



How To Get Far More Accomplished In A Lot Less Time

113 Tips & Tricks To Help
You Boost Productivity and
Overcome Procrastination

Robert Boduch

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by Robert Boduch

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Success Track Communications
616 Westshore Blvd.,
Pickering, Ontario
L1W 2T8
Canada

Web Site: <http://www.bizprofitbuilder.com>
E-mail: rboduch@rogers.com

Mindset

1. Accept the fact that there simply isn't enough time to do everything. That's why it's so important to work on the most important things. If you're always focused on the important things, both in your business and personal life, you'll always be making the greatest contribution by using your time wisely.
2. Establish a relaxed state of mind. Keep calm. Stay focused on what you have to do. Ignore everything else. Too much additional stress can make the whole task that much more challenging. Your mental state is something you can control. Don't let outside pressures get to you. Understand what must be done and do it in a calm, relaxed, self-assured manner.
3. Stop trying to be a perfectionist. It's easy to get caught up in the trap of trying to make something just a little bit better. But often the results of the additional tinkering make little difference in the overall outcome, though the cost in both time and unnecessary stress can be sizable.
4. Accept your productivity shortcomings as human nature. It does you no good to beat yourself up. When you've been less than productive, you need

to stop and re-focus. Don't dwell on past failures—simply accept it as human nature. Then, get to work.

5. Treat your workspace as a place of productivity. Condition your mind to acknowledge your office as an area where things get done. Do this consistently and you'll soon find yourself accomplishing more whenever you're there. Find other space for other less-productive activities, events and actions. Keep your workspace reserved for high-performance activities.

Planning

6. Prepare a list of all the tasks that need to be done. Your to-do list should include everything that comes to mind. The idea is to get it all down on paper. Don't edit your selections or stop to think about any single item. Just keep building the list until you've covered it all.
7. Prioritize your list according to importance. The easiest way to do this is to categorize each item into three major sections: A) Crucial And Urgent B) Important But Not As Urgent C) Neither Important Or Urgent. The A's are the most important and therefore should take top priority— always. B's are next in line and C's are seldom worth spending your time on. Taking the time to prioritize in the beginning, will help you to knock off one job after another, without stopping to decide the relevant importance of a task.
8. Determine which is your most critical task by listening to your own inner voice. Seldom will it lead you astray.
9. Delete any task from your to-do list that simply isn't important. Ask yourself, "What's the worst thing that could happen if I dropped this entirely from the list?" If you can tolerate the answer painlessly, drop it at once.
10. Delay tasks that aren't urgent in favor of the most pressing ones. Not everything needs to be done right now. Sometimes a project is held up by suppliers, vendors, or clients themselves. Postpone what you can, then use that time to get the most important jobs done.
11. Develop the habit on sketching out plans on paper for accomplishing tasks, large and small. The degree of success enjoyed by many can be directly attributed to the amount of written life planning they undertake. Create the road map first and follow it. Simple, but very effective.
12. Factor in the time investment required for each task you need to accomplish on your list. Take into account the time required for such things as

travel, briefing others, planning and outsourcing. Don't forget to consider the loss of actual productive time in doing these other activities.

13. Stop and think about what you're planning to do. How could it be done more effectively? Take a few minutes to outline, schedule and rationalize your plans. A simple outline can save you hours of indecision.
14. Set goals. Write them down and keep them in front of you. Know what you're striving for. Record your goals in your day planner and refer to them often. Set a realistic timeline for the accomplishment of each goal.
15. Create a flow chart for each major project. At the top of the page list the goal or the task to be accomplished. Each job can be broken down into individual action steps with deadlines for each task along the way. The idea of a flow chart is to continually break down each step into smaller steps, with each sequence being a more fundamental action than the previous one. A flow chart provides a critical action path that leads directly to your goal.
16. Plan every hour of your workday. Use blocks of time to structure your daily schedule. Give each task the time necessary for completion. Dedicate portions of your day to handle each priority task. If you finish a job early, move right into the next critical task. Take advantage of your peak energy periods to do what's most important. The more often you use this technique of assigning blocks of time to tasks, the more skilled you'll become in estimating time requirements.
17. Prepare well in advance of every meeting. Establish a precise purpose for each meeting. Make people aware of precisely what is expected of each of them. Let them know the agenda beforehand, so each attendee can contribute in a meaningful way. Before the meeting concludes, everyone should be clear of new tasks and responsibilities and who is responsible for each new task. Show all a respect for the value of their time by ending meetings at the designated time.
18. Get focused. Even if you have 101 different projects on the go, you must prioritize to maximize your efforts. There are plenty of distractions to tempt you. Lots of interesting things to do, places to go, and people to mingle with. You can easily spend your time many other ways. But if you want to accomplish and achieve, you simply must stay focused on that which is the most important.
19. Spend 10 minutes at the end of the day preparing for tomorrow. Generate your to-do list and prioritize it, one day in advance. This will save you precious time in the morning. You can dive right into your work without having to make

lists and choices. Using this strategy gives you a head start on the day and ensures that you're working on the most important task always.

20. Determine the appropriate time required for complete, uninterrupted attention to the task at hand. When you simply must bear down and accomplish tasks, you need to work without any disruption so you can get into the flow where results can happen much faster.
21. Break down goals and objectives into basic tasks. It doesn't matter how large or how small the goal. Any goal may seem like a far-away dream until you break it down into tiny action steps that can be taken immediately. Refining a goal down to its most basic task gives you something you can do today that will move you towards it. If you fail to do this, your goals will only remain distant dreams.
22. Allow for adequate time to do each job, the right way. You want to do it right the first time and shouldn't have to bear the additional pressure of a rushed deadline. There's no profit in doing anything a second time.
23. Determine your action steps before you proceed. Take the time to create a brief outline of the project. Break it down, one step at a time. Allow for planning time. One minute of effective planning can save you an hour of undirected focus. A good outline is your road-map to successful accomplishment of the project.
24. Create a master deadlines file. Know where you stand at any time in relation to any on-going project. Be aware of what they are and when they're due. The purpose of a deadlines file is to help you organize and meet each and every deadline in a timely manner. When you know there's a deadline looming in the not too distant future, you're more likely to get to work on the project.
25. Expect the unexpected. Allow for delays whenever your project involves the contribution of others. If you plan for it, you'll be less frustrated and still be able to meet deadlines. Be clear with others about what's expected of them and when. But understand this; no one else is as committed to accomplishment as you. Check in periodically, rather than waiting until the last minute. This way you're more likely to keep your project on track.
26. Set your sites on tiny incremental improvements in daily productivity. Concentrate on a small, but consistent improvement each day. Make the decision to raise your personal output every day by just a few percentage points. This may take careful planning on your part, but the exponential growth in productivity can be huge as you find new ways to become more efficient.

27. Prepare detailed, written plans for larger projects. Create an outline that includes point-form directions for each step along the way. Make your details clear and concise as though you were planning to turn the job over to someone else. If help becomes available, you can utilize additional labor effectively. If you're doing the whole project yourself, you'll never have to stop midstream to figure out the next step in the process.
28. Allow time for typical delays that are unavoidable. Give yourself a 10-15% cushion when scheduling your daily activities. By making such a provision ahead of time, you'll be more effective and less stressed.

Organization

29. Arrange your office for maximum performance and efficiency. Plenty of natural light where possible, adequate desk space, comfortable chair, and everything you need to perform any possible work-related task.
30. Put everything back where it belongs. At the end of the day, clear off your desk and return every file and document to its proper place. This way everything will be exactly where it should be when you need it the next time.
31. Insist on the essentials before you begin a project. Prior to starting, gather all the materials you need beforehand. For a writer, that may mean a complete package of research materials. For a builder, it may mean gathering all the tools and supplies needed. Collect what you need first so you can work until completion, without the need for an unnecessary break in productivity.
32. Avoid the temptation to stack paper on your desk. File it so you know exactly where it is. Minimize the number of times you handle each piece of paper.
33. Capitalize on all the valuable resources that are right in front of you. Your own personal Rolodex of important contacts you can count on, can spare you a lot of needless searching. A good librarian can help you find information on anything and most are happy to do so. Government offices, the Internet as well as directories like the Yellow Pages can all be valuable sources of time-saving information. Use them.

Getting A Head Start

34. Create tomorrow's to-do list, today. Most of us are less productive towards the end of the day. Assuming that the day's critical tasks have been

completed, it's time to prepare for the next day. It's best to keep your to-do lists in your day planner or in a bound journal. This way you'll have a permanent record of all your daily events and activities. Getting your list done ahead of time gives you a head start on the day. It also prepares your mind in advance for what lies ahead.

35. Start off with a clean desk every morning. Get rid of any backlog of work before you leave at night. If you can get in the habit of clearing your desk as you wind down the workday, you'll have conquered a big obstacle to clear and creative thinking—clutter. You simply cannot perform at your best when faced with a mountain of paperwork, and a full load of tasks that must be done at the same time.
36. Do the worst thing first. When faced with a list of unpleasant duties, tackle the most repulsive one first. After that, everything else is a breeze! You'll feel unbeatable for the rest of the day.
37. Get started immediately. Take the "Just Do It" approach. If you don't start, you'll never finish. If you wait for conditions to be just right, you may miss out altogether. Do something everyday that will move you closer to your goals. Don't put it off. Do it now.
38. Be punctual. Develop punctuality into a habit. Immediately you'll gain an advantage over 97% of the population. Consistently being on time makes you look good and saves time and money. It also indicates respect for others' time. Arriving early gives you extra time to get acquainted with new people and facilities... time to relax... time to mentally prepare... or simply time to review your notes.
39. Give yourself the advantage of an early start in the morning. Get up one hour earlier than normal and put that hour to good, productive use. Try it for a month and you may be astonished at what this one little hour can do for you. It's an easy way to gain a distinct advantage.
40. Begin each individual task on a positive note. Get something important done at the very beginning and you'll feel a sense of accomplishment that can carry you through the day. With simple projects, maybe it's the first one on the list. For the more complex, perhaps it's preparing a detailed action plan. Keep this simple idea in mind with every task or project and you'll get off to a great start every time.

Peak Productivity Ideas

41. Work on the single, most important task at any given time. The most

important task is the one that gives you the greatest value or the highest possible return. Constantly ask yourself, "What's the most valuable use of my time, right now?" Then, do the most productive thing possible.

42. Stick with it! Continue to stay focused on that one priority item, regardless. Work at it relentlessly. Take it as far as you can go without breaking your concentration, no matter how difficult, unpleasant, or challenging the situation may be. This often requires a strong will on your part, but the payoff is worth it.
43. Go to the next, most important item on your list. Focus your attention 100% on this task until it is completed. When you're done, or you've taken it as far as you possibly can, revert to the next item in succession on your list. One by one, you'll finish each task, always working on the most important one.
44. Do only that to which you bring unique value. Delegate or purchase the rest. This is a form of leverage and it can be very effective. Do the key tasks—those that you're best at—yourself. Whatever skill, experience and expertise you bring to the table should be used effectively, as the situation warrants it. Utilize your time and your expertise wisely. Look at each task and determine the most effective use of available resources.
45. Transform downtime into productive activity. Determine your time of peak productivity and do your most intense, demanding work then. Use other, less productive times to return calls, send faxes, hold meetings and carry on discussions. No one can be at their peak at all times of the day. The secret is to know when you're most effective and to use that time for the most important and demanding work.
46. Use your computer efficiently. Get in the habit of writing things once and then editing wherever necessary on screen. Avoid preparing hand-written notes that later need to be entered into your computer. Learn to use databases, project planners, spreadsheets, or whatever programs fit your business and your role in it.
47. Economize your time. Accomplish tasks with less waste. The fewer steps involved to complete a task, the better. Work at improving efficiency by shaving minutes or even seconds off routine duties. Be on the look out for overlap, excessive handling, unnecessary steps and duplication of work.
48. Mix-up the size of tasks to avoid burnout. Instead of taking on two 4-hour projects, one after another, break them apart with a 30-minute task in between. Strive for a blend of tasks from small to large. You'll feel a stronger sense of accomplishment and be less drained at the end of the day.

49. Challenge yourself to finish jobs ahead of schedule. Constantly seek out better, faster, more productive ways of doing things. Give yourself a reward for your increased productivity.
50. Strive for incremental improvements. Small but consistent improvement in effort and results can make a dramatic difference over the long haul. All you need is to do things just slightly better than average with regularity and you'll be in the top 5% of all achievers.
51. Develop a preference for action. Never put off until tomorrow, what you can do today. Dig in without delay and you'll accomplish far more in ten years than the vast majority will accomplish in a lifetime. Do it now and you'll feel a wonderful sense of accomplishment. How you use your time determines the quality of life you create.
52. Decide what you want to accomplish more than anything else. What one item on your list, or what goal is most important to you at this very moment. That is the one thing you need to focus on. Follow this path first above all others. You can achieve whatever you really want but... you can only accomplish one thing at a time.
53. Build upon each accomplishment by moving right along to the next task at hand. As you achieve one thing after another, you increase your potential for higher achievement. Success begets success. Each task completed successfully, fuels your momentum and builds up your confidence to achieve more. Every successful accomplishment strengthens your foundation to meet the next challenge. Do one thing at a time and then quickly move on.
54. Turn essential daily activities into powerful habits. A habit is something you just do automatically, without conscious deliberation. We all have tasks that are unpleasant or distasteful, yet necessary. Once it becomes a habit, it's much easier to endure. You don't have to stop and think about it.
55. Change old wasteful habits into productive ones. Decide to be a more effective time manager, starting today. Others will notice your ability to get things done, regardless. You'll be appreciated more and you'll have more time to take advantage of the things you really enjoy.
56. Imagine you only have half a day to complete a full day of work. What would you do? What must be done first? What can be delegated to others or put off until later? When you've suddenly got less time to work with, you're forced into a higher level of efficiency planning.

Tactics, Techniques And Action Steps

57. Eliminate personal interruptions. When you're on a roll, the last thing you want is to be stopped in your tracks by unnecessary intrusions. Great accomplishments occur when you gather momentum and a sense of rhythm as you progress towards a successful conclusion. Interruptions can hinder your success. Don't let it happen. Use controls such as door signs and voice mail. If you must, seek out a work space where no one else can find you. Or, adjust your hours to give you creative time at non-peak periods.
58. Learn to say no to low pay-off tasks. It's easy to be busy with less important work. If the task is not important today, don't waste your time on it. The fewer low pay-off items you work on, the more productive you'll be.
59. Wipe out any unnecessary travel. Take advantage of today's time-saving technology. Wherever possible, use the telephone, fax machine or e-mail to deal with the important issues of the day. Avoiding personal visits frees up time for more productive work.
60. Speak your thoughts into a cassette recorder, or use voice-recognition software and then edit your spoken words into the appropriate format. This is an easy way to express your ideas, without trying to "write" the perfect piece. For many people, writing is a chore—but talking is easy, as long as it's not to an audience. In many cases, the most effective writing is a one-on-one personal communication.
61. Introduce daily deadlines. Like them or not, deadlines increase productivity. The closer we get to an impending deadline, the more we are pressured into doing whatever it takes to complete the task. Institute a series of deadlines—monthly... weekly... daily. As each deadline approaches, the real work begins. Deadlines can give your productivity a significant boost as long as you stick to them.
62. Stand up while communicating on the telephone. Standing helps you get right to the point, for a faster, more productive call. It's easy to get a little too comfortable while sitting and phone conversations seem to drag on longer.
63. Group several small, related tasks together and knock them off at the same time. Return all telephone calls at one point in the day, preferably after you've completed your crucial action to-do list. Completing several small tasks at once is easier as you build the momentum. Consolidating your efforts helps you make the most of your time. Cluster together small jobs like banking and post office pick-up/delivery, or data-base updating and responding to e-mail messages. When you're forced to shift from one type of activity to another and back again, you lose time trying to re-focus and re-gain momentum.

64. Conduct meetings efficiently. Make it known in advance the precise start time and stick with it. Close the door to begin the meeting. Don't feel obligated to brief latecomers. Develop a reputation for holding meetings on time regardless. People will soon come to understand that you mean business and your meetings will be more productive. Scheduling meetings at odd times like 1:50pm or 3:25pm will help to convey a need for punctuality.
65. Challenge yourself. Always try to beat your personal best. Focus your attention on finding a better, more efficient way of doing the same task before you. By making it a game, you can turn even the most mundane task into something is interesting and fun.
66. Start your to-do list on a single, full-size sheet of paper. List everything, without concern for where it might fit in sequence. After listing all tasks, identify the 3 specific groups of tasks (A's, B's & C's) by using different colored markers. Once prioritized, you can then re-organize them easily into your day planner in the right sequence. This way, as you start each day, all your critical tasks are already laid out for you.
67. Group all your important records together. Maintain only one to-do list and one day planner. Preferably, your to-do list should be a part of your planner. Keep permanent records and avoid making notes on envelopes and small shreds of paper. Use your planner/notebook for all documentation. To try and utilize more than one list is unproductive duplication. You also run the risk of missing a key element while transferring bits of data.
68. Get right to the point in all communications. Avoid the long and wasteful windup. Keep your message short and sweet wherever possible. Trim the fat and the filler. Be respectful of others time and they'll return the favor.
69. Generate hard copy records of your duties and responsibilities. If you rely exclusively on your computer's hard drive to keep records, sooner or later you're bound to experience a frustrating crash that could wipe out everything. Computers can and do fail. If that's all you have, without back-up, you could face serious frustrations. Build a paper trail, so you always have back-up to prevent any possible mishap.
70. Catch yourself achieving and reward yourself with glowing praise. Life, in many respects, is a mind game. Sometimes playing little tricks and games with ourselves can stimulate new levels of productivity and accomplishment. A little positive self-talk for goals reached can help you achieve more.
71. Add incentives to trigger greater effort. Promise yourself or your team, something that would really be enjoyed, if you can reach your target on time.

Dangle a big enough carrot and you'll find creative ways to overcome obstacles and achieve goals in record time.

72. Post your plan. Keeping a visible record of your progress as you work away at a difficult project can spur you on to greater achievements. Use your outline as a checklist and mark off each individual task as it's completed. This helps you stay on track, maintain motivation and provides visual proof of accomplishment.
73. Start somewhere other than the beginning. Sometimes it's best to just get started at any point on a project. Trying to stick to the start-to-finish protocol you learned in school, may be counter-productive. If the beginning is causing you difficulty, skip it and move on to something you can do right away. Take the easiest step, and do it first. Then go on to the next easiest.
74. Take some form of productive action immediately. Know that your moment of power is NOW. Nothing in the past... and nothing in the future is as vital as the moment before you right now. The only time you can count on with certainty are those moments that lie before you today. Do not waste them.
75. Produce forms to reduce duplication of creative energies. Prepare generic documents that can be used for similar applications, over and over again. Fax cover sheets, meeting agenda forms, questionnaires, and testimonial requests are but a few examples of documents that can be standardized for widespread use.
76. Act as your own coach. On days when your tempted to wander from the most important task, catch yourself and adjust your course. The easiest way to develop self-motivation is to keep your main goal in view at all times. The goal is the reason-why you're doing what you're doing. Having a goal in mind, something that you're working toward, gives you the fuel you need to get through the tough times.
77. Face challenges and difficulties head-on. Often the most important task at any given time is the least appealing. When that's the case, the best thing to do is to roll up your sleeves and get to work. Dig in. Usually it's not as bad as you've imagined.
78. Delegate wherever possible. Follow-up to make sure others are on track and on time. Often, individual tasks can be handled by others. Utilizing the resources of others can be a big help where adequate direction and training has been provided.
79. Establish an efficient filing system. Nothing is more frustrating than knowing you have the materials you need... and not being able to locate them. One

way of adding efficiency to filing is to create an index page and place it at the front of each file drawer. Categories can be numbered systems or alphabetical listings, as long as there's plenty of room for relevant additions. As you add a new file to the draw, note it on the index. Put everything in it's rightful place and it will be there when you need it.

80. Keep your day planner (preferred) or a notebook within reach at all times. Record all your ideas, thoughts, concepts and any other information that can pop into your mind at anytime... and often does while you're busy doing other things. Make note of non-urgent issues you wish to share with others and do so at the end of the workday.
81. Make decisions quickly and firmly. People who get things done in life seem to share the characteristic of making quick decisions and sticking with them. Don't waste time deliberating. Size up the situation as best you can and make a decision. Not all decisions can be made that quickly, but many day-to-day type decisions can be. The more you practice this, the better and more efficient you'll become.
82. Minimize the time it takes to prepare responses. Learn to use the phone effectively to deliver prompt responses. Wherever possible, use the telephone to reply to correspondence. Letters and faxes don't necessarily have to be responded to in like fashion. A simple phone call can often do the trick in a fraction of the time it would take to prepare send a letter.
83. Maintain a sound mind and body. Good physical and mental health are essential to maximum accomplishment. Managing your time is about managing your life and good health is vital to a good life. To enjoy your accomplishments to the fullest, you need good health. Without it, nothing else matters much. Being in excellent physical condition gives you more stamina and endurance. It also makes you more alert and less stressed.
84. Exercise on a regular basis. Treat your body as a well-maintained machine and you'll operate more efficiently, for greater periods of time. Regular exercise of any kind can help you feel more vibrant and alive. Rest after physical exertion is what re-builds and strengthens the body.
85. Learn to speed-read. Many courses and books are available to help you. It's surprisingly easy for average readers to at least double their typical reading speed with the help of a few simple ideas and techniques. Most courses are designed to go way beyond doubling your speed, but they do require continuous practice. Just doubling your speed will cut reading time in half, freeing up more time for other important tasks.

86. Concentrate on the desired result at all times. Know your outcome. Be aware of your goal and the sense of accomplishment you'll experience with each completed task. By keeping the end result clearly in mind, you'll know why it's important that you press on to get things done.
87. Stick to your schedule. While it's inevitable that other things come up periodically that call for your attention, you must not get side-tracked. When a distraction occurs...acknowledge it, record the details, then set it aside for a later time. After you've completed your critical tasks for the day, go back to the notes and deal with the interruption then.

Monitor Your Time

88. Pay particular attention to the little things. In time management, those "little things" are the seemingly insignificant moments that we spend in a less than productive way. Over a lifetime, those days, hours and minutes can add up to a huge chunk of time that might have been better invested.
89. Maintain your focus on accomplishing the most vitally-important task at all times during the business day. Doing this will set you apart from most people. Unsuccessful people are often very busy, but they're seldom working on the most productive task.
90. Create a "tickler" system to remind you in advance of upcoming assignments, events, special dates and deadlines. "Ticklers" are periodic reminders you add to your day organizer. Preparation gives you a great advantage and regular reminders provide time to prepare for any situation or task.
91. Monitor your time for one week. Account for every hour and every minute within that hour. At the end of the week, review it. Total the hours and how they were spent. If you honestly separate real productive time from the other activities in your life, you'll be sure to spot obvious opportunities for improving effectiveness.
92. Recognize when a directional shift is required. If a process or strategy isn't working for you and you seem to be spinning your wheels, stop and make a change. Minimize your loss in time and energy when your efforts don't seem to be going anywhere. Modify your approach. Adjust. Regroup in a way that does work for you.
93. Watch out for the little time-wasters. Saving a couple of minutes each day can make a huge difference over a lifetime. Think efficiency. Condition this into your very core. Then, pay attention to the time spent standing in front of

the closet trying to decide what clothes to wear, or looking for your car keys when you've misplaced them. Your life is nothing more than a collection of minutes, hours and days.

94. Record an accurate log of the time required to complete each project, job, assignment or task. Such a document will help you with future estimates of time requirements. Seeing it on paper is often a revelation. You'll spot areas where efficiency could be improved.
95. Analyze early. Know when a project is due and what must be done to meet the specified details. Before you launch into full-scale action, determine the general steps that are required for completion. Create a basic breakdown of major sources or contributors to the job. A list might include the library, coworkers, outside vendors, and the client. What would be required of each? What work can be done in your office? What information or supplies must be gained elsewhere? A quick analysis gives you a better scope of the work ahead.
96. Use your work time for actual work—those tasks that will help you finish one job after another. Get busy doing the important things for the project in front of you. Leave all your planning and organizing for the end of the day, after the important daily work is completed.

Defeating Procrastination

97. Evaluate the task you're avoiding. What is it that prevents you from getting started on this project? Often a task seems overwhelming. The way to overcome this is to break it down into smaller pieces. Divide a large task into sub-components that are quicker and easier to do. Break it down and it becomes less of a monster. Look at it as a series of smaller tasks. Then finish them off, one at a time.
98. Weigh the consequences. What's the worst thing that can happen if you procrastinate and fail to complete this task? Conversely, what is the best possible result of getting it done on time? Now, do the right thing and jump right in.
99. Begin immediately. Get started now. Take charge of the situation at once and initiate the action steps you need to take. Even the most daunting task can be a lot easier once we roll up our sleeves and get busy. Start to develop

a reputation for getting things done. Putting important tasks off makes you appear to be less committed to accomplishment.

100. Make a public declaration to reinforce your commitment. Find someone who you'd be embarrassed to let down by not following through on your declaration. Share your objective and the timeline for achieving it with this individual. Then, get on it right away. Making your commitment public forces you to be accountable. You'll be less likely to goof off and more inclined to bear down and do whatever is necessary.

101. Act on anything that will help you get closer to the successful completion of the task before you. Open that file, dial the first number on your list, write the first line of your letter—anything that can help you get rolling so you can build a little momentum.

102. Think before you act. If you're having difficulty getting started, take 5 minutes to think about it first. Probe your mind for the reasons behind the procrastination. Force your self to analyze why you're delaying this project. Then face up to it. Confront your fears by taking some kind of positive action.

103. Do the thing you keep putting off, first. Complete this troublesome task early in the day. Once completed, you'll feel energized and the rest of the day will be a breeze.

104. Listen to the excuses you're using for putting certain jobs off, in favor of others. Always go back to the one task that's most important at this moment and work on that. It's easy to get caught in the trap of working very diligently on something else as a means to avoid doing what you really should be doing. Catch yourself and re-adjust your course of action.

105. Play games with yourself. Turn boring, mundane work into a fun game. Challenge yourself to break your speed record or to find a more efficient, more productive way to perform this task. You'll improve productivity, have a little fun, complete the "boring" work and you may even discover a revolutionary process that can change traditional thinking.

106. Recognize your delay tactics for what they are and then take some action. Have many times have you thought about doing something only to talk yourself out of it because it was too difficult, too inconvenient or too unappealing? Listen to your internal voice but be prepared to overrule if it's preventing you from doing the important things. Rarely is a task as oppressive as it seems. Usually, "the stewing is worse than the doing".

107. Change your attitude about it and any task can become more bearable. Catch yourself moaning about the job you have to do and then, make a

radical shift. You can often spend more time griping about having to do the job than it actually takes to just do it!

108. Find out why you're putting it off. Here's the main reasons why people procrastinate: A) other things seem more important... B) the task is so unpleasant that virtually anything else would be preferred... and C) a lack of confidence in one's own ability to accomplish the task.

109. Re-frame the unpleasant tasks to make them more acceptable to do. Nothing by itself is either good or bad. It's the thinking about it that makes it so. Nothing is either painful or pleasurable until we decide which it is. How you choose to look at a task can make a big difference. See it in a positive light and you'll get it done faster and emerge unscathed. Once you've mastered this skill, you've conquered the demon of procrastination.

110. Turn it into a pleasurable activity and it will be much easier to handle. We never procrastinate on the things that make us feel good. Make it fun. Make it a challenge or a competition. Turn it into an exciting adventure. It's often the perceived pain that's the root cause of procrastination. Build up enough pleasure and the pain subsides enough so you forget about it and get the job done.

111. Visualize the task successfully completed in your minds' eye. Internalize the feelings of success and accomplishment. Amplify it. Reinforce the joy. Lock these sensory experiences into your memory bank and relive them often. Do it enough and the mental image will in turn create the physical reality.

112. Create two lists on a single sheet of paper. First, divide the page lengthwise into two equal columns. On the left, list all the reasons for not doing a particular task. On the right, list all the reasons for getting it done. Now, you have to play a little game with yourself. You want to stack the reasons so overwhelmingly in favor of action, that failing to take action looks like such an inferior choice, that only a fool would opt for this choice.

113. Attack the problem as though you were a master at getting things done. Think of someone you know whose accomplishments consistently impress you. Now, pretend you are this person. How would they face this situation? What actions would they take? What would they do to just get it done? Next, prepare an outline of how this unique achiever would actually complete the project if it were their own. Then, follow the plan.

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Success Track Communications
616 Westshore Blvd.,
Pickering, Ontario
L1W 2T8
Canada

Web Site: <http://www.bizprofitbuilder.com>
E-mail: rboduch@rogers.com