Working Remotely - Vanquish the Time Vampires

Knowing your purpose/direction and planning makes all the difference for reducing distractions and vanquishing time vampires!

***“PPPPPP – Proper Prior Planning Prevents Poor Performance“***

Planning is NEVER wasted time – invest in at least 5 minutes daily to plan the next day, and longer once a week to plan each week and also in 3 month/90 day sections.

“***The plan never survives the first 5 minutes***” – situations change which mean your plan needs to change too, but the structure, purpose, and main direction, and your thinking that you put into making the plan means you have the knowledge required to adjust the plan to changing circumstances. Maybe it will just be changing the order of steps, and sometimes a major shift is required…. Keeping in mind your core purpose and main goal, and asking "Will this take me closer to the main goal” is your key to diminishing doubt and uncertainty about what you are doing. (Doubt and uncertainty are two of the strong time vampires!)

# Planning Tools/Techniques

**Vision: purpose + big goal**. Start with the end in mind. Gives you meaning and clarity, makes decision making easier. Guide/compass to know where you are going and what is the right direction. Helps you focus on what is appropriate activity.

**Covey’s quadrants** – **important and/or urgent**. Focus on things which are important, and ideally plan to do them before they become urgent!

**Steps** – Break down the big goal to large chunks, big steps and small slices.

**Prioritise** - what needs to be in place to get this done? Working backwards. What MUST be done first? What is most important and Urgent?

**Scheduling** – Put in the un-movables first (specific events, meetings, home commitments e.g. kids from school/home schooling) and the priorities – the ‘big rocks’. Your 90 minutes should be one of these at your best working time of the day. Then fill in with the pebbles and sand, less important things. Can be flexible how you plan around the fixed activities.

**Renewal time is important** – balance.

**Mindset** – positive thinking and positive feelings are important. Negativity leads to resistance and procrastination.

**Structure is important** – helps you focus. Create boundaries – time/place where you are not to be disturbed and can work ‘in flow’.

# Getting Things Done

**Plan 90 minutes per day for actions on your priority goal. Or 60 minutes.** Ensure everyone knows this is your DO NOT DISTURB under any circumstances time. You can have an open door policy at other times.

**Pomodoro Technique** Plan in 25 minutes segments of time. Set a timer for 25 minutes, focus 100% without distractions on the tasks during that time. When timer rings, have 5 minute break. Repeat.

**Take advantage of small segments of time: 5 – 15 minutes**. What tiny goal steps can you do? One phone call. An email etc. Procrastinators feel you need a large block of time to get started. Break down the activity into small sections. Write the 5 – 15 minute to do list to tick off as you go.

Any time you have a choice of what to do ask yourself: ***What’s the most effective use of my time right now? Will it take me towards my goal?***

**Getting going gets things done** – **creates momentum, reduces resistance**. Flywheel effect. It is difficult to move at first but once it gets going it creates its own energy and impulsion. Just get started mindset. Important to set very tiny first step. Easy to do in 5 minutes. No resistance.

**Small steps make big projects easy**. **PLAN THEM and PROTECT your PLAN**. Schedule and WRITE OUT our plan. Make others know your diary and don’t let them hijack priorities. If you need to attend someone else's meeting which clashes, then make sure you also reschedule your planned activity. How valuable is that meeting? How much do you really want / need to go to it? What value will it bring you – to get to your goals? How can you check whether you are really needed?

**Be realistic about time**. Estimate and allow yourself extra.

**Set end times**. Stick to them! Deadlines work.

**Schedule Renewal Time** and allow yourself free time. These belong in the IMPOTANT NOT URGENT quadrant – they are vitally important for you to work effectively and must be scheduled in first so they don’t get lost.

**Be honest about when your best work time** **is** – when do you get in flow easily, focus concentration easily. Plan priority work then.

**Learn to delegate responsibilities** – procrastinators often believe you should be able to do everything yourself. If it is not a priority for you, learn to delegate it.

**Be compassionate to yourself** – allow yourself to be human and know that you are not alone when you face struggles or setbacks or confusion! Recognise any negative emotions and 1) acknowledge that it's part of being human and 2) look at what factors you can influence to shift to more positive feelings. Taking action to plan and create structure goes a long way to minimise the doubt and uncertainty which affects most people. Recognise you need play time, me time and renewal time to feel great and manage your energy. When you do, you will be more positive, creative, innovative, and focused when you are working. And achieve more at work as well as being able to properly be there for others around you when you are not working – family, partner, friends etc.

# Kick the Procrastination Habit!

We all have the same 1,440 minutes per day, 168 hours per week. How I use this time defines my success.

* Where am I going? Clear + personally important goals = easy to set priorities.
* Time integrity. Focus 90 minutes per day and protect it.
* Be disciplined, no distractions.
* Getting going gets things done
* Small steps make big projects easy!