

# How to Make Time to Manage Your Time



**WHAT GETS MEASURED, GETS BETTER**

EVERYTHING IN BUSINESS CAN BE MEASURED IN NUMBERS,  
AND EVERYTHING WE WANT TO IMPROVE MUST BE.

# HOW TO MAKE TIME TO **MANAGE YOUR TIME**

**As a business coach, I often quote Mark Twain who is rumored to have said: "I don't want to know when I'll die, I want to know where." His point, of course, was that he could influence his location, but not time. He was right that we can't influence time, but we can certainly manage our allotment.**

Managing time is work until it becomes habit, and work requires incentive. Jim Rohn says that "If the promise is apparent, the price is easy." His genius was saying in simple terms what we all know is true: If we are complacent, unimaginative or completely satisfied, we will not do the work necessary to change.

If, on the other hand, we have a clear vision of what we want and a fervent desire to have it, vision and desire will provide the promise to reward our efforts.

## WHAT DO YOU WANT?

The first step in time management is to spend some of it defining clearly what we want. This is difficult for many of us, but we have to do it.

Understanding what we want is the foundation of time management because, at its core, time management is choice. It is choosing what to do first, what to do later, and what not to do at all. We have to know what we want in order to make those decisions.

Now that the hard part is over, the work begins. It's not difficult or complex, we just have to do it.

## HOW DO YOU SPEND YOUR TIME NOW?

Find out how you spend your time now with a time audit. Keep a pen and paper - or SIRI and an iPhone - with you and record what you do.

You know, things like email, bidding contracts, talking with customers, answering questions, dealing with suppliers and bankers, planning (?), FaceBook(!), and so on. It's also worth the effort to record how much time you spend on such things.

You will be surprised, and not in a good way.

## PRIORITIZE

In his book "Eat That Frog," Brian Tracy points out that the familiar 80/20 rule applies to time management. That means that 20% of what we do is responsible for 80% of what we accomplish. The object of priority is to spend our time on the 20%.

After several days of tracking, look at your list and ask yourself: "Which of these activities is most important to achieving my vision?" Circle that thing. Repeat the question four more times and you will have a list of your five most important activities.

Resolve not to spend time on other tasks so long as any priority task remains undone.

## BUT WHAT ABOUT ALL THE OTHER THINGS?

Some things we can just stop doing - like the time we spend on social media. Other things still need to be done by someone or something, but not you.

That means you have to delegate to people or technology.

Instead of approaching an issue and asking "What will I do?", ask "What people and resources can I deploy to address this issue now and forevermore?" Delegate each important activity that is not on your priority list to people or technology.

In the beginning, delegation means you will spend extra time developing systems, training people and adapting to technology.

The time invested will pay endless dividends into the distant future. During this transition period, systemizing, training, delegation and learning should likely be among your top priority activities.

## **GETTING YOUR TASKS DONE**

Gary Keller points out in his fabulous book, "The One Thing," that the 80/20 rule has a compound effect. It applies not only to your original list of activities, but also to your 20% list.

That means that one of your five priorities contributes 80% of the benefit of the top five combined.

Choose that thing and work on it.

Don't mess with numbers two through five so long as any part of the number one remains undone.

## IF YOU ARE DOING ONE THING, YOU CANNOT SIMULTANEOUSLY DO ANOTHER.

We hear a lot about multitasking these days. I first heard the term used to describe a PC's ability to run more than one program at a time. It quickly morphed into a description of people who could do a lot of things at once.

The problem is that we can't.

Really good "multitaskers" are just really fast switchers. Research shows there is nothing to gain from fast switching. In fact, we can't even break even on the deal. A study done by the University of London showed that multitasking not only dropped productivity by up to 40%, but also dropped some people's IQs as much as 15 points to that of the average 8 year old.

The lesson is: Don't kid yourself, and don't multitask. Focus. Concentrate. One activity at a time.

## ACTUALLY GET SOMETHING DONE

Okay, you've got the flu, you're going broke and your spouse is threatening divorce. Fine, but for this twenty minutes, this day, you're going to shut it out and actually accomplish something.

That way, when you get over your cold, don't go broke and your spouse doesn't divorce you, you will find yourself one step closer to your vision.

## CALENDAR

You have your priorities and your priority among priorities. Can you really do nothing but that? We all have to eat, sleep, talk to customers, and say hello to the family on occasion, so no, we can't spend 100% of our time on one priority.



We can, however, schedule time to ensure we make progress on our priority every day, week, month and year.

To do that, create a default calendar on which you block off regular times to work on, rather than in, your businesses. This is not a Google calendar that you fill with appointments as they arise.

It's just the opposite. It is a calendar on which you block off times that you will not fill with appointments.

I know a contractor who is "out of the office" every Friday afternoon.

Except he's not.

He is in his office working on his business. Everybody knows it, but if you want to talk to him, you have to wait until Monday. Period.

## **ACCOUNTABILITY**

Beware of backsliding. The daily grind constantly works to regain control, as when you yield your in-the-business-time to an urgent call from an important customer "just this once."

The antidote is to declare your priorities and default schedule to a partner, someone who will praise you, cajole you, harass you and ultimately hold you responsible for managing your time.

So, how did it get so late so soon? By starting "tomorrow."

Do it now.

## DO YOU HAVE THE TIME?

How about you? How many hours per week do you work on your business? What's your vision? What are your top five priorities? What does multitasking mean to you? Of the things you were going to do "tomorrow," which ones remain undone?

If you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to mail me at [Martin@annealbc.com](mailto:Martin@annealbc.com) or visit [www.annealbc.com](http://www.annealbc.com)



## Martin Holland

Martin Holland is the son of a successful entrepreneur. He grew up hearing about margins and markets, R&D and sales, risk and return on investment. He learned to love the language and rigors of business and grew to believe that business is both the most human of all endeavors and the highest calling. After selling a company in 2011, Martin became a coach in order to help other owners build profitable businesses that do not require their day-to-day involvement.

A native of Norman, Martin earned a B.A. degree from Hastings College in Hastings, Nebraska and a Masters in Business Administration degree from the University of Oklahoma. Over the past 7 years he has written business plans that have raised over \$52.4 million in bank and investor financing. He has helped 157 (and counting) business owners reduce stress and increase performance through clarity of purpose, better marriages, more money, and more free time away from the business.