

HOW TO GET MORE DONE IN LESS TIME

Karen Meager and John McLachlan have ten tips to help you organise your time more effectively

1. BE CLEAR ABOUT WHAT'S BEST FOR YOU

We are all individual and unique, so the best way of using your time will also be individual – to you. No time management tool will work for everyone, so find what works for you and stop using tools that do not suit you. Know what is important to you and prioritise those things.

2. YOUR BEHAVIOURAL HABITS ARE IMPORTANT

How you use your time has much more to do with our deep-seated thinking and behavioural habits than it has to do with our organisational skills. Consider why you do not stick to the to-do list you think is so important to time management.

3. FIND YOUR TIME CHUNKS

Everyone works in different chunks of time. Do you think in the short term, in minutes and hours? Or do you think more in weeks and months? When you understand your preferred 'chunking' you can arrange

your time to suit your preference and life will flow much more easily.

4. COMPLETE A TIME AUDIT

This is a valuable exercise to do for yourself with an aim of finding two or three things you do that waste time. Where do you spend more time than you think you should? Focusing in on specific habits will streamline how you do things.

5. KNOW YOUR ENERGY THRESHOLDS

When you are tired you will be less efficient and are more likely to 'take the long way round'. If you are aware of what

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builds and drains your energy, you can plan your activities in a way that suits you best.

6. COMMUNICATE YOUR TIME BOUNDARIES

You teach people how to treat you and respect your time by how you communicate your time boundaries. Learning to be clear and assertive about what you will and will not do, you will save a lot of time – and build strong relationships.

7. AVOID THE TIME SUCKERS!

We all know them: the space invaders, the time suckers,

the creepy, too-friendly people at work. They waste your time, make you feel uncomfortable and make you say and do things you don't want to.

8. SLOW DOWN TO SPEED UP

Time management is not always about doing things quickly. Speed has many benefits but also some drawbacks, in that speedy decisions can be less thought through and have unintended consequences that can take you by surprise, wasting time, money and energy later.

9. THINK THROUGH THE WHY

Brainstorm these questions honestly and openly, and it should give you a good solid base from which to design the next steps. Why are we doing this/not doing this? How is doing this linked to our mission and purpose as a business? If we decided to not do this, what would happen?

10. THINK RHYTHM NOT BALANCE

Achieving balance is like walking a tightrope – you are always swaying this way, then that. Anyone who has tried

cooking dinner, playing with their kids and working on a meeting agenda at the same time will know how this feels. Instead of trying to 'balance off' different activities in your life, think instead about creating a daily or weekly rhythm that works for you. ■

Karen Meager and John McLachlan are co-founders of Monkey Puzzle Training and co-authors of *Time Mastery and Real Leaders for the Real World*. Visit monkeypuzzletraining.co.uk