

How to Be More Productive



In our ever-changing, connected work environments, many things compete for our time: phone calls, emails, project deadlines, co-workers wanting to chat, and countless other distractions. Fortunately, there are tools and tactics you can use to help yourself or your team members stay focused to quickly and effectively get things done.

- 1. Set Goals.** Setting goals for yourself or for your team members can make a huge difference. Annual, monthly, weekly, and especially daily goals can help you structure your time so that you can produce achievable results. Ask yourself each day, “what do I need to accomplish to count this day as a success?”
 **Quick tip:** To help stay on track and keep your goals in mind, come up with a visual reminder for your workspace. For example, if your end goal is to enjoy vacation time and not worry about work, put a photo of your vacation spot or a loved one on your desk. Every time you feel tempted to procrastinate or waste time, look at the picture and remind yourself why you need to stay focused.
- 2. Don't Be Afraid to Delegate.** Delegating can be difficult. To start, make a list of things you should NOT be doing. Who can do these things for you?
 **Quick Tip:** Do you often feel like it would be quicker just to do things yourself? In the short term it may take some time to delegate tasks to others, but long-term, once everyone is familiar with the process, the investment will be worth it. Try to delegate redundant and repetitive tasks.
- 3. Stop Procrastination Before it Begins.** Place the tasks or projects you typically put off into your schedule or calendar and assign a time limit to them. (Setting an actual timer might help!) Work on those tasks first thing in the morning and commit to having them done by lunch.
 **Quick Tip:** Everyone procrastinates sometimes, but 20% of people chronically avoid difficult tasks and deliberately look for distractions. Schedule accountability or status meetings with your manager or team members to help you stay on track by looking at project progress.
- 4. Avoid Common Distractions.** Focus on what you want to accomplish and why you want to be more productive. If you're tempted to browse the internet or engage in a lengthy conversation with a co-worker about non-related work issues, think about what you may have to sacrifice in order to do this (leaving on time, missing a deadline, etc.).
 **Quick Tip:** Did you know that it takes 15 minutes to completely re-engage back into a project after being distracted – even if the original task was going to take you only five minutes? When you're working on a project, some part of your desk should be completely clear. Turn off your phone ringer and email notifications. If possible, only check your emails at certain times during the day.

Learn more about how to maximize your work output while enhancing results and your personal satisfaction in UofL Professional Development's one-day seminar, *How to Maximize Your Efficiency, Effectiveness and Productivity*. Visit louisville.edu/professionaldevelopment or call 502.852.4620 for additional information.