



*Creating workplaces that work...for everyone*

## Time Is Money....“And Very Good Money, Too,” Charles Dickens

Every business owner sooner or later confronts the fact that time is money—and as Charles Dickens says, very good money. But this fact is also extremely stressful. If you have a dozen projects to complete, which one is most important? If you abandon a project, how much time have you wasted? What do you sacrifice first when time runs out—your customers, your bookkeeping, your personal life? Before you can make the most of time, you have to organize it.

### Organizing the To-Do List

Most tasks for business owners fall into one of the following categories:

- Management
- Production
- Customer/client relations
- Finance/bookkeeping
- Sales/marketing/networking
- Personal

To begin organizing your time, place each task into one of these categories. For example, under production you might include filing; under finances, you might place invoicing; and under sales/marketing/networking you'd place your prospecting efforts (meetings with new clients, Chamber events, etc.).

### Prioritizing Each Category

Once your list is created, prioritize the tasks within each category. The most important are tasks that must be finished by tomorrow; then the tasks for the week; then the tasks for the month; and then long-range tasks.

### Estimate the Time Each Task Takes

For the next two weeks, keep track of how much time each task takes. You can use any system to track time that works for

you, whether it's a physical planner, a blackberry, Palm Pilot or Microsoft Outlook. But you need an accurate count of where your time is going *now*.

### Reorganize Your List Based on Reality

Once you know how much time you're spending on tasks, you can make three important evaluations. First, which tasks can be moved from the must-do-today list to the finish-this-week (or even finish-this-month) list? With a longer deadline, you may find that a few minutes each day keeps a big project on track.

Second, have you left time for interruptions? If you schedule, say, 20% of your time for interruptions, you know exactly how much time you can spend on that unexpected phone call or distraction. You can even set a timer.

Third, do you have time available that you aren't using? Maybe there's a task that fits in the time before your first appointment or right after supper.

HR Compliance will be glad to help you with individualized, customized training on time management. We plan to launch a webinar on this topic in 2010.

### FROM OUR CUSTOMERS

“Paula helped me with recruiting....She couldn't evaluate candidates for the technical expertise I require but she could detect the ones who were less than forthright about their qualifications.”

TOM STRICKLAND, President & Founder, Sequoya Technologies Group, LLC, Peterborough, NH

This newsletter refers to some of the regulations that may currently apply to small businesses.

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## Compliance Alert

Don't forget to post your OSHA 300A form.

This form is a summary of all your workplace injuries and illnesses in calendar year 2009. It is meant to be an educational tool for your employees, informing them of your safety record.

Although employers are required to post this form only until the end of April, we encourage you to keep it posted until the new form is due.



## Workplace and Training Solutions

- Q. I have a number of office employees who don't leave for lunch but eat at their desk. I know I'm supposed to give them a lunch break. Am I breaking the law by letting them eat at their desks?
- A. New Hampshire law states that an employer may not require an employee to work more than 5 consecutive hours without a 1/2 hour lunch break or eating period unless it's feasible for the employee to eat during his work and the employer permits him to do so. When employees eat and drink at their work stations, you must pay them for their time but you should also have them sign a lunch waiver form so that your company is protected during an audit. HR Compliance 101 would be happy to provide the form we've created.

### FOR OUR CUSTOMERS

Make sure your employees are classified correctly. Salaried employees (not paid overtime) must fit squarely within a limited number of exemption categories. Call or email us for more information.