SEVEN WAYS TO INCREASE YOUR PERSONAL PRODUCTIVITY:

PERSONAL PRODUCTIVITY

Increasing your personal productivity does not mean working harder or longer, It means working smarter. Here are 7 ways to accomplish more of what's most important to you with less time and effort.

1. **Manage your time the way you manage your business**. A successful business budgets, controls, and regularly evaluates its use of its assets. To increase your productivity, you must manage your most important asset - your time - in a similar way.

The first step is deciding what your most important goals are. Ask yourself: What do I most want to accomplish for my employer - and myself - in the next several months? Concentrate on the most important goals.

Next, you should outline, in writing, the steps you must take to accomplish these goals. Again, focus on the most critical steps. Also try to set out a timetable for completing each of these steps.

Re-evaluate your goals frequently. Get in the habit of asking yourself: Is this still the best use of my time?

2. **Focus each day's activity on your important goals**. Each day, you face a collection of things you have to do, would like to do, want to avoid, can't forget, and so forth. How do you sort these out?

An effective way is to list these activities and rank them according to how much they help you accomplish your important goals. You can categorize it: A, if it is urgent or a significant step toward achieving your goals; B, if it is of lesser value; and C, if it can be postponed.

Use your list to manage your discretionary time. Try not to work on any B's or C's until you have finished all your A's. At the end of the day, you can use the list to evaluate how effectively you spent your time.

3. **Audit your personal activities for several days**. Like many busy executives, you may be unsure of where the time goes each day.

The first step in the audit is to make a simple chart and record how you spend your time throughout the day. Try to account for all your time - "missing time" is often wasted time.

At the end of each day, review your chart and see how much time you spent on your important goals and tasks. Ask yourself questions like these:

What kept me from spending more time on my A and B activities?

What was my most frequent distraction or interruption? How can I avoid it in the future?

What steps can I take tomorrow to spend more time on my A and B activities?

What activities could I have delegated, postponed, or dropped completely?

4. **Learn from mistakes**. You can turn mistakes to your advantage by trying to learn from them. Take whatever you think was your biggest mistake in the last week or month and ask yourself:

What should I have done differently?

What can I do now to prevent the mistake from recurring?

A less painful way to learn from mistakes is to learn from the mistakes of others. When you do this, ask:

Could the same thing happen to me?

What can I do know to avoid having the same problem?

5. **Be careful about taking work home**. Sometimes you have no choice but to take work home with you. But don't forget that the possibility of working at home can be a crutch that keeps you limping through the day. It's easier to fritter an afternoon away if you think, "I'll do my important work tonight". Try to work for a week on a no-homework rule. If you can't do that, set a limit on the work you do at home.

6. **Don't overcommit yourself**. There is a limit to what you can accomplish in a day or a week. Don't commit yourself to handle more than you can successfully handle.

7. **Overcome mental block**. Many people are occasionally hampered by mental blocks that keep them from starting some important work. You can often overcome these blocks by analyzing them. Here are some examples:

Do you lack facts? Then start with some research.

Is the task overwhelming? Then divide it into smaller tasks and begin with just one of these tasks.

Are you tired? Take a break.

Are you afraid of something? Figure out what you fear. You'll often find that it doesn't merit your concern.

Do you lack conviction? Think about what you're trying to accomplish and be sure it's really worthwhile.

Make a habit of productivity. These 7 ways of increasing your productivity will work if you use some of them every day. Making them part of your work habits will improve your production, which will benefit both of you and your employer.

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