
GROWTH POINTS

With Gary L. McIntosh, D.Min., Ph.D.

Get More Done This Year!

January engenders dreams of “getting more done this year.” Not a bad idea, of course. But, how does one get more done?

Peter F. Drucker, who spent over sixty years studying effective executives, found leaders don’t start with their tasks or with their plans. Instead, they start with their time.

Three Step Process

Drucker discovered those who manage their time well follow a three-step process.

Step #1: Record Time.

Most leaders tend to guess where their time is spent. Since most leaders are well educated, they trust their memories to recall where time was well-used

and mis-used. The problem comes when a leader’s memory of their time usage is compared against real time use records. In almost every case, a leader’s memory is wrong.

Most leaders recall their use of time as they aspired it to be, rather than how it actually was.

Thus, the first step in managing one’s time is to find out where time really goes. And, the best way to do that is to record actual time use for a full week twice a year, i.e. one week every six months. Every six months is crucial, since leaders all drift into wasting time on trivia.

The way you log your time usage doesn’t matter, but it’s important to do it in real time, i.e., when time is spent, and not from memory later on.

Step #2: Manage Time.

Once you know where your time is going, the next step is to analyze your results and rework your schedule. This requires the following.

First, identify and eliminate what you don't need to do at all. Some things are a waste of time. Time wasters don't bring any results to your work. For example, some meetings, phone calls, online chats, Internet searches, etc. The key question to ask is "What would have happened if I didn't do this at all?" If the answer is nothing would happen, then, if possible, stop doing it.

Second, identify and hand off those things that others can do. This is not delegation, for delegation implies you'll follow-up with others. It's determining how many things you do that others can do just as well. This is getting rid of things others can do without your supervision or follow-up.

Third, identify how you waste the time of others. Ask others, "What do I do that makes you less productive?" Or, "How do I waste your time?"

One common answer is too many meetings, or its counterpart, meetings that last too long, or its companion, meetings with no apparent agenda. Keep this rule in mind: no agenda; no meeting.

Step #3: Consolidate Time.

Utilize time in blocks for things you must do. Large chunks of time are always more productive than small bits of time. For example, an entire day blocked out for sermon preparation is more productive than two-hours a day for five days.

Determine the two or three things you must do and block out time for each. Put all your counseling appointments on one day of the week. Schedule all meetings on Tuesdays and Thursdays, etc.

You CAN get more done this year.

Growth Points is published twelve times a year. Subscription price is \$29 (US Funds) per year. Permission is granted for use in a local church. For other reprint usage, advance permission must be obtained.

Copyrighted 2024 ISSN 1520-5096