

TRANSFORMING COMBAT ZONES INTO COMFORT ZONES

Newsletter – November 2009

There was an article in a recent issue of *The New York Times*, which could be a wake up call for all of us as it relates to our ability to manage or (as referenced in the article) not manage our time effectively. The article recounted the writer's observations of his fellow passengers' routines during their morning commute. Over numerous train rides, he observed various grooming tasks like toenail clipping, perfume spraying, eyebrow plucking and the one that takes the cake...flossing.

As he stated in his article, "We're all strapped for time. If a person cannot manage to keep personal business personal, then it's time for a major life overhaul." While I won't begin to defend the behavior of these commuters, I would suggest that they could benefit from the following **Time Management Tips** as in all probability their commuting behavior is representative of how they address their work lives.

1. Set Daily Objectives. The best way to keep track of all the tasks that need to be addressed is to create and maintain a to-do list. This list should be updated at the end of each day so that the following day's priorities are clear and there will always be a definitive starting point.

2. Prioritize Tasks. While there will be a number of important tasks to tackle each day, their degree of importance will vary. The ability to be able to successfully differentiate between the levels of importance is as essential as is the recognition that there will not be enough time to complete all of the tasks.

3. Schedule Time With Yourself. With the typical daily interruptions, there are days where you can still be checking the morning e-mails and it is almost lunch time. This is why it is crucial that time be scheduled on your calendar to work on each day's priorities. As complex tasks will require more time, blocking out time on a number of days may be necessary.

4. Group Tasks. By grouping like tasks together and then scheduling time to tackle them you will be far more productive. For example, make a list of all of the phone calls that need to be made and block out the appropriate amount of time to do so. Set definitive times during the day to check e-mail...preferably no more than 2-3 times per day.

5. Choose Your Calendar Wisely. It is important to identify how this tool will be used prior to purchasing one and, most importantly, use only ONE calendar. If you prefer a paper calendar, you can select from the standard appointment books like the At-A-Glance calendars (www.ataglance.com) or opt for a combination planner/calendar like the Planner Pad (www.plannerpads.com) where tasks to be done can be categorized, prioritized and scheduled. There is also Outlook, for those who prefer an electronic tool, which offers an integrated solution for managing time and tasks and can be synchronized with many phones. (www.microsoft.com/outlook)

If you, like the commuters referenced in the article, don't have enough time to do all that you need to do, find a minute to complete the [Productive Environment Scorecard™](#) and I will schedule a **FREE** 30-minute phone consultation with you.

Have a productive month!