



Brainstormed Solutions to Top Time Wasters

Phone Interruptions

- Put phone on silent mode, and call-back individuals at a set time, in bulk.
- Prioritize response times for stored calls.
- Assess need of caller, and redirect appropriately.
- Use Caller ID.
- Cut calls short... Set limits upfront (meeting in 10 minutes, deadline, etc.).
- Be succinct; don't ramble.
- Block off time for no-phones.
- Delegate to staff for follow-up.
- Screen calls.
- Don't give out your direct line.
- Limit personal phone calls.
- Transfer calls.
- Have staff screen calls.
- Set a goal of how much time you spend on the phone.

Meetings

- Clear agendas.
- Meeting should not be longer than one hour/set time limit.
- Be prepared!
- Ask for staff input.
- Must have action items that require follow-up.
- Write memos, e-mails instead.
- Telephone conference calls.
- Limit meetings to critical issues only.
- Start and end on time.
- Close meeting to interruptions.
- Don't schedule unnecessary meetings or invite players who are not directly involved.
- Schedule regular meetings, to avoid surprises/unexpected issues; don't wait too long between meetings.

Meetings (cont'd)

- Set meeting rules to stay focused on the topic.
- Delegate follow-up items, work assignments.
- Make sure people who are going to report are prepared.
- Set time-limit on talking: limit/structure, Q&A, etc.
- Have the right people in the meeting.
- Table discussion of unresolved issues for next meeting.
- Avoid side-bar conversations.
- Schedule only as necessary.
- Keep Blackberry in office.
- Avoid non-agenda items.

Unexpected Visitors

- Set walk-in hours.
- Prioritize unexpected visitors, refusing unless issue is a priority/emergency.
- Do not schedule an appointment close to another activity/meeting.
- Make sure to maintain the focus of the conversation.
- Use body language to indicate that the meeting is over (stand up)
- Fully inform support staff.
- Closed door sessions.
- Redirect.
- Set time limits.
- Have a gate keeper.
- Use unwelcoming behavior, without being rude.
- Don't stay sitting down or don't look up.
- Let your visitor know you are busy.
- Continue working, asking your visitor to set up an appointment.
- Establish a general policy.
- Ask person to return at a later time.
- Make appointments.
- Have front desk staff control walk-ins/front desk area.

Poor Delegation

- Repeat instructions.
- Ask for feedback/understanding of instructions.
- Trust, but verify.

Poor Delegation (cont'd)

- Know the skill levels of people who you are assigning to.
- Understand system, have system in place, don't reinvent system each time.
- Understand expectations.
- Know what you want, first... the goal, and purpose of task.
- Clear job descriptions and expectations.
- Individual skill assessment.
- Professional Development.
- Trust others.
- Let people make mistakes.
- Clear communication.
- Assess workloads.
- Manage expectations.
- Ask for permanent staff, so you don't lose trained employees.
- Don't wait until the last minute to delegate.
- Motivate employees.

Unexpected Crises

- Anticipate.
- Define "crisis."
- Contingency Plans.
- Delegate.
- Set clear priorities and procedures.
- Have contact information readily available.
- Train others on how to problem solve.
- Assess.
- Direct to appropriate individual or unit
- Diffuse.
- Call security.
- Create a safety/backup plan.
- Stay calm/Don't panic.
- Try to stay focused.
- Concentrate on finding a solution, instead of focusing on the problem.
- Get feedback from others.
- Be prepared as best you can.
- Establish relationships with others who can be helpful. (e.g., security, building and grounds, room scheduler).