

Productivity tips to get things done

Getting things done in the workplace is one of my favorite topics to speak on and write about. I have been passionate about this topic for 28 years. Assistants continue to struggle with how to keep up with all the demands placed upon them in a time-compressed world and yet maintain quality.

I will share with you some of my favorite tips, but you can also go to the [Office Dynamics blog](#) and read more about this subject, or go to [Office Dynamics' YouTube channel](#) for video training.

Coping with Conflicting Priorities

- Ask for specific deadlines. Do not accept the “asap” answer. How many times do you ask a manager or someone who is giving you a task, “How soon do you need this?” The typical response is “as soon as possible.” Change your question and you will get a different response. Instead ask the person, “By when is the latest I can get this to you?”
- Early in the day, clarify with your manager(s) what are the most important priorities. I recommend doing this first thing in the morning, as what you thought was a priority at 5:00 pm the day before could have totally changed because your manager (like many others) is working at night and early morning. Always clarify the top three priorities for the day.
- When struggling with which “A” priority to do first, ask yourself, “What is the impact of not getting this done today?”

Neutralize Information Overload

We are exposed to a tremendous amount of information in a day.

- Don't read everything that comes your way. Learn to scan information and determine which items really need attention.
- Assess your information sources. Make sure the source of information is credible.
- Use your highlighter to mark important information, deadline dates, or *a-ha!* information.

Tips to Be Productive

- Standardize your processes.
- When given a project or task, try to get all the information at once. Many times, your manager just gives you bits of information. Be assertive and ask for more details or get the bigger picture to reduce back and forth time or going off on the wrong tangent.
- Establish some quiet time throughout the day to re-assess your priorities.
- Recognize the time of day you are most productive. At that time of day, do your most intense work or the work that will take a great deal of focus or brainpower. Throughout the day, as you are doing your work, search for simpler and faster ways to do that task.

Don't Confuse ...

... activity with results.

... hard work with results.

... efficiency with results.

You can be active and very busy but running around in circles. A professional is someone who cares about the results, not just the activity.