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Are you racing against time?

DO YOU SOMETIMES forget files, appointments, dates, keys or even deadlines and then have to apologise? Do you wish there were more than 24 hours in one day? Do you wish you had gone to bed earlier last night? You may already use paper or electronic organisers to plan your day, but even with these you still don't seem to get everything done. Does all of this sound familiar? You are not alone.

It is important to manage one's time, but particularly so if you are someone who has to juggle many jobs during the course of a day.

Here are a few strategies to help you get more organised and productive.

✦ Find out how you use your time.

Start a log of everything you do during the day to see exactly how much time you spend on activities such as emailing, social networking, phoning, eating, drinking and travelling.

✦ Prioritise your to-do list in categories: must do, should do, would like to do.

✦ Every evening, plan the next day and keep strictly to your to-do list.

✦ Try not to answer the phone every time it rings.

✦ Email is addictive. Turn it off when you are concentrating.

✦ Make a concerted effort to manage your daily interruptions.

✦ Learn to say no when asked to carry out an unrealistic task.

✦ Don't procrastinate once you start a project. See it through to the end. Although this may seem obvious, the more productive time you spend on a project, the sooner it will be completed.

We all have the same 24 hours in each day, yet some people use their time so well. Chances are, they are organised and self-disciplined. What about you?

Are you confusing people with your leadership style?

CHRIS A RUSNAK

"YOU'RE UP ONE day and down the next. No problem—the people who work for you can just go with the flow, right? Wrong," says Karen Wright, whose company, Parachute Executive Coaching (www.parachuteexecutivecoaching.com), is a Costco member in Toronto. Wright, the author of *The Complete Executive: The 10-Step System for Great Leadership Performance* (Bibliomotion, 2012), offers these tips on creating a steady leadership persona.

Stay cool. Your people need to know the difference between a mood swing and a major business issue. Help them out by staying on an even keel at least 90 percent of the time. When you're down they'll know it's serious, and when you're up they will know there is real cause for celebration.

Walk your talk. The higher you rise on the ladder, the more people are watching—and the more easily you'll be called out if your actions don't match your words. Make sure you are a living example of the values you expect others to uphold.

Get your story straight. If you have achieved success, chances are people are going to want to hear about how you made it to the top. Don't embellish or inflate. The more relatable it is, the better. Besides, the truth will always catch up with you.

Keep it real. Never assume you're doing fine, and never presume you know what others are thinking. Ask for feedback, whether directly or through a confidential survey process, and be open to what you hear. You can't expect the people around you to accept feedback if you are not willing to do the same.

Stand for something. If you're in a position to inspire people and lead them toward something important and exciting, don't be shy. Let your passion show. Your authentic excitement will be infectious. And if you are not a naturally comfortable public speaker, get trained and practice, practice, practice: Few skills are as important in a leader as the ability to energize a crowd.

Train your brain for success

PESSIMISM DOESN'T grow your business. For ages, studies have shown that optimists are more successful in business and life. But developing and maintaining a positive attitude, according to a recent article at *Inc.com*, is never automatic. You have to work at it. Here are some tips from the story to help you cultivate this winning mind-set.

Control your attitude. Attitude doesn't emerge from what happens to you, but instead from how you decide to interpret what happens to you. Take, for example, receiving the unexpected gift of an old automobile. One person might think, "It's a piece of junk." A second might think, "It's cheap transportation." And a third might think, "It's a real

classic!" In each case, the person is deciding how to interpret the event and therefore controlling how he or she feels about it.

Create a "library" of positive thoughts. Spend at least 15 minutes every day reading, viewing or listening to something inspirational or motivational. If you do this regularly, you'll have those thoughts and feelings ready at hand (or, rather, ready to mind) when events don't go exactly the way you'd prefer.

Speak it into existence.

The words that come out of your mouth aren't just a reflection of what's in your brain—they're programming your brain how to think. Therefore, if you want to have a positive attitude, your vocabulary must be consistently positive. Stop using negative phrases such as "I can't," "It's impossible" or "This won't work." These statements program you for negative results.

To read the entire article, visit www.inc.com and search "positive attitude."

