



# Managing Time: How to Increase Personal Productivity

## Personal productivity at work: Are you task-sloppy or time-savvy?

Most of us are familiar with the 'work smarter, not harder' mantra and may have even heard it repeated by managers in an attempt to motivate us but without any original ideas or specific direction as to how. What's surprising is how long that phrase has been repeated around the modern office. Versions of it started appearing in American media in the 1960s, and it was popularised in the 1970s by Alan Lakein, author of the time management classic, 'How to Get Control of Your Time and Your Life.'<sup>1</sup> It seems that managers and employees were trying to figure out how to make the best use of their time even before email inboxes, Twitter and Angry Birds came along to provide far too many tempting distractions.

Another thing that hasn't changed over the decades is the truism: You can't fit 25 hours into a 24-hour day. The only thing you can do is to use the 24 hours that you've got wisely. Most workplaces these days are lean operations, and you may rightly believe that you are doing work that used to be done by two or three or four people. Solid personal productivity habits will make you an even more valuable employee. But these habits don't necessarily come easily to many of us who spend our days in an office. Dan Markovitz, founder of TimeBack Management, a US based consultancy which helps companies and individuals to radically improve team performance, points out that in a traditional manufacturing environment the assembly line keeps the work-in-process moving at a pre-determined pace. "People must handle the work as it comes to them, or the line stops," he writes. "But the office environment is different. There is no visible production line, and that fosters sloppy work habits."<sup>2</sup>

Let's first clarify one thing: there is no one 'right' way to overcome those sloppy habits and increase personal productivity. Some people can't function without a To-Do list; others find them overwhelming. For one person, a clear desk clears the mind; for another, if work is out of site, it's also out of mind. You may prefer jotting notes in a pocket diary, while your colleague at the next desk sings the praises of the latest and greatest calendar software or app. In this Blue Paper we'll look at seven of the most common personal productivity challenges - the things that lead to sloppy work habits - and offer tips and tricks to manage them. Everything that has been suggested here can be done by an individual, regardless



<sup>1</sup> Keyes, Ralph. *The Quote Verifier: Who Said What, Where, and When*. New York: St. Martin's, 2006. 255. Print.  
<sup>2</sup> Markovitz, Dan. "How to Make an Office Lean." *IndustryWeek*. Penton Media Inc., 5 Sept. 2007. Web. 29 Mar. 2012. [http://www.industryweek.com/articles/how\\_to\\_make\\_an\\_office\\_lean\\_14859.aspx?SectionID=2](http://www.industryweek.com/articles/how_to_make_an_office_lean_14859.aspx?SectionID=2).

of specific workplace settings or responsibilities. There's no need to acquire expensive new software or revise the filing system of an entire office. And, if you find just one or two new habits to put in place then the time taken to read this Blue Paper will have been productively spent.

## Ending email overload

How many email messages do you send and receive in a day? According to U.S technology market research firm Radicati Group Inc. the average business user in 2012 sent 36 email messages per day and received about 78, with about 19% of the received email considered to be spam and 24% including an attachment. Whilst these figures are down from 2011, there has been an increase in the use of Instant Messaging (IM) with 73% of respondents using it on a daily basis with colleagues, clients and suppliers. On average people have 8 IM conversations a day with 5 different contacts, taking up around 41 minutes a day.<sup>3</sup> Successfully managing an email inbox is a required skill in today's workplace - one at which many of us fail.



Ask yourself: How many email messages are sitting in my inbox right now? How often does an important email message get buried underneath a dozen low priority or entirely worthless ones? Do I allow incoming email alerts to constantly interrupt my train of thought when I need to focus on a key project? How much time do I waste re-reading emails that I previously scanned but didn't have time to devote to responding? Have I inadvertently trained my colleagues to expect me to respond immediately?

An email inbox can get very messy, very quickly. Poorly managing your email inbox can drain huge amounts of time from your day meaning that you don't get around to dealing with your true priorities and running the risk of key tasks being lost amidst a sea of peripheral information. It brings that assembly line that Dan Markovitz described to a halt.

How can you get the assembly line moving again? When Markovitz's company, TimeBack Management, was hired to teach lean manufacturing principles to staff at a department within a large local government agency in New York City, the company coached staff to handle email messages and other incoming work by applying the well-respected '4Ds' method of time management. "Staff learned to deal with the work that entered their systems - an email, a phone call, a

<sup>3</sup> "The Radicati Group 'Corporate IT and Business User Survey 2012-2013' The Radicati Group, Inc. <http://www.radicati.com/wp/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Corporate-IT-and-Business-User-Survey-2012-2013-Executive-Summary.pdf>

memo, a project - by taking one of four courses of action: Doing it, Delegating it, Designating time to address it or Dumping it. These are the 4Ds. When workers rigorously applied the 4Ds, nothing returned to the inbox; value always moved forward. These new work habits led to a 40% reduction in the amount of time spent working on backlog (which is a form of excess inventory in a lean system), and a 25% reduction in the time spent processing emails."<sup>4</sup>

The 4Ds approach to email management is one of many tactics that productive employees can use to slay the email beast. Save yourself time and stress by employing one or more of these additional strategies:

- Turn off email alerts, and only open your inbox when you can devote the time to respond. Schedule this time every day if necessary - perhaps once midmorning and again in the late afternoon.
- Learn to use the bells and whistles of your company's email programme - email rules, filters, flags and file structures. Setting up a structure that works for you and learning to use it may require a few minutes initially, but will save hours at a later date.
- Do NOT use your inbox as your to-do list. Clear it out by the end of each day. If necessary, create a Task folder within your inbox, and move any messages that fall within the third 'D' (designate a time to address it) into that box.
- If you read an email message that you can't respond to on the spot, hit reply and save the draft in your draft folder, then get in the habit of checking this folder regularly. Depending on your email programme, apps or plugins may be available that allow you to resend emails to yourself at a time you know you can deal with them. For example, is another department asking for the latest quarterly report before all the numbers are in? Set the email requesting the report to be resent to you again at a time when you will be able to provide the information needed.
- Think before you send. The recipient(s) of your email will almost certainly respond, and before you know it, you have a string of messages. Could you accomplish the same thing by walking to the recipient's desk and having a quick conversation? Could the question



<sup>4</sup> Markovitz, Dan. "How to Make an Office Lean." *IndustryWeek*. Penton Media Inc., 5 Sept. 2007. Web. 29 Mar. 2012. [http://www.industryweek.com/articles/how\\_to\\_make\\_an\\_office\\_lean\\_14859.aspx?SectionID=2](http://www.industryweek.com/articles/how_to_make_an_office_lean_14859.aspx?SectionID=2).

be held until your next in-person meeting? And is it really necessary to 'cc' or 'bcc' everyone else into the exchange?

## Squandering time with social media

While office workers have been struggling to manage their email inboxes for more than a decade, it seems as if a new version of social media explodes onto the scene every few months, each one providing yet another means for distraction. If it isn't part of your job to use social media then the best advice really is to go 'cold turkey' and don't log in during your working hours at all, or only check your Twitter feed or Facebook page while during a break.

It's trickier when your job does require you to use social media, and there are plenty of legitimate business uses for it: marketing your company or product, seeing what your clients and competitors are up to, networking with industry colleagues and so on. But it can quickly suck up time while serving no work-related purpose. One minute you're tweeting about your company's latest product or service and the next thing you know, you are checking out your best friend's latest pin on Pinterest.

It takes discipline to stop yourself from clicking on random links that, whilst fascinating, don't actually relate to your job or anything on your To Do list. Before you click, think: If my boss or a colleague walked in on me right now, would I want this to be visible on my computer screen or mobile device? The potential consequences are serious: According to a 2011 survey from U.S website Benefitspro, half of all employers monitor employee Internet and email use, and 22% have fired an employee due to non-work related Internet use.<sup>5</sup>

If your use of social media serves a strategic business plan, then give it the time it deserves - 30 minutes, an hour, whatever you and your manager agree to - at a scheduled time every day. Then turn it off and move on to other high priority tasks.

## Multitask at your own peril

The term multitasking was coined to describe computer processors capable of executing more than one process or task simultaneously. (Even this is technically impossible, which is why you may very well be reading this on a PC with a

<sup>5</sup> McGrory, Amanda. "Half of Employers Monitor Employee Internet Usage." Benefitspro. Summit Business Media, 28 Nov. 2011. Web. 29 Mar. 2012. <<http://www.benefitspro.com/2011/11/28/half-of-employers-monitor-employee-internet-usage>>.



dual-core or quad-core processor.)<sup>6</sup> As new software and gadgets entered the workplace in recent decades, everyone from techie gurus to HR directors began to extoll the virtues of human multitasking. That is, until research began to show that the human brain can't multitask at all.

Of course, there have always been some things that humans can do simultaneously - you may be able to pat your head and rub your tummy at the same time. And modern appliances and technology do allow us to accomplish certain tasks at the same time. For most of human history, if you were washing your clothes, you may have also whistled while you worked, but that was about it. Today you can throw the clothes into the washing machine and then turn your attention to another chore while the machine does all the work.



But humans fail at multitasking when the tasks involve performing cognitive functions, such as writing an email and talking on the phone, at the same time. What the brain can do is to 'switch tasks' very quickly - but with reduced efficiency. Research published in the *Journal of Experimental Psychology* showed that when test subjects were asked to repeatedly switch between tasks of varying complexity and familiarity, the subjects lost time when they switched from one task to another and the lost time increased with the complexity of the tasks.<sup>7</sup> The RoSPA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents) website contains plenty of research and statistics that demonstrates the danger of driving while trying to accomplish another task. One study for example states that motorists who use a mobile phone whilst driving are 4 times more likely to crash – even if they are following the law and talking 'hands free.'<sup>8</sup> And if you think that you are an especially skilled multitasker, think again: A study by researchers at Stanford University in America showed that people who are heavy multitaskers with various media devices performed worse on a test of task-switching ability than lighter multitaskers.<sup>9</sup>

Peter Bregman, author and strategic advisor to CEOs and corporate leadership teams, recommends two steps to avoid the temptation to multitask. This Blue Paper has already discussed the first and more obvious step with regards to looking at email and social media: Turn them off. The second, less obvious step, is to set unrealistic deadlines to force yourself to focus on a single task. "Cut all

<sup>6</sup> Abaté, Charles J. "You Say Multitasking Like It's a Good Thing." *National Education Association. National Education Association*, Mar.-Apr. 2009. Web. 29 Mar. 2012. <http://www.nea.org/home/30584.htm>.

<sup>7</sup> "Is Multitasking More Efficient?" *American Psychological Association. American Psychological Association*, 05 Aug. 2001. Web. 29 Mar. 2012. <http://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2001/08/multitasking.aspx>.

<sup>8</sup> Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, *Road Safety Information* January 2012 [http://www.rospa.com/roadsafety/info/mobile\\_phones\\_2011.pdf](http://www.rospa.com/roadsafety/info/mobile_phones_2011.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> Ophir, Eyal, Clifford Nass, and Anthony D. Wagner. "Cognitive Control in Media Multitaskers." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. Ed. Michael I. Posner. *National Academy of Sciences*, 24 Aug. 2009. Web. 29 Mar. 2012. <http://www.pnas.org/content/early/2009/08/21/0903620106.abstract>.

meetings in half," he writes. "Give yourself a third of the time you think you need to accomplish something. There's nothing like a deadline to keep things moving. And when things are moving fast, we can't help but focus on them. How many people run a race while texting? If you really only have 30 minutes to finish a presentation you thought would take an hour, are you really going to answer an interrupting telephone call?"<sup>10</sup>

Unrealistic deadlines may seem to be a recipe for more stress, but Bregman argues the opposite: "Because multitasking is so stressful, single-tasking to meet a tight deadline will actually reduce your stress. In other words, giving yourself less time to do things could make you more productive and relaxed."<sup>11</sup>

## To do, or not to do, to-do lists

You may have heard the cliché that there are as many recipes for classic Italian meatballs as there are Italian grandmothers. Well, there are probably as many approaches to to-do lists as there are people who make to-do lists. The right to-do list for you is the one that fits with your work style and the type of tasks you need to accomplish. But let's start with to-do lists gone bad. These include:

- Unrealistically long lists
- Lists that don't group tasks by priority level or the amount of time tasks require
- Lists that are really long-term goals ('learn Spanish') as opposed to tasks that are achievable ('sign up for a conversational Spanish class')
- Lists of items that are never checked off
- Lists scribbled on scraps of paper that you proceed to lose track of, on the one hand, or
- on the other hand, lists that utilise task apps or software that you don't open and update on a regular basis



In contrast, the tasks on useful to-do lists have common characteristics, according

<sup>10</sup> Bregman, Peter. "How (and Why) to Stop Multitasking." *Harvard Business Review*. Harvard Business Publishing, 20 May 2010. Web. 29 Mar. 2012. <http://blogs.hbr.org/bregman/2010/05/how-and-why-to-stop-multitaski.html>.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

to Merlin Mann, creator of the productivity website 43 Folders. Tasks on workable to-do lists:

- Constitute a physical action.
- Can be accomplished in one go.
- Support valuable progress toward a recognised goal.
- Are actions for which you are the best person for the job.<sup>12</sup>

Finding the right to-do system for you may require a bit of trial and error. If you have access to a variety of list management apps or task software and you think you can make using one of them a productive habit, give them a go, one at a time, to see which one works best for you. But if you are struggling with to-do lists and productivity, the problem is probably not in the tool itself. How many of us have purchased a piece of exercise equipment or a gym membership with the best of intentions and then never used it, or only used it infrequently without a clear goal, never making it a daily habit? The most amazing app won't work if you don't use it, or if it isn't right for the work you do. Here are some approaches from a variety of productivity experts that can help you use the right tool effectively:



A classic approach: Back in the 1990s, Steven Covey published the international bestseller: 'The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People' which promoted a **quadrant matrix** for prioritising tasks. Every task falls into one of four quadrants:

- urgent-important
- not urgent-important
- urgent-not important
- not urgent-not important.

One advantage of this approach is that it can be applied to whatever kind of tool you prefer: pen and paper, an Excel document, a white board, and, yes, there's now even an app available for it too.

<sup>12</sup> Mann, Merlin. "Building a Smarter To-Do List, Part 1." 43 Folders. 43 Folders, 12 Sept. 2005. Web. 29 Mar. 2012. <http://www.43folders.com/2005/09/12/building-a-smarter-to-do-list-part-i>.



**A no-tech approach:** Writer Dwayne Melancon uses an index card, with this process: Get every task onto one big list. When you are planning your week, pick the top five from the list that need to get done this week. Write them on the index card, and carry the index card with you all week. "Another thing I've found useful is to use the back of the index card to record the 'in the moment' priorities you end up working on, so you can review the things you chose to work on instead of your top five. This can be helpful in figuring out what (or who) is undermining your productivity. Sometimes you'll find you're doing it to yourself."<sup>13</sup>

**A no-list approach:** Markovitz of TimeBack Management suggests foregoing to-do lists altogether for a 'living in your calendar' approach. "That means taking your tasks off the to-do list, estimating how much time each of them will consume and transferring them to your calendar," he writes. "Don't forget to leave time to process your email. And leave some empty space - one to two hours - each day to deal with the inevitable crises that will crop up. In essence, you're making a production plan for your work."<sup>14</sup>

**And, finally, a slash and burn approach:** Michael Hyatt, chairman of Thomas Nelson Publishers, argues that successful people should occasionally transfer to-do list tasks to a not-to-do list; that is, a list of activities you are going to stop doing for the sake of greater productivity. "If you don't periodically take a machete to your to-do list, it will eventually grow over everything and strangle you! I know of no better way to buy time than with this simple tool."<sup>15</sup>

## "No" is not a four-letter word

Hyatt's argument for the not-to-do list stems from the irony that the more successful and productive a person is in the workplace, the more that employee becomes the person everyone else goes to when they need to get a job done. He writes that "It's like they become a task magnet. 'Give it to Laurie,' they say. 'She'll do a great job!' The problem is that people are a finite resource. I don't care how good you are, you only have so much energy and so much time. It's true for me. It's true for you."

Being able to successfully say no while maintaining cordial relationships (and possibly your own employment!) requires a delicate approach. Any particular

<sup>13</sup> Melancon, Dwayne. "The Top 5 Things For Greater Productivity." *Genuine Curiosity*. Genuine Curiosity, 10 Dec. 2011. Web. 29 Mar. 2012. <http://genuinecuriosity.com/genuinecuriosity/2011/12/11/the-top-5-things-for-greater-productivity.html>.

<sup>14</sup> Bregman, Peter. "To-Do Lists Don't Work." *Harvard Business Review*. Harvard Business Publishing, 24 Jan. 2012. Web. 29 Mar. 2012. [http://blogs.hbr.org/cs/2012/01/to-do\\_lists\\_dont\\_work.html](http://blogs.hbr.org/cs/2012/01/to-do_lists_dont_work.html).

<sup>15</sup> Hyatt, Michael. "Do You Have a Not To-Do List?" *Michael Hyatt: Intentional Leadership*. Michael Hyatt. Web. 29 Mar. 2012. <http://michaelhyatt.com/do-you-have-a-not-to-do-list.html>.



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situation depends on your status in the workplace (junior employee versus senior manager), your workplace culture, and who is making the request (i.e., a directive from your manager is probably more difficult to refuse than a request from a colleague). Helen Coster at Forbes.com™ lays out this strategy for saying no:

1. Take time to consider the request. Determine how much time you'll need to deliver quality work, and how the task fits in with your existing workload.
2. Offer an alternative. While saying no, try to help the person who approached you about the task. Ask if you can contribute in a different way, or tackle the project at a later date.
3. Say no in person, as opposed to an email message, so that your intent isn't misconstrued.
4. Avoid details. Keep your explanation short and simple to avoid the risk of others passing judgement on your priorities.
5. Consider the consequences. Weigh the risks and benefits of every refusal, both personally and professionally.
6. Don't respond with self-deprecation. The person making the request may respond with flattery and not let you off the hook.
7. Ask for help prioritising. Explain that you have a real conflict and you're trying to resolve it. If a supervisor asks you to take on a project when you've already committed to something else, say, "I'd love to help you on this. I have X responsibility for partner Y on Tuesday. How much time can I have to get this project back to you?" Keep your explanation as simple as possible.<sup>16</sup>



## Lazy living

At the beginning of this Blue Paper, we noted that you can't fit 25 hours into a 24-hour day. But you are not working 24 hours or 16 hours or hopefully even 12 hours a day. A significant amount of your day is spent living the rest of your life. Bad habits outside of the workplace can have an affect on your

<sup>16</sup> Coster, Helen. "How to Say No at Work." *Forbes.com*. *Forbes Magazine*, 25 May 2011. Web. 29 Mar. 2012. <http://www.forbes.com/2011/05/25/how-to-say-no-at-work.html>.

personal productivity at work. These very simple, perhaps obvious, suggestions can nevertheless be challenging in the craziness of day-to-day life. Try taking on one or two of the suggestions at a time. When they become a permanent lifestyle habit, take on one or two more.

- Plan breakfasts, lunches and snacks that provide for a stable energy level throughout the day, avoiding caffeine and carbohydrate highs and crashes.
- Get eight hours of sleep a night. When you are well rested, you won't be as tempted to fuel yourself with coffee and carbs throughout the day (see above).
- Take a 15-minute break. Walk around the building instead of walking to and from the snack machine and, if possible, switch from using the lift to the stairs at least at the beginning and end of your working day.
- Wash your hands frequently to help reduce sick days.
- Drink water all day long. "Brain cells require a delicate balance between water and various other elements to operate, and when you lose too much water, that balance is disrupted. Your brain cells lose efficiency," says neuroscientist Joshua Gowin. "Years of research have found that when we're parched, we have more difficulty keeping our attention focused. Dehydration can impair short-term memory function and the recall of long-term memory."<sup>17</sup>



## Managing Chatty Cathy (and Ken)

All of the work practices we've covered so far involve changes in the behaviour and habits of one person: you. But what if the thing that stands between you and improved workplace productivity isn't you, but someone else? There's one in every office: the colleagues who just can't shut up.

"There are all kinds of chatterboxes, from the person who talks nonstop through five hours of golf, to the colleague who keeps a meeting going on far too long by saying things like, 'Can you rephrase that?'" says communications expert

<sup>17</sup> Gowin, Joshua. "Why Your Brain Needs Water." *Psychology Today*. Sussex Publishers LLC, 15 Oct. 2010. Web. 29 Mar. 2012. <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/you-illuminated/201010/why-your-brain-needs-water>.

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Bill Lampton.<sup>18</sup> Bill Repp, president of Organization Development Group, delineates Lampton's suggestions for changes in your own behaviour that will encourage a chatty colleague to move along while maintaining a harmonious workplace:

Offer non-verbal cues. If you continue to work and don't make eye contact, many people take the hint. Don't encourage the chattering by saying, "uh-huh," or nodding your head.

**Make an excuse.** Employ this strategy with a chatterbox who is too busy talking to get non-verbal clues. Say, "I can't talk right now because I'm in the middle of a project that is due soon. Let's talk later." Or try, "I've got five minutes. What can we cover in that amount of time?" Then stick to the time limit.

**Get physical.** When children interrupt, parents often hold up a hand like a traffic cop to get their attention and stop them from speaking. The same can work with chatty adults: Hold up your hand and say, "Sorry; I can't get into this now. Please send me a note or schedule an appointment to talk about it later." Or, simply walk away from the person, making the excuse to go to the loo!

**Get help.** Ask a colleague to come and rescue you if you haven't finished in 15 minutes.<sup>19</sup>

## Perform a time audit

Your inbox is clear, you've refilled your water bottle twice already today and your mobile device is turned off. But you still aren't as productive as you need to be. What next?

Dieticians often recommend that clients keep a food diary of every single thing that passes their lips for three to five days to see where unnecessary calories sneak in. You can audit your time in exactly the same way. Try it for three days or a full week and then review the results. Are certain low priority items monopolising a lot of your time? Are you doing a task that could be delegated, automated or eliminated? Are you underestimating how long meetings or tasks will take?

If tracking every minute of your day, including interruptions, seems too much, an alternative approach is to set a timer for a specific interval, say, every 20 minutes,



<sup>18</sup> Repp, Bill. "Working Best: Handling Talkative Coworkers." *The Commercial Appeal*. Scripps Interactive News Group, 18 Nov. 2007. Web. 29 Mar. 2012. <http://www.commercialappeal.com/news/2007/nov/18/working-best-handling-talkative-coworkers/>.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

and whenever the timer goes off, write down what you are doing at that moment. (Management consultant Mark Shead of Productivity501 recommends using odd check-in times, such as 8:11, because on-the-hour or half-hour times tend to be when people walk to or from a meeting or take a scheduled break.<sup>20</sup>) Do this for three typical working days. When you've finished, plot all of your activities on a Covey-style quadrant, as discussed in the to-do list section above, and evaluate the picture that is revealed:

- How many tasks fall into the 'urgent-important' category? (Hint: most of them should.)
- Was most of your time spent in either the 'urgent-not important' or 'not urgent-important' quadrants? (Hint: maybe you need to reevaluate your priorities. Are there any tasks in those quadrants that could be automated, delegated or scrapped altogether?)
- Did you enter any activities into the 'not urgent-not important' category? (Hint: you really shouldn't have any activities in that category, but if a few landed there, be gentle with yourself. Chatting with a colleague about their weekend helps to develop a good atmosphere in the workplace, which in turn promotes productivity as much as any other strategy.)

## Some final strategies

To conclude this Blue Paper, we offer some final tips that didn't fit into a specific productivity challenge, but nevertheless are worth mentioning. Maybe you'll find your key to greater productivity here:

- Like email, set aside a specific time each day to return phone calls.
- If you have a door, close it when necessary. If you have a workstation or open-style office and need to avoid all distractions, move to an empty private office or meeting room while you complete an important task.
- Is there a particular time of the day when you are particularly productive? Reserve that time for tasks that require the highest level of concentration. And on the other end of the spectrum, save up



<sup>20</sup> Shead, Mark. "How to Do a Time Audit." *Productivity501*. Xeric Corp., 2010. Web. 29 Mar. 2012. <http://www.productivity501.com/how-to-do-a-time-audit/7043/>.

mindless 'housekeeping' type tasks for a time when your energy level typically slumps.

- Don't work on ongoing projects right up to 'home' time. Block out the last 15 minutes of your day for those last emails, to clear the day's filing and unclutter your real and virtual desks ready for the next day.

**And one final tip:** Don't list 'improve personal productivity' on your to-do list! That's a definite violation of the rules above regarding to-do lists gone bad. The strategies we've touched on in this Blue Paper are habits to adopt one at a time, not tasks you can accomplish in a day or week or even a month. You are not a computer that can be programmed to function at maximum capacity at every moment. But you are certainly capable of taming that email inbox, turning off your phone and structuring your day to be proactive rather than reactive. In doing so, you should find yourself with more time for creative endeavours in your professional and personal lives. Here's to productivity!



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