

## Time management

# 9 time-blocking tips

A no-excuses approach to getting things done.

by Rhonda Hamilton

Most professionals often say that their biggest barrier to implementing growth strategies and activities that correlate to a higher level of profitability, is “finding the time.” Time blocking—or setting aside time for a specific purpose—is a proven technique that will help you carve time into your schedule for creative income-producing efforts and other important activities.

Eliminating interruptions during the scheduled period of time is essential for success. Yet it's often difficult to accomplish this goal. Co-workers stop by to talk, clients call, problems arise that need to be solved—the list of interruptions goes on and on. Here are some tips that may help.

### **Make an appointment with yourself**

Put your appointment on your calendar and treat it with the same importance you would any other appointment. Use this time to make calls and do other marketing activities.

### **Set aside the first part of the day**

Schedule your appointment for the beginning of the day, before events unfold that take precedence and wipe away any time you would have had for yourself.

### **Do not check your messages before your time-block appointment**

Your messages, especially new problems, can derail your attempts to prospect and accomplish your goals. Nearly all the time, a problem can wait an hour or so before you tackle it. Don't worry, the problem usually won't go away on its own.

### **Instruct whoever is answering the phones to hold all calls**

Tell the person answering your calls to take messages during that time period, unless it's a real emergency. (You will have to define what constitutes a real emergency.) If you answer your own calls, leave an outgoing message that you are unavailable and will be returning calls later in the day.

### **Put up a *Work In Progress! Please Do Not Disturb* sign**

Place the sign on your door or desk. Let people know what you are determined to do.

### **Stick to your own rules**

If someone tries to disregard your instructions, politely let them know that you will connect with them once your time block is over.

### **Change your venue**

Rather than making calls from your desk at your office, find an alternate site where there are fewer distractions. This may be your home office or an unused conference room. Make sure you don't choose someplace that actually provides *more* distractions for you.

### **Know your plan and work your plan**

Prepare in advance—know exactly what you want to accomplish during the period of time you have blocked and have everything you need at your fingertips when your appointment begins.

### **Make it a priority**

Commit to your goals and priorities. Don't let other things get in the way. Stick with it!

***Rhonda Hamilton is a professional life success speaker and communications skills expert who champions others to live a bigger and better life. She specializes in bigger life principles, business building skills and interpersonal communication skills. She offers motivational keynotes and training for business professionals, associations and organizations who want to leverage their strengths, improve morale, build relationships, improve communication skills, excel in customer service, and ultimately, raise their level of profitability. Rhonda is committed to helping others build a better self and thereby, build a bigger life and a better world. Rhonda is a published author and a member of the National Speakers Association. She can be reached through her website, [www.RhondaHamilton.com](http://www.RhondaHamilton.com).***