



To a Realtor, time management can mean the difference between a lucrative career or one that flounders. Finding yourself buried in a pile of papers, late to arrive at appointments and leads that are never followed through on is not a position of power and certainly not a position you want to be in. Time management should be a top priority for you because to make money you must be productive. To be productive you must be able to manage your time wisely.

As Jim Rohn wisely stated,

**"Time is more valuable than money. You can get more money, but you cannot get more time."**

I want to help you fall in love with productive use of your time.

Never lose sight of the purpose of your time management. You are not simply trying to create more time to work, more but to work more effectively, be more organized and focused which will allow more quality of life and value for the time you have and most importantly not to simply fill the empty time.

Work expands until all the time available is used up unless you set limits. Without awareness all of your time is marked as available especially if you are in the business of helping sellers and buyers.

To be successful you need to learn which activities, conversations and actions are important to your success and block out time in your day to include them.

Have you ever thought about your relationship with time? Do you have awareness of where your time is spent or do you lump it under a single category of "I am always busy". There are many people I know who are very busy but not very productive and I know people who are very productive but are rarely busy.

We need to realize that there are two very different times we need to be aware of, clock time and real time.

Clock time is when you are waiting for an important call or the hours before work is done and you can begin your vacation.

Real time is the invisible time drain that occurs when you are doing certain tasks like watching television, talking on the phone or on the computer reading or sending emails. Another example is an hour of cold calls may feel like an eternity while an hour visit with a dear friend may feel like mere minutes.

Checking emails and your phone constantly, getting lost in a television show rotation where you end up watching shows you don't really care about or being stuck on the phone with a needy friend all should to be kept in check or hours drift by. Many times our perception of clock time is skewed making items we procrastinate on seem like they will take much longer than they actually do.

Since we all have the same amount of time in a day it is the great equalizer. However, what we choose to do with our time and the results of the time we spend doing something can be a wide gap. I have found a huge difference in the value very successful people put on their time and how closely they regulate anything they consider wasted time.

So how do we regain control of our time and place the needed value on that time? There are many pieces to this puzzle and we will begin tackling them one at a time by answering a few questions to try to determine what is working for you and what is not.

Please write out the answers to the following questions. Fill in as many answers as you are compelled to for each question.

I never have enough time to/for \_\_\_\_\_.

I spend too much time on \_\_\_\_\_.

One thing I wish I had time to do is \_\_\_\_\_.

I always seem to procrastinate in this area \_\_\_\_\_.

I always underestimate the time it takes me to \_\_\_\_\_.

I am always late for \_\_\_\_\_.

It is hard to say no to \_\_\_\_\_.

Can you see some areas that are not working for you? Is there a correlation between things you like to do, real time and things you don't enjoy, clock time.

Now let's see what seems to be working.

No matter how busy I get I always make time to \_\_\_\_\_.

I never procrastinate when I \_\_\_\_\_.

I am never late to \_\_\_\_\_.

I am really good at tackling these types of projects \_\_\_\_\_.

It is easy for me to say no to \_\_\_\_\_.

I can easily delegate these things \_\_\_\_\_.

So can you see what is working or which areas you are motivated in? Keep these in mind.

Mornings are my best/worst time to get things accomplished.

Afternoon is my best/worst time to get things accomplished.

Evening is my best/worst time to get things accomplished.

Late evenings is my best/worst time to get things accomplished.

Attention to our energy cycles can help us when we are trying to create a workable time management schedule. We should schedule our most difficult tasks during the time that our energy is highest.

Time management has many benefits among them health and wellness.

Here are some cold hard facts:

The average person now works 6 to 7 hours of overtime each week.

19% work through lunch

415 million vacation days go unused in the US each year.

Half of all Americans are on a prescription med and 21% are on more than three a day.

Entrepreneurs are by definition an action oriented group but constant action can impede the thinking needed to work smarter.

Did you know an MRI of a fatigued brain looks the same as a person who is asleep? After eight hours productivity decreases and stress rises. Realize that 20% of your productivity results in 80% of your results. So we need to look at what you are spending time on and determine if it is resulting in your desired outcome. Much more is accomplished on a refreshed and reenergized brain.

So let's begin by creating a grid and for the next three days. You will need to track how you are spending your time; no matter if you think you know what your days consist of, I am sure there will be some surprises! This will be extremely valuable as a reference when you create your plan.

Write down in the first column eight things that you believe you spend the most time on every day. In the second column write down how much time you estimate you spend on these eight activities and the last column will be an actual tally that you will keep.

So it may look something like this.

<b>Task</b>	<b>Estimate</b>	<b>Actual - EACH MARK = 10 MINUTES</b>
Phone	1 hour	
Travel	2 hours	
Paperwork	3 hours	
Showing	3 hours	
Emails	1 hour	
Personal time		
Errands	30 minutes	
Food Prep	1 hour	
Television	1 hour	
Personal time	1 hour	
Sleeping	8 hours	

Now for each of the next three days keep a separate sheet. If you spend more than 10 minutes on an activity add it to your list. This is a valuable tool and will allow you to create a clear picture of what your time is actually spent on.

On day four pull out all of your sheets and determine if what you thought your day consisted of is actually what happened. Is it what you thought you were spending your valuable time on? Add up your time each day and determine how much time is unaccounted for. Do you know where your missing time is? Have you been honest

with your assessment? If not take a couple more days to keep better track of your time.

Don't mistake time tracking with time management. We have only just begun the process. Once you have the needed information you can begin to create your plan.

**"The key is in not spending time, but in investing it." – Stephen Covey**

Have you realized that your work load is unrealistic in its demands? Many times looking at what you expect of yourself and realizing that your time is not spent actually working on things that increase your income (if that is your goal) will be required to think long and hard about the four D's: Delete-Defer-Delegate-Diminish.

Delete- Are there things on your list that can be hired out or simply don't need to be included in your day?

Defer - Things that aren't a priority to you. This does not mean putting off things that need to be taken care of, it simply means that not everything is urgent and it is most important to keep your goals in mind.

Delegate- Feeling like the only way to get things done is to do them yourself? Then you may have a control issue. Yes it takes more time to go back and fix things but learning to delegate is an important tool you will need the more successful you become. Look seriously at what you can pass onto someone else to do.

Diminish- Or as I like to think of it, simplify and reduce. Get rid of anything that you are not using, things that you do not need or that do not bring you joy.

So what are your goals? To increase prospects, sell more houses or maybe your bottom line is to make more money? Looking at your time grid is how you're using your time now reflecting your goal? Let's use making more money as our example. What would be your options sell more homes or sell more expensive homes. So let's say you want to increase the number of homes you sell - what would you need to do with your time to reach that goal?

Would you need to hire someone to help with paperwork, freeing you to do additional marketing? Maybe you would need to block out more time for prospecting or maybe networking with a focus on higher income individuals. With a clear goal you can see that first acknowledging what you spend your time on and then prioritizing what you will spend your time on is the key.

So let's begin.

First step is to write down everything you need to do on a daily and weekly basis. You should have a good idea of how long it takes you to do these items from your three day sheet. So let's say you take your children to school each day and it takes

half an hour to get them in the car and to school, on Tuesdays you have an office meeting that lasts one hour, these would be things that you would write down on your schedule. These items are predictable and regular to your week.

Next, create a list of items that you know should be a part of your day or week but you have not made time for. This list will include items from your goal list, things that may be important to you but have been neglected or simply pushed aside for other things that seem more urgent or important. This list might include prospecting for new business, setting aside time for organizing, exercise, nurturing your relationships or personal wellness. Whatever you feel would make you more successful, happier and healthier in life and business should be on this list.

Now create a long list of to do's including calls, tasks and projects. Gather all the little scraps of paper, cocktail napkins and all those business cards from an event you attended 6 months ago that you meant to reach out to. Everything needs to be in one spot.

Calm down I know you have a huge amount of things that you want to get done. Realize that now you see everything in one place you can decide what is most important for you to reach your goal.

It is now time to execute your plan - the one that will change your life.

Create a sheet that will have two columns, this can also be created in excel or word but I personally prefer to keep it in my portfolio so it is always with me. On this list is everything that you have accumulated on all these bits of paper. Calls to make, projects that you want to complete, names and addresses from those cards. There can also be pieces of longer projects. Nothing on this list should take longer than 15 minutes to accomplish.

Alongside each item you will jot down an estimate of how long it will take you to get this item done.

Now when you find yourself sitting in your car waiting for your buyer to show up you can pull out your list and get something completed. You will be shocked what you can accomplish in small amounts of time.

Now we need to look honestly at what you have on your schedule for each day and ask yourself if it is reasonable. Does it leave you time for personal renewal and development as well as allows you to have a life outside your work?

When you are able to prioritize you will not only accomplish more but feel more in control of your time.

At the top of your schedule block out at least 15 minutes of quiet time to *order your day*. Whether you do this at home or at the office it will be your number one priority for the day.

Look at your schedule and decide what the three most important tasks are for this day. Is there a very important meeting that you cannot be late to? Add 15 minutes to your schedule prior to that meeting so you can arrive prepared and relaxed instead of rushed and stressed.

Create a schedule of that day's events keeping in mind your energy cycle and using your high energy time to you optimum benefit. Include an estimated time it will take you to perform each task and for any items you can, create a start/stop time.

So here are stumbling blocks that will need to be addressed for you to receive the benefit of time management.

Discipline - Once this initial process is complete and you spend a couple weeks being aware of your time it becomes second nature so all the time keeping and recording can be diminished to whatever point you feel comfortable with.

Putting out fires- Late reports, missing papers, finding answers at the last minute to problems that could have been addressed earlier when you had time. Anything done in crisis mode adds not only to your stress level but lessens your productivity and adds little to your perceived professionalism. Did you know that Newsweek stated in an article on time management that we spend 55 minutes of our day looking for things?

Interruptions - The real estate profession is ripe with interruptions. Last minute changes, people dropping by your cubicle/office to chat or ask questions and the nature of your need to be responsive to others. These are derailing your plans to get organized and stay on top of your work. Simply close the office door, turn off the phone and don't check your emails. We all react to the chime of a new email or the vibration of your phone because they make us feel like we are missing something important and even if we don't check the email or answer the call they have taken our focus away from the task we are performing. Decide the amount of time you need to remain distraction free, set the timer on your phone and refuse to give in until all the time is used up. Let others know when your planned break time is so if they have issues that are not emergencies they can be addressed then. Inefficiencies can be contagious but so can amazing time management.

Saying NO- I have written much about this topic in my "All I Want is Everything" series. Being able to say no is imperative to being successful. Look at your schedule and your goals and see if you really want to say yes. There are many ways to say no without hurting feelings and being perceived as mean. I use a few different

tactics and one is to simply state that you are unsure of your schedule for that time and request that they give you the details and if you can work it out you will let them know. Most times people won't send you the details because they figure you can't and even if they do send them it doesn't require a response since you said you would let them know.

Look at the request of your time and see if it fits with your schedule. If you can help, then please do. If not, there will be other opportunities that arise in the future when you have your time under control.

### ***Regularly Add Time to Your Schedule to-***

Clean up and reorganize your desk.

The 10, 20 or 30 minute DREAD. Each morning after your 15 minutes to order your day make yourself pick something you hate to do but is important for your success. Simply do it first thing and it's over for the day.

Planning Tasks - Planning time to perform needed tasks creates momentum because you are accomplishing what you have planned to get done. So planning time each week for filing or prospecting is needed.

Breaking larger tasks into smaller more manageable pieces - Is there a big project that you have been avoiding because you don't have the time or it seems daunting to begin? Then break it into pieces. Small manageable pieces done in small chunks of time are an amazing way to get things done.

Uninterrupted Downtime- Personally I work really hard and then I take my playtime very seriously. Because I work from home the line gets blurred very easily of job work, housework and play. Because I create a defined work time and off time I am able to turn off the work and turn on the relaxation. The more you are able to have uninterrupted work time the better you will get with the uninterrupted downtime.

Uninterrupted work time - Working free of interruptions is very important to master even if it is for short bursts of time. Block out a period of time and turn off your phone and the auto download of your emails. You may choose set times during the day to check and receive new emails.

Time to return emails and clean out your inbox - But just don't delete emails if you truly don't want to receive the information, unsubscribe so you don't waste time deleting these emails in the future.

Take Breaks- Feeling overwhelmed with too much to do? Take a walk. I know the last thing you think you need to do is take a break but that five minute walk or

simply standing and stretching while breathing deeply will invigorate you and make you more productive when you return.

STOP multi tasking- Once believed to boost productivity it is now shown that attempting to do more than one task at a time not only reduces the quality of what you are doing but increases the time it would take to do each task separately.

Allowing disappointment to derail you - Blown deals and buyers that change their minds happen to everyone not only people in the Real estate industry. Having a schedule puts you right back on the track to success. Remember, it's the balanced well established plan that will make you a success not one successful sale.

Believing that you are the right person for every single thing you do - If you have a weakness in a particular area are you better served hiring that work out? If you are not good at finances you could hire someone who is faster, better and more efficient at doing your accounting, freeing you to focus on an area that you are not only better at but happier and less stressed doing?

Trying to remember everything - Writing it down either on a list or on your phone frees your mind to not worry about all those pieces and the free space allows you to be more creative.

Working with no client boundaries - You will at some point have a client that pushes the boundaries of what they expect. They call late into the evening, lack of respect for your time and drain your energy. Some clients will push you to your limit. Before you get to the point of doing something that may not be representative of your level of professionalism you will need to set your boundaries. When taking on a new client explain that your phone remains on and you are available until a certain time and after that it will go to voicemail and that you will return any calls when you begin your day.

Letting clients know what to expect can head off a lot of issues.

Fooling yourself that you can work with little children around - If you are home with your children and it is not working try finding someone in the neighborhood who can come in and play with your children or find a sitter. Yes, there is an expense to hiring someone and you may feel you do not have the money but if it takes you twice as long to do the work to say nothing of the sound of children causing a ruckus in the background is not as professional as you would like.

**START**

Enjoying your life - As a writer of self help books and counselor I can tell you that life is way too short to spend your time worrying (90% of what we worry about never comes about), waiting (if you want it go after it no reason to wait), loving

(everyone and everything because in the end that is your only companion on your final journey).

Try adding one piece at a time. Use the piece for two weeks and then add another. If something is not efficient for you then drop it and add another piece.

Deciding it's ok to put the phone away. This goes for realtors and spouses of realtors, children and friends. It is the erosion of the quality of our time together. I have a big jar that everyone puts their phone in at dinner time and all the phones remain in there during dinner, game time and family events.

Yes but you say you are trying to achieve balance in your life ~ forget it balance can never be achieved or maintained, which means you always feel like a failure. I like the word modulation much better. Modulation ~ the ability to adjust to changing landscape while maintaining sanity ~ is my definition. The best way I can describe it is if you are climbing up a mountain the ground is never level, you are always adjusting to keep from falling down and that adjustment allows you to moving ahead.

Sometimes work will take up more of your time and attention and at other points it will be your family that needs you, yet other times it may need to give yourself some time to renew and restore your spirit. The idea is always that when you return to a place of even ground again your review your priorities.

**"The bad news is time flies.**

**The good news is you're the pilot." – Michael Altshule**

Here is what I know for sure, as we age time seems to move more quickly and we perceive that we have less time. To make the most of this amazing life we need to make our days, weeks and even minutes all count for something more.

Let it be something extraordinary.

Blessings for a life filled with love and much success to share!

Kim

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