

Tips in Motion

Where Am I Losing Time?

Before we can spend more time with our families or by ourselves, we must first identify where we are wasting time.

"I need more time." "Where did the time go?" "I need more than 24 hours in a day to get all this done." Millions of people have spoken these or similar words of frustration. Listed below are areas for you to consider in determining where you are losing time. Check all that apply to you and add anything not listed that applies to your situation.

- | A | B | C |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Procrastination | <input type="checkbox"/> Interruptions | <input type="checkbox"/> Understaffed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of discipline | <input type="checkbox"/> Cluttered home | <input type="checkbox"/> Too many meetings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Poorly defined goals | <input type="checkbox"/> Cluttered office/desk | <input type="checkbox"/> More than one boss |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ineffective delegation | <input type="checkbox"/> Piles of paper or other items | <input type="checkbox"/> Overlapping tasks/jobs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Too much socializing | <input type="checkbox"/> Unscheduled phone calls | <input type="checkbox"/> Unstructured meetings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Easily distracted | <input type="checkbox"/> Unexpected visitors | <input type="checkbox"/> Untrained staff |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of sleep | <input type="checkbox"/> No priorities or plan | <input type="checkbox"/> No company guidelines |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fear of change | <input type="checkbox"/> Unrealistic time estimates | <input type="checkbox"/> Little/no documentation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Negative attitude | <input type="checkbox"/> Too focused on details | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Poor listening skills | <input type="checkbox"/> No deadlines | |

Column A primarily deals with personal traits. These areas will require stepping out of your comfort zone and changing habits. Column B focuses on daily issues. Some areas cannot be controlled, however there are ways to limit their impact on your life. Column C pinpoints situations usually found in a home-based or off-site business environment.

Your goal here is to recognize where your time is wasted and to carefully look for ways to improve a behavior or a process. Start with one thing and remember that it will take 21 days or so of repetition to change a habit.

If you organize or streamline one thing on your list and it saves you 5 minutes each day, you will have an extra 30 minutes a week of free time. Other items on the list, if addressed, will save you an hour or more per day. The minutes add up to hours – hours for you to relax or spend with family and friends.

The National Association of Professional Organizers (NAPO) has qualified organizers in your area to assist you if you are looking for help. Check out their website at www.napo.net. For those of you in the North Carolina area, go directly to www.napo-nc.org.