

# BASICS OF TIME MANAGEMENT

## Take the Time to Plan

Think you're too busy to plan your time? Wrong – the busier you are, the more you need to plan your time, so you can use it more efficiently and effectively. And planning your time will take much less time than you think. A small investment in planning can save you hours in reduced productivity and wasted effort.

Our work days are pressured on all sides by deadlines, paperwork, interruptions, meetings, phone calls, email, voicemail, questions from co-workers and staff, unforeseen emergencies... the list seems endless. The more well-managed your time is, the more efficiently you can handle your work load and the less stress you will have to deal with.

Your time planning should take no more than a few minutes each day and can be done while you are doing something else, such as having breakfast, traveling to work, shaving, enjoying that first cup of coffee, etc.

The following are a few of the basics of time planning:

### 1. **Mentally review your short-term and long-term "to-do" lists.**

- Take a few moments each day to think about what you want to have completed by tomorrow – or by the end of the week, or by the end of the month – which depends on something being done today, for instance, research. Keep a notepad, Palm Pilot, etc. handy and jot down your ideas and thoughts.
- Is there any prep work (research, drafting, phone calls, etc) that you can get done ahead of time before an upcoming big project? Completing these tasks early will save time, help keep you more organized and can even show up any potential problems or delays, which can then be dealt with BEFORE they become problems or delays.
- Every job has a number of aspects, and you don't need to do it all. Delegate portions of the workload to staff or co-workers.

### 2. **Use your "peak hours" to best advantage.**

- Determine what hours of the day are your most productive, which are your most creative, etc. What time of day (or night) are you most alert and energetic? Most lethargic? Every person's peak times are different. Plan your day according to the peaks and valleys of your internal clock. If you are most productive between 8:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m., then schedule tasks that require the most effort and thought for those hours, and take your lunch break after 1:00 p.m. If you are typically most irritable around 3:00 p.m., do NOT schedule sales calls, client meetings or other types of meetings that require you to be at your most congenial.
- Working overtime can be counterproductive if the overtime you put in coincides with your least productive time of day. For instance, if the early evening hours typically leave you feeling spent, hungry and irritable, why attempt to get any additional work done during that time? If you are an early morning person, go into the office an hour before the rest of the crowd gets there – you may find that you get more done in that hour than at any other time of the day.