



SILVER Monthly Time Management Accountability Exercises- P 1

TIME ACCOUNTABILITY

The following strategies will help you get the right things done in less time.

1. Start your day with a clear focus.

The first work-related activity of your day should be to determine what you want to achieve that day and what you absolutely must accomplish. Come clear on this purpose before you check your email and start responding to queries and resolve issues. Setting a clear focus for your day might require as little as five minutes, but can save you several hours of wasted time and effort.

2. Have a dynamic task list.

Capture the tasks and activities you must do on a list and update it regularly during the day. Revisit this list frequently and add new items as soon as they appear. Make sure your list gives you a quick overview of everything that's urgent and important, and remember to include strategic and relationship-building activities as well as operational tasks.

3. Focus on high-value activities.

Before you start something new, identify the activity that would have the most positive effect on your project, your team, and your client if you were to deal with it right now. Resist the temptation to clear smaller, unimportant items first. Start with what is most important.

- To help you assess which activities to focus on first, ask the following:
- What does my client or my team need most from me right now?
- What will cause the most trouble if it doesn't get done?
- What is the biggest contribution I can make right now?
- Which strategic tasks do I need to deal with today to help us work smarter tomorrow?

4. Minimize interruptions.

The more uninterrupted time you get during the day to work on important tasks, the more effective you'll be. Identify the activities that tend to disrupt your work, and find a solution. Basically, one of the most essential time management skills is to *not get distracted*. For example, avoid checking emails and answering the phone when you're in the middle of something important. Once you have broken your flow, it can be difficult to reestablish it. Instead, discipline yourself to work on a task single-mindedly until it's complete.

5. Stop procrastinating.

If you have difficulties staying focused or tend to procrastinate, you may benefit from creating an external commitment for (deadline) yourself. For instance, schedule a meeting in two days' time where you'll be presenting your work and by which time your actions will have to be completed. It's also very effective to complete the most unpleasant tasks early in the day and to allow yourself small rewards once you've completed them.

6. Limit multi-tasking.

Many of us multi-task and believe we're effective when we do so, but evidence suggests that we can't effectively focus on more than one thing at a time. In order to stop multi-tasking, try these tips: Plan your day in blocks and set specific time aside for meetings, returning calls and for doing detailed planning and analysis work at your desk. Whenever you find yourself multitasking, stop and sit quietly for a minute.

7. Review your day.

Spend 5-10 minutes reviewing your task list every day before you leave the office. Give yourself a pat on the back if you achieved what you wanted. If you think your day's effort fell short, decide what you'll do differently tomorrow in order to accomplish what you need to. Leave the office in high spirits determined to pick up the thread the next day.

Self Evaluation coming next week.

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