



"Think Zink" March Newsletter

March 2007

Stop Chasing the Clock! Time Management Tools for Busy Professionals

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Dear Sarah

I hope this newsletter proves to be helpful to you. If you have any ideas for future newsletter topics, [contact me](#) and let me know.

Please feel free to forward this newsletter to your co-workers, friends, employees, or customers.

You are also welcome to print and/or quote anything in this newsletter, provided you give credit to Sarah Zink Business Training.

Warm Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarah M. Zink". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sarah Zink
Sarah Zink Business Training

We all want to think we have less time than the next person, but the reality is - we all have the same amount of time available to us each week. The painful truth is - the only difference between each of us is how we use that time.

Begin thinking of your time as your treasure - because once you spend your money, you can always earn more, but once you spend your time - it's gone forever!

As you browse through this month's "Think Zink" newsletter, think about what you consider to be your biggest challenge to time management. Then find the tool that will help you take control of your time!

Time Trap # 1 - Socializing Struggles



Of course we love visiting with our co-workers. On average, we spend more waking hours with these folks than we do our own family! But don't let your need to "hang out" with your peers compromise your time management!

TOOL: Time Blocking - set aside 15 minutes twice a day to meet your friends in the break room, or take a walk around your building. Time blocking also gives you a tool to communicate your plan to own your time to your friends: "I'm right in the middle of project right now, but let's meet at 10:15 in the break room!"

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Re-Take Ownership of Your Time!



How can you re-take ownership of your time?

First - COST YOUR TIME! Do some basic math (salary plus benefits divided by a 40 hour week) to figure out what you are worth per hour. (NOTE: you can't do this calculation based on how many hours you actually work, or you'd only make \$2.21 per hour!) Now that you know what you are worth per hour - evaluate EVERYTHING you spend time on. Is what you are doing worth what it costs to do it?

Second - STOP SABOTAGING! Recognize that managing your time is managing your energy and become aggressive about taking control of your energy. STOP letting others sabotage your time management, and STOP sabotaging your own time management.

Third - SET GOALS - daily, weekly, monthly, semi-annually and annually. How do you know you've achieved some measure of success if you don't have any way to measure it? This will cause you to focus on results, not simply on being busy.

Finally - LEARN TO SAY "NO" - You don't have to be rude to say "no" - to interruptions, to additional work, to volunteering projects. Practice different tactful ways of saying "no". "I'd love to help you, but I have a project that is on a deadline." or "I'd love to visit, but I'm practicing managing my time. How about lunch?"

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Time Trap # 2 - Discussing Everything "Right Now"



How many times have you been in a meeting when someone comes up with a great idea, but it causes the entire meeting to get off off-track to discuss that idea?

Or how many times have you been working in your office, and someone just HAS to talk to you RIGHT NOW about a solution to a problem that can wait?

TOOL: "The Parking Lot" - get a large "Post-It" style flip chart, and put one sheet on the wall in your office, in your break room, and in your meeting room. Whenever anyone has an idea - and it can wait - have them write it on the "Parking Lot". That way, their idea is preserved, and you can address it at the appropriate time.

Time Trap # 3 - Email and Voicemail



Do you have a sound attached to incoming email? Or do you use a "pop-up" notification each time you receive an email? Do you ALWAYS answer your phone, no matter what?

TOOL: Schedule when you check email and answer your phone. Not everyone can do that with BOTH email and the phone, but if you can, do it. If you can do one or the other, do it. Check your email two or three times a day. Set up an auto-responder for emails, letting people know that you have received their email and will respond within a certain amount of time (one business day, 48 hours, etc). If possible, do the same thing with your voice mail. Let the caller know that you return calls between 1:00 and 3:00 pm each day, or whatever time frame works best. This enables you to control your time, rather than letting your email and phone control your time.