**WINNING THE PRODUCTIVITY GAME**

**201 Time-Saving Solutions to Work Smarter, Faster and Easier**

# 1

##### There are three ways to improve your work output.

Do you ever wonder if you are working as productively as possible? Heading back to the office from the golf course right now might be a good start.

Here are three ways to check:

1. Your Focus – Are you working on the correct thing? (Few people do. They work on what they like to do or are comfortable doing, not on what they really need to do.) What is that one, correct thing that you always need to be working on?
2. Your Methodology – Do you have a good system of working? (Many people don’t use a real system while others use a system they picked up along the way and kind of modify it as they go along.) What system do you use?
3. Your Speed – Do you work faster than a normal worker would in order to keep up? (Ouch! Nobody wants to work fast all of the time. It is exhausting and after a while you’ll get sick.) Are you able to work at a comfortable and steady pace?

What many workers do today is simply work more hours rather than fix the problem. Some, believe it or not, actually take work home and are available 24 hours a day to respond to e-mails, calls, and texts, wherever they are.

Hey! Forget about working more hours and working crazy.

Instead, stay focused on that one thing and use a better, make that a Vetter, work system.

# 2

##### Action creates energy.

How do you feel when you just sit around for days? Tired? Lethargic? Now compare that with how you feel after working out.

When you feel stuck, do something, do anything. The mere act of doing something causes you to create energy, which in turn allows you to do other things. It’s as if you are creating a source of fuel for yourself when you take some kind of action.

Think about grilling a steak. The steak doesn’t stop cooking just because you pull it off of the fire. It continues to cook from the energy created by the movement of the heated molecules. That’s why your Medium-Rare steak mysteriously turns into a Medium later on.

The same is true for you. Do nothing and, well, nothing happens. Don’t make a Misteak. Be Rare! Do something Well Done!

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# 3

##### It takes more work to evade a task than to accomplish it.

Do you know that you spend more energy avoiding doing something than just going ahead and doing it?

Think how much time you have spent (or more appropriately wasted) throughout the years “thinking about” tasks that you needed to do. If the time you spent “thinking about” those tasks counted as work completed, every task you ever wanted to do in the last twenty years would have been completed about, oh, nineteen years ago.

The next time you realize you are starting to “think about” something you need to do, just shift gears and start doing it. The job will be done before you know it. Now get started!

# 4

##### Doing something poorly is better than not doing it at all.

How many times have you avoided working on something because you were concerned about how well you would do it? What kind of result did you get when you didn’t do anything? Exactly!

Accomplishing a task with an average result—or for that matter, even a poor one—sure beats the heck out of no result at all.

Some result is always better than no result. It’s a hard one to learn.

# 5

##### Success is measured by what you complete, not by what you begin.

How many items on your to-do list have you begun but never have seemed to be able to finish?

Back in 1984, I started selling telephone systems, door to door, competing against the telephone company. (Back then, there was only one Phone Company and boy, was that a hard sale!)

On one Friday, my sales manager called me into his office as to the number of phone systems I had sold for the week. I proudly replied that I had delivered an unprecedented 12 sales proposals. After commenting that it was great that I had 12 proposals out, my manager again asked me how many I had closed. Gulp!

Working on a lot of things is admirable. The secret to success, however, is getting your work completed.

Finish one, before you begin another one.

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# 6

##### Make time from time that you don’t think you have.

How many times have you said, “I don’t have time to do that?”

If you were guaranteed a million dollars, would you have time then? Of course you would. Why then, and not before? Because with the million, you were able to see such a big payoff.

A way to shift from a victim mentality to a mentality of power is to say, “I choose to do something else” rather than “I don’t have the time.” It’s subtle, but there is a difference.

Make time every day for your Quiet Time where you brainstorm, plan, think, improve, and drive your business—all of the things you don’t seem to have time to do now.

Is it possible that you are not seeing the big payoff that is right in front of you?

As Ty would say to Danny in Caddyshack: “See—the payoff Danny. Be—the payoff. Nah, nah, nah, nah, nah, nah, nah.”

# 7

##### One hour of uninterrupted time is equal to three hours of a regular day.

Guess what every administrative assistant would love to have— besides a big fat juicy raise. An hour a day when everyone would just leave them alone.

Oh, the work they could produce! You have the opportunity most of the time to do this but are probably blowing it.

I know, I know. You don’t have the time. Well, no one else does either. But why choose to let that get in your way?

To win the Productivity game, you must create time from time (your Quiet Time) that you don’t think that you have but which of course, you really do have.

Just ask your admin how valuable an uninterrupted hour is—and what they would give to get one.

Now please go to your room and be Quiet.

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# 8

##### Be still and really listen.

Have you noticed that people just don’t seem to be listening like they used to?

Do any of these sound familiar?

1. While on the phone, you hear the faint clicking of typing in the background or the rustling of papers.
2. While someone is talking to you, they look down at their smartphone more often than a kid on a car trip looking out of the window asking “Are we there yet?”
3. They look at the sky or into la-la land while saying “Uh- huh” every five seconds, having absolutely no clue—none whatsoever—as to what you are talking about.
4. After hearing your first sentence, they immediately start formulating what they will say to counter what you just said and from then on, interrupt you silly.
5. Their smartphone rings and without saying anything—not even “Excuse me” or “Would you mind if I take this call?”— immediately start talking as if you weren’t there. (Walking away when they do this is a riot. Some people notice— others don’t.)

Most people just want to be heard. Don’t you?

Try saying nothing and just being with someone. It’s called listening.

The effect of listening is amazing—to you, to them, and to your bottom line.

# 9

##### Listen like this.

When someone says, “I need you to listen to me,” how do you listen? (If it is your wife, you run. Oh wait, that’s “We need to talk.”)

1. Keep doing what you are doing, nod your head and tell them you are listening.
2. Say uh-huh every time they pause. Uh-huh.
3. Constantly interrupt them with unsolicited advice such as

“Here’s what you really need to do be doing, Hoss.”

Hard to believe but there are other options. What about asking them how they would like to be listened to? Here are three ways to listen:

1. Passive listening: Just listen and say nothing. Most people just want to be listened to.
2. Active listening: Listen to what they are saying and then when they are done, tell them what you heard. (“What I heard you say was…”) They will correct you if you didn’t hear them.
3. Listening and advising: Listen to what they say and when they are done, make suggestions.

If you just want to be listened to, the very last thing you want to hear is advice.

How many times have you ever heard someone ask “How would you like me to listen?” I am guessing never.

Uh-huh.

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# 10

##### Habits create needs.

Have you ever smoked a cigarette after a meal? For some reason, it is supposed to be really satisfying. Now I have never smoked a single cigarette so I am probably the last person on earth to be commenting on this but what the heck, I will anyway.

People who smoke always seem to really enjoy a cigarette after a meal. How come? My guess is they saw someone doing it so they innocently started. After a while, they got into the habit of smoking, which created the need for a cigarette. Now, a meal doesn’t seem quite the same without one.

There is no difference between this habit and the habit of working your organizational system. If you repeat an action long enough, you will create the need for it.

The next time you want to make a change in your life, simply start doing a new action. Then do it again and again and again. Before you know it, you will have created the need to do that action. Now it is easier to do because you created a habit.

This, of course, applies to everything except doing your taxes.

# 11

##### Gear your behavior to be both goal-producing and tension-reducing.

Are you constantly engaging in activities that only reduce your tension? If you are, have you ever wondered why you aren’t getting more results?

With every activity you get to choose: reduce tension or produce work.

Fortunately, with some activities, you’re able to do both, such as working out at the gym. You reduce your tension level and build a strong, healthy body at the same time.

Why then, would you continue to waste your precious time with only tension-reducing activities?

The next time you reach for that bag of potato chips (munch), plop down in front of the TV (veg) or sip on another brewski (gulp or should that be chug?), you just may want to ask yourself what you’re producing.

Hopefully, it’s not just fat.

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# 12

##### Slow down.

What’s the rush?

Have you noticed you don’t have enough time to get everything done? Guess what? You’re not supposed to. Why are you buying into the belief that you are?

Why this obsession with always having to be busy, to be on the go, to be doing something? What are you afraid of missing? Or do you know that if you stay so busy, you won’t have time to feel that deep hurt inside that you don’t want to feel.

Being busy doesn’t always mean being productive. It can also mean being exhausted, compulsive, mechanical, addicted, and joyless. Worse yet, it can mean not dealing with issues in your life. If you are always busy, you never have time to feel.

Isn’t it finally time to slow down and feel what you have always been afraid to feel?

To feel is to heal.

# 13

##### Process information only three times a day.

How many times a day do you check your e-mail? Today an average person checks an electronic device 150 times in 24 hours. Hi, boys and girls. Can you say “interruption”? I knew you could.

Processing information consists of prioritizing, categorizing, sorting, organizing, and deciding. It is never, ever doing. Real work is never accomplished by Processing information (e-mail, voice mail, texts and Inbox) even though many workers believe that they are Producing work when they are opening, looking at, and forwarding texts and e-mails. Perhaps they are working but many times aren’t Producing.

Go through and Process all incoming information three times a day—first thing in the morning, (before you start work or attend one of those wonderful and fulfilling meetings), after lunch, and finally late in the afternoon.

By the way, doing this means eliminating multitasking (Producing work and Processing information at the same time) from your day.

Process information only three times a day and watch your Productivity skyrocket.

♫ Skyrockets in flight. Morning, lunch and afternoon Processing delight. ♫

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# 14

##### Produce work three times a day.

How many times a day do you have to stop and think what you need to do next? Imagine having a work system that thinks for you, keeps you on track, and allows you to Produce a lot more work.

Producing is creating results and accomplishing work. It’s what you’re paid to do. It’s the opposite of Processing (sorting, categorizing, and prioritizing) information. Every day, Produce by working on each of your Action Categories:

* Batched – similar tasks that can be worked on and done together. Think of an assembly line.
* Calendar – tasks that can only be done today, or on a certain date, or in a certain month. Do not put tasks that are due in the future in here.
* To Do – Important and impactful tasks that you never seem to do. Tasks that have a due date that can be done before their due date. A step of a Project. Do these in your (QT) Quiet Time every day.

When you Process, Process. When you Produce, only Produce. Doing these three, will make you free.

# 15

##### P six times a day.

Do you have a specific work system that you follow? How about a system for checking incoming information?

Many workers spend their day jumping back and forth between checking e-mails, replying to them, answering their phone, texting someone, going to meetings, and, in between all of this, trying to get some work done. If you don’t have a specific system, chances are that you will be reacting to the urgencies of the day rather than pro-acting on what is important.

Break your day down into Processing information three times and Producing work three times.

* Process (Voice mail, e-mail Inbox, smartphone, and desk Inbox) First thing in the morning.
  + Produce (Calendar – tasks that can only be done on a certain date)
  + Produce (Batched – similar tasks that can be done together)
* Process (Voice mail, e-mail Inbox, smartphone, and desk Inbox) Lunchtime.
  + Produce (To Do – important and impactful tasks you work on in your Quiet Time)
* Process (Voice mail, e-mail Inbox, smartphone, and desk Inbox) Late afternoon.

By having a system and following a system, you, rather than your day, will be in control.

It’s as easy as P’ing six times a day.

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