

Career Headlines



Be a Smart User of Time

Some things we do during the day contribute to high productivity on the job, such as completing important tasks, researching information needed for a project, meeting with coworkers, supervisors or customers, and organizing for the next day. Other things we do are time wasters that may not be productive.

Avoid time wasters

While no one can be productive 100 percent of the time, you can use your time wisely by not wasting it on "low-value" activities. You diminish your productivity when you:

- Check email frequently
- Become distracted by mobile phone notifications
- Socialize unnecessarily



Organize your day to fit your work habits

Do you have more energy in the early morning, or do you come alive at 10 a.m. or even at 3 p.m.? For the next three days, jot down how you feel at various times of the day. Note the time and whether you feel alert, tired, focused, distracted, or some other way. Schedule your most important creative work for your high-energy times and routine tasks for low-energy times.

Look at personal habits

If you have low energy wattage for most of the day, look at your eating and sleeping habits. Eating a high-carbohydrate breakfast and a mid-morning snack may increase your energy in the morning. A lighter lunch may help reduce sleepiness in the early afternoon. Or, simply, you may need to go to bed earlier.

Set priorities

Doing the most important things first sounds like a no-brainer. Do you schedule priorities in their proper order, or do you do the most enjoyable things first. By completing the most important things first, you become more productive.

Action: Aggie works at Marshall's Landscape Center, and his To-Do list for today is shown below. Prioritize his work by writing a 1 by the most important task, a 2 by the next most important task, and so on.

- _____ Water plants in greenhouses
- _____ Begin to develop plans for display at next year's Spring Garden Show.
- _____ Put together Mrs. Goodwin's order for 10 a.m. pick-up.
- _____ Sweep workroom
- _____ Count tomato plants in the greenhouse for a report at tomorrow's staff meeting
- _____ Make suggestions for the customer satisfaction survey
- _____ Add supports to the hanging plant display
- _____ Fix the landscape center's sign that fell during last night's windstorm

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Note to instructors: **What Your Employer Expects**, the new *Quick Skills Series* 2nd edition book with a chapter on time management will be available from Career Solutions Publishing for spring classes. For information, contact us at 610-993-8292, or by email at csp@careersolutionspublishing.com.

