



Home Builders Network

Making a difference in the housing industry

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It's About Time

Presented by Al Trellis



Getting Things Done

Success in life is based not upon wealth and fame, but on our accomplishments. Getting things done requires effort and planning, a bias to action, and follow-through. Here are some general guidelines for getting things done.

Results, not effort

It's the results that counts, not the effort you put into it. Effort is important, and a certain amount of effort is required to get results, but the general rule of thumb is that 80% of your results will come from 20% of your efforts. The problem is figuring out where to put that 20% .

Do the right things, rather than do things right

Peter Drucker points out that there are really two ways to improve your use of time. One is by spending your time *doing the right things* (effectiveness). The other is by *doing things right* (efficiency). But no matter how efficient you are, if you're doing the wrong things, you're getting nowhere. Drucker suggests spending 80% of your effort on *doing the right things*, and only 20% on *doing things right*.

Unfortunately, we spend a lot of time and energy trying to improve our efficiency, when the most efficient way to do something may be to not do it at all. Saying no to ineffective demands on our time frees us to spend that time more productively.

Direction, not speed

Think of effectiveness as direction and efficiency as speed. If we are moving in the right direction, however slowly, we are still getting closer to our destination. If we're traveling 90 miles an hour, we may be very efficient, but if we're going in the wrong direction, we'll never get there. In fact, we only get farther away.

People have a tendency to increase their speed once they lose their direction. It's as if all that hustle and bustle will somehow make up for the fact that what they're doing isn't that important.

Don't wait for the perfect plan

Just as you don't want to start driving before you know where you're going, you don't want to spend all your time deciding where to go, and no time getting there. (This is known as paralysis by analysis.) The thing about directions is that they can be corrected. If you have a map and make a wrong turn, you can quickly turn around and correct your course. This action, reaction, correction process is sometimes called muddling through, and is often the only way to go when you aren't quite sure where you're going. Perfection is the enemy of action. If you wait until your plan is perfect to implement it, you may never get the chance.

The Big Picture, vs. day-to-day

We sometimes get so caught up in the day-to-day operations of running a business that we forget to plan ahead for six months from now, a year from now. The time to think about next year is NOW, when you can do something about it, and avoid some of the last minute crisis. Get the big picture first, then fill in the details about how to accomplish that picture.

Success is not the absence of failure

One of the biggest barriers to getting things done is fear of failure. But if you put off doing the things that need to be done, you practically guarantee failure. One of Netscape's business maxims is "Fail fast to succeed sooner." So don't be afraid to make mistakes. They're rarely fatal. Then correct them quickly and go on to other things.



What's your style?

Quick to Action (Leap before you look) — You're a bull in a china shop. Damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead.

Paralysis by Analysis — You tend to analyze everything to death. Learn when enough is enough.

DIY (Do it yourself) — Your motto is "If you want it done right, do it yourself. Unfortunately, you can't do everything yourself, and you become a bottleneck.

Team Player — You work well with others.

Coach — Likes to sit on the sidelines and mentor the ones who carry the ball. This can be effective if you have a good team.

Procrastinator — There's no problem so big that you can't put it off another day.

Cockeyed optimist — Nothing will go wrong.

People-pleaser — How can I help you? (Can't say NO)

Fire fighter (crisis manager) — You want it when?

Big Picture Person — Don't bother me with details.

Nitpicker (lost in the details) — Vision? Who needs vision?

Deal with your style

If you have a style problem, you need to compensate by being aware of the style, and compensate, either through your own behavior, or by using the help of others.

Compensate through awareness

If you know you're a procrastinator, then you need to set small intermediate deadlines, and report to someone on their completion. If you suffer from paralysis by analysis, then you need to set up a personal reward system that is biased toward actual tasks accomplished and implemented.

Compensate through delegation

You can use employees or partners to handle those aspects of getting things done that you don't enjoy or that you're not good at. For example: If you're a detail person, find a big-picture person. If you're a cockeyed optimist, you need a pragmatic realist. If you're a people pleaser, find someone who can say "NO".

Compensate through collaboration

You can even go outside your company and find other professional and agencies who's style of getting things done compensates for your style. If you tend to be a bull in a china shop, and your architect tends to be people oriented, you both can benefit.

Getting things done through others

There are several ways to get things done. You can do it through other people, you can do it yourself, or you can decide not to do it. When you do everything yourself, there is only a limited number of things you can accomplish. However, you can multiply your results by working with other people to tackle bigger tasks. There are several ways of working with others: staffing (hiring others), delegating (assigning responsibility to other people), and by the team approach (getting people to work together for a common goal.)

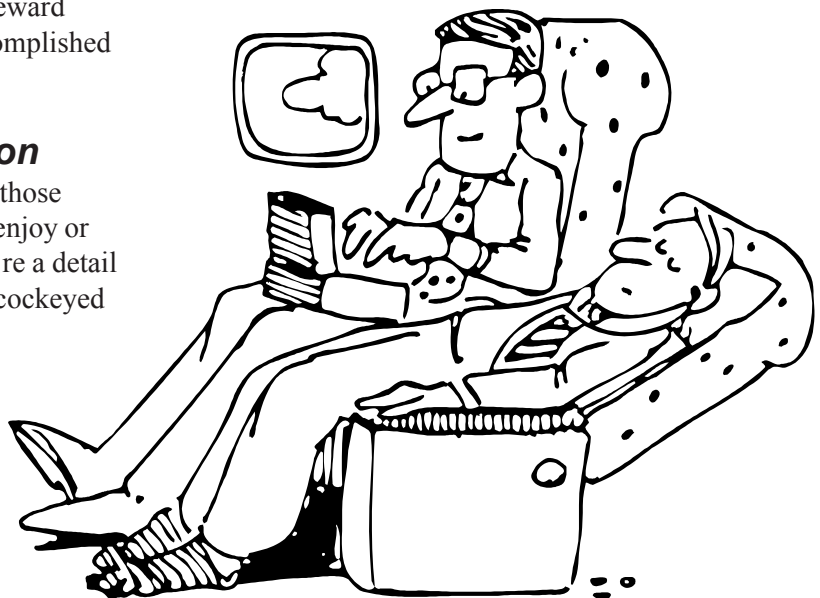
Delegating

Assign responsibilities, not tasks

If you try to micromanage by looking over their shoulder every ten minutes, you can't get anything done, and neither can they. As long as they're getting the results you want, give them some leeway.

Let them "own" the problem

You assign the problem. Let them come up with the solution. It's faster and easier, and they'll amaze you with their ingenuity. If they come up with the solution, they own it, and will work even harder to implement it.



Assistants, not Assistants to

An assistant is someone who works in a subordinate position to someone else, but has their own areas of responsibility. An assistant to, has no separate responsibilities... they just do whatever the boss assigns them to do. Assistants are a good management approach, but assistant to's generally just make their bosses lazy.

Team Approach

The best management approach to getting things done is to build teams. In a well constructed and coached team, every member has a different area of responsibility, but they work together to achieve a common goal.

Divide and conquer

Divide the task among the team members so that each works on the area where they can make the biggest contribution. Avoid responsibility overlap. Otherwise, they'll fight over turf, instead of solving the problem.

Engineer consent

As a coach, your role is to build consensus, so that everyone works together on implementation. To do that, you have to listen to everyone's opinions, incorporate their ideas, and give credit for their contributions.

Plan to implement

The most difficult part of getting things done is the implementation strategy. Make sure it's a crucial part of your planning. Until you know how you're going to implement the solution, you really haven't thought it through.

How to Hire the Right Person

If you need to hire someone, here are some good rules for getting the right person for your organization.

- 1. Hire for Attitude and Aptitude, not experience and education.** A new employee with the right attitude can learn everything they need to know to be successful. But what you can't teach are attitude and capability.
- 2. Hire to compensate for organizational deficiencies.** We all have a tendency to want to hire clones of ourselves, rather than people who will compensate for our weaknesses.
- 3. Hire Team players.** You want people who not only can do the work you want done, but can work with other people as well.

Hiring from the Bottom

If you need to hire new staff, it usually pays to hire from the bottom. There are several reasons for this:

- 1. It costs less.** You can hire an assistant superintendent for less than you would pay for a more experienced superintendent.
- 2. It's cost effective.** In every company there are \$6/hr. jobs and \$25/hr jobs. Hiring from the bottom allows you to assign those \$6 jobs to \$6 workers.
- 3. It makes your staff feel good.** If you hire an assistant it makes your overworked super feel good. Now he can be more effective and get more done. If you hire another super, he feels threatened, and you get negative competition between them.
- 4. It provides a promotion path.** If you an assistant he can look forward to becoming a super some day. If you hire another super, they both fight over promotion to VP of Construction.
- 5. Training.** If you hire a super, you're responsible to train them. If you hire an assistant, the super is responsible for training.



Setting Priorities

How do you decide what gets done?

Setting priorities is not easy. There's never enough time to get everything done that you want to do. (If there were more time, you'd just want to do more things.) So how do you decide what are the most important things to do? What gets done, and in what order? Here are several ways to set priorities.

Time critical — which tasks have the shortest deadlines? Some things have to be done today, or tomorrow will be even worse.

Short-term consequences — which tasks will cause the greatest problems if they're not done.

Long-term consequences — which tasks will have the greatest impact on your bottom line.

Difficulty of achievement — which tasks can be done quickly and easily.

Fire-fighting vs. fire-prevention

Fire fighters are people who put off problems until they become a full-blown crisis. Then they rush in and give a Herculean effort to solve the crisis. Fire-fighting gives a sense of importance, and a sense of accomplishment.

Fire prevention is boring, and usually goes unnoticed. However, for the long-term health of the company, fire-prevention is clearly more beneficial. Fire-fighting sucks the time from getting important things done. And it doesn't solve the problem, it merely deals with the consequences. Of course, when you're having a fire you want to put all your effort into putting it out. But if you keep having the same kinds of fires over and over again, you aren't solving the problem, you're perpetuating it. You need to spend more time on the boring, non-heroic, and unheralded work of fire prevention. Find out what caused the fire in the first place, and put into place strategies to keep it from happening again. After all, fires still do damage, even if you put them out.

“The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is now.”
Chinese proverb



How to Increase Your Available Time

There are four steps to increasing your use of time. The four steps spell the word TIME: These steps are:

TARGET
INITIATE
MULTIPLY
ELIMINATE

TARGET

Targeting is determining how you're going to spend your time – over the next day, week, month, and year. By organizing your time beforehand, you can spend your time on those tasks that will be most productive and avoid a lot of the time traps common in everyday life. In addition, you can prevent fires from happening, instead of spending ALL your time putting them out. There are three steps to targeting your time: **Plan**, **Prioritize**, and **Organize**.



Plan

Determine your goals and your values. Your values should determine your use of time. Plans should not be cumbersome or inflexible. They should be action oriented. In fact, over-planning can waste time, just as under-planning can. Remember, a plan is just a plan. As circumstances change, change the plan.

Prioritize

Work on the important tasks first. If you find yourself a prisoner of trivial demands on your time, go through your list of tasks and break them into categories by the impact and the deadline: High impact/short deadline is

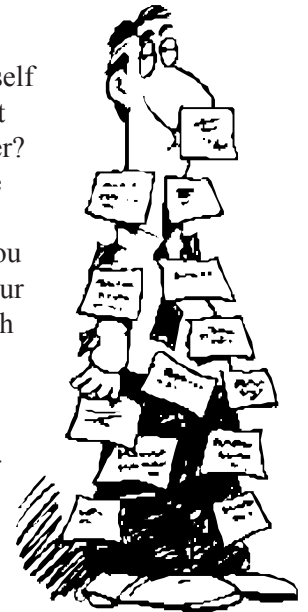
your highest priority. Next is high impact/later deadline. See if you can shift some of the low impact/short deadline tasks somewhere else in the organization. Delegate. Delegate. Delegate. And see if you can eliminate some of the low impact/later deadline tasks. Use an ABC system to set priorities.

Block out time for your high impact tasks and leave the office if necessary to work on them. Then fill in any spare time with the pressing, but less important priorities.

Organize

Do you write little notes to yourself on slips of paper, and then forget where you put the pieces of paper? When someone leaves a message but doesn't leave a return phone number, how long does it take you to find his number, as well as your notes on your last discussion with him? That's organization.

Keep all of your essential information in one place. Many people use a day planner as their organizer. Others use a portable computer or three-ring binder to help them keep organized. Many builders use a different 3-ring binder for each client. In it they keep all the important paperwork for that client, such as contracts, specification forms, permits, draw schedules, etc. The important thing is to keep all your information in one place, eliminate redundancy, such as having multiple calendars, and ELIMINATE ALL THOSE SCRAPS OF PAPER.



Three Questions to Ask Yourself

1. Am I "too busy" to do the things that are really important in my life?
2. Can I say "NO" to demands on my time that are not really significant?
3. Am I always "behind time," rushing to get things done?

INITIATE

This is the all-important, and often difficult, step of beginning a task. Until you take that first step, all your planning is worthless.

Many of us are born procrastinators. Unpleasant tasks, or things we don't want to do, are put off until the last moment. Then it's rush, rush, rush to get it done, and it's rarely done right.

Some people have the opposite problem. They love to start projects, but because they don't have the resources to complete the projects, they leave them half-finished. This is even worse than procrastination, since the procrastinators were at least working on other things while they were avoiding doing the things they needed to do.

There are four steps to initiating: **Do it Now**, **Set Deadlines**, **Break it into Bite-Size Pieces**, and **Follow-through**.

Do it Now

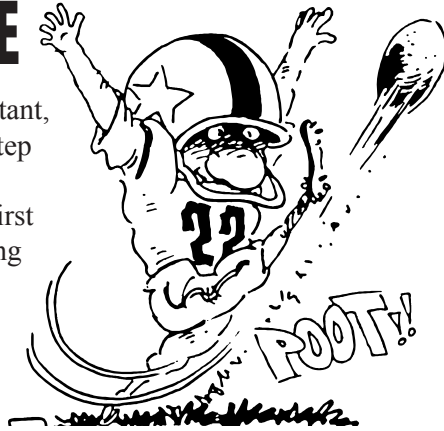
This is the Law of Action: "Don't wait for things to happen, make them happen." When you have an important task, the most important step is actually starting on it. Do the tough things first. Reward yourself for completing tasks.

Set Deadlines

Remember Parkinson's Law: "The job expands to fit the time allotted." Set realistic deadlines, so that you aren't running around from one deadline to another, but don't give yourself enough time to allow the job to expand.

Break it into Bite-Size Pieces

If a task is too complex or daunting, start by breaking it into smaller bite-size pieces, and then begin working on one



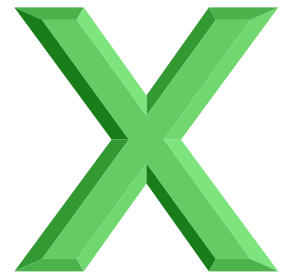
of the pieces. That way you aren't paralyzed by the complexity of the problem.

Follow-through

Once you've completed a task, there are often follow-up tasks that are related. Schedule them as soon as you accomplish the task, so that these follow-through steps don't fall through the cracks, and all your original effort goes to waste. Follow through and follow up are the key to accomplishing the tasks that you initiate.

MULTIPLY

One way to get more done is to multiply your effectiveness, and accomplish more than one thing at a time. To do that we must **Delegate**, **Collaborate**, **Multi-Task**, and **Automate**.

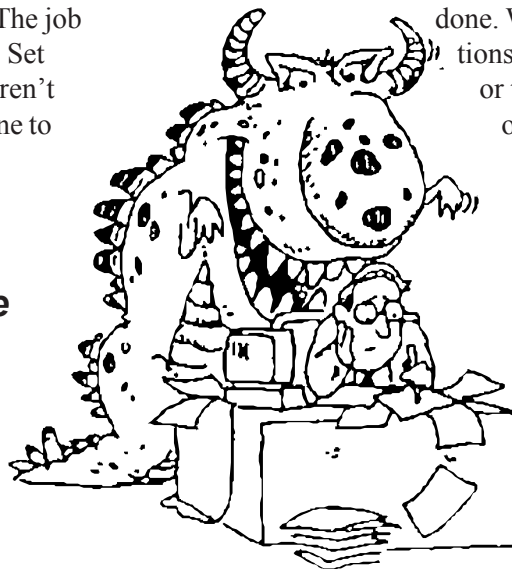


Delegate

Delegation allows you to use the time and skills of others to accomplish the tasks you want done. Teach someone else to do it. Then let them. Delegation is a good reason to hire first-rate people. If you don't, you don't dare delegate to them.

- **Delegate responsibility**, not just tasks.
- **Follow-up on results**, not details.
- **Use Management by Exception.** Management by Exception is a form of delegation in which you assign other people responsibilities and *then give them the room to get the job done*. You don't have to stand over their shoulder every second of the day. You don't have to know the minute details of what they've done. What you need to know are the exceptions: the problems that were either too big or too unusual for them to solve on their own. By managing the exceptions, and letting the other person manage the routine tasks, everyone gets more done.

You often hear people say, "If you want the job done right, do it yourself." What they're really saying is that they are often more interested in the details of the job, than in the results. They're so afraid of losing control that they have to manage every little detail.



If that's the case, it is easier and faster to do the job yourself.

There is a story about a small consulate in an Eastern European city, staffed by two foreign service officials. Because they were such a small office, they were constantly overworked, putting in long hours to keep up with the paperwork. Then the head of the consulate was recalled to Washington. The assistant didn't see how he would keep up with the work himself.

He quickly discovered, however, that he was able to do all the work, with time left over. He no longer had to keep the consulate head informed of all his activities. He just did them. His paperwork was cut to a fraction of its former size. He managed his time better and spent it on the things that were important, rather than the priorities his boss had imposed.

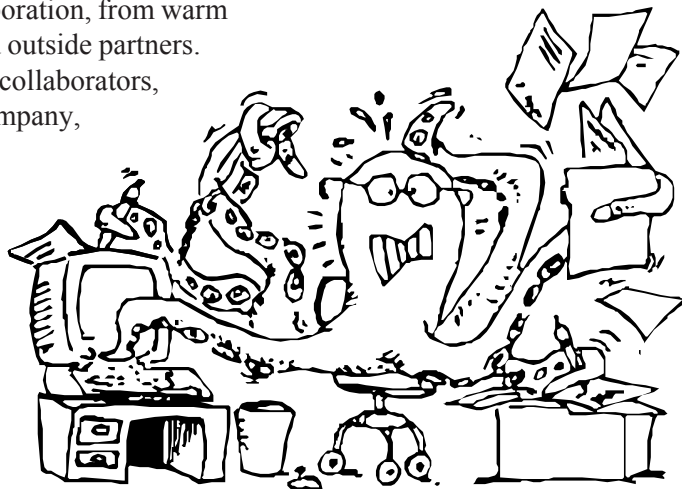
Management by Exception allows people to work as if they were working independently. You eliminate unnecessary coordination and free people to use their creativity and skills to get the job done. You get reports on the results, not on the details. Plus you get the advantages of putting your energy into the exceptions – the truly big problems that require your attention. Don't underestimate the pleasure of giving something you don't want to do to someone else.

Collaborate

The difference between collaboration and delegation is that sometimes we need the input of other minds to improve the results. The solutions to some tasks benefit substantially when viewed from multiple perspectives. In addition, working with other people is often a way to break the procrastination logjam. You are much less likely to put off a task if you have to work with someone else to solve the problem. There are mutual expectations, deadlines, etc. that speed things along. There are many levels of collaboration, from warm bodies to inside staff and outside partners. The trick is to find good collaborators, inside and outside the company, and then utilize them to multiply your effectiveness.

Multi-task

Some tasks don't require your undivided attention. You can get more time by using



that time to do other things as well. For example: you can listen to self-improvement tapes or dictate notes to yourself while riding in car. You can also use that time for making phone calls with a cellular phone. You can carry a book to read while you're waiting. You can use small blocks of down time to organize, plan, prioritize. And you can combine leisure and educational time by attending lectures, watching educational programs, or learning a new skill on the computer.

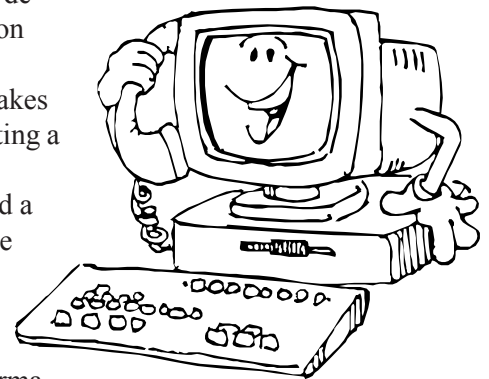
Automate

Use technology to decrease time spent on routine tasks.

- **Telephone.** It takes less time than writing a letter.
- **Fax.** If you need a written letter, write a short memo and fax it. Use broadcast fax to communicate information to multiple users.
- **Word Processing.** Keep standard letters on the computer and just change the name and address. You can even send a fax directly from your word processing application. No printing. No envelope. No stamp. No waiting.
- **E-mail.** E-mail is the easiest and fastest way to communicate in writing. There is never a busy signal, and the recipients can pick up mail at their convenience. The other advantage of E-mail is that it calls out for brevity. You might not send a one sentence letter

because it would look strange on the page, but a one sentence E-mail is great. To reply to an E-mail, you simply click on an icon, type your response, and it is sent in a matter of seconds.

- **Computerize information.** Use data bases, spreadsheets and specialized applications to minimize repetitive tasks.
- **Dictaphone.** You can make notes and dictate letters much faster than you can write them.



Eliminate

We would all have more time if we could just eliminate all the time wasters in our life. However, most people think that they have much less control than they actually have over these time wasters.

Just Say No

The fastest way to accomplish a task is to decide that you're NOT going to do it and cross it off your list. Some things are not worth doing. And if it's not worth doing well, it isn't worth doing at all.

This is the concept of **Opportunity Cost**. The time you spend doing one thing is the time you can't spend doing something else. You can use this effectively when your boss, partner, or spouse asks you to do something that you really would rather not do. Instead of saying no, you can simply evoke opportunity cost. "Yes, I could do that. But then I wouldn't be able to get such and such done by Wednesday. What do you want me to do?"

Procrastinate if you can't say no

The only time you can effectively use procrastination is when you can use it to delay or kill a project that shouldn't be done. There is a Dilbert cartoon where Dilbert is telling a co-worker how to save time. One of his rules is, "Put off meetings with incompetent morons." "How do you do that?" the co-worker asks. Dilbert looks at him and says, "Let me get back to you on that."

Keep other people's monkeys off your back

A monkey is a problem that belongs to someone else. People who like to solve problems often find themselves taking on problems that really aren't theirs to solve. When you find that happening, put the monkey on the back of the person to whom it belongs.

Control Interruptions

It's hard to remember, but you can control interruptions. Use the answering machine and return all your calls when you've finished what you're doing. However, if part of your job is to answer the phone, then a phone call is *not* an interruption.

Several years ago in England, a new driver had taken over a bus route. He was told the importance of keeping to the posted schedule. Off he went. All of

Ten Ways to Say No

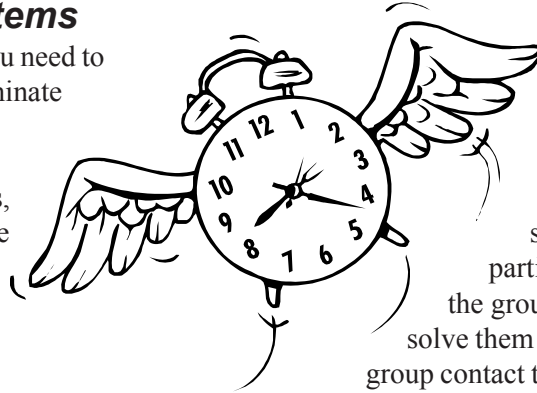
1. **Yes, But...** "I would love to, but I wouldn't be able to devote the time to make it a success."
2. **Pass the buck.** "That's a good idea. I bet Charlie would love to get his hands on that one."
3. **Ask the right questions.** "Is this worth doing?" "What are the opportunity costs?"
4. **Kill it with brutal facts.** "Great idea. All we need is a million dollars to get started."
5. **It's not your monkey.** "I'd like to help, but you're the only one who can solve that problem."
6. **Conflicting priorities.** "Do you want me to do A or B? I can't do both."
7. **Trade off.** "I can do that, if you can do this for me."
8. **Kill through delay.** "Let me get back to you on that when I have more time."
9. **Broken record.** "The answer is no. The answer is no. The answer is no."
10. **"What part of NO didn't you understand?"**



a sudden, the main office started getting complaints from passengers that the bus wasn't stopping to pick them up. They sent a supervisor out to find out what the problem was. When the supervisor finally caught up with the bus driver and pulled him over, he asked him "What are you doing? You aren't picking up the people." "How do you expect me to keep to the schedule," the bus driver replied, "if I have to stop every few minutes and pick up all those bloody passengers."

Create Realistic Systems

In order to improve efficiency, you need to simplify your procedures and eliminate any unrealistic expectations. By streamlining work processes and eliminating unnecessary functions, you can get more done in less time and increase your enjoyment of what you do.



Systematize

Make repetitive tasks into a routine. If you have multiple cost categories in your cost estimate for a new house that are related to square footage, develop a multiplier for each category. Once you determine the square footage, all these cost categories are automatically calculated. Look for ways to simplify the process, eliminate steps, and use shortcuts.

Eliminate Unrealistic Expectations

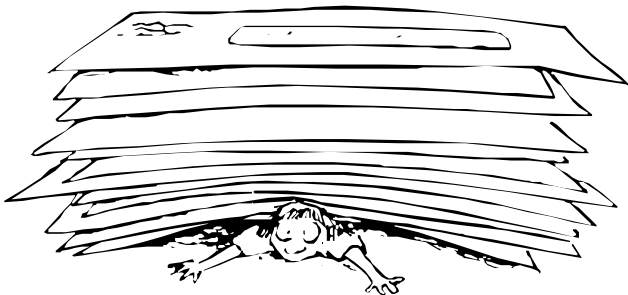
Look for results, not perfection. Remember Opportunity Cost. In the time it takes to do one job “perfectly” you could probably do several tasks that got significantly greater results.

Eliminate Common Time Wasters

Too many meetings

Meetings should be short, to the point, and held only when necessary. Nearly everything can more easily be resolved in face-to-face discussions between two or three people.

Whenever possible, limit meetings to no more than half an hour. Hold them standing up, if necessary. That keeps them short. If you don’t need to be at a meeting, say so. Most people attend meetings so they won’t be left out of the decision loop, not because they need to be there. You can review the results of a meeting by reading a summary in three minutes, rather than spending 30 minutes in the meeting. If you disagree with the results, you can always add your input then.



Too large groups

The optimum size for a group is three to five people. Beyond that, too much energy is spent in coordination and not enough in creativity. It’s better to have small working groups to resolve particular problems and report back to the group as a whole rather than to try to solve them as a large group. Let the working group contact the key players individually. As long as they’re not left out of the decision, they’d rather not have to sit through long meetings.

Unnecessary paperwork

Too often we spend too much time collecting information that we never use.

With all paperwork, use the KISS method. Keep It Short and Simple. Don’t collect information you don’t need or won’t use. You could probably eliminate half the forms and reports in your office and no one would notice.

Time Based Competition

For many companies today, return on investment or profit margin are not as important measures of profit as profit per hour. By increasing the speed at which you do business, you can increase total profits. There are three rules here to remember.

Faster turnover = higher profits

This does not necessarily mean building a house in less time, but means reducing cycle time between houses. Starting houses sooner allows you to build more houses. Since overhead is generally fixed within a range, the gross profit on additional product goes directly to the bottom line.

Faster response = higher sales

When you get back to people faster it leaves a good impression, and you improve your closing ratio. You also reduce time to closing, which improves cash flow.

To increase speed, streamline your systems

You can’t increase speed over the long run simply by working harder or longer. You really have to streamline your system and simplify decision making.

Creating a sense of urgency

Everyone who has studied marketing understands the “call to action,” a carefully crafted presentation designed to motivate the reader/listener into acting *right now*. A more interesting analysis, however, revolves around management’s ability to create a sense of urgency not in the mind of the buyer, but in the corporate consciousness of the entire organization – staff, subcontractors, and suppliers. For a “do-it-now” attitude has several ramifications far beyond motivating a reluctant buyer. It is, in fact, about our ability to implement and accomplish within our organization.

As we work with principals of building companies, I can’t help but notice how often they are frustrated by the unwillingness or inability of subordinates to push hard toward the speedy achievement of specific goals and tasks. In the end, management is about what you can accomplish, and a sense of urgency is a powerful tool in getting things done.

Here are four reasons that a corporate sense of urgency is so critical to your success:

Credibility

You gain credibility by consistently delivering goods and services on or ahead of schedule. Some companies take this the extra mile and create corporate legends based around performance. Once it becomes part of your corporate culture, it becomes a powerful incentive to maintain performance.

Opportunity

Many times, outstanding opportunities will be lost for lack of prompt action. Opportunities are time sensitive. If you don’t seize them, companies that are driven by a sense of urgency will. The difference between Microsoft and Digital Research (remember them?)

was that Microsoft had a sense of urgency about creating an operating system for the new IBM PC. Microsoft became the dominant software system, and Digital Research became a footnote in computer history.

Lost Profits

The difference between acceptable profits and outstanding profitability is the last small increment of volume after the overhead has been paid. A sense of urgency allows the company to reach the profit potential of the last dollar of volume.

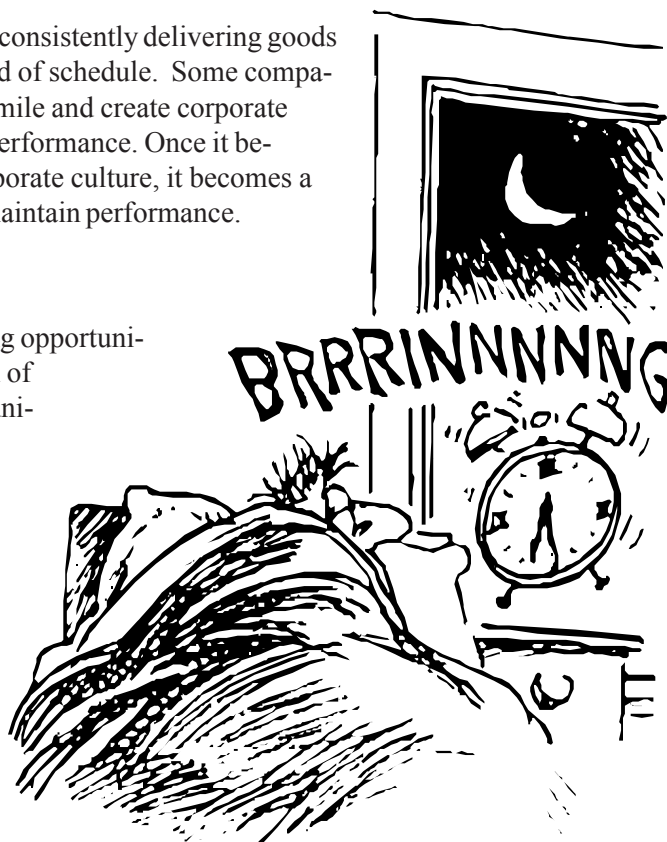
Pride

Teams that accomplish a lot and produce more and better work products than the competition, are proud of who they are and what they can do. This “Team Esteem” is critical to creating an organization that thrives on challenge and is capable of overcoming obstacles.

In all this urgency, however, there is a danger. There is a difference between a sense of urgency and a sense of crises. There can be a fine line between creat-

ing a sense of urgency and creating a sense of burnout. You don’t want to drive your best people into leaving you for the competition. You don’t want people so driven by getting things done that they sacrifice quality for quantity. You can avoid that trap simply by injecting some fun and humor into the workplace. A company that enjoys a sense of urgency and “Team Esteem” is energized by their accomplishments.

Good attitudes become good work habits. Having fun and getting things done is what it’s all about.



How to create a sense of urgency

The problem with recommending what to do and why to do it is that people immediately ask “How?”

Motivating employees to “hustle” and be highly productive starts, as most things do, with the right people. People who want to succeed understand teamwork and are capable of change. We have the responsibility as managers to motivate our associates through reward (praise and financial remuneration) and education (providing the skills and tools to become better). Neither of these will prove to be effective, however, if directed at employees who are intellectually or emotionally incapable of improvement.

Once you have employees that are capable of motivation, here are some specific things you can do in your company to create a sense of urgency.

Leadership by example

Unless you show a sense of urgency, no one else in the company will either. The trick is to show urgency without turning everything into crises, and wearing everyone out. Urgency also means setting priorities. If everything is a four-alarm fire, people quickly learn to treat real four-alarm fires as if they’re routine. If you expect your people to perform, then *you* have to perform. If you’re out playing golf every afternoon, don’t expect the staff to feel an overwhelming sense of urgency.

Setting specific deadlines

Some people just work better under a deadline. It creates an automatic sense of urgency. To say “I need this done by 3 p.m. on Thursday” is much more urgent than “Get this done as soon as possible.” Remember the corollary to the Peter Principle... “The work expands to fit the time allotted.” Giving someone more time to get a job done rarely improves the performance. It means more time is spent fussing with the details. Keep your deadlines short but reasonable in order to avoid creating unnecessary crises.

Raise the bar

Sometimes people don’t perform up to their potential because no one expects them to. By expecting your people to find effective solutions quickly, and praising

your people for performance, you set new standards and reward the behavior you’re trying to instill. Let them know that *they* are responsible for results, and they’ll respond accordingly.

Encourage efficiency and creative solutions

Often the real time-savers and creative solutions will come from the staff, not the top. But unless you encourage innovation and new ideas, those ideas will be squelched before they’re even suggested. Maybe rules aren’t made to be broken... but they are made to be rewritten. If people see that their solutions are accepted and implemented, you’ll be amazed at how creative they’ll be.

Make urgency fun

There’s a fine line between a dynamic, action-oriented organization and a stressful, ulcer-producing workplace. That difference is management’s attitude. But creating the right attitude only happens when you reward them for their accomplishments, rather than punish them for failures. People *do* miss deadlines. But if they’re operating from a sense of urgency, and look at their work as solving problems, rather than simply doing more tasks, they’ll be more productive, and you’ll be more profitable.

“There is a time for engagement and a time for withdrawal. A time to walk around the job. A time to contemplate it – and a time to just laugh at it.”

Robert Townsend,

Up the Organization

Time Management Action Plan

In order to use your time more effectively, there are several steps you need to take. Begin thinking about these steps now.

1. Determine your goals and values

Use a Resource Allocation Model to determine optimum use of time.

2. Make a list of tasks

Macro: Make list of yearly, quarterly, monthly, weekly actions.

Micro: List all actions to do on a daily basis.

3. Prioritize

A Absolutely necessary

B Better do it soon

C Could do it – whenever

4. Organize

Put all information in one place

5. Simplify

Forms, procedures

6. Systematize

Repetitive tasks (estimating, client contact, specifications)

7. Structure

Control interruptions

Make blocks of time

Use small blocks for short tasks

Large blocks for big tasks, creative projects

8. Multiply effectiveness

Delegate, collaborate, automate

9. Eliminate time-wasters

10. Have fun

Do what you enjoy. Enjoy what you do. You'll always work harder and better when you're having fun.

What do YOU want to do?

Pick a task that you've wanted to do for a long time, but have never been able to accomplish. As we go through the process of getting things done, work out a plan in your own mind to how you'll get YOUR task done. List ten things you need to work on when you get back to the office.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Now, go through these ten things and eliminate or assign as many as you can.

D - delegate (assign someone else to do it)

E - eliminate (doesn't need to be done)

Of those remaining, rank them in priority (A, B, C).

A=Absolutely must begin today, B= Better do it soon,

C=Can put it off, if necessary.

TOP THREE TASKS

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Now take an A task, and begin planning how you're going to get it done.

“If I had eight hours to chop down a tree, I'd spend six hours sharpening an axe.”

Abraham Lincoln

Gresham's Law of Time: *The essential priorities of the future are held hostage by the trivial priorities of the present.*