and allocate time to the most important tasks!



7. Delegate! Even if you don't have staff, you can delegate. It's hard to learn but good delegation frees up your day whilst getting the job done – only not only by you. Be sure about your own role and what fits into that of others. Ask for favours and flatter others into taking on tasks.

8. Use the 80:20 rule. Pareto's Principle suggests that 80% of input creates 20% of output/results and conversely 20% of input creates 80% of output/results. Do more of the 20% of impactful tasks.



9. Stop interruptions. Whether you take yourself off to a quiet place to work, book an imaginary meeting in a meeting room, give off body language saying “not available” at an open plan desk, turn the email “alert” off, put the phone on voicemail or turn off your mobile....any prevention of interruptions will give you a chance to maintain concentration to achieve core tasks.

10. Slow down. If you want to be less reactive, if you want time to plan, if your brain needs time to think and if you need some quiet time to concentrate or be creative....try slowing down. You will gain time and feel like you're going faster in the long run.

Four time management facts to make you think carefully about how much of your time is wasted:

1. The average manager is interrupted every 8 minutes (Dr R Swensen 1992)
2. 28% of the working day is spent on distractions (Basex, 1992)
3. Workers only use 3 of their 5 working days effectively (Microsoft, 2005)
4. Employees spend 36 minutes on personal tasks per day (Office Team Surveys, 2007)

For further ideas to what your appetite and solve workplace problems,

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