

Time Management

Remote Training Course Notes

The following are tips and techniques that we will cover on the live online training workshop. Download this to refer to on the day.

Setting goals and priorities:

1. Set clear and realistic goals and objectives.
2. In addition to knowing what is important to you at the moment, you may also have specific goals and objectives in mind, for your personal as well as work life.
3. Goals and objectives are the specifics or building blocks which ultimately satisfy your life values.
4. Do you have a goal? Maybe not at the moment - but you might have one in the future and decisions you make about what to do next should be influenced by the goal you have.
5. Targets are important factors in motivation as they drive you towards completion
6. Planning is important because it gives you more control in your life
7. Commit your priorities to an action plan. By writing down what we wish to achieve it gives us more motivation to succeed.
8. Daily priorities are the vital factors to ensure our objectives are met regularly and consistently.
9. Know the difference between important and urgent tasks so that you are able to make quick priority decisions throughout the day.
10. Get into the habit of looking forward through your diary to see what is coming up; which days that are already committed, and what amount of spare time you have to complete your priority tasks. Make sure you create enough spare time to complete things you need to finish.
11. What gets on your daily or weekly list should be prioritised so that you are working to full effectiveness. Grade tasks by their Importance and Urgency to decide what the best use of your time is.

Assertiveness tips:

1. Assertive behaviour allows you to state your needs in a tactful and respectful way
2. Be aware of the time you may be wasting by your non-assertive approach and make a decision to start asserting your point of view more often

3. Manage your body language and vocal delivery to ensure you sound and look confident when making your point of view
4. Be assertive when you know the consequences of this action will be positive
5. Remember; you are just refusing the request, not rejecting the person
6. Practice your assertiveness regularly to maintain its effectiveness
7. Keep the reply short. Simply say, “No, I don't want to”, “I prefer not to”, “I'd rather not”, rather than inventing an excuse.
8. Give reasons if you think it will be helpful to you and the other person.
9. Don't apologise. If you do want to say you're sorry, do so simply.
10. Ask for more information, if you need it, before deciding whether or not to refuse the request, but not simply as a way of avoiding making a decision.
11. Acknowledge whoever has made the request, e.g. “It's kind of you to ask, but I don't want to go to that meeting as the issues I want to discuss aren't on the agenda.”
12. Show warmth and attentiveness so that your refusal is not seen as a rejection of the individual, but simply a refusal of the request. On this point remember you're not turning down the person - you're simply refusing the request.

Become better at 'easing e-mail':

1. Block off specific times to process your e-mail. Ensure it is at regular intervals and resist the temptation to check e-mail more frequently.
2. Turn off the e-mail 'pop-up' on your computer - it encourages distraction.
3. Clear your Inbox every day - don't let it become a catch-all folder for everything you are working on. Create new mail folders with names that categorise your mail and move messages into them. This way new mail is easier to find.
4. Delete messages with attachments after you have saved them to your hard drive. They take up a lot of space on the server. Place items in separate e-mail folders as you would with paper items. Don't use your Inbox or Sent Mail as catchall holding tanks.
5. Stop promising people more than you know you can accomplish. *Under promise and over deliver* is a technique that is an instant time saver.
6. Sort incoming e-mail by subject, key word, or author so you can process related mail together.
7. Read items just once, and answer, delete or move them to project specific folders.
8. Set up rules for your Inbox, that will automatically file, delete, highlight, forward or prioritise incoming and outgoing messages.

9. Set a '5 or 10 minute *'don't send rule'* for most e-mail. Instead, save them in your 'drafts' folder-you'll be surprised how given a five minute lapse you will be able to retract a poorly written message or reconsider your response to something important.
10. Learn how to keep an address book to save e-mail addresses, automatically insert them into a new message and maintain groups of contacts.
11. Use signatures to reply to frequently requested information. These will automatically respond to the sender with a prewritten message. They are often used for acknowledgements, brochures, price lists, directions, etc.
12. Use the blind carbon copy ('bcc') feature for your own mailing lists. You can send out periodic announcements to a list of people. By using the 'bcc' feature, recipients won't be able to copy other people's names and addresses.

Managing Your Telephone Communications:

1. If you regularly list your phone calls prior to making them, write the number next to the name. This will save you time looking it up every time you need to call the person who is very busy and difficult to pin down.
2. Get into the habit of making a contact sheet with people you speak to on a regular basis, or your important contacts. If you note the major items during all of your phone calls, you will save time if a problem occurs or if you need to clarify an important detail.
3. Plan your calls. Make a brief note of what you want to say and what you want to find out. It saves time later.
4. Make notes during the conversation, this will allow you to have a record of important details in case you need to refer to agreed actions later on.
5. End all phone conversations with 'time specific' actions. You will then increase the effectiveness of your communications because both parties will know what is expected of them and when they must deliver promises.
6. Immediately record all agreed activities in your diary after the phone call. The diary will then act as an automatic memory jogger for your agreed actions and promises.
7. If you have several phone calls to make, plan to do them all at the same time.