

How to Control The 5 Major Time Wasters

Flashback: Are you ready? Hold on I will go pretty fast.

Morning

During my employment with the Louisiana Technical College, I had normal work hours 8am – 4:30pm so I started my morning at 6:00 am, getting my two kids ready for school (Jaune' & Jeffrey, Jr.) & myself for work. The usual routine, breakfast, combing hair, loading the car with book bags and occasionally preparing lunch for the kids to take to school (if the school menu had something they didn't find edible). First stop, Jeffrey's school (before care) next Jaune's school and than finally I arrive at work.

Afternoon

Jaune' had the dream (at that time) to become an aspiring ballet dancer and she had been accepted into a strenuous dance class at New Orleans Center of Creative Arts (NOCCA), however the classes started at 4:00 pm. so I received approval to take my lunch break at 3:30 pm to allow me the opportunity to take her to dance class to across town. Upon dropping her off at dance class, I returned to work and if I was lucky I ate something in the car or I brought something from home to eat once I returned to my office. Okay, its 4:30pm, time to leave work and pick up Jeffrey, Jr. from school (after school care) and bring him home so that he could get ready for his 5:30 pm Karate Class, we had just enough time to make it home, let him change into his karate uniform, get a snack and off to class.

Evening

Now its time to drive back across town to pick up Jaune' from Ballet Class which is over for 6:00 pm. and return back to get Jeffrey from Karate Class which ended at 6:30pm. Great! We are headed home for dinner (I still need to cook) homework and discussions about our day.

Are you still with me?

Jaune' is now changing uniforms because she has an 8:00 pm Karate Class. We are back on the road again, however we will return to get her for 9:00 pm when her class ends. In the hour we are home, Jeffrey bathes and get ready for the night. We leave to pick up Jaune'. Okay, we are going home for the evening; we are home at 9:20 pm.

Mission Completed.

I was asked numerous times how did I do it all so smoothly and with ease. I can't remember my reply then but now I would reply, I didn't waste time. I knew what I had

to do and I did it. I didn't allow time wasters to distract my time or allow me to be late or not complete my scheduled tasks. And you can do the same, the message is the same for your personal and business affairs, **control time wasters, get more done with less stress.**

1. Procrastination

I will do it tomorrow, I will get to it soon or whatever excuse you use, it's all procrastination. The feeling that you will complete the project or task in the near future will rob you of your time today and cause unnecessary stress when there is no more tomorrows left. In order to avoid this time trap, start your work day with the most unpleasant task first. Decide and visualize the desired outcome of the project and list small daily assignments that will get you to completion. You don't have to complete the project in one day, just work on it daily, set deadlines in order to reach the desired outcome. Also, think about the consequences of not doing the project or task, which alone will motivate you to get it done. Block time on your schedule for tasks and commit to following your schedule, this will help you avoid putting off until tomorrow. Once the project is completed, you will feel emotionally great to complete other duties.

2. Emails / Telephone

Block time in your schedule to read and reply to emails. I check and reply to emails in the morning before I start my daily tasks and once again as I close my day. I only check emails during the day if I have a few minutes due to cancellations or I have finished a task sooner than anticipated. If you review & respond to emails all day or whenever you get mail, you will tend to spend more time corresponding on the internet and not completing other much needed tasks. Create folders for emails that you do not have time to read but would like to read them later on your personal time. Use filters to avoid the over abundance of unwanted mail and keep replies short and to the point. Depending upon your services or products, it is great to establish a "frequently most asked questions" list and use it to reply to questions or post it on your web page (if you have one) as a point of reference, if the reply does not require a more customized answer from you.

3. Meetings

Before you attend or arrange a meeting make sure you have an agenda. The agenda should include the purpose of the meeting, intended outcome and action items to review. Set a start and ending time for meetings. Stay on schedule and do not allow the meeting to go past the scheduled ending time. Take accurate minutes or tape the meeting and have the notes transcribed and send it to all parties in attendance. Make sure there is a

necessary need for the meeting so you do not spend time outside of your office if it is not needed.

4. Unexpected Visitors

Set office hours (especially if you are a home based business owner) and share the hours with family, friends and associates. Let them know that you are working during those hours and you should only be distracted if there is an emergency. Keep your office door closed and hang a *do not disturb* sign on your door. Do not engage in aimless conversation, make a decision and end discussion.

5. No Daily Game Plan

You must start your day knowing what you need to accomplish on that day. Do not waste time wondering what you will do today. Purchase a weekly planner or use a spiral notebook and list time & tasks, any appointments, blocked time for telephone calls, emails and marketing. Put everything on your schedule with deadlines. At the end of the day, clear your desk and plan the next day's activities. You will feel organized, proud and enjoy your day without worrying about tomorrow's task, they are already planned. At the end of the week, you can then evaluate your weekly progress and make changes accordingly.

This Month's Action Step:

Write down what you do on a daily basis and include all interruptions: visitors, telephone calls, emails, meetings etc. then record how much time you spend with each. For example, read 45 incoming emails – 25 minutes, replied to 15 emails, 35 minutes, Aunt Sally stopped by to visit since she was in the area – 2 hours.

Identify Your Time Wasters.

You may find that there are other time wasters you have that I have not mentioned, write them all down. Then review your list, notice how much unnecessary time you spend on time wasters as oppose to what you really need to accomplish. Now use the above tips and plan your day accordingly. Now record how much time you are saving, and celebrate your increased organization and productivity.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Business Coach, Bridgette Boudreaux, teaches small business owners to get it all done in 6 hours or less daily!

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