



Power-to-Change

Inspiring people to reach their full potential

INSPIRATIONAL TOOLKIT

Issue no. 10.0111

7 Tips for Working Smarter not Harder

Why is it that those 24 hours in every day are never quite enough? Time is finite and you cannot increase the number of hours in a day. However, you *can* make dramatic changes to the way that you use that time. Here are my top 7 tips that will enable you to work smarter rather than harder.

1. You will find that you really will work differently when you have goals to work towards so the first step is to establish a baseline of goals, objectives and tasks. Goals and objectives pertain to end results whereas tasks define the steps you need to take in order to achieve those results. Once you have set goals for yourself or your business, prioritise them. You want to find clarity as to what is really important in your daily activities before you break your goals and objectives down into bite size tasks that are easier to focus on.
2. Review how you use your time. A good way to do this is to keep a log for a couple of weeks of exactly what you are doing during the day and for how long. Then compare this with your goals and objectives. It can be very enlightening to see just where you are spending your time and you may also be surprised to see just how much of your time is spent on areas not related to the goals and objectives you have prioritised. Having done this, you will be able to reallocate your time in relation to your goals and objectives.
3. Be effective with your use of time. In other words, do well what is really important. Don't get bogged down worrying that there isn't enough time to do everything well. Effective people make choices and focus on what really needs doing and then do it well. So instead of getting stressed by thinking "I've really got to get this done", ask yourself "should I be doing this at all?" The answer does not have to be working harder or longer but in radically restructuring your priorities so that you can achieve more of what you really want. This also means making your working space time effective by de-cluttering and introducing good systems that make it easier to find things because everything that consumes time, space, energy or resources unproductively detracts from your effectiveness.
4. Delegate as much as possible. If there are things that you don't do well then it makes sense to have someone better qualified to do it. Think about it, which costs you more; you spending numerous frustrating hours trying to create a website for your business when you have no IT skills instead of actively marketing your business and getting more paying clients and doing what you do best, or paying someone to create a professional looking site that will be up and running and bringing you more business in a fraction of the time? Do what you do best and get help with the rest.
5. Reduce stress. You may think it unusual to find this in a list of time management tips but when faced with more than they can get done, most people choose to work harder and longer with the obvious end result, work quality, energy and enthusiasm decrease while stress levels increase. You need to take time out in order to renew your energy levels by taking a short walk or a 10 minute cat nap for example. You will be able to think much clearer and get through so much more afterwards.
6. Value your time so that you can get the most out of your day. Are you a morning person or an evening person? Think about what part of the day you are more creative and when you can get the most done and make better use of these times to tackle important tasks. At different times during the day ask yourself "Am I making the best use of my time?" If not, stop what you are doing and work on another task that will allow you to make better use of your time.
7. Your health, family and friends are important too. The busier you are, the more important it is for you to schedule time to maintain your health and fitness as this will give you more energy. At the end of the day, being overworked and stressed is only going to hamper your health so take care of this and spend time with family and friends too. We all need support from family and friends so make time for them – you don't want to finish your career and find yourself alone!

If you want to make good use of your time, you've got to know what's most important and then give it all you've got. **Lee Iacocca**

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