

# Work More Effectively

**We have focused on becoming list makers and we have learned about establishing priorities. Now it's time to put those tools to use and learn how to work more effectively.**

**PRE-REQUISITE ARTICLES:** A101. Become a List Maker and A102. Establish Your Priorities

Yes, work more effectively. But how?

We're running ourselves into the ground with tight deadlines and this "around-the-clock" mentality. Many of us are having trouble working more effectively simply because we're too stressed out. We've decided that everything is important rather than focusing on the things that matter most. We're trying to keep all of our day-to-day information stored in our brains believing we'll be able to recall pertinent information when the time comes. All of these noble attempts to manage our lives have become unmanageable and futile.

But all is not lost. In this article you'll learn five things you can do today work more effectively. Let's get started.

## Be diligent, not perfect.

The truth is out. Nobody is perfect ... really. Now that we got that out of the way, accept the fact that perfection is an unrealistic goal that often results in frustration and defeat. Diligence should be your focus. Stop agonizing over your work to the point that you are no longer an effective producer. Strive for excellence and consistency, not perfection. There is a difference! You'll find that most people don't have the time or the money for perfection. Producing at 95-98% will please the majority of people out there. You must learn to strike a balance. Just because you have determined to operate at 95-98% efficiency does not mean that you offer less than your very best. People know when you have done your best. They can tell what kind of worker you are. Your actions will speak much louder than your words. Remember; be diligent, not perfect!



## Make your tools work for you.

Master your computer and software, your printer and your Internet capabilities. Doing so can at least double your efficiency and productivity. Learn to use short cuts with

your computer and the Internet. It's amazing how many of us don't know our computers very well. Make your resources work for you so you can produce more in less time. After all, isn't that what efficiency is all about?

## Learn to multi-task effectively.

Multi-tasking can be an effective way to keep your productivity high. If you are anything like me, your attention span may be a little lacking. I have found that to keep my productivity from waning, I need to jump from one project to another. Although this can increase your chances of error, it does allow you to get more things done. Save your multi-tasking efforts to things that aren't for the world to see.

## Focus on small portions.

This is an area that might require a little bit of discipline. However, if you can master the art of focusing on small portions, you will be able to make the most of your time. Before mastering this technique, I was the perpetual procrastinator who felt that I would get the entire project done once I had a big chunk of time allocated. Guess what? That big chunk of time never came. Don't fall into the same trap. Utilize those 10-30 minute increments you have throughout your day. By time the day is finished, you'll be surprised how much you have accomplished. Those small portions add up!

## Write it down.

It would be nice if we could retain all of the necessary information we need in our brain. And many people can do just that. However, when schedules get hectic and e-mail boxes get full, your brain seems to short circuit—recalling important information can be a grueling experience. Writing things down can take a huge load off of your mind. If you are worried about losing the information you have written down, write it down in a notebook; one that you keep with you. Get into the habit of writing things down, and you will quickly find that you have freed up your brain from unnecessary worry.



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### **About the author**

Donna M. Murphy is an editorial specialist, a veteran writer and a published author who has written, edited, and designed extensive collateral and key solutions products for print and the web. Training manuals, operating procedures, business documents and content quality assurance encompass a large portion of her assignments. Donna is the creative force behind Summit Publication Design, LLC, and has specialized in content organization, quality assurance and publication design since 1997. Visit Donna's website at <http://www.summitpubdesign.com> for information on her comprehensive services, helpful resources, more articles like this one, and strategies to help you improve the quality and effectiveness of your publications.

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