

6 Tips to Efficiently Manage Your Time

Marco Sacco

All successful entrepreneurs have in common a brilliant mind, the fact that they never give up, and the ability to efficiently manage their time. Indeed, the key to success when running a business - in addition to [motivation](#) - is time management, so that you do not feel overworked or stressed and you have a better quality of life. Just have a look at [Virgin CEO Richard Branson](#) who is able to divide his time among surfing, hiking... and running a successful multinational company thanks to his time management skills.

Here are 6 tips to efficiently manage your time.

1. Making a to-do list

As an entrepreneur, you are very busy and have so many things to take care of or think of that sometimes you can forget some of them. In order to avoid such unfortunate events, the first step you should tackle when starting your day is as simple as writing down what has to be done. You should include everything in your to-do list - from the most urgent tasks to the least significant ones. Once you have done the list, you are then ready to the next step, which is organising your time.

2. Scheduling your day

Scheduling your day is a critical step in your day. For this step, you will need to decide which tasks are the most important and in which order you are going to work on them. Unlike the to-do list which gives you a rough overview of what your day is going to be like, the schedule gives you a complete picture of your day. The idea here is also to [develop a routine](#) that helps you to save time and to avoid these indecisive moments when you do not know which task you should work on next. Finally, the best way to keep track of what have been done so far is to constantly refer yourself to your schedule throughout the day.

“He who every morning plans the transaction of the day and follows out that plan, carries a thread that will guide him through the maze of the most busy life. But where no plan is laid, where the disposal of time is surrendered merely to the chance of incidence, chaos will soon reign.” – Victor Hugo

3. Prioritising tasks

Each day, look at your list and mark those items that are the top priority. At this stage, you consider the urgency and the importance of each task identifying the ones that you deem to

be very urgent, urgent, very important, important, neither urgent nor important, difficult or easy. Because the easy tasks will not require much of your time, you can work on them first, but note that you should not spend more than 30 minutes a day on them. You should also create room in your agenda to concentrate on 'neither urgent nor important' tasks to prevent them from becoming so.

5. Using the 4D's rule

The same rule of prioritising can apply for your emails using the 4D's: Delete, Do, Delegate and Defer.

- Delete: get rid of useless emails
- Do: reply to urgent emails, since you can do so very quickly
- Delegate: forward emails that are out of your expertise and can be dealt better by someone else
- Defer: put aside the emails that require longer action and take care of them later

4. Setting deadlines

Setting deadlines is a good way to make sure you do not spend too much time on one activity. Here is no point in setting deadlines if you make executive decisions to always push them back. Set a deadline and try your best to stick to it. Set your deadline a few days before the task absolutely has to be done. This allows for the possibility that other things will get in the way, but also allow for you still to get the task done.

6. Taking breaks

As odd as this might sound, taking regular breaks, even when you are busy is highly recommended. According to the New York Times, [breaks help to stay on schedule](#). When you work long hours, as a human being you will inevitably lose your focus. Taking regular breaks will help you to gather your thoughts and increase your productivity. Consider also taking "active breaks", such as walking around your office or go for a coffee break, and try not to stay put and just check your Facebook account at your desk.

"Should you find yourself in a chronically leaking boat, energy devoted to changing vessels is likely to be more productive than energy devoted to patching leaks." – Warren Buffett

Bio:

Marco is a digital marketing executive and freelance writer. At the moment he's working with [Activia Training](#), a training provider agency that focuses on delivering training in Software & IT, Management and Staff Development for entrepreneurs who are looking for improving their productivity or expanding their businesses.