

# Schedule Time Blocks

## An article by Keith Rosen about scheduling your days

Time blocking is the art of allocating blocks of designated time for specific activities or tasks throughout the day that are aligned with your goals and the realistic number of hours you have each day, while keeping your life in balance. If you haven't already, I would strongly suggest that you make a list and prioritize your tasks and activities to be included in your daily routine along with established timelines for each.

For example, if you have a nine hour workday, you realistically have about eight hours (or less) to use for activities that you can create designated blocks of time for and then position within your schedule.

I say only eight hours of actual task time for the following reason. Build in some buffer time throughout your day for those activities that either take longer than expected or the activities you have to complete that would typically fly under your radar undetected when planning your day (unscheduled meetings, traffic, emergencies, new projects, family/client demands, and so on.)

You may encounter certain sporadic, yet consistent activities that take up a portion of your day such as personal errands, phone calls, e-mails, prospecting, administrative duties, managing employees, writing proposals, training, meetings, or other work related tasks.

Consider allocating blocks of time for each activity during certain intervals throughout your day to handle them rather than having these activities get in the way of the activities that would move you closer to achieving your goals, such as prospecting. For example, instead of being interrupted by incoming calls or e-mails throughout the day, try blocking out specific portions of your day to make and return calls or respond to e-mails.

How much time do you spend on the phone or responding to e-mails? Many people complain that their workflow is constantly being interrupted by phone calls or incoming e-mails. As such, they feel compelled to either take those calls or respond to an e-mail as soon as it hits their inbox, which distracts them from the initial activity they were involved in and disrupts their focus.

### Are You Interrupt-Driven?

Do you become easily diverted or distracted by situations, new tasks or people rather than maintain the focus on your goals and initial objective? Consider for a moment that if your e-mail program is set to download e-mail every five minutes, in essence, you are scheduling an interruption or a distraction for yourself and get diverted from your initial path every five minutes.

While many people feel the need to multi-task, there are many similarities between managing your mindset and managing your schedule. Each activity or task that you engage in requires a change in your direction, both in action and in thought. As such, each task or activity requires a shift in your:

- Mindset and thought process
- Focus
- Action and energy

- Skills and resources
- Desired outcome

If you spend time prospecting or cold calling, I would suggest separating new prospect calls with follow up calls. When you shift the focus of your energy and thoughts, you are taking up time. Whether it's 10 seconds or 10 minutes, that time is compounded over days, months, and years.

For example, lets say for every five minutes that you check your incoming e-mails, you are losing one minute. That's 12 minutes per hour. In an eight-hour workday, consider that you are losing at least one hour and thirty-six minutes, every day!

If you are a creative person, there's a different mindset that's required when creating a marketing piece, writing an article and answering a phone call or an e-mail. Allowing certain interruptions can surely stall or block the flow of creativity, affecting your level of productivity. Imagine trying to play golf, tennis, and baseball all at the same time.

Consider this solution. Change the time that you have your e-mail program set to receive e-mails from every five or ten minutes to every four hours. While this may sound excessive, I've heard of some people treating their response time to e-mail like regular postage/snail mail.

Sure, e-mail is a great tool for communication, collaboration, and correspondence, enabling you to communicate quickly and conveniently. The point here is to ensure that this tool continues to be productive and efficient for you. Managing your e-mail like snail mail may sound a bit extreme for your situation. Even checking your e-mail every four hours may sound challenging.

To determine a realistic frequency when it comes to checking your e-mail, ask yourself these questions:

1. "Are the bulk of my e-mails time sensitive? Does my ability to quickly respond to an e-mail determine whether or not I will earn a new customer's business?"
2. "Can I still honor my prospecting campaign, provide the same level of service to my customers, and not compromise my ability to attract new customers or perform my job effectively if I respond to e-mails only twice a day?"

If creating blocks of time to respond to e-mails or phone calls would compromise your ability to do your job effectively, then this strategy may not fit for you. However, if you have a degree of flexibility in your job to do so, consider this. Instead of checking and responding to e-mails and phone calls every four hours, make it two. If two hours still doesn't work for you, try doing so every half hour.

Take the next week to determine if there's a specific time throughout your day when you receive the bulk of time sensitive e-mails. There still may be an opportunity for you to block out designated times for responding to calls and e-mails at less frequent intervals than you are doing now.

The fact is, even if you change the frequency of when you check your e-mail from every five minutes to every ten minutes, you have just cut the time you can lose from this distracting tactic in half!

Remember, this same strategy can be used for telephone calls. If you have other responsibilities aside from making or returning phone calls, consider blocking out time throughout your day to

do so. Whether it's once, twice, or three times a day, you would allocate a designated block of time to make or return calls.

Become someone who is driven by goals rather than driven by distractions. The more effective you are at time blocking, the greater the quality of your life will be. If you are responsible for attracting and retaining your customers, your ability to manage your customers' expectations is a direct reflection of your ability to not only manage your schedule but your mindset as well.

Make time your ally. Eliminate at least 2 hours of your workload each day and do more of the things you want to do. Call Keith at 1-888-SELLING or [info@ProfitBuilders.com](mailto:info@ProfitBuilders.com).



**Keith Rosen, MCC - The Executive Sales Coach**

Keith Rosen is the preferred, authentic coach that top executives and sales professionals in many of the world's leading companies call first. As a prominent, engaging speaker, Master Coach and well-known author of many books and articles, Keith is one of the foremost authorities on assisting people in achieving positive, measurable change in their attitude, in their behavior and in their results. Keith's articles can be found in *Selling Power Magazine* and has appeared in feature stories in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Times*, *Inc. Magazine*, *Sales and Marketing Management's Ultimate Motivation Guide* with Stephen Covey and *The Wall Street Journal*. For his work as a pioneer in the coaching profession, *Inc. magazine* and *Fast Company* named Keith one of the five most respected and influential executive coaches in the country.