

Got Productivity?

Here it is spring (at least the calendar says so) and Memorial Day is quickly approaching. Do you find yourself chomping at the bit to tackle all of those tasks you have put off in both your personal and professional lives? Or do you look at the stacks and stacks of things to do and say . . . "maybe I'll get around to it another day". If it seems overwhelming today, it will likely not get any better with procrastination.



Here are some tips to help get you started on your road to productivity.

1. Start

Sounds simple, right? Well, you are not going to get to the end of something unless you start it. You don't have to leap off the block and burn up all your energy, but why not start by tackling one aspect. Break the large overwhelming tasks into smaller, more manageable ones. Rather than do all your QuickBooks entries for the past 3 months, start with month 1 and celebrate that success. Work on a client proposal and then make the three follow up phone calls you have been meaning to get to.

If you work better by focusing all of your attention to something, shut your door and do that. If having minor distractions is okay and you need to get away from your home office because you are suffering from cabin fever (or the siren call of laundry), seek out a quiet corner at your local coffee shop and get to it. You may be surprised to see many of your peers there conducting productive business because they do not have the distractions of their office and can hunker down and just do it (sorry to borrow your tagline, Nike).

If you are a squirrel chaser, jot down that errant thought that popped into your head and then get back to the task at hand.

Mise en place – What's that you say? French for everything in place, mise en place is most often associated with the culinary arts. In this sense, it means gathering all of the materials you will need to accomplish the task ahead of you. That way you won't be led astray looking for an item and use that as an excuse to get off track.

2. Know Thyself

Are you a morning person who can bang out 3 chapters of a book before noon, but heaven forbid you try to do something after 1? Or do your creative and productive juices start flowing after the kids are put to bed? As you are undoubtedly aware, your energy cycles throughout the day. To be at your best and your most productive, learn to recognize what your circadian rhythms are telling you. Don't fight



them, embrace them. And use this self-knowledge of your most productive times when you are going to tackle the important work versus the mundane time stealers.

3. Take Care of You

There has been a recent spate of reports on how sitting in front of a computer all day may be unhealthier than being a couch potato. The advice of the experts is to get up every hour and stretch. But how do you remember to do it? Set a timer on your phone or computer, or if that's too cumbersome, use a cooking timer that you place across the room – it may be old school, but it will force you to get up out of your chair to turn off the annoying clatter of it. And don't forget to reset it for the next 55 minute block.

Taking a quick walk around the block can do much to get you in a proper frame of mind to handle a task. Breathe deeply, swing your arms to increase your circulation and just revel in the beauty of the outdoors. If you have a pet, take 10 minutes to play with them; empty your mind of all the pressing thoughts and enjoy their unconditional love. It will help bolster you to get

back at it, refreshed and reinvigorated.

Be Singularly Focused

A few years ago, Cybertary wrote about the hazards of multi-tasking in an article titled *Multi Tasking – A Talent or A Torment?* The sad truth of the matter is that multi-tasking is often counter to productivity. Having the task at hand be your focus can help you accomplish it and get it out of the way. Then, you can see to all of those other things that you wanted to juggle under the pretense of being productive.



And a 5th (and shameless self-promotion for Cybertary) . . . consider delegating some of the tasks that you do not have to do personally. That way you can concentrate on what you need to do, letting us handle those 'round tuits'.

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