

SereneScene

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Practical Recovery

By Andrew Martin

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Effective Time Management for High Achievers, Part 7

By Andrew T. Martin, MBA, CADC II, SAP, CA-CCS

Chapter 9: Productivity Hour

Congratulations! If you have had the persistence to stay with this behavior modification program to this point, you are reaping many of the rewards of effective time management. High achievers following the program in detail are usually reporting an additional four to eight hours of productive time per week. While this is a tremendous benefit, there is still room for improvement.

As you are aware, high achievers seldom give themselves the chance to slow down and collect their thoughts. This trait can be hazardous to an effective time management program. It is well worth the effort to regularly stop and review performance and assess the results.

The productivity hour will provide a regularly scheduled time period for you to review your schedule, take

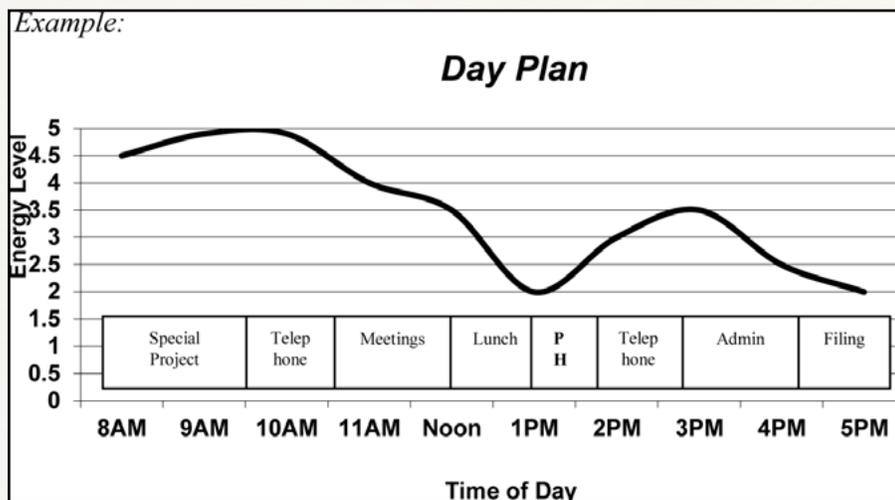
care of your personal business, and to provide some 'think time' to catch up on all of those great ideas that have not been implemented yet. After all, now that you have discovered several hours of time per week, shouldn't you be using that time to your ultimate benefit?

Process

1. Schedule one hour per day that will be uninterrupted, call this time your 'productivity hour'. Try to schedule the time toward the middle of the day and when your coworkers, clients, and family are less likely to interrupt you. Schedule your productivity hour for at least one-month in advance so you will not be inclined to schedule anything else during this period.
2. Send a memo or email, or schedule a meeting to inform your coworkers that you will not be available for anything other than critical organizational issues during your productivity hour.
3. Do not accept any new tasks, meetings or unso-

licit telephone calls during your productivity hour. Be firm about enforcing your productivity hour. You will find that using this time for your own review and 'think time' will generate creative ideas that will improve your performance beyond anything you have experienced before. The productivity hour is a key factor in truly using an effective time management program to benefit yourself and your organization.

Example:



tion and family, it is a forgone conclusion that anybody interrupting you from achieving success is a detriment to your organization and family.

At this stage in your behavior modification program you have effectively taken control of your schedule and organization. You have also effectively developed a system for determining the importance of tasks and the order in which they will be completed. You have also invested the necessary time to be a contributing member of your organization and family through 'think time'. It is now the time to make the final commitment to take control of your entire schedule.

Process

1. If individuals interrupt you in the workplace try using the following tactic. Most interruptions can be avoided by simply asking the individual leading the interruption to come back in 10 minutes when you can give them your undivided attention. Amazingly, most of the time the individual will never return because they will answer their own question or seek assistance from someone else. If they do return, make sure

to get the task in writing as discussed previously, then put the task in your in box and deal with it the next time you schedule the in box items.

2. Urgent interruptions can be very distracting. Often times, urgent interruptions are not important. Try using the tactic above, if that does not work, take the time to show the individual interrupting how to figure out the answer on their own. This tactic does initially take some time to do; however it will eliminate future interruptions. Additionally, you may be able to use this individual as a delegation resource in the future if someone else has the same question: you will be able to send him or her to the individual already trained rather than handling it yourself.
3. Client interruptions cannot be avoided in many cases. High achievers that need to deal with the client as a priority for their job description find it is necessary to schedule for the interruptions. That means schedule extra time into each task item with the assumption that you will be interrupted on a

Chapter 10: Interruptions

Interruptions are often the effective time manager's most severe problem. Not only do interruptions distract attention from the task at hand, they also provide an excellent reason not to do what is scheduled when the high achiever would rather procrastinate than perform.

Your time is yours; it is nobody else's. You have the option to use your time to the fullest, or choose to waste your time. The point is, you control your own time, and because you are in control it means that you do not have to put up with somebody else wasting it for you. If you are truly performing the primary duties of your job function and family responsibilities, and are prioritizing your tasks appropriately, you should feel absolutely no guilt for disallowing unproductive distractions. Because your schedule is designed to accomplish all the tasks you need to do for your organiza-

regular basis to handle client needs. However, do not use this extra time to handle any priority other than client needs.

4. Unavoidable interruptions are a reality of the world in which we live. When these interruptions happen, simply reschedule the tasks that were previously scheduled and handle the unexpected urgent and important priority. This is a wonderful tool because it allows the high achiever to always feel confident that all tasks will eventually be completed. Electronic scheduling software makes it simple to juggle tasks around when unavoidable interruptions do occur and cause a ripple in the schedule.
5. Interruptions can pile up at times. In these situations your previously scheduled time management efforts for the day can be totally destroyed. Do not allow this to depress you. Simply take ten minutes and regroup. Go through the tasks and reschedule them according to priority. Remember that you are always in control of your time management efforts: even when situations seem out of control.
6. Stay focused regardless of an interruption. Several methods of dealing with interruptions have been outlined here. You probably have your own set of tactics as well. Above all, stay focused on the task at hand rather than trying to do a dozen things all at once. The only thing that happens when you diversify your attention is to delay the completion of all the tasks simultaneously. Take care of one thing at a time and focus on it until it is complete. If you cannot complete the task, then schedule another time to complete the task at a later date.
7. Allow only one project on your desk at a time. Distractions caused by paperwork stacks and project files can be worse than individuals interrupting you. Get all that paperwork off your desk so you can focus on the project at hand. The only items on your desk should include the task being worked on; everything else should be scheduled and filed away, or in your in box waiting for your next in box review.

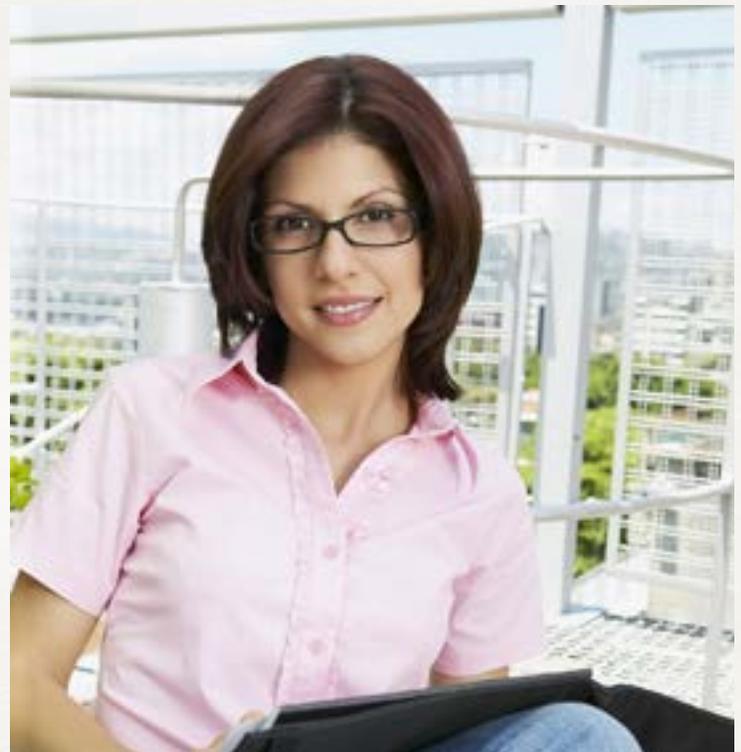
Chapter 11: Commitment

As mentioned in the beginning of this guide, many high achievers have tremendous success with this time management program. If you are not encountering

similar results there are only two possibilities. First, you are already an excellent time manager. Second, the commitment to make this life-altering change is not there.

There is nothing to be ashamed of if you simply do not feel the need to improve your time management performance to the level of a star performer. For most people the pressure associated with being a high achieving star performer is overwhelming and is not beneficial to their mental health or personal lives. However, if you are serious about making the most of your time and abilities, this commitment must be given the utmost effort. It is not an exaggeration to state that effective time management will impact every part of your life - forever. Imagine making an extra four hours a week for your family: over the course of one year that will add up to 208 hours!

Keep your commitment strong. Revisit the action plans developed throughout this behavior modification program to remind yourself of the effort needed to succeed. Do not get lazy with time management efforts, even if things seem to be going extremely well. Time management is a continual effort - you will never be able to stop consciously prioritizing, scheduling and revising. This is a lifetime commitment.



If you stray from the program you can get back on the program within a couple of hours. Simply follow all the steps we have gone through from the beginning of this guide. Know that this time management effort will benefit your life to great levels. Know that you will be a better performer as a direct result of this time management program. You will be successful.

Chapter 12: Rewards

As you know, this time management program is not easy. It is a serious behavior modification program for high achievers that are serious about their success. Not everyone can master this system. However, the high achievers that do master the program are star performers.

Performance deserves rewards. When you accomplish the behaviors of the effective time manager, you should be rewarded as well. Already you will be rewarded with more productive time and the feeling of being in control of your schedule. You will also be rewarded every time you have the opportunity to delete one of those tasks that was just completed. While these rewards are terrific and ongoing, perhaps it would be a prime opportunity to really give yourself a reward for making the commitment and sticking with this very difficult program until your behaviors are changed permanently. After all, this is a life-changing program!

Wouldn't it be a great idea to set a goal to affect permanent change in your time management behavior? An action plan with measurements to determine lasting results would be an excellent tool for proving success in this regard. Perhaps this is the perfect opportunity to reward you performance with a family vacation, a new car, or perhaps a fantastic new gizmo you have had your eye on for some time.

Reward your success: you deserve it. You have achieved a level of productivity that most people will only dream about their entire lives. Congratulations to you and may you have many more successes in your future. Of course, you are bound to have many more successes now that you are an effective time manager.

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Andrew Martin began his entrepreneurial approach to business in 1982 at the age of fifteen. Throughout his career, Andrew has fulfilled his duties as a senior executive in viable business ventures in various industries including; health care, sound reinforcement and lighting, electrical safety equipment, commercial catering, specialty metal shapes manufacturing, and the

entertainment overhead suspension industry. Andrew's current business efforts are encompassed by Serene Recovery Network, a group of branded organizations with a common vision of helping people in early recovery to help themselves to a long-term rewarding quality of life without addiction. The individual businesses include Serene Connections, a publishing and professional educational conference production company catering to the field of addiction treatment: The Evolution of Addiction Treatment is the flagship conference. Serene Directory, an online directory of professionals and organizations affiliated with the treatment of addiction. Serene Foundation, a micro loan lender providing funding for the continuum of addiction care. Serene Scene Magazine, a publication promoting long-term healthy lifestyles of recovery. Andrew Serene Institute providing educational opportunities to professionals.

Andrew has authored many articles related to addiction treatment, health care agency productivity, industry specialties, as well as business approach and leadership and has been published in Serene Scene Magazine, Behavioral Health, Freedom Newspaper, Sound & Video Contractor, Western Wall and Ceiling Contractors Association Bulletin, Connections Magazine (Australia), dB Magazine, EQ, Lighting & Sound International (Canada), Sound & Communications, Live Sound International (UK), Recording-Engineering-Production. Additionally, many patents and trademarks have been awarded to Andrew Martin for various business related products, brand names, and service marks.

Andrew is also very active on boards related to the treatment of addiction. Andrew also keynotes for many organizations and speaks internationally on many topics relating to the treatment of addiction.