

## Yes, you can boost your productivity

SEPTEMBER 2, 2013 BY SIMON EJEMBI



There are many easy steps an individual can take to get much more work done in a day, according to experts. SIMON EJEMBI highlights some of them

Being unable to get much work done day after day can be depressing. For some people, nothing is as depressing as having your boss issuing you a query for failing to meet your targets or scoring you low for productivity. Some who have experienced the above without doing anything about it have found themselves without jobs, and facing financial crisis.

Whether your level of productivity is low, average or high, experts say you can make it better by taking a few steps.

According to the Chief Executive Officer, Inspired Life Media Group, Lisa Bell, the idea of getting more done in less time is a seductive one.

She says when people are faced with so many tasks each day, it is easy for them to be attracted to the possibility of getting more done with the little time they have.

Here are the steps you can take:

### Note your energy levels

In a post on her blog, <http://www.lisanicolebell.com/>, Bell says this is an important step.

According to her, it is important for people to know when their 'golden time' – when they have the most focus and mental clarity – is.

She explains that the golden time is the time of the day when an individual is most effective. Within that period, she says time seems to slow down, making it possible to get important tasks done.

"The easiest way to discover your golden time is to create a time journal for a week. Note how you feel each hour and what you're working on. After a week, review the journal and note any patterns. Do you feel more energy before 9am or after 10pm? Is writing easier in the afternoon than the morning? Use the data to assess when you're most effective and mould your schedule around your golden times."

### Take control of your time

Forbes Magazine contributor and career development expert, Lisa Quast, says for individuals to be more productive, they need to be in control of their time.

In an article published by Forbes, she says to achieve this, it is important for people to find out where their time goes, plan ahead, prioritise, eliminate the non-essential, set out goals and carve out email time.

Her explanations of the steps are below:

### Find out where your time goes

Track your time for one week and then analyse the results.

### Plan ahead

At the end of each week, sit down in a quiet location for 15-20 minutes and plan out your week ahead. Write down all of the key projects and tasks you need to accomplish.



## **Prioritise**

Prioritise your list from most important to least important activities and projects, and then block out uninterrupted time to accomplish your most important items. Don't let others schedule meetings on top of the time you've blocked for your key projects.

## **Eliminate the non-essential**

Use any remaining time on your calendar to schedule less important activities. Ask yourself, "Is this activity actually important or is it unnecessary?" Then, cut out non-essential activities.

## **Set goals**

When you get up in the morning, set goals for yourself as to what you plan to accomplish that day.

## **Carve out email time**

Set aside specific times for checking your email, such as at the beginning of your workday, right before or after lunch and at the end of the day. Refrain from checking email except during these allocated times.

Business Development Consultant for Callboxinc, Belinder Summers explains on her blog, *The Appointment Setting*, that the following steps can also help people to boost their productivity:

## **Work backwards**

Break down your goal into its smallest parts, then do each part as best as you can. Not only will you be able to get the job done faster, you get the feeling that you really did something in a single day.

## **Avoid multi-tasking**

Summers argue, "If you think that multi-tasking will help you to do more, then, you are sadly mistaken. In fact, according to one study conducted by TNS Research, employees actually end up getting dumber in work when they do a variety of tasks all at the same time. Concentrate on one work at a time. You will do more this way."

## **Eliminate distractions**

According to her, if you have to post a 'Do Not Disturb' sign on your door, do so.

"In fact, if you can come up with any working idea, even if it may sound bizarre, just so that you can concentrate on your work, then do so. If it can help you improve your productivity, as well as get the best work done at the best time, then you should do it," she adds.

## **Work with a goal**

Summers explains that when people do not have a clear goal or plan in mind, distractions will seem to be irresistible to them.

Consequently, she says there is the need for people to set a goal for themselves of what they want to finish for the day.

"You may not be able to do them all (yes, there are times it happens), but at least you can be sure that you are going somewhere," she explains.

## **Work in intervals**

Here, the business development consultant explains, "Sixty to 90 minutes of focused work can actually get you done fast. After that, take a short break like getting a drink, walking around a bit, as well as other activities that will take your mind off the work for a few minutes. Not only will this refresh your mind, it will also help you to concentrate better on the next task that you have to do."

