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Time Management



Learn How to Get Time Back
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Do you find it is easy to get distracted at the office? Learn of common distractions and how to avoid them to make the most of time.

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I had the chicken pox a few weeks ago. I did not want to infect anyone in the office, so my boss let me work from home. Do you know what? I found it very easy to get more work done at home than in the office.

I did not understand why until I thought about all the distractions present on a normal basis at the office. I knew I could not work from home after I was cured, but I did enjoy the pace and the riddance of distraction.

I decided to catalogue the things that most deterred me from my work so I could properly address them during the business day.

Emails

Emails are constant and dense. I get in the habit of checking my email each time I get a prompt for a new message. I also get lost in the myriad of messages that accumulate each day.

I found I work better by ignoring the new messages and designating certain times per day to check my mail. I also use folders to categorize what needs immediate attention and what can wait until later in the week.

The phone

I do not have a secretary, so I usually answer the phone every time it rings. It is not always important, but it does always break my concentration from the task I was formerly performing.

I now screen all of my calls. If I see it is someone important on the caller id, I pick it up. Other than that, I let it go to voicemail and check it on a regular basis.

Random papers

I am always amazed at how many random papers accumulate on my desk throughout the day. I usually lose track of them and then have to scramble to find something when the appropriate time comes.

Now, I assess each paper as it comes into my hand. I use folders like I do for emails, and if the paper does not need my future attention, then I discard it.

Visitors

Clients and colleagues will sometimes pop-in my office unannounced. I usually get distracted like I do with the phone and find it difficult to refocus my attention after they leave.

Now, I kindly tell them I am busy and would love to talk with them on a scheduled basis. It may sound rude to read, but I do not come across as rude. Most people understand that I am just trying to do the best job possible with the time I have.

Ambience

I used to bring an extra sweater to the office or find myself taking my jacket off depending on the immediate climate. I really didn't understand what a distraction your immediate environment can become until I thought about it.

Now, I have no hesitation in adjusting the thermostat to my comfort level.

Noise

I got in the habit of leaving the radio on after listening to my morning talk show. I would find it difficult to write while singing and talking were

being inserted into my head while I was trying to form my own thoughts.

I now focus my attention on my talk show and when it is over, I shut off the radio for the duration of the day. If coworkers are noisy outside, I shut the door to my office.

Thinking ahead

Before, each day would be like an adventure. I might have two meetings one day, a doctor's appointment the other, and have to pick my child up from school another. Yet, I would try to get the same amount of work done each day.

Now, I look at the big picture for the week. I try to schedule tasks for when I have ample time for them. It has helped me gain a lot more time back.

Kenneth C. Wisniewski is the president of VendorSeek.com, an online business to business marketplace that connects business consumers with pre-approved vendors in over 150 different categories. VendorSeek.com has over 5,000 vendors in their *Approved Vendor Network* and processes close to 10,000 requests per month from businesses of all sizes.

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