

'FIRST CLASS' RESULTS

- using top tips from the pro's



First Class Results for Managing Your Time

'You control your life by controlling your time' Conrad Hilton

Everyone is busy, and time is the only thing that we can't stop, buy or repeat. Working smarter can help and here are some golden nuggets to help you harness your time and make the most of every minute and to achieve.

1. BEGIN NOW The sooner you start the sooner you can see tangible changes so set your resolve to succeed and remember 'nothing changes until something moves'.

2. SET A GOAL Pinpoint your no. 1 job (a bigish goal, not a small thing) and list what you need to do to accomplish it. Write down all the steps you need to take and then prioritise those steps. (I like to write each step on separate post-it notes, and then spread them on the desk and move them around into order until the flow feels right). Small steps all contribute to big goals – you need to keep up momentum, overcoming barriers and celebrating small successes.

3. RESIST BEING INTERRUPTED These can take the form of the phone, email, Facebook, visitors etc. Turn off all distractions and just spend good quality time towards your goals. 20-60 minutes can make a huge difference and each step takes you closer to your goal. If you find that people interrupt you, then take yourself off somewhere different – go to the library, a café, hotel lobby – anywhere where you are not going to be constantly interrupted.

4. HARNESS YOUR ENERGY Do you know when you work best? Morning, afternoon, evenings? For me I work best late afternoon to early evening (about 6.30 pm). When you know when your energy is high, plan your most important work around those times, and save the more menial tasks for when you are in your low energy phase.

5. MAKE PROPER USE OF A DIARY Whether you are a pen and diary person or you love to go totally electronic, then use one system and stick to it. Don't only put in your meetings and appointments, also schedule in your travelling, planning, project work, deadlines and leisure time. By blocking out periods of time you are more likely to do those things and if they are separated into chunks it gives your day more variety.

6. REFURBISH YOUR DESK SPACE Do you really know what is on there? Clear everything off and then put your desktop back retaining only the things you use every day. A clear desk contributes to clearer thinking and gives a better impression when you are at work. It says 'I'm in control!'. You'll find your thinking is much clearer too with only one piece of work on your desk at a time.

7. LAST TASK OF THE DAY Before you leave your workspace, take 10 minutes just to plan the next day. Pinpoint your goals, write them down and leave the list on your desk to greet you the next morning. By dumping your mind on to paper it enables your brain to relax for the evening and get refreshed, rather than fretting about what you have to do, trying to remember everything and it keeping you awake!

It takes time to learn how to manage your time – don't expect it to happen overnight. All good time managers have a system. Copy what they do. Once things become a habit they will benefit you so much. Master five new habits and when you've got those under your belt, try another five. In no time at all people will be envious of *your* skills!