



Want to be really productive at work in 2018? Here's how

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Productivity is the combination of intelligent planning and focused efforts.

But staying productive at work can be a challenge said Richard Andrews, Managing Director of Inspiration Office, an Africa-wide office space and furniture consultancy.

“Every time the work day ends, odds are that you are not satisfied with what you have accomplished. Here’s how to make your work life more productive.”

1. Seek help / Delegate tasks

Everybody needs help and should never take on large tasks alone.

“In order to get help from others, you need to trust your colleagues in helping you complete work. If you tell your colleague what the deadline is for the project, then they will likely take it very seriously, “ said Andrews. Make sure to give your colleague all of the resources that he or she needs.

If you are too introverted to ask for help, then you will most likely be doing tasks on your own. You may also end up becoming somebody else's work-horse because you are too shy to speak up.

2. Don't get sucked into unnecessary meetings

Said Andrews: “Time is the most important currency in your work life. While it may be tempting to meet with as many people for the benefit of networking, the time you get at your desk is extremely valuable. Knowing what meetings to refuse is very important.”

If your manager wants a meeting, then it is obviously important. However, attending a meeting about which font to use for the weekly newsletter design get-together may not be worth your time.

“What many people find effective is to designate a day or two out of the week just for meetings leaving the rest of the time to focus on core tasks.”

3. Create to-do lists

At work, there are tasks that are simple and ones that are complex. “It’s often easier to complete the easy ones first and then tackle the complicated ones. To stay on top of task creating to-do lists is a good idea rather than having a million things you need to do buzzing around your head,” Andrews noted. If some of the tasks are larger, then break them into multiple smaller tasks.

One of the most satisfying aspects of creating a to-do list is crossing off things when they are done. It gives you a sense of accomplishment and gives you a visualisation of progress.

4. Designate times to handle e-mail

If you are constantly checking your e-mail, this could mean you have too much free time on your hands and need to work on other tasks. Urgent information tends to be passed through phone calls rather than e-mail.

Instead of stopping what you are doing to respond to a new e-mail, you should consider setting aside a time for responding to e-mails in batches.

5. Weed out distractions

In the U.S., over 12.2 billion collective hours are being spent browsing on a social network every day. This is costing the U.S. economy around \$650 billion per year.

“If you find that you are really falling behind on your work, then you should consider uninstalling apps like Facebook and Twitter from your smartphone. It’s the easiest way to stop being tempted into distraction,” Andrews said.

6. Set ambitious, yet realistic goals

People that set higher goals have a tendency to be more satisfied than those with lower expectations. One of the major reasons why people fail at goals is because they did not set a deadline. Goals have to be very specific and they should be written down. “It is good to get feedback about the goals in order to refine them,” Andrews advised.

7. Spend a few minutes preparing for the next day

Mornings at work can be chaotic and often you are tasked with unexpected things which can easily throw your day out. “A few minutes preparing the day before means you have less to do when you get to work and the smoother your day will be,” Andrews added.

8. Declutter your immediate work environment

Clutter can really influence the way you work and your productivity when at your desk. "If you're too disorganized, everything competes for your attention and makes it hard to

work, not to mention influence perceptions of your professionalism." "Inspiration Office has access to many innovative and cost effective solutions that has allowed us to improve the efficiency of many client's offices, and as a result improve overall productivity" concluded Andrews.