

Getting More Done in Less Time

Got extra time to spare? Find yourself at midday with nothing to do? If you weren't certain this was Tudog's monthly newsletter you might think it was a piece out of National Lampoon. That's how absurd the mere suggestion of spare time is. We're all running around like lunatics, trying to squeeze 10 hours of work into 12 hour work days (not to mention time for family). Well, what if Tudog were to tell you that there are ways to speed through those small tasks that seem to take up so much of your time.

What happens too often is that we enter our day with large tasks in mind only to find that it is the small tasks that sweep away our time. If we can learn to lessen the time we need for these small chores, we would find ourselves with more time for the larger tasks. Spending less on time on the small stuff does not mean doing less of it, or even passing it on to someone else. It means learning to do them faster and with less effort.

Tudog has some suggestions that may serve you well as you go through your routine business activities on your way to your extraordinary business opportunities.

1. Return Phone Calls Sooner - Too many people let their return phone calls pile up or go get away from them, leaving a trail of people offended, angry, or simply out of the loop. You need to return all phone calls within 24 hours. If you do not wish to speak to the person or do not have everything ready for the conversation, have your assistant or someone else call and explain when you will get back. But in this fast paced world, if you don't return calls, the opportunities those calls represent will pass you by.

2. Shorten Your Calls - Just because you return a call doesn't mean you need to allow someone to capture more than a few minutes of your time. You can begin your conversation with "I only have a minute but I wanted to get back to you"...and then get down to business. If you see the conversation is dragging on you can end it politely but firmly. You need to control your time, and part of that time is spent on the telephone.

3. Get to No Faster - Regardless of which side of the deal you are on, people have a tendency to delay getting to "no", as in "no deal", "no sale", "no thank you". You need to get to the no as fast as you can so that you are not wasting time chasing rainbows or forcing someone to waste time. The kindest thing you can say to someone is that you are uninterested and that their time would be better dedicated elsewhere. Similarly, you can ask others for the same courtesy as applies to their answers to you.

4. Get to Yes Faster - Just like getting to no takes too long, sometimes getting to yes takes too long too. Sometimes making a decision is actually what is taking all the time – time you don't have to waste. So, one of the ways to accelerate processes is to make decisions more quickly. This can be accomplished by being better informed of your options and being able to pull the trigger when the time comes.

5. Commit - Too much time is spent on pondering and not enough is spent on executing. Once you have struggled with the elements and made your decision, commit to its execution. This will prevent the wasting of valuable time between when you made your decision and when it actually started getting done.

6. Be Polite - It may seem odd to find be polite on a list of time saving tactics, but we actually waste a great deal of time on issues that could be resolved with a simple apology. Don't wait until you realize you were wrong to apologize. It's enough that the other person believes you owe them the apology. It is their perspective of being wronged that outweighs your perspective that you did nothing wrong. The faster you apologize the faster you can move on. Same, by the way, with saying thank you. Showing appreciation immediately eliminates the time it takes to show even greater appreciation later on.

7. Take Shorter Lunch Breaks - A controversial suggestion no doubt, but while lunch may be a necessary breather in an otherwise hectic day, the truth is that your batteries can be refreshed in half the time you're giving them now. You don't need two hours to discuss something that might otherwise, had the meal not been involved, taken one hour. Give yourself the least amount of time you need for each task, including charging yourself up.

These hints are not going to be simple to perform because most of us are extremely embedded in our ways. Yet, if you are able to make the leap, you'll find yourself with more time to deal with the big stuff, and perhaps even enough time to make it home for dinner - every now and then.