

The Complete Business Administration Solution

Top Time Saving Tips

- 1. Clear your desk.**

Piles of paperwork, letters and memos left on your desk whilst you are trying to work can serve as a distraction. By all means, have an 'in' tray for new items to be placed awaiting attention, but keep this separate to your current working space. Clearing the clutter on your desk will allow you to concentrate on the job in hand.
- 2. Plan, Plan, Plan.**

Keep one diary and use it to plan your week. Include travel time when planning meetings and include regular breaks away from your desk.
- 3. Reflect.**

At the beginning of every week, allow some time to reflect on the week before, note your achievements and bring forward items not completed / actioned to the current weeks plan.
- 4. To Do Lists**

The last action of the day should be to reflect and write the to do list for tomorrow.
- 5. Phone calls**

Plan all calls ahead. Allow some time on a daily basis for making calls, and stick to it. Make use of your voicemail, and switch your phone off to avoid distractions, or employ a telephone answering service.
- 6. Emails**

Emails do not need to be answered the minute you get them. Allow yourself two hours each day to go through emails, say 11:00 & 16:00. Make sure you delete or file once the email has been dealt with to ensure you are not doubling up on work
- 7. Unscheduled interruptions**

We all get them, which is why it is imperative you schedule one half hour a day to deal with them. If you are lucky enough not to be interrupted, the extra half hour you have gained can be used towards your buffer file.
- 8. Buffer File**

A buffer file contains all the items you could do at any point in the day. So whether you are early for a meeting, you completed your emails early or finished a project earlier than expected, this is where you get to work on the items in your buffer file. At the end of the week you should schedule some time in to complete any outstanding tasks from your buffer file so you can start the next week with a clean slate.
- 9. Meetings**

Always plan to get to meetings early. Not only is it polite and instils confidence, it enables you to deal with any traffic or transport issues. Any time gained can be used for your buffer file.



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10. Contacts

Keep your contact lists up to date. On your return from a meeting, scan in business cards and keep notes.

11. Delegate

Employ a team of professionals and outsource the tasks you don't want, don't enjoy or don't have time for. Please see my article Inside Outsourcing.

12. Printing

Think before you print, not just because it's helpful to the environment, if you print it you will need to find a home for it. Don't print it unless you are willing to file it!

13. One step at a time

Rome really wasn't built in a day. One task may be just be a drop in the ocean of all the tasks you have to complete, but one drop could make the difference between full and overflowing!

14. Real Work!

Before all these distractions came about, real work was what we spent most of our day doing.

15. Internet Browsing

For some, the internet can be a huge distraction. It's very easy to Google something and then be carried away with the results. A good way to judge is to set a maximum number of pages to look at, say 2, and then change your search terms if the search doesn't yield the right result. Also limit your time on forums, set that timer!

16. A good night's sleep and regular breaks is essential

This isn't rocket science, but people function much better when they have had a good night's sleep. Generally they are more productive and clear headed. Likewise, regular breaks are essential to clear thinking. There is little point to mulling the same problem over and over. Get up, go for a walk, get some fresh air make a phone call, and come back to the problem with a fresh pair of eyes.

17. Choose your three priorities and tackle them first.

Every day you should aim to tackle 3 items of your list. It's not a huge amount, and likely more achievable

18. Use a timer

It's no good setting yourself times to complete tasks and then ignoring your timings. Set a timer so you know when to stop and carry on with the next item. Allow a contingency for when items do run overtime.



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