

Eliminate Interruptions & Time Wasters

Now, the next thing that I want to cover is eliminating interruptions and time wasters. Eliminating interruptions and time wasters are key to maximizing your performance and for you and your team to achieve peak performance.

To begin, as I've mentioned in the multitasking example, you cannot accomplish anything meaningful if you constantly get interrupted. Period. Nobody who has ever accomplished anything meaningful has constantly been interrupted when they were achieving what they set out to achieve.

Now, scheduling your days significantly helps with this, ok. Once your day is scheduled and you have a meeting at 3 o'clock, you are not going to get interrupted at 3:10 because you are in that meeting. Now a lot of what you need to do is to set meetings with yourself.

So you are going to set up a 2 o'clock meeting - 2 to 2:30, or 2 to 3 o'clock with yourself, and you cannot let yourself get interrupted. Scheduling your day will get you in the habit and will get others in the habit of not interrupting you and not wasting your time.

Here are some other things to do.

One, eliminate any sort of "got-a-minute" culture. Hey, got a minute? I used to always get, "Hey, Dave. Got a minute?" I used to always say, "Hey, Andrew. Got a minute? Hey, Pete. Got a minute?" You have to eliminate the got-a-minute culture. Got-a-minute questions - they interrupt and they are rarely, rarely emergencies. They prevent important tasks from getting done.

Got-a-minute questions or ideas rather should be documented and should be discussed periodically. Got-a-minute questions, got-a-minute ideas to be documented and discussed periodically - for example weekly.

They don't warrant - unless it is an absolutely emergency - interrupting anybody. By not accepting got-a-minute questions particularly if you are the employer, you are the boss, it allows your employees to help figure things themselves and helps them to grow. It also helps them to plan in advance, because if they know - they plan their day, they plan their week - they start thinking through the issues, the smaller tasks. They start thinking about some of the questions that they going to have, and they put together those questions, and they set up a meeting with you to go through 10 questions so that in 1 hour, they get all their 10 questions answered rather than interrupting you 10 times.

There's been research that says that once you get interrupted, it takes you 7 minutes to regain concentration. I don't know if I fully buy 7 minutes - it seems like a long time - but let's say it took three minutes to regain concentration. Two minutes. So for 10 interruptions, you will lose 20 minutes of actual time and you just lose your focus. So I want you to eliminate that got-a-minute culture. If you have an open door policy, and I'm going to doubt you do because most entrepreneurs and business owners once they get that they start open door policy, they quickly end when they realize that they are not getting any work done. But if you do, then lessen the time - lower the time when you have open door policy. Eight hours a day - make it 1 hour a day, or 30 minutes a day. Set that time. You cannot have got-a-minute culture and expect to get big things accomplished.

The next thing to eliminate interruptions and time wasters is reduce time spent on email. In the next section, I'm going into great detail about email

management.

Email in today's environment is by far the number one time waster. It can be eliminated and I'm going to show you how.

Next, thirdly, stop answering phone calls. Unless the call is an expected call – it's on your schedule, it's on your calendar - unless that call is that from a perspective client that you need to close, or the call is from a pre-approved number like your spouse or your child, don't accept the phone call.

Now, what I do is I pull my work phone cord out. I don't even turn the ringer off. I pull the cord out and I put my cell phone on top of the cord so I don't forget to put it back in later. That is just how I do it because I do not want to be interrupted. I refuse to be interrupted. If something... if reaching me is that critical, somebody will call somebody else in my company. Somebody will call my wife, will call my business partner, will call my cell phone. They will figure out a way to get in touch with me if it's that important. What you also do to eliminate the time waster and be a lot more productive is you want to return important phone calls in batches, or better yet ... so, say you received four voice messages, you prioritize the ones that you feel you need to call back, and you block out the time from 3:30 to 4 o'clock to return those phone calls. I can guarantee you those phone calls are going to be more focused and more targeted when you know that you only have half an hour to make them.

Now, another key thing if it's an important phone call, what you want to do to be more productive rather than calling them back, ideally, you can email that person and set a specific time to speak with them. Because what you don't want to do is you call them back and then you waste five minutes of

your time calling them, waiting for their voice mail, and leaving voice messages for two or three minutes, and still having that on your to-do lists. Ideally, you can schedule the call back time and not have to worry about leaving voice messages.

Now another key way to eliminate time interruptions and time wasters is to stop the social chitchat. Stop the joking - stop the time you are spending... you are on the water cooler, talking about last night's football game, or basketball game, or TV show. I understand that you want to bond with your employees. I like having the periodic social times like lunches where you can shoot the breeze and bond and get that teamwork bonding done, but the social chit chat - it doesn't work. It interrupts your day. If you are going out to get and grab some water, go straight back to work. There are no breaks in achieving success. There are no 15-minute breaks. Maybe give yourself a 3-minute break. There is no time for ideal chit chat. If all else fails, then work offsite. If it's the only way to avoid interruptions, then work offsite or at least part of the time.

And in terms of working offsite, you have to remember, if you are the business owner, one of your key goals is to allow the business to run without you. To allow your business to run without you. Now, I didn't say "to allow your business to grow or thrive without you." I mean, to "run" without you. Your goal is to grow the business. Running day to day operations - part of your goal is to get your employees more productive to create systems so that your business can run without you. If your goal is to eventually sell your business, one of the most important things the buyer wants to see is that the business runs without you so that they can buy and have the business continue to run successfully.

So you want to be able to have the business run without you and the way to do that is to get your employees more productive to create systems – I'll cover systems a little bit later here. I have a whole course on systematizing your business as well.