



BOARDROOM STRATEGY

MIKE DESJARDINS

How to become more strategic with your time

Remember sitting in a productivity seminar in an Entrepreneurs' Organization Conference in Chicago a few years ago when the speaker asked a series of interesting questions.

The first was: "Who in the room is habitually late for everything?" The second was: "Who in the room

prides itself with being on time?"

Then he asked: "For those of you who are always late, what do you think the impression you leave with people is?"

The answers around the room were, "I'm busy, important, successful, value my time, etc."

Then the speaker asked: "For those of you who are always on time, what do you think about people who are late for meetings?"

The answers they gave included: "rude, inconsiderate, poor planners, not very thoughtful, selfish, disorganized, etc." You could have heard a pin drop.

Lately it seems that the word busy has become synonymous with the words important and successful. I double-checked a thesaurus and those words are not synonyms of busy.

Here are some ideas on how to become more strategic with your time.

The iPhone's TempusDiem app allows you to perform ongoing time audits.

The hardest list to fill is stop doing.

Shift your day.

Move the most critical tasks and appointments into the time slots during the day when you have the most energy.

That way you know you're putting your best foot forward when it counts the most.

Move the most critical tasks and appointments into the time slots during the day when you have the most energy

into the time slots

during the day when you

have the most energy

Colour-code your calendar.

Use the feature in Outlook or iCal that lets you colour code your schedule based on the type of activity you're engaged in. That way you can see at a glance where you might not be booking enough time to get from one place to another or where your schedule might be out of balance.

Book a 15-minute buffer between meetings.

Instead of butting multiple meetings up against each other where you haven't left time to even use the bathroom, give yourself 15 minutes of breathing room to complete your notes from the meeting that has ended and prep for the next one.

To help everyone else stay on track, use the following phrase when you're nearing the end of the meeting: "We have 10 minutes left before the end of the meeting; how can we use that time most efficiently?"

Conduct a time audit.

Look back at your calendar over the last month (two weeks is not enough of a sample).

How much of your time was spent on activities that have leverage – both for you (focusing on your strengths) and for your organization?

Shutdown Outlook and push your calls.

During key times when you need time to contemplate, shut down Outlook and push your calls straight to voicemail.

This will allow you to concentrate on the task at hand. It can take 15 to 45 minutes to get back to the same pattern of thought you were in before you got distracted by checking email or answering the phone while working on something complex.

Create a start-stop-keep list.

Review your role and the tasks that take up most your time, and sort them into a start doing, stop doing and keep doing list.

This is a tough-love type of experience, so be ruthless.

Look for repetitive tasks.

Are there any repetitive tasks that would be better served by delegating them or creating a system to streamline them? Ask for help from your team instead of simply dumping all of the low-priority tasks on them by using TEAO: Trim, Eliminate, Automate, Outsource (delegate).

As Matt Corker from Lululemon said to me recently [paraphrasing], "Giving my team low-priority tasks while I handle the big, juicy, detailed projects, isn't great for their development."

Batch process your email.

Instead of leaving Outlook open and your email notification on, shut the notification off, and check email in the morning, before lunch and in the late afternoon. Clear all of your email at once by deciding whether you reply, file, delete or defer for contemplation. No one will notice that you're batch-processing, and you'll be surprised how much time it saves you and how much "mind space" you get back. ■

Mike Desjardins is the CEO at ViRTUS (www.virtusinc.com), an organizational development consulting firm with expertise in strategic planning and implementation, leadership development, change management and succession planning for medium to large organizations. He regularly blogs at www.mikedesjardins.com.

BIV Marketplace

CONSULTANT

ACCOUNTING

Best Books Inc
ATTN: BUSINESS OWNERS
Monthly & Quarterly Bookkeeping services available at our office.
604-215-8872
info@bestbooksinc.com
www.bestbooksinc.com

REAL ESTATE

789 W. Pender Howe
Air Conditioned
978 sf – 3 offices, reception – \$3,168 per month
2,853 sf – 7 offices, boardroom, open office area, kitchenette – \$9,600 per month
1,344 sf – 5 offices, storage room, reception – \$4,352 per month
Call Patrice at Tonko 604-684-1198
www.tonko.com

Get and keep informed.
Local business news, daily.
» E-mail News Alert «
Sign up at
www.biv.com

GETAWAYS

Get the **juMP** on the ski season

CAHILTY LODGE Room rates starting from

866-429-2207
cahiltylodge.com

PLACE AN AD

Call 604-608-5189

You can save up to 50% with multiple week bookings.

METRO VANCOUVER

Solution Connection

COPY & DIGITAL PRINT SERVICES

Volume based prices
Print More Save More

Copies Plus

COPY • IMAGING CENTRE

M – F 8am – 9pm Sat-Sun 10am – 6pm
1950 West Broadway, Vancouver, BC
Tel: 604-731-7868 www.copiesplus.ca

BUSINESS INTERNET ACCESS

SKYWAY WEST
BUSINESS INTERNET SERVICES

- Power-up your LAN with ADSL, Wireless or Fibre
- VPN, Bonding, VoIP, Co-locate, or Web Hosting
- Full Internet Service Provider since 1996
- Now serving Canada, coast to coast

info@skywaywest.com 604-482-1225