



101 Ways to Save Time and Be More Effective

Compiled By Success Networks

Acknowledgement

This report is the result of the many Success Net subscribers and members who submitted their ideas about what's worked for them. To them we are grateful.

Introduction

We all have the same amount of time. What makes the difference is how we invest that time. This report will show you how you can make the most of your most precious resource and to be more effective as well as more efficient.

I subscribe to the theory that we cannot really manage time. We can only manage events, tasks and actions. It is to this end that this report is dedicated.

Bear in mind that not all of the ideas listed in this report work for everyone. It's important to zero in on those ideas you can use and the ones that will work for you.

No doubt you will see some overlap in the ideas and practices mentioned. This is due to the fact that we received many suggestions that were the same—or at least were related. We've done our best to eliminate redundancy, but whatever is left is a result of an overwhelming duplication in some of the habits that have worked so well for so many.

The ideas submitted were often written in the first person. We've changed most of them except where it seemed to communicate better as originally written.

Enjoy.

**"Employ thy
time well if thou
means to gain
leisure."**

—Benjamin Franklin

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1. Ask yourself, "What is the best use of my time right now?" Develop an absolute "yes" and an absolute "no" list.
2. When you finish work, make your agenda for the following day. This saves time; the ideas are in your mind and the next morning you can review, prioritize and get started immediately. It's a jump start on your day.
3. When you try to contact someone by phone and they're not available, leave a message so they have some idea of what you want and can be prepared with the information you want when returning your call. This saves time on wasted calls trying to contact each other.
4. Whenever possible, use the team concept:
T-ogether
E-veryone
A-ccomplishes
M-ore
5. Indecision is a huge time waster. Often it's the little decisions which get us as we handle the same issue before doing something about it. For everything—absolutely everything—Do It Now! Decide now what the next best step is and then do that. The step may be small or big, but decide NOW—Trash it, delete it, throw it away. Delegate it or batch it, but do something, NOW!
6. Kill three birds with one stone. If you live within 15 miles of work, here are the time saving and time management advantages: 1. You get your exercise in and get to work at the same time. 2. You're more productive because of the energizing effect of the morning ride. 3. You feel better after you get home, too!
7. Concentrate on one thing at a time. We might THINK we can focus on more than one thing, but we can't. By attempting to do so, we fragment our efforts. (For a paradoxical viewpoint, see the next idea.)
8. Always do two things at once. As I work on the computer I can have supper cooking in a crock pot. While driving I listen to educational or motivational tapes. Even washing dishes (no dishwasher here) gives me the chance to think and plan my to-do list for the next day. You'll find yourself doing twice as much as before with no more effort.
9. Learn to say "no". Remember that every time you say "yes" to something, you'll have to say "no" to something else. Learn to choose your "yeses" wisely.

"Your greatest asset is your earning ability. Your greatest resource is your time."

—Brian Tracy

10. Begin your day with prayer and/or meditation. Getting started in the right frame of mind and quieting some of the noise of the day will go a long ways toward being more effective.
11. Plan your work, and work your plan. Take more time in planning a job. This saves considerable time in doing the job. Remember that 90% of planning is execution and 90% of execution is communication. Every minute spent planning saves five in confusion and frustration.
12. Follow the "touch-it-once" rule: while it's in your hand, put it where it ultimately belongs, rather than in an in-between place. Deal with it, delegate it or dump it the first time you handle it.
13. Don't reinvent unnecessarily. Follow the systems that are already in place.
14. Close your office door at the end of the day and take 15 minutes to contemplate on what you got accomplished today and plan what you will accomplish tomorrow.
15. Keep an incoming phone log so you won't have to look numbers up again and again.
16. Practice "Do it now." As soon as you think of something that needs to be done or if you're asked to do something, do it right away—it saves time.
17. Do whatever is ahead of you as though you only have that hour to live. Do your best now.
18. Have a clear vision (or purpose)—then weigh-up the worth of actual or intended activities against that vision.
19. Be organized - it is the foundation of being calm and having plenty of time.
20. Finish the things you start. Having umpteen things 90% finished creates chaos and stress and an unbelievable mess both at home and at work.
21. When looking for a specific item, call the store first to check if they have it instead of dropping by to check and see or going to several stores looking for something.
22. When you have an appointment with the dentist or doctor, call 1/2 hr. before the scheduled appointment to ask if the doctor is on time. If you're told she/he is running behind, tell the receptionist to keep the scheduled time and that you'll be there at that time. This saves the time and the frustration of

"Time is the coin of your life. It is the only coin you have and only you can determine how it will be spent. Be careful lest you let other people spend it for you."

—Carl Sandburg

sitting in a waiting room full of cranky people who are all now late.

23. Do your best not to run out of things that you need/use on a daily basis such as paper for your printer or personal things like shampoo. Keep at least one extra of these things and you'll rarely have to run to the store for a last-minute purchase.
24. To realize where my time gets spent, I've done a pie chart showing the 24 hours in each day . . . 7 hours of sleep, 8 hours at work, 1-1/2 hours of commute, 2 hours for meals and prep. That leaves 5-1/2 hours per day for family, exercise and for me, writing.
25. Rituals and good habits can move you further along the journey to a life in balance. Simple, quick and easy habits, done regularly, can reduce or remove stress and anxiety and save time.
26. Use achievable, measurable, controllable "To do" lists. Review/update weekly.
27. Whenever you receive mail, sort it out immediately and look at it just once and determine: a) trash b) reply needed c) for future reference d) immediate response/signature.
28. Always bring your organizer, Daytimer, Palm Pilot, etc., to Dr's appointments, client appointments, etc. It'll allow you to plan, make notes, brainstorm, organize if you find yourself waiting with time on your hands.
29. Avoid being a pack rat—you waste a lot of time looking for things when you have too much stuff.
30. Be clear about priorities. There's no way we can do everything everyday, but we can usually do most of those things that are most important.
31. Keep systems simple--filing, bookkeeping, any kind of system. Complex systems break down quickly because they are cumbersome and difficult to maintain, so we don't maintain them and things become disorganized again.
32. Put your schedule into writing. This removes any ambiguous things that actually waste a lot of time.
33. Prioritize the activities. Classify the priorities and the activities as (1) Urgent and important, (2) Urgent, (3) Important and (4) Normal.

"Some people think that meditation takes time away from physical accomplishment. Taken to extremes, of course, that's true. Most people, however, find that meditation creates more time than it takes."

—Peter McWilliams

34. "Want to dos" and "Have to dos". Wanting to do a job is by heart. Just having to do it is by force. To make best of the time, create a self-motivation policy of wanting to do rather than having to do a job.
35. Buy in bulk, think ahead of gift-giving occasions, keep a copy of your bulk items that you need for your favorite recipes with you so you're always well prepared.
36. Make sure before you're done with today's work—you have tomorrow's activities all lined up—that way you don't spend good time coming up with activities when you get in the next morning. You start with a fresh list of things that need to get done today. This list should also be prioritized.
37. Learn speed reading and increase your vocabulary. We spend quite a big percentage of our time each day on reading. Having a better vocabulary not only helps you to communicate efficiently, but increases your comprehension of your reading.
38. If you're a morning person, do your high-priority items and the jobs which require higher concentration in the morning. Vice versa for evening/night people.
39. All work and no play is very counterproductive. Break monotony and take small breaks in between.
40. Get out your day-timer and schedule uninterrupted focus time that allows you to work on important projects when you are most alert and at your best. You'll improve your focus and accomplish more in a shorter period without distractions and interruptions.
41. Practice TNT—Today, Not Tomorrow. Get it done now and don't put off 'til tomorrow what you can do today.
42. Write it down. A short pencil is better than a long memory any day. It sounds simple, but often the best solutions are easy and quick. Carry index cards. The paper is sturdy so you can do it on the fly and the cards last longer. They slide easily into a shirt pocket.
43. Always carry a book or something to read with you. That way you're never caught standing idle in a line or traffic.
44. Before you do anything, think twice about how and why you're doing it.
45. Install filters on your email so that specific email automatically filters out of your inbox.

"The time which we have at our disposal every day is elastic; the passions that we feel expand it, those that we inspire contract it, and habits fill what time remains."

—Marcel Proust

46. Check email just three times a day. Otherwise, you could waste all day reading email.
47. Set aside time when you don't accept phone calls. It's difficult to concentrate with all the interruptions.
48. Keep a clipboard or notepad in every room. Then when an idea hits, you can write it down no matter where you are. It clears your mind so that you can think about other things . . . just knowing that the idea has been recorded.
49. Delegate work to others that is time consuming and that you don't like to do. My teenagers have been more than happy to earn extra money doing some of these tasks.
50. Use the Internet to communicate more with clients & subcontractors. It saves time to post things for review and comment online rather than to schedule an on-site meeting.
51. Use an accounting program such as Quicken or Quickbooks to keep your finances up to date. Once you have the program set up, it automatically keeps track of your account balances, overdue invoices, bills for you to pay, etc.
52. Use a messenger service. Instead of driving across town, hire it done. It's more cost effective than you might think.
53. Determine what one thing you're avoiding, and start it.
54. When working on a project, turn off the phone. Let the answering machine/voice mail get your calls, so you can stay focused.
55. Learn all of the nuances of the software you're using. For instance, if you're using Microsoft products, are you using macros (stored keystrokes for repetitive procedures) or rules for your email in Outlook? Investing the time will save you time.
56. Listen to personal development audios/CDs in your car or while you work out. Note: Videos are better while working out . . . you can pay more attention to them if you're working out at home.
57. Print out email you want to read and keep in folder that goes with you. You never know when you'll have down or wait time to read it.
58. From Ken Blanchard—Don't let your associate put the monkey on your shoulders . . . keep it on theirs . . . teach people how

"Everything comes to the one who hustles while he waits."

—Thomas Edison

to solve their own problems so they don't become yours and waste your time.

59. Use a kitchen timer. Time it for a set time and then work on your project. Even if you're not finished when the bell rings, you can feel good because you've gotten a good start.
60. Solve your problems before you spend time on opportunities. This requires that you know the difference between the two, because they're not the same thing. If you focus on opportunities in the first instance, your success may be short-lived, whereas if you squarely face up to your problems and resolve them, your success will be sustainable.
61. Prepare several meals on Sunday afternoon, freezing portions of them for later use. You'll spend very little time in meal preparation during the work week.
62. Deal with bills as soon as they come in. Thanks to my Internet access to my checking account, I now "prepay" many bills as soon as I receive them. When the bill is paid, I get an electronic notification and confirmation number by e-mail from the bank.
63. Keep a running log, very free form, of what you've done. It can save oodles of time and stress when you need to remember something you just did yesterday . . . or was it day before last?
64. Make some form of exercise one of your most important things.
65. Keep a list of your children's friends' telephone numbers in your personal phone book under the name of your child rather than by the name of the friend. When I need to track down my son, I turn to the letter E for Eddie and there's the list of all his friends with their telephone numbers.
66. I use the "NOTES" feature in Outlook, like I would sticky notes. My desk is clear. They are all in one neat place, color coded, dated, printable and fileable. I have one called Quotes that I keep as a running list of inspiration.
67. Watch one hour less of TV every day and use that time to do something more productive.
68. When you're really in the mood to do work, put in the time to doing more work. This way, when you're not in the mood, go out and do something that you enjoy.

"The things that matter most in life are too often hostage to the things that matter least."

—Hyrum W. Smith

69. The single most powerful time-saving idea I've found was to decide who I was and what I was trying to accomplish. This permitted me to choose what to spend time on and to prioritize within those choices. All of the time management and professional organizer stuff in the world didn't help until I sorted that one out.
70. My greatest ally in the time/efficiency battlefield is my (Franklin) calendar/address book. EVERYTHING is kept there, from bills to be paid, birthday list, e-mail addresses and site passwords, cards to write, and notes, as well as appointments and my to-do list. Keeping it all together is the only thing that keeps me from falling apart!
71. Have separate "work islands" for different types of projects to save set-up/break-down time. Examples: computer station for what has to be done online/keyboard; editing desk for proofreading; off-desk plexi kiosk for to-be-filed accumulation; bookshelf unit and desk dedicated to only the art-related work.
72. Make all your telephone calls in one designated time space.
73. Recognize the things or people that are a distraction and get avoid them. Don't get side-tracked into one activity to the detriment of others.
74. A laptop is an incredible increased efficiency tool! Now I can perform my work anywhere.
75. Use a relaxation technique each day to limit the amount of time that is spent dealing with anger, stress and negative thinking.
76. I say to myself that - Time is my friend and concentrate on the idea of working with time rather than against it! If I do this then I relax and things do not seem so overwhelming. I am capable of being calm and sorting things out and being more productive.
77. Buy a diary—make it paper, make it electronic, but GET ONE!!
78. Prioritize what you need to do each day into categories: Must do straight away, do within six hours, complete by the end of the day, could wait until tomorrow at the latest, etc.
79. Use online banking and bill paying. Sure beats standing in line and licking stamps.

**"One that would
have the fruit
must climb the
tree."**

—Thomas Fuller

80. Buy groceries a week at a time. One trip to the grocery store a week is enough!
81. Consider each minute as being the crucial minute in which something supremely vital for your project may come about. You'll never waste time again!
82. I have a year calendar on my wall onto which I rate my previous day's efforts on a scale of 1-10. At the end of the month I tally up and divide the days and give myself a percentage rating which I compare month to month.
83. Delegate, delegate, delegate.
84. Donate, sell, give away, or recycle anything you haven't used in a year. Then do the same six months later to anything you haven't used since then. Be ruthless! Unneeded items get in your way and take up your time in many, often hidden, ways.
85. Cut down the information inflow and limit it to a manageable amount.
86. Instead of calling or going to another co-worker's office to give them a message, e-mail it. Then you have it on file that it was delivered, and you don't have to spend time walking to their office.
87. Group your trips. Example: If you have copies to make and a file to deliver to a co-worker whose office is right next to the copy machine room, then take your copies to make and the file at the same time.
88. Organize your things to begin with and then put them back after you're finished using them. You'll know exactly where to find them when you need them again and won't waste your time searching.
89. Make a list before you start out to do errands so you'll remember to make all stops and not have to backtrack or go out again.
90. When cooking, make larger quantities, and freeze the extras for later use.
91. Break down extra large tasks into smaller parts so you won't tire of the project and leave it unfinished.
92. I have a post office box. I open, sort and discard all my mail at the post office and don't bring it to my office. You can't imagine the time I've saved, the space I've saved in my office

"Unfaithfulness in keeping an appointment is an act of clear dishonesty. You might as well borrow a person's money as his time."

—Horace Mann

and how effective it is not to have to handle mail more than once.

93. Anytime you're stuck waiting in line, get out a pen and small pad of paper and do a "brain dump" of all those little things that float around your mind (like the item you need from the drug store or the note you want to send to a friend or the one thing you want to remember to tell your spouse about). It's amazing the freedom you'll gain from simply writing things down, not to mention how much easier it will be to accomplish the tasks!
94. Don't just list the things you want to do—schedule them! Block out the time to accomplish the most important things by treating them like an appointment. You'll find that you'll get more of your "A" things done.
95. Ask for help. Many times we attempt to accomplish things by ourselves when others would have been more than happy to help. Sometimes we even resent that no one offered to help us. Learn to ask. It works.
96. Keep a handheld tape recorder in your car to take notes as they occur to you. Transcribe the notes when you return home or to the office. Some handheld computers are capable of recording voice clips as well.
97. Get adequate rest. Vince Lombardi, the great football coach said, "Fatigue makes cowards of us all". We can't be efficient or effective if we're overtired.
98. Know what your three most important goals are at all times. When you're clear on your three primary objectives, you make better decisions, you're more focused and you manage your time better.
99. Stay healthy. We know what to eat and what not to eat. By properly fueling our bodies by eating and drinking right, we are sick less and have more energy to accomplish what we want to accomplish. Getting sick is a terrible waste of time.
100. Ask the "point question". The point question cuts through the preamble and drapery talk and gets to point. "Thanks for stopping by, Fred. What can I do for you today?" Or, "What brings you here today, Mary? How can I help?"
101. Don't waste time blaming others or yourself. Conversely, don't waste time defending and being defensive. Get on with what works.

**"This instant is
the only time
there is."**

—A Course in
Miracles

Resources

Top Ten Ways to Handle Email Overload

Michael Angier receives over 150 emails a day—sometimes 500. He shares his favorite methods for managing his inbox.

<http://successnet.org/articles/angier-emailoverload.htm>

What Worked, What Didn't, What's Next?

This article promotes a simple process to keep on task and not let things get you sidetracked.

<http://successnet.org/articles/angier-whatworks.htm>

Reach Your Goals with Efficiency

Race car driver David Nguyen shows us how to get there fast.

<http://successnet.org/articles/nguyen-goals.htm>

Feeling Guilty About Taking Time Off?

Gary Lockwood has some keen insight into the wisdom and power of taking time off without feeling guilty. Don't miss this one.

<http://successnet.org/articles/lockwood-timeoff.htm>

Books

HOW TO GET CONTROL OF TIME AND YOUR LIFE, Alan Leikin

FIRST THINGS FIRST, Stephen Covey

THE 10 NATURAL LAWS OF SUCCESSFUL TIME AND LIFE MANAGEMENT,
Hyrum W. Smith

The Success Networks Creed

The principles and beliefs upon which Success Net was founded and the guidelines by which it operates.

WE BELIEVE that a balanced life is the only life worth living. Without it, no real fulfillment can be experienced. Having financial success at the expense of one's health or one's family is not true success. We recognize that striking this balance is never easy.

WE BELIEVE that success is indeed a journey and not a destination—that it's not what we achieve, but rather what we BECOME in the process of our achievements. It's not what happens TO us but what we do about what happens to us that makes the difference.

WE BELIEVE that we must give in order to receive—that if we help enough other people get what they want, we can get what we want. We commit to serving and supporting others—to helping them realize their potential and, in the process, realize our own.

WE BELIEVE in dreams—that all great achievements in history came from the pursuit of a dream, and that it's incumbent upon us to discover, honor and fulfill the dreams we have within us.

WE BELIEVE in the resilience and potential of the human spirit, that men and women are created in the image of God and that they're capable of accomplishing anything—although not necessarily EVERYTHING— they set out to do.

WE BELIEVE that business is all about relationships with people—that good business is built by creating relationships of trust, by keeping agreements and maintaining integrity.

WE BELIEVE that commerce has been and will continue to be a primary influence in world issues and that world peace is furthered by strong and interrelated business alliances. As business and people become more interdependent upon one another, we become freer and decrease the likelihood of armed conflict because we realize it's impossible to sink half the ship.

WE BELIEVE that by providing excellent products and services, people will reward us with their business. When we under-promise and over-deliver, we secure the loyalty and patronage of the consumer. We commit to constant and never-ending improvement of what we offer our customers.

WE BELIEVE that the path of mastery is through the joy of creating excellence in all that we do and the way in which we do it. When we do what we love, we're not only happier; we produce better products and services.

WE BELIEVE that every customer, employee, stockholder, servant, competitor and partner is first and foremost a person—a unique expression of Universal Spirit—someone who deserves our respect and consideration.

WE BELIEVE that change is not only inevitable but good; not only unpredictable, but also stimulating and educational. It's rarely comfortable, but it's essential to our growth and development. Accepting change and adapting to it will always win out over resistance.

WE BELIEVE that mistakes and failures are an integral and necessary part of success and embrace them as learning experiences.

WE BELIEVE that the use of knowledge is power and we are committed to our own ongoing educational process. We further believe that our knowledge is to always be used for good—never to cause harm.

WE BELIEVE that information, information technologies and the sharing of same creates more freedom. It levels the playing field, thereby reducing injustice and making it more difficult for tyranny, prejudice, misunderstanding and inequality to reign.

WE BELIEVE that we have a responsibility—a sacred trust—to conduct business with the utmost integrity and with the highest ethics of which we are capable. We further believe that this responsibility goes beyond mere legality and encompasses a sense of fair play for all involved. We play win-win and play it well.

What is Success Net? How Can You Benefit?

SUCCESS NET is an international association of people committed to operating at their best—to creating excellence in every aspect of their lives and every part of their respective organizations.

We support people in developing the skills, knowledge, belief and passion necessary to achieve their dreams. Success Net is dedicated to helping you become more knowledgeable, prosperous and effective.

You can expect much more from us than subscriptions to our publications; we provide a complete membership package dedicated to making your road to success easier and more fun.

Who Joins?

People from all walks of life become members: Small business owners, managers, employees who want to move up in the organization, parents, students and homemakers. Anyone who wants to maximize their potential, improve the quality of their lives and make a lasting difference in the world.

In short, Success Net is for great people who want to become even better.

Financial Independence

One of our primary objectives is to encourage and support our members in becoming and remaining debt free. And after that, to develop complete financial independence. This kind of freedom is within everyone's reach in only a few short years.

Free Membership

You can become a member online at <http://www.successnet.org/>
There is no risk and no obligation.

As a new member, you'll be enrolled in the free seven-lesson **STEP UP TO SUCCESS COURSE™**.

Visit our web site at <http://www.successnet.org/>

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OUR COMMITMENT
is to double the
value of your
membership
and double your
market value
every two
years.
Everything we
do is with that
intention in
mind.