



## & The Business Shed

- A Creative Initiative

### Are you a procrastinator?

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#### Do you postpone doing something, especially on a regular basis? Is your life "full" of uncompleted tasks or projects?

If so, here are some basic tips that may help – some will seem so obvious that you wonder if they will work, but they will. These tips will work in an office situation, or at home – it will just be the tasks and their importance which will be different – the techniques are the same.

#### Organise and Prioritise

Make a list of all your tasks. Now put those tasks into order of importance – use this idea:

Must do Can't be avoided	Not so urgent Can't be put off too much longer
Must do Can be delayed	Really these can wait But not forever

This idea has been around for some time, but when you see it "in print" it starts to make sense – you could get a board and use 'Post-It' notes to put the tasks into each box.

Be really tough on yourself – don't put everything into the bottom right hand box – that's not going to get any change from where you are at the moment – is it?

Now take the *Must Do Can't be avoided* tasks and put them in order of importance. Ask these questions:

- When is the deadline?
- What do you need to achieve this?
- How long will it take – be realistic?
- Are any linked or sequential? Look and see if any are dependent on others and if so make sure you've got them in the right order.
- Can any be broken down into smaller tasks? If so, go through the order of importance steps again.

Then make sure you've got everything you need to start work on them.

#### Delegate

Look through the list and see if there is anything that can be delegated – is there someone else you trust who could do this task? If so, give it to them – you really do only have so much time in your day, so delegate when you can – remember to say thank you.

#### Limitation Exercise

Do one thing at a time from start to finish – do not go onto the next task until you've finished the one you started.

Do the hardest tasks during the time when you are your most productive, when you are energised and mentally alert.

If some of the tasks are routine (filing), keep those for when you're not at your best. Here's a helpful hint: Keep something simple and easily achievable for the last task of the day – you will be rewarded by doing something quickly and completely and you're going to feel good that you've achieved it.

#### Be accountable

Be accountable to yourself and if you have one to your coach.

### Re-draw the board

Now that all those *Must Do Can't Be Avoided* tasks have been done, have fun by removing them from the board, or from the paper on which they were written and start on the next box – Must Do Can Be Delayed. Take a little time then to look at those on the right hand side of the box and see how they can now be moved up as well.

You may redraw the board twice a day (or more often) or only once every couple of days – but here's another helpful hint:

As new tasks come in, but them straight away into the correct box.

Don't stop what you've started just because another task has arrived – finish what you're doing and then (and only then) re-prioritise. Obviously this is not going to work in every situation, but it will in most – if you have to break off from what you're doing, make sure you go straight back to it when you finished the *supremely life or death* task that just arrived.

### Take time for yourself

Finally, remember no one reached Heaven saying I wish I'd spent more time at the office! So include breaks and personal time in your day – you may have to make that a task in the *Must Do Can't Be Avoided* box to start with – but you need to take time out, to breathe the air, smell the roses, have a coffee – whatever – but make time for you and no one else.

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## *Creating Possibilities and Finding Solutions*

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