

## Helpful Tips for Time Management

How many of us have heard someone say, “If I just had a little more time in my day . . .”? A common challenge in the modern-day work environment is trying to do more with less. Employees are being asked to step up and take on more duties, but with less time or fewer team members available: less job postings, maybe less hours per week due to company cutbacks, less staffing due to retirements/transfers, etc. Learning how to effectively manage our time is critical. Time management skills are a big plus to any agency or business.

We have compiled a few tips to help you with a plan to manage your time.



- ✚ **Prioritize** – This is figuring out which of your tasks, projects or duties are the most important. Compile a list of duties you need to complete. Next, arrange them by order of importance, or by deadline/due date, or by specific staff who assigned each to you. Once you have the priorities established, you can move on to the next step. Make a list on your computer, note pad or calendar of those tasks which need your attention today.
  - What will cause the most trouble if it doesn't get completed?
  - What does my supervisor/customer need right away that only I can provide?
  - What tasks completed today will put me in a better position tomorrow?
  
- ✚ **Set Goals for Yourself** – You have to set goals for what you would like to accomplish each day as a way to keep yourself on task. If you do not set any goals, the day could be filled with interruptions and distractions and you'll feel as if you haven't made much progress. Be reasonable and realistic with your goals.

- ✚ Avoid the Pitfalls of Multi-Tasking – Sometimes, there might be a need for multi-tasking in order to get things accomplished due to a tight deadline. However, studies have shown that multi-tasking actually reduces our productivity in most cases, because it's difficult to focus on multiple things at once. Try to set your day up in blocks of time to handle specific tasks such as responding to email requests, returning phone calls, attending meetings, or any other daily duties required.
  - Do one thing at a time: When you jump around from one task to another before you've completed what you began, you lose momentum. Stick to the task you started and see it through before jumping to another "fire", another issue, another question. In the end, everything will get accomplished and you will not feel as if you are being pulled in ten different directions.



- ✚ Don't Overbook Your Calendar – Sometimes, we do not have control over certain meetings on our calendar and it is not an option to say No. However, when you do have an option, try not to overload or over-commit yourself within the business day to where you are feeling overwhelmed or anxious.
- ✚ Delegating – When at all possible, try to delegate some minor tasks to other staff who are capable of handling them for you in order to free yourself up for the more pressing projects needing your attention. If you get bogged down each day with too many minor tasks, it can drain you of the valuable time needed to accomplish your priorities.





- ✚ Manage Your Stress – A few times during the day, step away from your desk or office for a few minutes to take a deep breath and get yourself refocused. This will help you keep a healthy state of mind when dealing with your various job demands and responsibilities.
  
- ✚ Review Your Day – At the end of the day, check off your list to show what strides you made with getting items accomplished. This step also allows you to better plan for the following day, when you have determined what still needs to be done or any questions/concerns that need to be addressed.
  - Some days might not go according to schedule or how you pictured them to be, or how you have tried to prioritize. Just do what you can do and be resigned to the fact that you have the following day or the remainder of the week to continue making progress.

Additional information about Time Management is available online from a variety of workforce development resources.

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