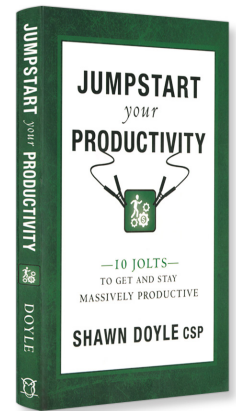


Jumpstart Your Productivity

10 Jolts to Get and Stay Massively Productive

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Contents

Set Goals and Write Them Down

Page 2

Your Time Management System

Page 2

The Key to Massive Productivity

Page 3

Stop Saying Yes to Everything

Page 3

Control the Interruptions

Page 3

Take Breaks, Boost Productivity

Page 4

The Summary In Brief

Productivity has many definitions, but one of the best ways to view it is work less hard, and fewer hours. Becoming more productive takes being more consciously aware of how you spend your time and efforts and analyzing whether you're spending them effectively. It's about properly setting goals and achieving them to the best of your ability. Always keep in mind that productivity is an ebb and flow process. Some weeks you will have balance and some weeks you may not.

In *Jumpstart Your Productivity*, you'll discover how to define your goals in both your professional and personal life. You'll receive tools and techniques to help you choose a time management system, better plan your activities, and make a to-do list that works for you.

In addition, you will learn how to gracefully decline invitations that interfere with your productivity and how to control and manage the many interruptions that arise on a daily basis. And you'll learn about the importance and power of rest, recovery, and relaxation, and how they directly relate to your productivity.

In This Summary, You Will Learn:

- Ways to help you get and stay massively productive.
- How to select and use a quality time management system.
- How to detect and eliminate productivity vampires.
- How to make and keep an effective to-do list.

Set Goals and Write Them Down

When talking about productivity, you must decide what you are going to be productive about. You might be wondering, why should I set goals for myself personally and professionally?

Well, setting goals can be very motivating. They can help you plan better, make better decisions, increase your credibility, improve your thinking, and spend your time more wisely.

The First Step in Defining Your Goals

The first step in defining your goals is actually defining them. How do you do this? The question is not really how to define your goals, but what it is that you want.

Start by writing what you want in these categories: Social, Professional, Love, Financial, Mental, Health, Family, Friends, Recreation, Spiritual, Community.

You can ask yourself questions like: What am I passionate about? What is it that I truly want? How would I know if I became successful? Why do I want success? Answer these in relation to each category.

The Next Steps

Now that you've developed a list of your wants, you're ready to write down your goals for each on the basis of the ones that you have identified. Make sure your goals are specific with lots of detail.

Take your list of goals and transfer them to your calendar system (physical or electronic), and once you've written them down there, arrange the goals in the following time elements: Yearly, Quarterly, Monthly, Weekly, and Daily.

Now, ask yourself specifically what individual actions you need to take to make sure that each one is achieved. There will be your list of goals and in addition to it all the activities that are aligned with each one.

Your Time Management System

If you want to be productive, successful, and credible, one of the main tools you need is some kind of system in place for managing and tracking your time. There are five types of time management systems: Phone-based, time management system apps, electronic/online, hard copy/written, and collaborative. But how do you know which system works best for you?

Deciding Which Time Management System to Use

You will find that there are literally thousands of options

available to help manage your time and productivity. There are some questions you can answer to lead you in the right direction.

First, ask yourself what it is that you need. Make a list of specific criteria that you want in your system. Then, consider the cost of the system. Is it user-friendly? Is it quick? Does it integrate with the rest of your technology? Do you like using it?

When you've answered these questions, ask other people which systems they prefer. Experiment with different kinds of systems. Take the time to do research to find out what systems are out there.

Are You Wasting Your Efforts?

In 2015, the U.S. Bureau of Labor reported that employed persons worked an average of 7.6 hours on the days they worked. More hours were worked, on average, on weekdays than on weekends—8.0 hours compared with 5.6 hours.

On an average day, nearly everyone aged 15 and over (96 percent) engaged in some sort of leisure activity such as watching TV, socializing, or exercising. Of those who engaged in leisure activities, men spent more time in these activities (5.8 hours) than did women (5.1 hours).

On the days they did household activities, women spent an average of 2.6 hours on such activities while men spent 2.1 hours.

What can we learn from this study? It shows that people could be much more productive than they are. The average American spends over 5 hours of leisure time per day. This is a result of falling into habits and not thinking about what you are doing and how you are doing it.

Productivity Vampires and What to Do About Them

Productivity vampires are the forces that prevent you from being able to accomplish what you want to accomplish and that interfere with your level of productivity.

When you work for yourself or for a company, there are activities that you get involved with each week; you need to analyze what those are and whether they are serving your greater purpose. You should note how much time you spend on e-mail, administrative work, meetings, instant messaging, phone calls, project work, travel, preparation, social media, and managing/leading.

If you find you are spending several hours on any of these, take steps to prioritize and minimize your time spent.

The Key to Massive Productivity

If you want to be massively successful and massively productive, then you have to start planning for maximum success. In other words, if you want to be more productive, spend more time planning because the more time you spend planning, the more productive you will be.

For your goal to be successful you must set a measurement of success, a time frame for completion, and be as specific as possible in what you want to achieve.

The Elements of Planning

The first element of planning is to look at time increments. If you're planning on achieving a specific goal, you can take that goal and break it into short-term (4–6 months), mid-term (6–12 months), and long-term (12–18 months) goals.

Next look at are categories for planning. That means placing goals under Resources, People, and Materials. Ask yourself, which resources will I need on this particular project to ensure that I will be successful? Which people will I need internally and externally to successfully pull off this project? What materials will I need to complete this project?

Project Plan

Your project plan can be something as simple as a regular old calendar where you write the specific dates, an electronic time management system that will continually remind you electronically when things are due, or if you have a more complex project you can use project management software specifically made for managing large, complex projects. When planning, remember to have a specific plan that is all yours. Make sure it is time bound and written down.

Make and Keep A To-Do List

Once you have your goals and your plans for the year, and then for the quarter, the month, and the week, then, of course, you will have the things you need to do every day. The tool you will use to do this is the world-famous to-do list.

The Power of the To-Do List

This list should be aligned with your goals meaning it should include activities that help you achieve them. It should also be in writing. A written to-do list keeps you on

track with exactly what you need to do and helps you keep track of what you've already done. It allows you to add to the list whenever something new comes up, and you can compare what you need to do for someone versus what you have on your list.

An effective to-do list will contain categories such as: Tasks to complete, Administrative work, E-mail, Phone calls, Travel arrangements, Meetings, Preparations, Household, Financial, and Social. You should prioritize your list items in each category as A, B, or C.

Remember that having a to-do list makes you more credible and increases your focus. It can motivate you, help you keep promises, and help clarify your thinking. You should include work items and other personal items in the same list, prioritize list items by deadline, have your to-do list with you at all times, and review it frequently throughout the day.

Stop Saying Yes to Everything

The inability to say no is directly related to lack of productivity. If it is your habit and your approach to say yes to everything, that definitely has a negative impact on your productivity.

So, why do many people in life personally and professionally say yes when they really would rather say no? Some reasons are feelings of obligation, fear, or guilt. Do any of these apply to you?

Why We Should Say No

In terms of productivity, there are some very powerful reasons why we should learn to say no. It is acceptable to say no when something takes away from your productive time, distracts you from thinking productive thoughts, and costs you in some way whether it's time, money, effort, or labor.

How to Decide If You're Going to Say Yes or No

When a request is received, many people have a hard time deciding whether to do it or not and don't really know how to decide. There are questions you can ask yourself to help. Do I feel like doing it or not? Is this aligned with my goals? Will this result in conflict? What will be the impact? How will this affect other people?

Control the Interruptions

It seems like at work we are constantly getting interrupted, multiple times per day and maybe even multiple times per

hour. That makes it very difficult to focus and be productive. How do we solve this dilemma?

Different Kinds of Interruptions

In-person interruptions happen when you're sitting in your workspace and someone comes to ask you a question who does not have an appointment. What should you do in this situation? You can try to negotiate with the person visiting you, wear earbuds while working, move to a conference room or empty office where you can't be seen, avoid making eye contact while working on a deadline, or come up with some team guidelines so people know when and when not to interrupt.

Phone calls, emails, and meetings can also be a drain on your productivity. If you're in the middle of a project, you can let calls go to voicemail and call people back when you're finished. You don't have to respond to emails immediately, and you can turn off notification sounds. And if you have control over meetings, you can improve things by having an agenda, appointing a facilitator to keep conversation moving, and knowing the meeting's objective.

Take Breaks, Boost Productivity

Scientific research shows that when people take breaks they are much more productive. In a study at Baylor University, Drs. Emily Hunter and Cindy Wu studied the break habits of close to one thousand workers. They found that taking a break in the morning, before lunch, was more effective at replenishing energy, concentration, and motivation. Workers who took breaks early in the day were more productive later in the day.

The Break Manifesto

If you want to truly be more productive, you need to start habitually taking breaks at work. You can start by taking a break somewhere between when you start the work day and lunchtime. Leave your work area for 15 minutes and go take a walk. If you're worried about what other people will think, know that when you're more productive, they will realize that you taking a break actually has a positive impact, not a negative one.

Always take a 30- to 45-minute lunch break away from your desk. Disconnect from work by eating outside or in your company café. You should also take an afternoon break between when you come back from lunch and when you go home at the end of the day. If you take afternoon breaks, you will be much more productive when you come back to do more work.

Remember that productivity is an ebb and flow process. You'll achieve balance some weeks and others you may not. Always keep in mind that becoming more productive means becoming more aware of how you spend your time and making sure you spend it effectively.



Shawn Doyle is a professional speaker, book author, executive coach, and consultant. For the last 22 years, he has spent his time developing and implementing training programs on team building, communication, creativity, and leadership. His training programs help people become more effective in the workplace and in their lives. Shawn's clients have included numerous Fortune 500 companies, and his awards and honors are extensive. He is the author of twelve inspirational books.

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