

Must-Do Tips No 29: Where Does All The Time Go?

High on most New Year's resolution lists is often something about making more productive use of the precious commodity that is time. Whatever branch of the professions that you are in - and in whatever role - the challenge of ever-increasing workloads and their negative impact on work and home life is real. This month, we offer three (well, actually five) things to do that can help and a *free offer* (see below).

Tip 1 - keep a log

So where *does* all your time go? Many professionals whose business should be the accurate recording of time (as well as those roles for which it isn't) do not have an accurate picture of where their time actually goes - or where it will go. Measuring supply and demand on your time **going forward** using a simple activity spreadsheet can highlight where things might be **going to go wrong** from overload - so you can do something about it before it happens. *For your free copy of this tool hit 'Reply' and type 'Free Spreadsheet'.*

Tip 2 - prioritise the priorities

If nothing is a priority - or everything is a priority - then the risk of important stuff slipping back or away is magnified. With a list of hot topics to choose from, remember the most important question to ask yourself: "If I am able to complete only one thing, what would it have to be?" and work your way down the list putting them in order.

Tip 3 - interruption interrupters

Interruptions can waste so much valuable time. Here are three things to reduce their impact:

1. Allocate a period (or periods) of 'My Time' each day in which you are not to be interrupted (that includes phone calls and emails). Make sure that your colleagues know about and when this is and politely enforce it.
2. Minimise the number of meetings you attend. Leave the ones you do attend when your bit is finished.
3. Go and work in a location in which people won't expect to find you.

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We welcome feedback from you on what you think about "Must-Do Tips". If you like it hit 'Reply' and tell us specifically what you like. If there is a topic or issue that you would like us to cover, what is it? And if there's something that annoys, tell us too! We want to improve.

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Best regards.

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