

# 8 Great Ways to Double Your Productivity

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## 8 GREAT WAYS TO DOUBLE YOUR PRODUCTIVITY

All successful people are described as being very well organized and good time managers. Fortunately, time management skills are learnable with practice and repetition. You can become one of the most productive people in your field by applying the ideas you are about to learn.

### 1 **MAKE A DECISION**

Every positive change in your life begins with a clear unequivocal decision that you are either going to do something or stop doing something. Significant change starts when you decide to either get in or get out. Either fish or cut bait. Decisiveness is one of the most important qualities of successful and happy men and women. And decisiveness is developed through practice and repetition, over and over again until it becomes as natural to you as breathing in and breathing out.

The sad fact is that people are poor because they have not yet decided to be rich. People are overweight and unfit because they have not yet decided to be thin and fit. People are inefficient time wasters because they haven't yet decided to be highly productive in everything they do.

Decide today that you are going to become an expert in time management and personal productivity, no matter how long it takes or how much you have to invest to achieve it. Resolve today that you are going to practice these principles over and over again until they become second nature. Discipline yourself to do what you know you need to do to be the very best in your field.

Perhaps the best definition of self-discipline is this: self-discipline is the ability to make yourself do what you should do, when you should do it, whether you feel like it or not. You see it's easy to do something when you feel like it. It's when you don't feel like it and you force yourself to do it anyway that you move your life and career onto the fast track.

What decisions do you need to make in order to start moving toward the top of your field? Whatever they are, to either get in or get out, make a decision today and then get started. This single act alone can change the whole direction of your life.

## **2 DEVELOP CLEAR GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

Perhaps the most important word in success for you for the rest of your life is the word clarity. Fully 80% of your success comes about as the result of your being absolutely clear about what it is you are trying to accomplish.

Unfortunately, probably 80% or more of failure and frustration comes to people who are vague or fuzzy about what it is they want and how to go about achieving it. The great oil billionaire H. L. Hunt once said that there are only two real requirements for success. First he said decide exactly what it is you want. Most people never do this. Second, he said determine the price you're going to have to pay to get it and then resolve to pay that price.

You can have just about anything you really want as long as you're willing to pay the price. And nature always demands that you both pay the price in full and that you pay it in advance.

## 3 **PLAN EVERY DAY IN ADVANCE**

Daily planning is absolutely essential for you to double your productivity. You should practice the “Six P Formula,” for high achievement. This formula says, “Prior proper planning prevents poor performance.” Proper planning is the mark of the professional. All successful men and women take a good deal of time to plan their activities in advance. Remember the 10/90 Rule which says that the first ten percent of time that you spend planning your activities before you begin will save you as much as 90% of the time necessary to perform those activities once you start work.

Always think on paper. Something wonderful happens between your head and your hand when you write out your plans in detail on paper before you begin. Writing actually sharpens your thinking. It stimulates your creativity and it enables you to focus far better than if you were just trying to work out of your mind.

Begin by making a master list of everything you can think of that you have to do for the long-term future. This master list then becomes the central control list for your life. Whenever you think of something new that you have to do, write it down on your master list.

At the beginning of each month, make a monthly list covering everything you can think of that you’ll have to do in the coming weeks. Then break your monthly list down into a weekly list and specify exactly when you are going to start and complete the tasks you have decided upon for the month.

Finally and perhaps the most important, make a daily list of your activities, preferably the night before so that your subconscious mind can work on your list while you sleep. Always work from a list. As you work you scratch off each item as you finish it. This

tracking gives you an ongoing sense of accomplishment and personal progress. Crossing off items one by one motivates you and actually gives you more energy.

According to time management experts, working from a list will increase your productivity by 25% the very first day you begin doing it.

## **4 SEPARATE THE URGENT FROM THE IMPORTANT**

Everything that you have to do during the day can be divided into one of four categories. These categories are determined by designating your tasks as either urgent or not urgent, and important or not important.

The first type of task is both urgent and important. This is something that you have to do immediately. It's a job that's in your face. Urgent and important tasks like important phone calls, meetings, customer calls and emergencies are almost always determined by other people. They are vital requirements of your job. You cannot put them off without causing serious problems. Most people spend all day long doing things that are both urgent and important.

The second category of items are those that are important but not urgent. These are the items that usually have the greatest possible long-term consequences. These are items like personal renewal, upgrading your knowledge and skills, physical fitness and exercise, and spending time with your family.

The third category of tasks are those items that are urgent but not important. These may consist of telephone calls, coworkers dropping in to see you, casual conversations about what was on television, and so on.

The greatest time wasters of all are those activities that are neither urgent nor important. These are things that you do during the day that are completely irrelevant and have no consequences at all, like reading the newspaper, calling home to see what's for dinner, or going shopping. They contribute nothing to your company or to your personal goals.

Always ask yourself, "What are the long-term potential consequences of doing this task? What would happen if I didn't do it at all?" And whatever your answer, let it guide you in your choice of priorities.

## **5 USE THE LAW OF FORCED EFFICIENCY**

This law says that there is never enough time to do everything but there's always enough time to do the most important things. Whenever you are put under significant pressure to complete an important task; a task for which there are significant consequences, you put your head down and you get the job done by the deadline.

Many people cannot discipline themselves to get the job done in advance. They then say that they work best under pressure. However, no one works best under pressure. This is just a justification for poor time management. When you are under pressure you not only experience more stress, but you also make more mistakes. These mistakes often require that the job be redone again at a later time.

There are four great questions that you can ask to increase your efficiency and double your productivity. Here they are.

First, begin by asking before you start work, "What is the highest value use of my time?" What is it that you do that contributes the greatest amount of value to your work and

to your life? What is it that you do that pays the very most or yields the highest rewards to you and your company? Talk to your boss and to the people around you. Ask for input. You must be absolutely clear about the answer to this question, and work on these high value activities all the time.

Second, ask yourself regularly, "Why am I on the payroll?" Exactly what have you been hired to do? Of all the things that you've been hired to do, what are the few accomplishments that most determine your success in your job? Whatever the answer to this question, these are the activities that you need to focus on all day long.

The third question for maximum efficiency is this: "What can you and only you do that if done well can make a real difference?" At any given time there is only one answer to this question. This is the sort of task that if you don't do it, it doesn't get done. But if you do it and you do it well, it can make a major difference. Whatever it is, you should be working on it above all else. This is where you can make your greatest contribution.

The fourth question is perhaps the best time management question of all. It is simply this: "What is the most valuable use of my time right now?" Always ask yourself, "What is the most valuable use of my time right now?" And whatever your answer to that question be sure that is what you are doing most of the time.

Your ability to ask and answer these questions on a regular basis will keep you on track and performing at your best. "What are my highest value activities? Why am I on the payroll? What can I and only I do that if done well can make a real difference?" And, "What is the most valuable use of my time right now?"

Discipline yourself to work only on your answers to those questions and this alone will double your productivity.

## **6** WORK AT YOUR ENERGY PEAKS

One of the most important requirements for high productivity is high levels of physical, mental and emotional energy. All highly productive, highly successful, highly paid people have high levels of energy sustained over long periods of time.

To generate and maintain high levels of energy you need to practice proper eating, proper exercise, and proper rest. You need to eat light nutritious high protein foods and avoid fats, sugars, white flour products, pasta, potatoes, candy, soft drinks, and deserts of all kinds. You need to get regular exercise, three to five times per week, 30 to 60 minutes each time.

Be sure to get lots of rest, especially if you are working hard. You need at least seven or eight hours of sleep per night and sometimes even more. You need to take at least one full day off each week and two full weeks off each year if you want to perform at your best.

You should identify the times of the day that you are the brightest and most alert. For some people this the morning. For others it's the afternoon or evening. Whatever it is for you, you should schedule your most creative and demanding tasks during the time of day when you are at your very best. Especially, you should do creative work such as writing reports and proposals at your energy peaks.

Perhaps your most valuable asset in your work is your ability to think well and perform effectively. Maximum performance and productivity requires that you take excellent care of your physical and mental health and that you work at your most important jobs when you experience your highest levels of energy. This is a major key to high outputs and great success.



## **7 PRACTICE ZERO BASED THINKING CONTINUALLY**

This is one of the best tools you'll ever learn to clarify your thinking and improve the quality of your life. Ask yourself on a regular basis, "Is there anything in my life that, knowing what I now know, I wouldn't get into again today if I had to do it over?"

Is there anything you are doing today; any relationship you're in, any investment, that knowing what you now know you wouldn't get into if you had to do it over? This is one of the most important questions you ask and answer.

Many people waste many years of their lives working at something that they don't particularly like or enjoy, and then in their 30s they have to start all over again in a completely new job in a completely new career.

Is there any relationship in your life, business, social or personal activities that, knowing what you now know you wouldn't get into again? Is there any part of your business, any product, service, expenditure or process that, knowing what you now know, you wouldn't start up again today if you had to do it over.

Remember, whatever the situation, if it an unhappy situation it is probably not going to change. It's probably going to get worse over time. The only question then is, do you have the courage and character to deal honestly with your life as it really is today?

By applying zero based thinking to every part of your life you'll be absolutely amazed at how much better your decisions become and how much more productive you become at the same time.

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## BE INTENSELY ACTION ORIENTED

I've referred over and over again in this course to the need for speed. Today everyone is in a hurry. Your customers didn't even know they wanted your product or service until today, and now they want it yesterday.

People today are incredibly impatient. Nobody will wait in line anymore. The average internet surfer will switch in seven to eight seconds if the internet site does not load quickly.

The most outwardly identifiable quality of the top performer in every field is that he or she is in constant motion. The top performer takes initiative to get the job done. The top performer takes action, over and over again, continuously toward the goal.

In the final analysis, we only get paid for results. Results are everything. Intense result orientation goes hand in hand with high productivity and high performance in every area.

Make a decision today that you are going to move fast when opportunity or need presents itself. Pick up the pace. Take action of some kind. Get on with it.

The good news is that the faster you move the better you feel. The faster you move the more you get done. The faster you move the more energy you have. The faster you move the more you learn and the more experience you get. And the faster you move the more you earn, the more you get paid, and the faster you get promoted.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**B**rian Tracy is Chairman and CEO of Brian Tracy International, a company specializing in the training and development of individuals and organizations.

Brian's goal is to help you achieve your personal and business goals faster and easier than you ever imagined.

Brian Tracy has consulted for more than 1,000 companies and addressed more than 5,000,000 people in 5,000 talks and seminars throughout the US, Canada and 56 other countries worldwide. As a Keynote speaker and seminar leader, he addresses more than 250,000 people each year.

He has studied, researched, written and spoken for 30 years in the fields of economics, history, business, philosophy and psychology. He is the top selling author of over 50 books that have been translated into dozens of languages.

He has written and produced more than 500 audio and video learning programs, including the worldwide, best-selling *Psychology of Achievement*, which has been translated into more than 20 languages.

He speaks to corporate and public audiences on the subjects of Personal and Professional Development, including the executives and staff of many of America's largest corporations. His exciting talks and seminars on Leadership, Selling, Self-Esteem, Goals, Strategy, Creativity and Success Psychology bring about immediate changes and long-term results.

He has traveled and worked in over 90 countries on six continents, and speaks four languages. Brian is happily married and has four children. He is active in community

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and national affairs, and is the President of three companies headquartered in Solana Beach, California.

Brian is the president of Brian Tracy International, a company that helps individuals and businesses of all sizes achieve personal and professional goals.

To learn more about Brian Tracy, please visit [www.briantracy.com/AboutBrian](http://www.briantracy.com/AboutBrian).

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