Work Right: How to Improve Your Productivity

It's Monday morning. Your desk is cluttered, your to-do list is two pages long and you have 25 new voice-mail messages. Maximizing your efficiency with proven productivity skills can help you clear the decks and get on with your work.

"The key to becoming more productive and efficient is to establish 'do-it-now' work habits," says Kerry Gleeson, founder of the Institute for Business Technology in Boca Raton, Fla., and author of "The Personal Efficiency Program." "Dealing with something the first time you touch it can help you clear out your backlog, improve your concentration, process your work in a timely fashion and overcome procrastination, which eats up more time in the workplace than practically anything else."

These additional suggestions from Mr. Gleeson can help you further improve your productivity:

- **Use a calendar system to plan a week at a time**
  Planning on a weekly basis increases your chances of scheduling and doing your work successfully. "When it comes to planning your workload, planning by the day is too short a time frame and by the month is too long - by the week is just right for most people," Mr. Gleeson says.

- **Commit to a daily action plan**
  Each morning, devote 10 minutes to creating a daily action plan, then track your progress through the workday. To simplify your daily planning, work backward from the larger picture created by your weekly plan. Derive your daily to-do lists from a list of tasks designed to move you closer to a larger goal.

- **Stop shuffling through the piles of paper on your desk**
  When you pick up a piece of paper, deal with it by acting on it, passing it on to someone, filing it or pitching it.

- **Determine which assignments need to be done right away**
  Breaking down projects into specific tasks and entering those tasks on your to-do list over a week's time can keep you from being overwhelmed by a large project.

- **Make follow-up and follow-through part of the work process**
  Follow up with staff members on their ongoing projects; follow through by keeping your boss informed of your progress and problems with major projects.

- **Analyze your time**
  Create a time log to keep track of what you do and how long it takes. "You'll be amazed at how much time you spend on certain items and how little you spend on others," Mr. Gleeson says. "Use your analysis to delegate tasks and eliminate interruptions that waste your time."

- **Batch routine tasks**
  Return phone calls and respond to memos and e-mail messages once or twice a day. "If you perform a series of these tasks in batches or blocks of time, you'll complete them in 25 percent less time," Mr. Gleeson says.

- **Put routine tasks on your weekly calendar and your daily to-do list**
  Doing so allows you to do them, then move on. Schedule time each week for planning your workload and keeping your desk and work area organized.

- **Think in terms of work cycles**
  Each task has a beginning, middle and end. The beginning involves preparing and setting up for the task. The middle is the act of doing it. The end involves completing it, then returning files, supplies, reference materials and anything else you used to where they belong. Cleaning up as you go will help you maintain order and prepare for the next item on your agenda.

- **Work smarter by streamlining routine tasks**
  "You should spend as much time coming up with ways to do your tasks more efficiently as you do performing them," Mr. Gleeson says. "Low-value, time-consuming tasks can clog your ability to produce if you waste time completing them."
Has Work Become Your Respite? The Reality of Working Caregivers

Approximately 73 percent of employees are responsible for some type of caregiving, and one in six workers are caregivers for an older adult. Caregivers are not just middle-aged Americans: 6.2 million millennials make up 24 percent of unpaid caregivers, and one study shows that 14 percent have left the paid workforce, unable to balance work and caregiving.

The financial impact is staggering. Services provided by unpaid caregivers are valued at $430 billion annually, about the size of the annual Medicaid budget. Caregivers aged 50 or over lose, on average, $300,000 in wages, pensions, retirement funds and benefits over their lifetimes. 70 percent of caregivers experience work-related problems, such as decreased hours, tied to caregiving.

So, where does this leave you? You might:

- Contact IMPACT Solutions to access eldercare support and resources
- Help create a workplace culture that supports working caregivers.
- Celebrate the caregivers on your team and transform the corporate culture into a truly caring company.

If you would like more information on how your EAP can be of assistance, give us a call today at 800-227-6007.

Contributed By: Benjamin Rose Institute on Aging
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FAQs about Telemental Health Counseling

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Is my information secure? Our providers use HIPAA compliant tools insuring your information is secure. Since telemental health sessions can be held wherever you choose, it is important for you consider whether there is adequate privacy within your surroundings.

Are there any issues where this modality may not be appropriate? For safety reasons there are a few concerns where counseling via telemental health may not be appropriate. Some of those issues include severe depression, substance abuse, anger management, and when an individual is reporting suicidal or homicidal thoughts. Our triage counselors are skilled in assessing whether telemental health is an appropriate format for you.
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