

TIME MANAGEMENT: MAKE THE MOST OF EVERY MINUTE

Wasted time equals lost opportunity. Lost opportunity means lost profits.

■ Time, and how to manage it are crucial to your success. The adage, "time is money," is especially true in the landscape industry.

Here are some suggestions on how to maximize your "minute management:"

1) Limit your availability. Unexpected and unplanned interruptions and distractions can steal your day. Too much time away from the "main thing" has a negative impact on your business productivity and profitability.

2) Concentrate your phone calls. Try to devote a certain time of the day both to return and originate phone calls. Prior to each call, jot down the points you want to cover, and take notes during conversations.

3) Protect your "magic" minutes. Knowing when you operate at peak performance allows you to devote certain activi-

ties to certain times of the day.

4) Be aware of time. Start by keeping a stopwatch with you. After a while, your internal clock will take over.

5) Establish a common format for similar pieces of correspondence. However, always ensure that letters are personalized and signed.

6) Confirm appointments. Never assume a meeting is on. A simple phone call saves time and energy.

7) Don't be stuck in traffic. Invest in a cellular car phone. Let a customer or prospect know you're on the way or will be a few minutes late. You can also check messages and return important phone calls.

8) Plan your day the night before. Try to divide your daily activities by type.

9) Allow time for each activity. Plan how long each item on your daily to-do lists will take. This helps you keep track of whether you're on schedule or running behind.

10) Reduction leads to completion.

Look at a major project in bite-size chunks. Plan what can be completed daily and weekly. It will reduce anxiety and keep quality and workmanship high.

11) Don't get buried by paper. Try to touch each piece of paper only once, and file it, act on it, or throw it away. If you haven't touched it in six months, you probably never will.

12) Set priorities. Rank duties from most important to least important.



The qualities of LEADERSHIP

Gaining 'four-star buy-ins' from employees means being enthusiastic, empathetic and more.

■ Even if you're not a natural-born leader, you can become one, according to Jim Perrone of Perrone-Ambrose Associates, Chicago, Ill.

Perrone, speaking at the Midwest Grounds Management Conference this summer, asked the audience what they thought employees want and expect most from their leaders. Here are the responses:

● integrity/trust/confidence,

- two-way communication,
- a sense of direction/vision,
- positive mental attitude,
- technical competence, and
- sincerity.

All supervisors are not leaders, Perrone said. He also noted that "we want to move away from the idea that a leader is superior. He or she just has a different area of responsibility."

Studies by American University and the University of California at Berkeley both revealed that leaders are visionary, Perrone said. "They have an agenda, and know where they're going."

"But what I don't see often enough is the ability to pass that vision on with a sense of urgency. This unleashes the ability of everyone else in the organization to connect their visions in."

Perrone says leaders can get employees to "invest their hearts, to get them on board, heart and soul."

"Leadership is making people *want* to do what they *have* to."

Likewise, he says, a vision is more than an idea, it's a force in the heart. Employees can "buy in" to the vision at four different levels:

LEADERSHIP GUIDELINES

- 1) Have an agenda; know where you're going.
- 2) Be honest, predictable and consistent.
- 3) Be trustworthy and exhibit integrity.
- 4) Show empathy, understand what people are struggling with.
- 5) Be enthusiastic.

★★★★ **Four-star buy-in** is a full commitment where the employee says "get out of my way."

★★★ **Three-star buy-in** is the employee who is "on board," a good soldier.

★★ **Two-star buy-in** is what Perrone calls "formal compliance."

★ **One-star buy-in** is what Perrone says is "grudging compliance" where the em-

ployee will do what he or she has to in order to keep the job.

Many employees are two-star and some are one-star. But leaders strive to get as many employees as possible into the three- and four-star categories. And one of the ways to do so is to be trustworthy and exhibit integrity.

"You've got to be honest, predictable and consistent," Perrone notes. "We pass on our vision by how we live. We must walk the

talk."

Opening the lines of two-way communication—what he terms "interpersonal competence"—means that the leader involves people in the process of leading. Employees expect leaders to be congruent and honest, to deliver information in a constructive (not destructive) way, and to get to know and value them as individuals.

"Show empathy, understand what people are struggling with," Perrone says.

Finally, "if you have no enthusiasm, it's going to be hard to be a leader."

Perrone, an expert in organizational human relations, is founder and managing partner of the nationally-recognized Perrone-Ambrose Associates. The Perrone-Ambrose approach to leadership is used at companies such as Environmental Industries, Xerox, Sandoz, Blue Cross/Blue Shield and ESPN.

The Midwest Grounds Management Conference, held at Illinois State University in Normal, was co-sponsored by the Professional Grounds Management Society and the Midwest Association of Higher Education of Facilities Officers.

—Jerry Roche

Be prepared! ...Winterize sprayers now

■ Now that cold weather has begun, don't forget to winterize your sprayer before storing it for the season. This can save costly delays from equipment breakdowns during the next business season. Applicators who practice preventive maintenance can improve sprayer performance.

A good cleaning with a cleaning/neutralizing solution is essential, says Tom Williams, University of Delaware cooperative extension agricultural engineer. The solution used depends on the pesticides to be removed from the sprayer. Check pesticide labels for specific cleaning instructions.

In most cases, Williams says, ¼ pound of laundry detergent in 25 gallons of water will do an adequate cleaning job. One quart of household ammonia per 25 gallons of water will help neutralize salt or amine formulations of herbicides. Leave the ammonia solution in the sprayer for at least six hours.

Choose the cleaning site carefully to avoid contaminating water supplies. You should have a chemical rinse pad some-



where on the premises. If you don't, the Delaware cooperative extension recommends that you stay 100 feet away from any well. They also say you shouldn't dump rinse water or cleaning solution in one spot. Instead, spray the solution on a field where it won't harm plants or animals.

"Wear appropriate protective clothing when cleaning the sprayer to prevent exposure to pesticides," Williams cautions. "As a minimum, wear rubber gloves, boots and apron to protect hands, shoes and

clothes. Also, wear splash-proof goggles for eye protection."

● Start cleaning by rinsing the inside of the tank with clean water. Spray the rinse water through the nozzles. Do this twice before mixing the cleaning/neutralizing solution. Agitate and spray out the cleaning solution. Then rinse again with clean water.

● Remove the nozzle tips, screens and ball check valves. Clean them in a strong detergent solution with a soft bristle brush. They can then be stored in kerosene over the winter.

● Check for leaks, corrosion and worn-out parts and make the necessary repairs. "Loosening or removing diaphragms in the check valves for storage helps ensure a solid seal for next year," Williams says.

● Finally, take steps to protect the sprayer unit from potential freeze damage. Add enough antifreeze with rust inhibitor to fill the pump and control valves. Circulate the antifreeze to protect all parts.

Next spring, drain the antifreeze from the sprayer and save it for future winter storage use. Clearly label it as contaminated and only for sprayer use. Then store the antifreeze with pesticide supplies over the summer.