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"Making things possible..."

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progress to be made AND I have a bit of a buffer just in case I need to handle something important before that week is over. Many times, working across time zones, I found or remembered something that I was able to initiate later on a Thursday, and wrap up or continue before the weekend was upon us. I like it, our clients like it, the business likes it!

I provide a template of the weekly debrief, a version of the one I do for an hour each week, to all my seminar participants. My goal in sharing that is not so much that you go away and “do the same thing.” My intention is to offer a possible framework and some food for thought as you go forward in implementing your own action and ambition management system. For the record, the main areas I review:

Calendar – 2 weeks behind, 2 weeks ahead

Outcomes list – all the projects I’ve said YES to

Actions lists – can I mark any off as complete, do I need to add any?

My briefcase – am I “supplied” for the next trip, do I need to add anything

In boxes – e-mail, voicemail, and my desk. Process it all so I’m ready for next week

Wallet, notebooks, pockets, and desk drawers – what needs to be filed or thrown away?

As long as I make it through at least those things, I’m on my way to success. There are some other areas I review, from time to time. Be sure to read our website and my weblog as I update those areas with ideas and workplace productivity tips often.

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If you read this, we thank you for taking the time to review this presentation we made in a recent tele-seminar. For more information, to sign up for our newsletter, and to pre-order an Audio program: Tips to Get More Things Done, visit our website today:

www.JasonWomack.com.

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January 2008 - buy, learn, implement iPhone (sync to) Apple products as new org system

It may seem a lot of work for you to go through that processing process for everything out in front of you right now, every note, every e-mail, every voice mail, every idea, yes...even if your car dashboard oil light came on this week! But, what's the alternative? You'll have to decide the answers to those three questions at SOME point, and going forward, don't you want to be making those decisions about NEW things and not re-making the same decisions, clouding up your mind and your currently-existing paper-based and electronic based systems with only half of your stuff identified and processed?

Here are those questions, in another form:

Where am I?

Where did I say I would be by now?

What do I need to do next, to continue my momentum?

This is a personal decision you'll have to make. From where I sit, and from the practice I have had over the past several years, it's actually easier to process it ALL on the front end and then work off of those lists going forward. It's the easiest way I know of to do what I said I would do in the time that I promised, while being open and available to new things to come my way.

Ok, here is the last piece for this short presentation. Do your debriefs. "What do you debrief?" you may be asking. I like to debrief it all: a plan, a project, an event, a crisis, and even my week. Yes, each week I stop for a full hour and just look back over what had happened over the past 7 days, and what's going to be happening over the next 7 days (or more). Personally, I have found Thursday is the best day for me to do a weekly review. Why Thursday?

Well, the week is almost – but not quite – over. I have 3 days behind me and one day ahead. I have enough time that has passed to expect some work to be done, and some

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If you need to do something ABOUT it, pause for a moment and ask yourself, “What’s my next step?” And, remember from our last tip, whatever you write down...just write down the next step...with an action-verb... of something you can DO...the next time you are working. And, remember to add *that* to do to your to do list! IF *your* to do list is INSIDE of Outlook, consider dragging the e-mail over onto the Task icon on the left, and simply typing the action into the subject line and clicking Save and Close.

Now, let’s talk about another piece of the Productivity Puzzle: ***Processing your stuff***. All the systems-implementation you build won’t matter much unless and until you go through all your other information – meeting notes, calendar entries, ideas in your mind, even the things you think of when you’re away from work – is processed. What does this mean? Simply that you’ve thought about what you have to do, and you’re doing something about what you’re thinking. In the seminar, we talk about important distinctions to make between the work you are thinking about, the work you are doing, and the work you are managing.

An easy way to do this is to take anything within eyesight, and just answer these three questions: Where am I on that? When am I finished? Where do I need a reminder of those things?

Here’s how it might look for me:

I see my mobile telephone.

I am committed to buying an iPhone.

I am going to set up my iPhone to sync to an all-new-to-me organizational system.

I am going to wait until after the holiday season to buy an iPhone.

I’m going to write a note on my calendar for January to buy an iPhone.

Now, often times people will ask me, “Jason, if you know you’re going to do something, do you still add it to your outcomes list?” To answer that question, let me read what is on my projects list right now:

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down it's generally not that useful. I generally write down topics, issues, circumstances, or situations – not clearly defined tasks or outcomes. A systems-based approach is to take all of your lists and write each item as a separate to do.

The easiest way I have found to do this is to change the first word of each item I write.

Here are some recent examples:

1. Meeting Tuesday
2. Proposal

The meeting on Tuesday has the next action:

Draft 3-4 point agenda for meeting with R and J on Tuesday the 9th

The proposal has the next action:

Review E-mails with AVPR and identify 3 main topics of proposal due on the 23rd.

#3 Flip your inbox up-side down

Ok, so this will really work for anyone with a few dozen e-mails in their Microsoft Outlook INBOX. Even if you only have a few, try it anyway. Look at the OLDEST e-mail (which is now on the top!) and ask yourself these questions:

- Do I need to do something WITH this e-mail?
- Do I need to do something ABOUT this e-mail?

If you need to do something WITH it, move it out of there. If it goes to a certain FOLDER on the left side of your screen, press these three keys on your keyboard: CTRL+SHIFT+V. If you want to add the person's info to your address book, click, hold and drag that e-mail over the CONTACT icon on the left. If you want to read this e-mail again later, RIGHT click and hold, and drag it over your CALENDAR icon. When you drop it there, choose Copy here as appointment with attachment, and then pick the date you want to re-read this item.

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Alternatively, what you ignore gets done...later! Think about it, you procrastinate most effectively (ponder THAT for a moment...) when you stop thinking about or looking at reminders of important things to work on. Even if you have an alarm or reminder, or sticky note on your computer – if you’ve gone numb, and don’t notice that reminder, you’re not engaged – when you stop noticing, thinking about, or looking at the reminders of important things to work on, you stop working on them.

Then, suddenly the due date is upon you, you close your office room, call in sick, or work well into the late of the night – not managing your time, instead simply managing your focus.

Hey, what’s the opposite of procrastination? It’s *NOT* not procrastinating! It is ***getting the right things done***, in the time you promised!

So, what are some “systems” things you can do to influence and enhance your workflow, reduce your stress and get the important things done? Here are three to consider:

#1 Start, Use and Update your agenda “to-dos”

#2 Change the first word of your to-dos so they are really to Dos

#3 Flip the inbox – sort your E-mail inbox by date...oldest on top!

#1 Agendas

Our latest newsletter addressed this topic, and our upcoming eBook (www.OutlookDashboard.com) will go into much more depth on this topic. The client I worked with in London found this incredibly valuable. She wound up with over a dozen “buckets” which she used to capture items to tell people the next time they met.

#2 To do lists

Make a to do list out of your “to think about list.” Most people I know – me included – find it easy to “make another list.” Personally, however, the first time I write something

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There were three main areas we addressed in our time together – all three of which we continue to discuss over the weekly coaching plan. Here, I'd like to present those three areas for development, share some ideas to implement those as practices, and conclude by answering any questions you may have had after our time together or as a result of anything I share here. As I go through the next 15 minutes, please turn off your cell phones AND your computer monitor. Pull over the car you are driving, sit up and take note...and notes! Write down any observations, connections, ideas and questions. And, as always, please e-mail us with questions, concerns, doubts or considerations! You can reach us through our website: www.JasonWomack.com

Let's start with the area of focus for this Tele Seminar...your System.

Right after this phone call – and after every meeting, every break, every interruption in the hallway or even at your own desk – what will you look at to find out where you are, or what you need to do next? Many times out of 10 (the majority of the time), people will end a call or a meeting (or a meeting over a call!) and go immediately to their e-mail inbox to see “what's new.” But, is that the MIT...the Most Important Thing?

Your system, how you set it up, and how you use it, will directly impact what you get done during the day. I'll remind you, it's not time that you are managing or mismanaging; it's really how you manage your focus.

What you focus on, you do. It's like in some science programs where they say, “What is measured is recorded.” It seems easy enough, but the profundity of this principle should not be lost in its simplicity. If you can focus on the RIGHT things at the RIGHT time with the RIGHT tools and the RIGHT frame of mind, you can accomplish much in half the time (or less).

Procrastination works because of the following principle: What you focus on, you do.

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Personally, I have many of these kinds of jobs:

Author

Husband

Expert speaker

Homeowner

Social entrepreneur

Idea generator

...just to name a few. In our seminar, we talk about putting boundaries around our work. What does that mean? To me, it means managing my productivity. Remember, it's important as you move through the "Information-to-Implementation" phases of ANY kind of skills-based training that you define SIGNIFICANT terms for yourself. As a result of our seminar, I hope you have worked on a definition for yourself for the word PRODUCTIVITY. Once again, here is mine:

I am productive when I do what I said I would do in the time that I promised.

Recently, I flew to London to work one-on-one with a client; the director of corporate finance for an investment bank. In fact, she flew in from her regional office in Europe so we could work together face-to-face. Preparing for this one-day coaching event, I knew the pressure was on to exceed (not just to meet) expectations of our coaching program, and me as a consultant.

We spent about 6 hours working together to identify, practice and implement more efficient workplace behaviors. It is extremely important to note here that her systems were already effective – she was getting things done – it's just that her workload had increased over the past several years, and as a result her systems were feeling pressured...in some instances, they were weakening. It was normal to stay at work an hour or two after other people, and to work a bit more at night after dinner.

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Transcription of a recent tele-seminar by The Jason Womack Company

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Workplace Performance Training

Jason Womack Company



Where did yesterday go? Have you ever ended a day, wondering how you got there so quickly, or why you didn't finish all you had hoped to finish?

There are certain things highly effective people do to finish their work. In my experience of watching people work, and then discussing that with them in debriefing sessions, I have found that the people who *debrief, study and re-implement workplace and productivity methods* get things done with less effort, in less time. That is, in fact, a significant reason we produce our seminars: It gives people time to think about HOW they work, not just what they need to get done.

Chances are high that you have, had had, or have heard of a job that is never finished.