



Big Fish Coaching

Unleash your potential.

Work smarter not harder – 3 steps to small business time management

By

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As a small business owner, providing a great product or service is only part of what you do. It is likely you are also the sales, marketing and H.R. manager and maybe the accountant, computer expert and receptionist too!

All these roles are vital to the success of your business. Juggling the different balls can be exciting and energizing, especially when your business is new. You are making decisions, solving problems, multi-tasking. You are in control and making things happen. It feels great!

But what happens when a vital, business critical ball you are juggling is dropped? The knock on effect can soon have a detrimental impact on current and future earnings.

The good news is you don't have to work harder to keep all areas functioning efficiently. You can choose to work smarter instead.

Imagine arriving at your desk each morning and actually being able to see it. How would it feel to have time to plan and prioritise daily and weekly tasks? How great would it be to stay on task and tick items off your to do list, instead of adding more? If this sounds too good to be true, it's not. You can make it happen by following these 3 simple steps.

Step 1 – Where are you now?

Get an accurate picture of how you currently spend your time. (You might be surprised!)

For one week keep a time log.

Mark on it what you are doing every 15 minutes of your working day.

Score each different activity with a high, medium or low priority rating.

At the end of the week take study the time log. Are high priority tasks getting enough attention? Are you spending too long on low priority actions? Do you jump from task to task? Are you easily distracted? Identify your bad habits and decide what you will improve.

Of the tasks you are performing, how many are because you think 'you must.'

Look at these 'musts.' What are the consequences of not doing these tasks?

What is the likelihood of this happening? How many of these tasks can be removed or delegated?

Finally, identify times during the day or week are you most productive.

Step 2 – Believe you can do it

We are what we believe ourselves to be. Practice replacing negative thoughts about time management ability with positive ones. E.g. "Every day my time management gets better." "I am organized and in control of my time." This positive reinforcement will help cement the changes you are about to make.

Step 3 – Make a plan and commit to it

Using a blank weekly planner draw up a schedule for your week

Using your knowledge of when you are most productive, allocate chunks of time for each business task.

Plan to begin each day with a 15-30minute planning session. Use this to identify and prioritise daily tasks.

Don't procrastinate. Do it now and tick tasks off your list as they are completed. Plan a 20 minute review at the end of each day. Congratulate yourself on your achievements. Consider what didn't happen and why. What have you learned? Reschedule unfinished business.

Finally, practice saying no. You do not have to acquiesce to every request for your time. Offer an alternative or politely decline the request. When you value your time, others will too.

It takes six weeks for a new way of working to become a habit. Stick with it, work smart and watch the balls fly through air.

Dawn Harvey is the founder of Big Fish Coaching. She works with business and individuals to develop skills for success. To learn more about working smarter not harder contact info@BigFishCoaching.co.uk or visit <http://www.BigFishCoaching.co.uk>