

Other Productivity Enhancing Tips

I want to go through now a series of other productivity enhancing tips to help you be more successful, more productive. First, once again I want to reiterate, you need to remember and accept that it takes time to save time. It takes time to save time. Accept that.

Once again, delegating as I discussed takes more time the first time. Scheduling your calendar takes time. Creating your to-do list takes time. But the overall time savings and productivity enhancements from these activities will be huge. They will be massive. A good example here - and in a way I don't need examples because once you start doing this, once you start planning your days, once you start your to-do lists, scheduling your days, hour by hour, minute by minute - you are going to see massive productivity boost. But an example that pretty much everyone can relate to is most people will go shopping without a grocery list. And the fact is that spending five minutes to write down your grocery store list will save you 20 minutes of shopping, minimum. It will ensure that you will get everything that you need. You will probably save money doing it. And that's just five minutes.

How many times have you bought things that you don't need, or haven't bought things that you do need? By spending five minutes in your kitchen going through and writing down specifically what you need, by creating that to-do list and going through the supermarket and then executing on your To Do list, executing on your plan, you are going to be much more productive.

Right then and there - that five-minute, 10-minute grocery list is going to save you right away at least twice the time, if not more. It's going to save you time. It's going to save you money. It's going to save you grief of having forgotten things that you need.

Next thing - skills. You need to determine what skills are preventing you and your company from achieving your goals. Be it sales skills or closing skills. Maybe it's internet marketing skills. Maybe it's typing skills. Then you need to acquire them. Typing skills is the easiest to give an example for. You need it all the time with email and typing. If you can take a course and improve your typing by 10 percent, how much time will you save each year?

If you are able to take a course and improve your closing ratio by 10% - so rather than closing 30% of your clients, you close 33% of your clients - your profitability will go up dramatically. Figure out the skills that are preventing you from achieving your goals and go and acquire them.

Next, take advantage of all free time you have. My goal right now is I am hoping you are driving in your car right now listening to this audio tape. Whenever you are driving in a car, you shouldn't be listening to music - you should be listening to audio tapes. It should be... If you are waiting for a flight, you shouldn't be reading a book. I found a portable DVD player for very, very inexpensive. I have a DVD player in my car that I listen to when I don't have... when there are DVDs that I want to listen to. I put them on DVDs. I obviously don't watch them while I am driving, but I at least listen to them. And I write down the times when there is something that I need to go back and watch. I listen to a lot of audio tapes in my car. You need to need to improve your skills. You should take advantage of all the free time that you have.

Avoid congestion. Even though, ideally, your car is a mobile learning environment because you're listening to tapes or audio tapes, you want to spend less time in your car if possible. You know - can you avoid driving

during peak hours? Avoid congestion by not going to lunch at times when it's very busy. You're waiting on lines; you're waiting for the service in restaurants. Why don't you try to avoid that congestion?

Next, leverage any trips that you have. If you are trying to fly to Denver for a meeting, is there anyone else that you can meet while you are in Denver? Let's take advantage of the fact that you are in Denver.

Dealing with information overload, you need to read to succeed. It's a triple rhyme. You need to read to succeed and stay on top of your industry and best practices. In so many industries, the information is evolving very, very quickly. You need to read to succeed.

You need to stay current. So what can you do to stay current in the least amount of time? First off, learn to speed read. My partner Jay Turo, Growththink's co-founder, is a speed reader. It's astonishing - absolutely astonishing - the number of books that he is able to consume, the number of business books he is able to consume and get value out of and understand. If I would have taken the same speed reading course 10 years ago that he took, I would have read, by now, a hundred more business books. I mean, the value of a skill like speed reading is enormous. You need to prioritize something like speed reading.

You need to be selective, okay? Once again you can't do everything. You can't read every magazine, every article, every email, every newsletter, every blog post, etc. You need to be selective.

Next way - book summaries. I've got some great book summary sites. There's Summary.Com, there's GetAbstract.Com, there's

BusinessSummaries.Com. Look at book summaries – you'll get most of the information you need with book summaries. If you think it's a great book, and you think that you need the whole book, then get the whole book and speed read the whole book. But book summaries are great. As I've mentioned, audio tapes - great way to stay current. And Parkinson's Law, once again – work will fill the time you allot to it. Give yourself one hour a day to read, and that's it. Give yourself an unlimited time, and you will feel just like reading and reading and reading, and will be less productive. Give yourself 30 minutes, give yourself an hour a day, and during that time, that is your reading time. You will be highly productive, highly effective.

Next tip to improving your productivity - Learn to say no. Say no to got-a-minute meetings, say no to meeting requests that may not go anywhere, say no to half-baked ideas. Say no. It's okay. Before you do something - you haven't done it yet - in a way you already said no because you are not doing it. Learn to say no. You need to focus on priorities.

Next tip - Getting started. Schedule every minute of every day. If you go on to my calendar, if you look at my calendar, you will see that every minute of everyday is scheduled. This is not easy, it is hard at first. I don't want you to get demoralized. I give you some help with this in the 30-day workbook. But what I am going to do there is I want you to do a couple of things. One is that you can start slow. You don't need to schedule every minute of every day. The first day you don't need to say 8:00-8:30, 9:00-9:30 and 10:00-11:00 etc. You don't need to schedule every minute of everyday. Start small. Schedule one hour of the day. Next day, schedule an hour. Next day, schedule two hour blocks. Next day two. Next day three. Start small. You need to form a habit. Habits take 30 days or longer to form. I want you to form a habit. You need to get started slow.

A couple of things. One is, each day, you create a tighter and tighter schedule. And starting slow, start with a one-hour block. Over time increase that. And for things like email - it is very important to set small little box to check emails just three times a day.

If you think it's going to be a half-an-hour block, give yourself some cushion. You can start with three one-hour blocks to check your email. If you think something's going to take you, you know, 40 minutes, 45 minutes, give yourself an hour. Give yourself some cushion. You don't want to right away say, "I set this meeting with myself, from 1:00-1:30. It's 1:30 now and I didn't finish it. I want to finish it. I'm off schedule already and this doesn't work." I want you to start slow.

As you get better and better in doing this, you get a better sense of how long things take. A relevant example of this - a story related to this - is that I was a high school, and I was a division one college wrestler. And when you wrestle, you have to be very in tune with how much you weigh and you often have to lose a lot of weight for wrestling match weigh-ins.

I was at a point, many years ago when I was wrestling, that I didn't even have to step on a scale. I knew within a quarter pound how much I weighed because I can just sense it. I was so used to getting on a scale, so many times a day, and how I looked and how I felt that I didn't even have to get on a scale most of the time. It's the same with time management - scheduling your day. The more you schedule and you say, "Okay. I'm going to do this in 45 minutes. I can do this in half an hour. I can do this in one hour." You see your results initially, the better you will get at predicting how long a task should be accomplished.

You just need to start slow. Give yourself some buffers, and you will get better and better. Next, discipline is key to enhancing productivity. It's more fun to do the easy stuff. It's the hard stuff that yields results. Like everything else - like going to the gym - once you get the habit going, it's easy to sustain. I go to the gym, Monday through Friday, five days a week. I try to go once on the weekends. When I say I try once in the weekends, there are many, many weekends that I don't make it. Monday through Friday, I am there. I go through the door, everyone says, "Hey, Dave." I have the same guys and girls that I see everyday at the gym. It's a habit. It's very, very easy for me to do it. It's my habit.

And you see it in the beginning of the year - you see all these new faces in the gym and 90% of them are gone by February; they are gone by late January. They gave up on the resolution. They are gone because they did not make it a habit. Once it's a habit, it's easy. It's very, very easy. I feel much, much worse when I don't go to the gym. It is a habit. It has been built into my schedule. At 5 o'clock, I'm leaving the office, and I'm on my way to the gym. It is a habit. It is a discipline. It takes 30 days to form good, lasting habits so get started now. I'm not saying that it has to be 30 days of a rigorous, set schedule where all you think about is productivity, but you need to get started. Scheduling your calendar is probably the most important tip - the most important tactic or technique. Start with scheduling one hour tomorrow, when I teach you to use the workbook on how to do that so you are more successful. You get started. You get disciplined.

Next - Create systems. Creating systems for recurring lesser evils in your company is critical. Systems allow your business to run without you. I've mentioned before - that's what you want. You want systems. Systems allow

for your eventual sale. It increases the valuation of your company. It saves you time. It saves other people's time. So, if there are recurring necessary evils in your company such as filling out government forms, such as employee expense reports - any ongoing processes that require multiple people - create a system. Build software, license software, use somebody else's software. Create an internal system - an internal mechanism. If something is recurring that needs to be done and your company is spending hours on doing a certain thing, month after month after month, year after year after year, figure out a better system to get it done, so that you save time in the long run.

You now have this system built that is a massive asset for your company. Now, your employees and your team mates have more time to do high value added things, and you don't have to worry about them as much.