

TIME MANAGEMENT: DEVELOPING A PLAN FOR SUCCESS

*"I would, I could stand on a busy corner, hat in hand,
and beg people to throw me all their wasted hours."*

~ Bernard Berenson

"One morning I shot an elephant in my pajamas. How he got in my pajamas, I don't know"

~ Groucho Marx

Sales Truth: Whether you are in sales, customer service, management, executive leadership, operations, customer service, maintenance, or whatever role you perform; you are paid for the value you deliver to the marketplace, in proportion to the value you deliver, during the productive hours you invest in the marketplace.

Sales Truth: As a sales professional, the only real assets you have to sell are your *time* and your *knowledge*.

THE CHALLENGE

The bell has rung. The race is on. A new day has begun, and you have a fresh opportunity to make the most out of this day as possible. You power up your computer, check your smartphone, check your e-mail and your voicemail. You scan the notes, letters, and other documents scattered across your desktop. The phone begins to ring, and the emails begin to roll in. You are promptly overwhelmed by the tyranny of the urgent, and the realization that you have more to do than is humanly possible. Welcome to another day ... now what do you do?

If you embrace the truth that the only two assets you truly have to sell are your *time* and your *knowledge*; and your objective is to make the most profitable use of your time – *to you* – there is only one thing for you to do. Prioritize all of the activities competing for your time and attention, and begin tackling them in a manner that is the most profitable to you.

Clearly, this is easier said than done, or far fewer of us would reach the end of the day, week, month, and year wondering how it is that we worked so hard, yet failed to realize many of the goals that were most important to us.

Time is a non-renewable asset. The minutes you spend reading this *Success Habit* are minutes that will be gone for good, never to be had again. The goal of this *Success Habit* is to offer you some insights into how you can leverage a few simple skills to push back against the tyranny of the urgent, to be certain that at the end of each day you have completed those things that are most important to the pursuit and realization of your business and personal goals.

SUCCESS HABITS

As you assume more control over your time and life, there are a number of truths of time management which are important for you to embrace:

- 🏰 Every day of your life, there are more activities competing for your time and attention than you can ever hope to complete over the course of a day.
- 🏰 There is but a select group of these activities that are both pressing to be completed, *and* can have a significant impact on the achievement of your goals.
- 🏰 There are many activities clamoring for your attention each day that can be scheduled for a later time, or ignored completely, at minimal physical, fiscal, or emotional cost.

Meaning:

- 🏰 Every day, some things are going to go undone. Why not choose to let go undone those activities that will be of least value to you?
- 🏰 When you reach the end of the day, having completed all of the activities of highest value to you, you will enjoy a great sense of satisfaction and more easily recognize how insignificant some of those other activities really were.

Once you come to grips with these essential truths of time management, you are now ready to take control over your time and life.

Habit 1: Develop a Prioritization Model That Works For You

At the heart of *Time Management* is employing a system for organizing and prioritizing all of the activities that are competing for your time and attention. At Sales University®, the prioritization model we recommend is one we first saw published in an article by Peter A. Turla & Kathleen L. Hawkins in a publication from Success Unlimited, Inc.

As an alternative to the typical one-dimensional “High, Medium, Low”, “A, B, C” or “1, 2, 3” prioritization system, the authors suggested a two-dimensional prioritization model that takes into consideration both the urgency (priority) of an activity, and the potential profitability (payoff) of the activity. The authors wrote about how there are different types of activities competing for your time and attention each day. Those activities that are of the greatest priority *and* the greatest potential profitability to you are your daily “elephants”. Those activities that are of lesser priority, or offer little in the way of potential profitability, are your daily “ants”.

The premise: you can expend your time and energy stomping out a countless number of ants each day, with little to show for it in terms of progressing towards your goals. On the other hand, you may only be able to tackle a small number of elephants, while having a great deal to show for your

work at the end of the day. Conclusion: go elephant hunting first, and deal with the ants in your spare time.

At Sales University, we have built upon this basic idea by developing a *Time Management Matrix* for sales professionals. You can use this *Time Management Matrix* as a starting point for personalizing a *Time Management Model* that fits your work, and your life.

		Priority/Urgency		
		A	B	C
PROFITABILITY/GOAL ACHIEVING	1	CLOSE BUSINESS Scheduled Sales Calls & Meetings Get Out Quotes & Proposals Scheduled Telephone Time Attend Scheduled Training Work On Customer Deliverables Customer Lunch <div style="text-align: right; border: 1px solid white; border-radius: 50%; width: 30px; height: 30px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 0 auto;">1</div>	Customer Service Visits/Calls Work On Upcoming Presentation Develop Proposal/Letter Templates Prepare Customer eNewsletter Call For Customer Referrals <div style="text-align: right; border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; width: 30px; height: 30px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 0 auto;">3</div>	Review Customer Files Reading Industry News Develop New Prospect Lists <div style="text-align: right; border: 1px solid white; border-radius: 50%; width: 30px; height: 30px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 0 auto;">6</div>
	2	Prospecting Calls & eMails Write Thank You Notes Attend Networking Event Prepare Sales Forecast Prepare For Internal Meeting Update CRM System Prospect Lunch Go To The Gym (Workout) <div style="text-align: right; border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; width: 30px; height: 30px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 0 auto;">2</div>	Reading For Personal Development Self-Directed Training Product Training Meet With Mentor Go To Seminar /Webinar <div style="text-align: right; border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; width: 30px; height: 30px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 0 auto;">4</div>	Reading Business Books Blogs & Websites of Interest LinkedIn (Prof. Social Media) <div style="text-align: right; border: 1px solid white; border-radius: 50%; width: 30px; height: 30px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 0 auto;">8</div>
	3	Lunch w/ Colleagues Vehicle Maintenance Medical Appointment Attend Game/Theatre <div style="text-align: right; border: 1px solid white; border-radius: 50%; width: 30px; height: 30px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 0 auto;">5</div>	Personal Errands News & Current Events Service Club Meeting <div style="text-align: right; border: 1px solid white; border-radius: 50%; width: 30px; height: 30px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 0 auto;">7</div>	Facebook (Personal Social Media) Office Gossip Watch Favorite TV Programs <div style="text-align: right; border: 1px solid white; border-radius: 50%; width: 30px; height: 30px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 0 auto;">9</div>

Legend: The horizontal axis (Priority Urgency) is used to determine how important it is to complete this activity today (or tomorrow if you are planning ahead). The vertical axis (Profitability/Goal Achieving) is used to determine the relative value of this activity in terms of how its completion will move you towards achieving your goals.

- A1 – Time critical and high near-term potential profitability
- A2 – Time critical, with high potential return down the road
- A3 – Time sensitive, although they offer little in the way of goal achievement
- B1 – Need to be done, but not time critical; and offers a high potential payoff
- B2 – Not time critical, and their completion supports your goal achieving abilities
- B3 – Not time critical, and can be fit in around other higher priorities

- C1 – Low level of urgency, but offer high potential payoff over time
- C2 – Low level of urgency, but are supportive of your goal achieving abilities
- C3 – Lowest level of urgency & lowest value to you from their completion

1 – 9 – The optimum order in which to complete the activities on your calendar & to-do list so as to realize the greatest Return On Time Invested (ROTI)

Every business day can be broken down into *Prime Selling Time*, *Off Hours*, and *After Hours*. Prime Selling Time is comprised of those hours when you can most readily do business with your customers. For a Business-to-Business sales professional, Prime Selling Time may be between the hours of 8am to Noon & 1pm to 5pm. For an In-Home sales professional, Prime Selling Time may be between the hours of 4pm to 8pm Monday through Friday & from 9am to 4pm on Saturdays.

Off Hours are those other hours of your typical business day when connecting with your customers may be a little more difficult (ex: early mornings, lunch time, late afternoons). After Hours are those hours of the day before or after standard business hours for you and your customers.

You will notice that we use “stop light” colors to accent this matrix. The colors are meant to help you think about how you should choose which activities are best suited for Prime Selling Time, and which are better to be left for Off Hours or After Hours.

Green – These are your elephants. These are the activities that are the most important to do today, and the activities that move you closest to achieving your goals. Any time is a good time for your green activities.

Yellow – These are your baby elephants. These are the activities that are not time critical today, and whose payoff may be down the road, but they are all directly supportive of your mission, and are critical to helping keep you on track for consistent success. Although yellow activities can be done anytime, you will be well served to move as many of them as possible into Off Hours and After Hours.

Red – These are the ants. These are the activities that tend to become large in number, do not require a great deal of time or effort to address, but that do little to help you move forward towards achieving your goals. The goal should be to do as many of these activities as possible After Hours, and being conscious to be as efficient as possible with any ants you must handle during Off Hours and Prime Selling Time.

We have taken the additional step of labeling each cell of the matrix with the numbers 1 – 9. This numbering system serves as the recommended order within which to tackle your daily activities list if you are to make the most out of each day. Begin the day with your A1 activities. When you have handled the A1's, move on to your A2's, followed by your B1's, and so on. By following this ordering system you will be sure to get to the B1's that will become the A1's of tomorrow, and the B2's that prepare you to achieve your highest levels of success.

Step 1: Develop a Master Task List

Using the *Time Management Matrix Job Aid*, develop a comprehensive list of the tasks that fill up your days. Remember to include your professional, family, community and personal activities. The more specific and complete you develop your list, the better you will be able to personalize your *Master Time Management Matrix*.

Examples: Business: Close Orders, Prospecting Calls, Quotes & Proposals, Weekly Meeting
Family: Cook Meals, Dry Cleaning, Auto Maintenance, Little League
Personal: Reading Time, Hobby, Exercise
Community: Service Club, Volunteer Activities

Step 2: Develop a Personalized Master Time Management Matrix

Using the *Time Management Matrix Job Aid*, place each of the activities listed on your *Master Task List* into one of the cells on your *Master Time Management Matrix*. To help you select the appropriate cell for each activity, ask yourself two questions:

How important is it that this activity be completed today?

What level of impact will the completion of this activity have on the achievement of my goals?

Yes, it is important to recognize that any activity can become an A1 priority on any given day. When your car breaks down, leaving you sitting on the side of the road, Auto Maintenance becomes an A1. When your son or daughter is competing for the State Championship, this may become an A1. When creating your *Master Time Management Matrix*, prioritize your activities based upon the demands of a “normal” day, and not the exceptional days.

Habit 2: Keep a Master Task List

Create, keep, and regularly update a *Master Task List* that contains all of the activities you intend to complete. You may keep this list in an electronic calendar, a CRM system, a spreadsheet, or simply on a notepad. The key is to keep the list. When creating your Master Task List, the minimum information requirements you will want to keep include:

Activity: The specific activity to be completed.

Date & Time: The date when this activity is due to be complete, and either the scheduled time for activities such as meetings or calls, or the time required to complete the activity in the case of office or personal tasks.

Location: Where does this activity need to be worked on, or completed? This becomes important when developing your monthly, weekly and daily travel plans.

Priority: What is the priority of this activity at the current time, as measured on your A1-C3 scale? Example: a customer meeting for tomorrow may be an A1, whereas the same meeting scheduled for next week may be a B1 today, and will become an A1 activity next week.

People: Who is this activity scheduled with, and/or with whom do you need to coordinate in order to complete this activity?

There may be additional information you wish to track such as Account Names, Project Names, Billing Codes, or other information important to your business. In the end, it is important that you have a *Master Task List* that gives you all of the information you need to track all of your important business and personal activities, while helping you prioritize the relative importance of each activity to the achievement of your goals.

Habit 3: Create a Weekly Plan

At the conclusion of each week, and before beginning a new week: review your Master Task List, make revisions to the activities, dates and priorities as needed, and develop a *Weekly Plan* for the coming week. Once again, it does not matter if you are using an electronic calendar, a CRM system, or index cards. What is important is that your Weekly Plan specifies all of the activities you intend to complete each day of the week, and the prioritization assigned to each activity.

Your Weekly Plan will serve as your roadmap for the week ahead. It is important to recognize that as the week unfolds, new activities will surface, others will gain or lose importance, and you will determine that some activities can go undone. In other words, life will happen.

Habit 4: Create a Daily Plan

At the conclusion of each day, or before beginning the next day, it is essential that you revise your *Daily Plan* to include all of the activities that have risen up to become “A” level in urgency, as well as the “B” and “C” level activities that support your goals for the week and month.

Yesterday is gone. Tomorrow is a promise. Today is the only day upon which you can act.

Your *Daily Plan* is the calendar of activities that will direct your actions for the next 24 hours. Now it is time for you to throw yourself into the completion of these activities – *in priority order* – with the full enthusiasm and confidence that comes from knowing that at the end of the day you will be one day closer to achieving your professional and personal goals.

If you have done everything asked of you in the Success Habits outlined above, you can expect to come into the day with more activities on your plan than you can ever imagine completing. Welcome to reality. Do not waste any time worrying about what will be left undone at the end of the day. Some of the things that have to go undone will be reprioritized to a later date. Others will simply fade away, having turned out to be unimportant in the grand scheme of things.

Habit 5: Execute Fearlessly

Effective Time Management is a habit. Just like every other habit, it must be built through sustained, conscious thought and action. From the day you begin this exercise, commit to following these simple rules every day, seven days a week, for the next 100 days.

At first, you may expect to feel as though you are wasting time by spending time doing this daily planning. Ask yourself, this question: Do you spend more or less time and money when you go to the grocery store with a clearly defined plan for what you intend to buy, or when you just walk in and start wandering up and down the aisles?

Be prepared to disappoint others. Other people will give little thought to asking you to do things that are important to them, but which may be of little value to you. The question you need to ask yourself is whether these activities are equally important to you, and to the achievement of your goals. Just because someone asks you to help them with an activity that is an A1 on their task list, does not necessarily mean that the activity merits an A1 (or even a B2) ranking on your list. You need to be prepared to say “No” to others, or to tell them that you will gladly help, *and* when you can prioritize it for completion based on your other commitments.

You may find that your supervisor wants to add activities to your day that promise to take away the time you have planned for elephant hunting. Be prepared to explain to your supervisor what you have planned for your day, and the importance of these activities to the achievement of your business goals; and then ask your supervisor which of those activities he or she would suggest you push back in order to add their request to your day. You must take control over your time.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Your value in the marketplace will be in direct proportion to the value you deliver during the time you invest working in the marketplace. As a sales professional, the only real assets you have to sell are your time, and your knowledge.

The more effectively and efficiently you use your time, the more valuable you will be to your customers, your firm, and yourself. The more valuable you make yourself through the continuous improvement of your knowledge and skills, the more valuable you will become to your customers, your firm, and yourself.

A critical success habit to maximizing your value to your customers, your firm, your family, your community, and yourself is cultivating the habit of managing your time for best results. The 5 Success Habits outlined in this document have been derived from studying the habits of top performers in every arena. From the day you commit to building these habits into your professional and personal life you will begin to take more control over your life, and put yourself on track to achieving more of your professional and personal goals.

So Let's Go Elephant Hunting!