

Keep the workplace running like clockwork

Whether your office has sophisticated scheduling software, day planners for everyone or no formal calendar management at all, a few visual reminders can keep everyone running on time.

Make it public. Post calendars in public areas to remind people of important dates. Mark the reservation deadline for the employee picnic where everyone will see it.

Color-code project deadlines on public calendars, so the sales team members know at a glance that the green items apply to them, and the marketers will look for orange.

Even marking off the past days makes it easier for employees to visualize time better.

If people are constantly popping in to see your boss, posting a bare-bones copy of her daily schedule on her door will help. They don't need to know who her 10 a.m. appointment is with, but if they see that it's scheduled to end by 11 a.m., they'll know—without interrupting you—when to check back.

Post a copy of conference room reservations to avoid conflicts. When the customer service representatives arrive for their 2 p.m. meeting, they'll know at a glance that they need to wrap everything up by 4 p.m., when the next group has dibs on the room.

Synchronize the clocks. Maybe the art department employees are always five minutes late for meetings because the clock in their area is set differently from the one near the conference room.

What your boss needs now more than ever

Executives are struggling with time management now more than ever, given the “doing more with less” philosophy that reigns in most workplaces.

In a new poll from Robert Half Management Resources, 38% of executives surveyed said time management is their greatest challenge—more than keeping up with technology or staying current with their industry's regulations.

Ask your boss: “How can I open up more time in your schedule?”

Ideas:

- Sort all incoming papers, whisking away or routing the unimportant.
- Process her e-mail inbox, culling the garbage, forwarding only what deserves her personal attention, and processing the rest.
- Handle routine correspondence. Armed with a boss's preferences, you could answer requests for meetings, time or donations, for example.