

SALES SOLUTIONS

Sales Training and Coaching

TIME

"I don't have enough time!"

"Where did the time go?"

"There just aren't enough hours in a day to do what I have to do!"

Really? Are there really not enough hours in a day to do what you have to do?

H. Jackson Brown said, "Don't say you don't have enough time. You have exactly the same number of hours per day that were given to Helen Keller, Pasteur, Michaelangelo, Mother Teresa, Leonardo da Vinci, Thomas Jefferson, and Albert Einstein."

We can - and should strive to - make of our time what they made of theirs. And while we may argue that they lived in a simpler time (there's that word again!), we live in an era that affords us countless ways to save time (computers, automobiles, and microwave ovens, to name just a few), thus balancing the equation. So why do we so often find ourselves complaining about the supposed scarcity of this precious commodity?

We do so because most of us don't manage time well. Instead we *mismanage* it.

I must admit - I am as guilty as the next person in griping about the apparent paucity of time. In fact, as I'm writing this, I keep looking over at the clock - which seems to be ticking much too fast - as I have set a goal of finishing this by midnight (it's precisely 10:39 now). In fact, there are some concrete steps we can take to manage time. In my case, I've taken a page (literally) from Steven Covey's [*The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*](#) (from Habit #3, pages 146-182). In this landmark work, Covey encourages us to "put first things first" - in other words, prioritize - and to think hard about whether some of the tasks we spend time on are really as urgent and important as we make them out to be. I've then incorporated his lessons into my work week, continuously re-evaluating whether what I'm doing at a given moment is really contributing to my goals.

Yes, initially it was difficult. I had to *think* about what I was doing, and why. Now, it's second nature. And it's a great feeling to know that I'm using my work time in the most efficient way possible. This, in turn, lets me enjoy more leisure time. Before, I'd find myself wasting time on low-value activities like cruising the web and checking e-mail every time I heard that annoying "ding" (which grabbed my attention like a dog's owner yanking his leash would). Now, I *close* it when I'm working on something that requires my complete focus, and re-open it only when I'm done. And why not? I can't remember when I ever got an email that was so urgent I just had to read it right then and there!

Time is a sales person's most precious asset. For us, time very much is money. What you choose to do with the time you have, how efficiently you choose to use that time, and what you choose *not* to do all impact whether you accomplish the things you need to in order to achieve the success you want. And the best part is - it's all under *your* control!

ACTION ITEM:

If you don't already own it, buy Covey's book (no, I receive no compensation for making this recommendation!). Go someplace other than where you usually go for work - a place where you can think, free of interruptions. Spend an hour or so thinking about ways you can better prioritize and use your time. Write it down. What will you change? What will you eliminate? What can you do later, rather than now? And what will you eliminate altogether? If you are a manager, examine how your people are using their time. Are there suggestions you can make that will help them use it more efficiently? Can you remove low-value, high-time-consuming tasks from their daily routine, and reallocate them (or eliminate them completely)? Giving your team back time they're stealing from themselves is one of the best contributions you can give to them (after training, of course!). So go to it - now.

But first - *close that e-mail, please!*

Good Selling! (11:34PM!)