

“Just let me get my work done.”
Managing Interruptions in the Workplace

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Productive Matters...
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Do you ever...

- Make a to-do list?
- Leave the office feeling like you didn't get anything done?
- Find yourself doing your “real” work after hours or on weekends?

Did you know?

- Research shows that the average worker loses 2.1 hours a day to unnecessary distractions/interruptions.
- Your brain can take up to 15 minutes to get refocused on a task after some interruptions.
- The average worker switches activities every 3 minutes – email, talking to co-worker, web, etc.
- Your IQ falls about 10 points when you are fielding constant email, texts, calls, etc.,
- Office workers are interrupted an average of 7 times an hour (56 times a day).

3 Ways to Fix a Problem

1. Change something about yourself
2. Change something about your environment
3. Change something about someone else

Today's message will help you learn how to avoid being a victim and take responsibility for what you can do to enjoy a higher-quality work day.

“Never assume to malice what could be explained by stupidity.”

Individual factors...

- Too tired, too busy, too stressed to think it through for themselves.
- Lack of skills. (For ex: Have you ever had any official email training?)
- Personal and/or workplace disorganization.
- Ignorance of the offending behavior (talks loudly, uses speaker phone in open spaces, etc.)

Why is it the way it is?

- The modern workplace is set up for constant interruptions
- Lack of training
- Diversity
- Poor communication skills

What's bugging you?

5 Key Culprits:

1. People interruptions
2. Email
3. Clutter/disorganization
4. Noisy environments
5. Phone

People Interruptions ...

“I just have a quick question.”

- Make a note of repetitive requests.
- Address repeated requests as a group.
- Delegate or train someone else to handle it.
- Create a signaling system (closed door, signage, note on door, etc.).
- Establish a “Do Not Disturb” time for each day.
- Have a “drop-off” box outside your office.
- Stand-up when someone enters.
- Tweak your schedule to include work time for before/after busy times of the day.

More solutions....

- Get lost.
- Move your desk.
- Schedule regular lunch times with colleagues for personal discussions.
- Schedule regular meeting times with colleagues.
- Practice saying “later” for drop-in requests.
- Get rid of candy dishes or other “invitations” to your area.
- Work from home occassionally.

Email...

A constant interruption if you let it be.

35% of those reporting they check email 3-4 times an hour discovered that *in reality*, they were checking their e-mail

30-40 times per hour.

- Turn off your automatic alert signal
- Limit your email “checking” times/habits
- Improve your email communication skills
- Enforce your company’s email policy
- Empty your inbox often
- Learn how to use Outlook
- Use separate accounts for different “hats”
- Discourage using “Reply All”; invest in email etiquette training

Clutter makes every job harder and take longer.

- Clean off your desk.
- Get organized.
- Improve your information / filing systems.
- Plan 10-15 minutes at the end of the day to tidy, prep and plan for next day.
- Have a designated drop-off space/inbox, outbox and file box.
- Pay attention to what “builds up” in your area and give it a proper home.

Noisy Environments

“Would you please be quiet?”

Talking too loudly (#12 of the 44 annoying habits in the book *‘What NOT to do at the Office’*)

- Lower *your* voice
- Bring up the issue in a staff meeting
- Post reminders- *“Quiet Please-People at Work”*
- Assess traffic flow patterns (away from break rooms, entrances, etc.)

Phone Interruptions

“Ring, ring – Ring, ring – Ring, ring”

- Use voice mail as *your assistant*
- Use caller ID
- Improve your greeting message; let callers know your hours, when to expect a return call, to leave a detailed message, etc.
- Forward your phone calls when possible
- Always return your calls
- Schedule time to return calls

More *smarter* practices...

- You will be more easily distracted and struggle with staying focused when you are hungry, tired, stressed, worried, have a headache/stomachache, etc. Take better care of yourself so you can take better care of others.
- Practice the “Right Now” habit.
- Schedule certain activities for certain days and/or times; create routines, put it on your calendar, etc.

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- Get More Time In Your Day
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- Less Stress – More Energy!
- Reducing Your Mental Clutter
- Getting It Done While Getting Along

We will all need some help to get where we want...

- Free occasional e-newsletter with productivity and organizational tips for work and home
- Free articles on my website
- In-house training and coaching
- Tele-classes and webinars
- Presentations at special events
- Volume book discounts

“Few things are harder to put up with than the annoyance of a good example.”

Remember to save enough time, energy and *enthusiasm* to share with those you go home to each day!



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