

## 5 Time Management Tips That Will Boost Your Career



*By: Lisa Quast*

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Along with continuing to learn one new skill every year, there's something else that will help you to be successful: Being in control of how you spend your time.

I'm often asked "How do you get so much done in one day?" and my response is always this: "Simple. I schedule my workload every day." When a friend of mine asked that question and heard my response she was horrified. "Oh, I could never do that. I'm just not a structured kind of person. I'd rather see how my day is going and how I feel, and then decide what I work on throughout the day."

Everyone has differences when it comes to the way they approach their work. My friend happened to be the type of person who liked living from one moment to the next, handling things as they arose. But the issue was that she wasn't receiving the pay raises or promotions she had been hoping for.

**So I gave her a fun little exercise to do:** Document what she did every hour of each day at work for one week. When we sat down to chat afterwards, she was almost bursting to talk. "I can't believe how much time I've been spending on emails! And I also realized how much I get distracted from what I planned to do and end up doing something else."

Sound familiar? It can be easy to get sidetracked at work when you don't have clearly defined goals for what you're trying to accomplish each day. If you want to achieve your career goals, one of the first skills to master is time management. Here's how:

**Find out where your time goes.** Track your time for one week and then analyze the results.

**Plan ahead.** Sit down in a quiet location for 15-20 minutes and plan your week ahead. Write down the key projects and tasks you need/want to accomplish.

**Prioritize.** Rank your list so you can see the most important activities all the way down to the least important.

**Block time on your calendar.** Schedule the time you will need to complete your high-priority tasks and projects that week. Then, block out time for your medium-priority activities. If you're out of time for the lesser priority items, you may need to push back on certain requests, ask for more time or work longer hours.

**Carve out email time.** Set aside specific times for checking your email, such as at the beginning of the day, right before and after lunch, and at the end of the day. Avoid checking email except during these times, as it can become a huge time sinkhole and distract you from your high-priority work!

The more disciplined my friend became managing her time, the more of her professional goals that she was able to accomplish. All it required her to do was to reframe her thoughts from "I wonder how my week will be?" to "Here's what I'm going to accomplish this week."

