

TIME MANAGEMENT SUGGESTIONS

Notes:

- 1) People obviously had different interpretations of the categories. You'll find "lists" in many places; you'll find "Google Calendar" in many places. I copied the PostIt notes down where people put them, but you may want to re-arrange.
- 2) Within each category there was a lot of repetition, so I tried to group similar things together.

TIME SUCKS

Self-distraction

- Looking at my phone during lunch then eating SLOW
- Reading / digging for articles in Journal of Museum Education (I can't quit!)
- Chatting with co-workers
- *So* easy to procrastinate.
- Social media
- Social media
- Social media!
- Facebook / Twitter / social media
- THE INTERNET

Technology

- Tech distractions
- E-mail / Text / phone
- Constant access to e-mail & expectation to respond immediately
- Random e-mails that pop into my in-box
- Copied on e-mails as FYIs
- Slow computer, old programs

Meetings

- Meetings
- Meetings!
- (Some) meetings
- Too many meetings
- Meetings that should have been e-mails

Office politics

- Time commitments made on my behalf by other staff
- Thinking other's urgent requests must come first
- Unexpected demands from political forces that must be responded to and/or massaged
- Busy work ("I outrank you, and my life would be easier if you did this for me.")
- Negotiating what is of true value and meaningfulness from others, esp. superiors

Impositions

- Interruptions
- Spontaneous unexpected phone calls
- Visitors
- Drop-ins
- People stopping by w/o scheduled meeting
- Unscheduled "drop-in" meetings from direct reports, but often more from others outside my department
- Frequent guests – conversations & requests
- Talkative people
- Random museum visitors popping into my office
- Talking with our student workers too much
- Chatty co-workers / volunteers
- Being held verbally hostage
- Shared work space / cubicles

Other duties as assigned

- Urgent tasks
- Non-assigned tasks that you do because no one else does
- Re-doing tasks because they weren't able to be completed the first time for various reasons
- Tasks taking longer than expected
- Time card changes
- Re-informing people of information that has already been distributed
- Staffing changes / absences
- Trying to locate resources from past employees / volunteers
- Responding to visitor needs (because we are) short staffed
- Last-minute requests for programs / test calls
- Handling field trip / program requests
- Coming up with content for organization's social media
- Travel to/from work sites

- Exhibit interactive breakdowns
- Cleaning & general facility operations

TOOLS

Digital

- Digital organization, i.e. folders, subfolders, etc. for documents, presentations, information, etc. – do this also for e-mails – however, must be disciplined and have time to do
- Use project trackers (I like airtable)
- Omni focus
- Apple notes
- Basecamp, Sharepoint, Smartsheet
- Asana
- Diigo—bookmarking and annotating web pages and PDFs
- Outlook
- Outlook calendar
- Outlook Calendar; “Band” app
- Outlook Calendar color-coded by type of job
- Hootsuite (social media post organizer)
- Google Suite
- Google Keep (plug-in pinnable to-do lists)
- Google Calendar and Google Docs for collaborations
- Busy / Out of office lock on Google Calendar
- Google Calendar for work & personal life
- Voicemail to text—avoid taking a call & get message when ui can quickly check it
- Use voice mail, let phone ring with greeting “I’ll get back to you”
- Flag e-mails I don’t have time to address when they come in
- Audiobooks—a long commute seems like wasted time without them

Physical

- Writing it done
- Use highlighter to call out “to-do” things in staff meeting notes
- To Do fst (?)
- Lists
- Lists
- Lists!
- ‘1. Lists 2. Lists 3. Lists 4. Lists

- Separate to-do lists – by project or task
- Lists & sticky notes
- Notebooks & sticky notes
- Sticky notes as reminders
- Sticky notes on/around computer monitor (but not too many haha)
- Physical planner
- Planner with calendar, month & weekly break down
- Old-fashioned paper planner with lots of space for notes and additions
- Planners (paper)
- Have a paper planner and an online one
- Shared planning calendar with a template for filling in relevant details
- Bullet journal
- A good eraser

Personal

- Delegate
- Work study students
- Self-motivation, urgency
- Rigid time restraints & deadlines
- Pomodoro method
- Close the door, “Gone fishing”
- Creating meeting with myself on my work calendar to complete specific tasks
- Best friend at work
- Peer learning group with other local nonprofit manager & supervisors
- Ask for help! Ask for patience
- Give yourself & staff reward (flowers) when you complete a project by deadline
- Schedule self-care appts (during day) on work calendar
- Mediation, yoga, etc.

STRATEGIES

Attitude

- Set yourself up for success every day
- Focus until finished
- The 80/20 rule
- Be flexible and adaptable

Approaches

- Plan ahead
- Break down big projects into small sections
- To do the easiest thing first
- Rate tasks by importance: 1—get it done (15 min); 2—should do (2 hr. max); 3—long term
- Must do / should do / can do (things that aren't urgent but they are easier. I also call them "brain breaks." Productive but not urgent.)
- Try to put information in accessible places

Actions

- Be consistent with time
- Get in before other people
- Know your style: schedule creative work for your "high-energy" part of the day; schedule meetings and busy work for your low-energy times.
- Don't write or respond in writing after 2 pm if possible
- Save important but not urgent projects for the times I know I won't be interrupted
- An hour of planning / catch-up time a day
- Once or twice a week work late, just one hour
- Blocking out time for specific tasks
- Schedule chunk of time during day for tasks, e.g. content development, research
- Make "appointments with myself"—block out time on Google Calendar to get work done
- Google Calendar (scheduling myself for each "must complete" each day) (This also helps me track time spent on projects or tasks)
- Schedule all standing meetings for Tues-Weds-Thurs, to keep Mon & Fri relatively free
- Once a month, a week with no meetings
- Setting aside time just for reading
- Take one day to plan out one month's worth of social media posts

Assistive technology

- Headphones
- "Read" voicemails (from transcripts and e-mail back)
- Take advantage of filenames & versioning so (you) can find docs later—good metadata!
- Digital notebooks—keep running lists to refer to later
- Airplane mode on phone / turn off notifications

Writing it down

- Physically writing out a to-do list ON PAPER
- Plan lists: big to-do list broken down to small tasks each day
- Weekly list / day list / agendas for meeting
- To-do list with section for long-term projects

Self-care

- Give yourself time every day for yourself, “self-care”
- Brain breaks! When working on a project that requires too much thinking. (Bob Ross is on Netflix!)
- Plan for breaks in day and actually take them!
- One minute of deep breaths to clear your mind
- Rigid eating and sleeping schedules

Dealing with others

- Tell others when you need to block out time and not be disturbed
- Shutting door / finding quiet space
- Be OK with occasionally shutting office door!
- Shutting my office door (but being available through messenger/phone)
- Schedule meetings with “talkers” for end of day.
- Understand patterns of time sucks; try to anticipate in advance with pre-emptive action.
- Manage expectations of others on projects or work I am doing.
- Daily touch-base to go over the next day’s appointments
- Communicating my to-do list / tasks with my team (group meeting and/or e-mail) so they have a better sense of when I am available to help them
- Open communication with staff (making calendars, deadlines, priorities)
- Explaining the “no,” or why something / some project was not acted on at that time.
- Ask for help
- Keep running lists of things that can be delegated or that volunteers can help with
- Delegate repetitive tasks that are completed by part-time staff.
- Delegate tasks to conference participants— wait a minute...