



eBook

Being productive in a world of busy



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Beyond Sales Tactics™

PRODUCTIVITY HABITS

Get in the flow

Productivity isn't about quantity. It's about doing the right task, at the time. In other words, in it's about recognizing what to do when. However, sometimes that's easier said than done. You can help your team improve their productivity with Productive Work Habits.

If you would like to help your team improve their productivity, **contact Barb** to learn more about this highly engaging in-person or virtual productivity workshop.

There's a lot of talk around productivity, and rightfully so. As companies and leaders have mandated teams to work remotely full-time or part-time, work life and home life are melding. Not only are we in hybrid work situations, many of our children are in hybrid school situations. To add to the complexity, these situations change rapidly and sometimes on the dime.

This new way of working and living is creating unique challenges to productivity and focus that we haven't seen before. While technology is supporting us with this new way of working, understanding, planning and mindset shifts cannot be forgotten.

Before we explore steps to greatness, let's start at zero. What is productivity and why is it important?

According to Merriam-Webster, productivity is the quality or state of being productive. Going further, productive means effective in bringing about or yielding results, benefits, or profits.

Our modern world has a lot of moving parts. In order to get things done, achieve what we want or need to achieve, and ensure positive wellbeing, staying efficient and productive is important.

We have a lot going on.

- We need to work to make enough money to support ourselves and our families.
- At work we need to lead our teams and ourselves, finish projects, solve problems, create new revenue streams, develop teams and ourselves...
- We need to handle our personal tasks or chores: i.e. get groceries, cook dinner, do the laundry, feed the dog, drive the kids to after-school activities, wash the car, mow the lawn, clean the bathroom...
- Take care of our bodies mentally and physically by eating well, exercising and getting about eight hours a day on average to rest, recover, and regroup.

The list goes on and on.

There's a lot to do each day and that day only has 24 hours. We don't get more, we don't get less. Time is a finite resource. And that right there is why productivity matters.

While some of what is on our to-do list is negotiable, some of it isn't. There are things that simply have to get done. The only thing under our control is how fast we move through our task list and our choices as to what we put on that list. And that's where productivity comes in and why it matters.

Chapter 1: Are You Productive...Or Just Busy?

Have you ever observed someone who seems to be busy all the time, but doesn't really get anything done? You might feel the same way, at times. But how do you know if you too are productive or just busy?

To help answer that question, here are a few key questions to ask yourself.

Do you have goals? People who are productive generally have goals, aspirations, and focus the right proportion of energy on achieving those goals. Too much energy spent in one area means another area may suffer. It requires setting priorities, making choices, and setting boundaries. Of course there are going to be distractions, however those distractions don't take priority over the big picture.

Do you focus or multi-task? Those who multi-task often seem very busy. They're always doing something, but rarely are they doing any one thing very well. You'll be more productive if you focus on doing one thing at a time.

Do you delegate? Sometimes you may take on tasks that would really be better to delegate to someone else. If you are an entrepreneur with a team of one, this may be more difficult. However, there are many online resources that can support you in your quest to become more productive. Tools such as [Time Trade](#), [Hootsuite](#), [Canva](#) and [Google workspace](#) can make your day easier. You might also be able to delegate personal tasks as well. Asking for help from your partner, children, parents, friends and siblings offers the ability to get more done and have enough personal energy left to support overall wellbeing. Hiring help is another resource for delegation.

Do you say no? People who are productive know how to say no to something that is going to take them away from their personal and professional priorities. Give yourself permission to say no when you don't have time or the task doesn't match up with how you want your personal or professional life to look and feel.

Do you let some things go? It may sound counterproductive to erase some tasks from your to-do list, yet you may find that you have given yourself tasks that really won't move your vision forward and just take up extra time. Go ahead and give yourself permission to scratch something off the list and go a different way.

Do you have a schedule? People who are productive tend to have a schedule for each day of what needs to be done and when. If you're not planning ahead, chances are you're staying busy but not productive. And when I am coaching high-level leaders,

teams, and professionals my question is, do you schedule some free time daily for those inevitable unexpected events, requests and situations? Usually they are scheduling every moment of their day and this small action of calendar blocking works wonders.

“When you create a clear plan about where you’re going and what you want to do, there’s no time lost.”

Barb Girson



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Do you complete projects? You can be busy doing something all day long, every day and rarely get a project completed. If you find you’re starting a lot of things without finishing them, it’s time to look at your priorities and become more productive. Before adding new projects, ask yourself “Do I have space for this? What can I remove or cut back on to make space?”

Do you feel inner peace? When you spend your time doing a lot of seemingly urgent yet not so important tasks but not accomplishing much you might feel a sense of anxiety or unfulfillment. You may worry frequently about what you need to do that isn’t getting done and feel as though you aren’t getting anywhere. When you’re productive, you can actually feel inner peace. You know what’s important and you have a plan to get it done on time.

Chapter 2- Being More Focused Leads to Productivity

You most likely know that staying focused is a key component to high productivity, in any area of your life. In a world where instant gratification is treasured and accessible, this can be a challenge.

Focus is a common issue cited among leaders, teams, and entrepreneurs. There is so much to do and so little time. The juggle and struggle of managing professional and personal priorities is challenging and requires planning. When you spend too much time on your business, your family suffers. Too little time spent on the business, and your results are meager.

Set your intention to find a formula that meets the needs of work and home. Yet stay open to modifying your method and be minding of equilibrium.

If you're struggling with focus there are some things you can do to stay free from distractions and accomplish more.

Set Up A Physical Boundary. No matter what environment you work in, setting a physical boundary can help minimize distractions. If you have an office with a door, shut it when you need to focus. If you're in a cubicle, post a polite sign asking not to be disturbed.

If you have a home office, make sure that your family and friends are aware that when you're working they need to respect that space. It helps if you can set up your office in a room that isn't used for other things.

One coaching client was striving to give themselves time off. This person found it helpful to literally tie up her laptop on the weekend to help break the cycle of working all seven days.

Make a Daily Task List. This sounds basic yet is worth a reminder. It helps to get more done throughout the day if you keep a list of what needs to be done where you can see it. This can be posted on your computer desktop, on a dry erase board, or kept on a notepad by your desk.

Try to have a list with no more than 12 things on it for each day. If you have larger tasks, keep the list shorter. When your list gets too big, it is easy to feel overwhelmed. When you feel overwhelmed, ask yourself, "What is the next small step you take toward where you want to go? Keeping your Daily Task List manageable helps with staying out of the

overwhelm zone. Keep a visual reminder of what needs to be done each day and keep it visually appealing to look at it.

Make the Most of Time Management Apps. If you find yourself easily distracted by email, social media, and other sites that are time wasters you may want to take advantage of computer apps that lock those down. To get you started, Zapier has a list of [The 7 best apps to help you focus and block distractions](#). Some of these programs will automatically block specific sites so that you can't be distracted by them.

Use a Timer. It's impossible to be completely focused on a task for hours at a time. You may find it helpful to set a timer for 25 minutes that will help you to stay focused for that time. Then give yourself a five minute break to get a drink of water, walk around a bit, or just take your mind off of work so that you can feel refreshed.

Dividing work into smaller chunks can keep you from feeling fatigued, and bored. It can also keep you from procrastinating on a big project that will be time-consuming.

Eat the Frog, aka Do the Worst Tasks First. For some people it's helpful to just get the worst tasks over with before getting on with the rest of the day. This is a good solution for procrastination and leaves the rest of the day free for the tasks you enjoy. And for others, it makes better sense to go for some quick wins, get 'em done and carve out time to 'Eat the Frogs' or tackle the biggest items that require a larger time block.

Chapter 3- Organization Leads to Better Productivity

If you've set your priorities and you're good at focusing and still struggling to be productive, it could be a lack of organization that's holding you back. For some people organization comes naturally, but for others, it requires some energy to learn organization skills. And for others, they thrive even with a little more chaos around them. So analyze what works best for you.

Even if you're not inherently organized, there are steps you can take to improve your organizational ability.

Clean Your Work Area. If your work area looks like it was the victim of a recent natural disaster, your productivity will suffer. The first step toward better organization is cleaning your work area.

This means getting rid of trash, organizing papers in file folders or binders, designating storage spaces for office supplies, and throwing away materials that are duplicates or that you no longer need. Often if you can control a small area, then you start to feel motivated to get the rest cleaned up.

Organize Your Computer and Email. If your computer desktop has fifty icons on it and your email list has hundreds of emails, it's time to clean those areas. Make sure that all important documents are stored in logical folders and remove any unused icons from your desktop.

Spend a day organizing email so that unimportant emails are deleted and important emails are organized into folders so you can refer to them when you need them. If you have unread mail, read it. This is an area I can certainly get better at. We all have our achilles heel.

Use a Planner. Productive people plan each day with purpose. Using a daily planner – either on paper or electronically – can help you to stay on track and become more productive. It's best to plan the next day's work at the end of your work day so that you can begin fresh the next day and know what needs to be done first.

Focus Your Efforts. Instead of worrying about trying to do everything at once, learn to focus instead of multi-tasking. Research shows that multitasking actually burns out your prefrontal cortex in your brain.

Set a designated time or times each day to read email, respond to voicemail, and work on social media. The rest of your day will benefit by being spent on more important “high impact actions”.

Don't Procrastinate. Sometimes it's tempting to put off tasks that are less desirable. But all this does is get you behind schedule and put off the inevitable. When you need to do something, use self-discipline to complete the task and move on. You'll save time and energy. If you are continually procrastinating in a certain area, explore what is holding you back and how important that task actually is.

Stick to a Routine. It's easier to be productive when you stick to a consistent schedule or 'routinize' instead of doing things differently each day. This may sound boring, but over time you'll find you actually like the regularity of a routine and you'll get more done in less time.

Chapter 4- Productivity Boosters

If you can make it through that list just a little faster and get things done more efficiently, that leaves you with more time to do the things you want and love to do. With that in mind, let's move through these three powerful productivity boosters.

Productivity Booster #1 – Focus On The Things That Matter

Before you get to work on anything, look over everything you need to do and figure out what is important. What matters, what doesn't? By cutting out things like busy work, unnecessary errands, and the likes you can greatly boost your productivity. Focus on the important stuff, on the things that matter and make a difference.

Have you heard of the 80/20 rule? It's used a lot in business and marketing, and applies to the rest of your life just as much. It states that 20% of your efforts give you 80% of the results.

Let's say you're working on a home improvement project. 20% of the time you spend working on the project will result in 80% of the progress you're making. The rest of the time, you may be doing busy work, looking for stuff, or just standing there staring at what you've accomplished (or how much there's left to do).

The key to boosting your productivity is to identify the 20% of the work you do that results in 80% of the results. Then just focus on doing that 20% work. Yes, you can cut your workload quite a bit and end up with more and better results. All you need to do is to do more of the 20% stuff.

The challenging part is identifying what the high productivity tasks are. Set aside a little time and review what you're doing and what's giving you the best results. Those are the tasks and activities you want to focus on most of the time to boost your productivity.

Write them down and then make a list of what you need to get done today. Designate time to actions that will have the biggest impact. This will ensure you stay productive even when your workday is cut short. Give it a try and see if prioritizing and making a list doesn't help boost your productivity.

Productivity Booster #2 – Put Yourself On A Deadline

The next big profitability booster is to put yourself on a deadline. It only makes sense, doesn't it? Think back on times when you were on a tight deadline. When your client or boss asks you to wrap up a report for him in an hour, or when you're trying to get the house cleaned before your dinner guests show up for a visit. How about when you are getting ready to leave for vacation? Is that a time that lends itself to high productivity for you?

When we have a deadline, we tend to work a lot more efficiently and effectively. We don't let the little stuff distract us. We put on our blinders and get stuff done.

There's something called Parkinson's Law which states that work will expand to fill the time you give it. If you have all day to clean the house, write an article, or prepare a report it will take you all day. If you have a 45 minute warning before friends show up, it'll get done in 45 minutes. Sure, it may not be as much of a deep cleaning as the all day job or it might not have the depth of a report you pour over, yet the 80/20 rule applies here as well.

I call this achieving a level of 'good enough'.

Now let's talk about putting yourself on a deadline on a regular basis. It sounds pretty simple, yet may take some practice if you have not done this regularly. Grab a timer, set your microwave time, or use an app on your phone, and start using the timer to have a deadline for all your tasks.

Challenge yourself to get stuff done much faster than you are right now. It will force you to focus, stop wasting time, and it will boost your productivity. In other words, you'll get a lot more done in a lot less time if you're using a timer. Try it.

Productivity Booster #3 – Take Advantage Of Flow

Let's talk about getting in the flow. It's that almost magical state of mind where work becomes effortless and you get more done than you ever thought possible. I'm sure you've experienced it at some point in the past. You get so involved in a project or task that you forget about everything else around you. You are focused and your brain cells are firing at twice the normal speed. You make decisions with ease and just work

through your list of tasks without letting anything or anyone interrupt you. It's a great feeling and it's an amazing productivity booster.

Start by taking advantage anytime you get into the flow. Buckle down, work hard, and get ahead whenever you find yourself in the flow state. That alone will boost your productivity, and imagine how much more you could get done if you could get yourself in the flow on demand.

To make this happen, start paying attention to what it takes to get you into the flow. Identify what exactly brings it on or what's happening when you get in the flow.

Once you have that information, strive to replicate it whenever you have some work that you want to get through quickly or when you want to innovate or be creative. Go through the same routines, recreate the setting that gets you in the flow, and just start practicing.

I'm serious. Like meditating, getting into the flow gets easier with practice. Before you know it, you'll be able to generate short bursts of flow on demand. Take advantage of that new "super-power" and increase your productivity whenever you need it.

And here's another handy little tip. It will get easier to get into the flow when you know exactly what you're working on and when you know what you're doing is important. That goes back to productivity tip #1. And having a deadline helps you get into the flow as well, which is what we talked about in productivity tip #2. Both of those combined will help you get into and stay in the flow on a regular basis, while helping boost your productivity overall.

In other words, all three productivity boosters in this eBook work together – in synergy – to help you get more done in less time. And that's a beautiful thing.

While 'productivity focuses on speed, efficiency and manageability; flow helps you focus and enjoy the process. Your work becomes effortless.

Conclusion

Let's wrap this up and get back to work. All three productivity boosters will help you get more done in less time. And that leaves you more time for the things that are important on a more personal level. It gives you more time to spend with your loved ones (be they family or friends), it gives you more time to pursue your hobbies and passions, and it gives you time for some well-deserved rest and relaxation. Isn't that a goal worth striving towards?

We all have only one life to live and within that there's a limited amount of hours. We may not know exactly how many hours we are given, yet we know without a shadow of a doubt that it is not an infinite number. That's why it's important to stop wasting time and letting tasks drag on and on. Instead, give these productivity boosters a try, make them part of your daily routine, and get more done in fewer hours.

It's well worth it when you take control of your time and you get to choose how you want to spend it. That's the real benefit of time management and increased productivity. It isn't so we can do even more work. It's so we get to choose how we want to spend our time. Yes, some of it will be spent on work and tedious chores, yet the better we get at working on these actions quickly, the more we have leftover at the end of the day to spend on activities that matter, finding happiness and people we love.



What are your High Impact Actions?

The actions that will move your business forward using the best investment of time, money and resources.

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Beyond Sales Tactics



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In person or virtually, Barb is here to help you take your high-performing team to the next level.



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