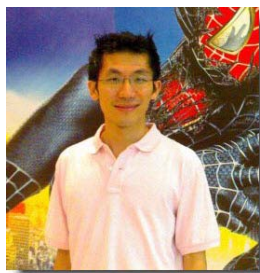


How To Improve Time Management So You Become More Productive

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By Welly Mulia

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I'm sure almost everyone will agree with me when I say there is always not enough time to do what we want to do. We all want to have more time. 24 hours is simply not enough.

Since we can't fit more than 24 hours in a day, what can we do about it?

The solution is to learn how to improve time management.

Below I'd like to share with you 3 GOLDEN principles that are **BOUND** to help you manage your time **A LOT** better so that you can finish what you want to do in **MUCH LESS** time than what it would take you if you weren't applying these principles.

Last month I've just finished reading the famous book "The 4-Hour Work Week" (I know I know! I should've read that ages ago...)

Like many people, I'm very impressed by the book and the concepts and ideas taught within. So I decided to immediately implement a few of the strategies in my business as they really made sense to me.

After all, there is no point in spending your precious time reading a book when you don't actually implement what it taught but only saying to yourself "ohhh... so this is how it's done. I see..."

There are 3 key concepts from the book that I've implemented:

1. The 80/20 Rule
2. Parkinson's Law
3. The Email Rule

I'm actually already aware of some of the principles above even before reading the 4-Hour Work Week, however like I've said above, simply knowing and not implementing will not help your business at all. As the saying goes "to know and not yet to do is not yet to know".

1. The 80/20 Rule (Pareto Principle)

This rule states that 20% of our actions will determine 80% of our results. I'm sure that you've heard it umpteen times and have long known about it.

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But my question is: Have you implemented it?

I've spent some time thinking hard what are the VERY FEW UTMOST IMPORTANT activities (the 20%) in my business that I know if I did will directly result in 80% of the revenue.

(... well it may not necessarily be 80% - but you get the idea)

The 80/20 rule not only applies to the business activities or priorities you have in your business. When it comes to customers, this principle holds true as well.

You should FOCUS servicing the 20% of your customers that bring in 80% of the revenue.

What about the remaining 80% of customers? Well you can still do business with them, however don't spend too much effort and time as they only contribute to only a small fraction of your revenue.

Let me ask you a question: which would you rather be doing business with? 5 customers that contribute to your organization's 80% or 100 customers that only contributes to the 20%?

I'd take the former any day.

Speaking of customers, there are also customers that are worth FIRING. Usually they belong to the 80% that contributes only the 20%. These people spend very little money on our business yet they demand and complain A LOT. They EXPECT to be treated like kings.

I say FIRE them! I've done the same in my business and you should too. I can guarantee that you'll free up a lot of time and headaches and your business will soar to new heights now that you can concentrate on servicing the 20% of your customers BETTER.

I have now identified the 20% that I should focus most of my time and effort on. Let's wait and see how much things are going to take off in my business.

2. Parkinson's Law

Taken from Wikipedia, Parkinson's Law means:

"Work expands so as to fill the time available for its completion."

In simpler words, the more time you allocate to getting a specific task done, the more "perceived" work you have to do.

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I say “perceived” because often the case, you can complete the same quality (sometimes even better) work within a shorter period of time, when the time allocated to getting the task done shrinks.

Why does this happen?

One answer: Because of GREATER FOCUS.

Think about it: when you’re assigned to complete a project and you’re given 3 months to do it, how much time would you take to complete it?

Answer: 3 months, right until the last minute.

If I point a gun at your head and demanded that you complete the same task in 1 month, do you think you can do it?

Absolutely! And the final output would be of equal or higher quality, all because of GREATER FOCUS.

Use Parkinson’s Law in your business to shorten work time to getting only the VERY IMPORTANT things done.

3. The Email Rule

Do you check email first thing in the morning before doing anything else? Or do you check your email every 5 minutes?

For most people, the answer is Yes.

If so, you must STOP this bad habit now as this is ruining your business!

Checking your email first thing in the morning before doing anything else is not effective. Instead of completing the most important tasks for that day first, you aimlessly wander around reading emails after emails.

Most of them are useless and time-wasters anyway. Countless news gossips and forwarded humor messages that do not add any value to your business but only drain your time and energy away.

By the time you’re done checking your email and forwarding useless messages, you’ve wasted precious time already.

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This becomes worse when you turn on automatic send/receive within your Outlook. Every 5 minutes you're interrupted by new email messages (that most likely are personal time fillers instead of work-related).

You should never begin the day by checking your email first. Instead you ought to get the most important things done first (the 20%).

How do you know which are the 20% that need to be completed first?

You do that by having a pre-written task list the night before of what you want to accomplish the next day. Never, ever begin the day without having a list of what you want to accomplish. Always have one made the night before. Doing this will DRAMATICALLY improve your productivity.

Tim (the author of The 4-Hour Work Week) recommends checking your email at most twice daily, which is what I'm currently doing. Seemingly "urgent" matters are seldom urgent, and people are poor judgments of that.

Conclusion

There are a lot more strategies and tactics covered in the book, you can get yourself a copy of the book at Amazon or your local bookstore.

I highly recommend you read it as I believe you'll benefit a lot from it, just as I've benefited. Remember though, simply reading and knowing won't do you any good if you don't put it into practice.

To achieve maximum productivity in your business, use the 80/20 rule in conjunction with Parkinson's Law:

1. Identify the 20% tasks that lead to 80% revenue (80/20 rule)
2. Assign very short datelines to get the 20% tasks done (Parkinson's Law)

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