

## 24 Hours is Never Enough



Every day consists of 24 hours. That's 1440 minutes and 86,400 seconds. With that being said, why is it that we never seem to have enough time on any given day to do all of the things we need to do? The number of hours in each day isn't a surprise and we're not going to wake up one day to discover there's only 19 hours or an additional 5 hours in our day. Yet, we are always amazed or disappointed when we can't figure out where the day went and why we've accomplished so little. Time management or, the lack thereof, is the key to a lot of the mysterious holes in our daily calendar of accomplishments.

When working with women who want to start a business but feel that they can't, one of the excuses I get on many occasions is that they don't have enough time to start or run a business. They think that they are already burning the candle at both ends so, there's no way they will ever be able to find the time to follow their dream of entrepreneurship. Time management is not rocket science and you don't need an elaborate system to make it work for you. However, you do need to recognize that it is an important part of our daily lives. Without time management, things are forgotten, people are overlooked, and we end our days feeling dazed and confused. The feeling of being overwhelmed and under-accomplished, only leads to a downward spiral of feeling like you'll never have enough time for everything you need and want to do.

In an effort to keep our already inundated lives simple, I recommend a simple time management system to help keep your days on track. Whether you're a busy wife and mother of two running her own company or a single woman working 60 hours a week in a corporate job while you spend another 20 hours trying to start your new business, you can never go wrong with a few simple steps that will help simplify your day.

- 1) **Make a Plan** – Make sure you have a to-do list everyday. You can write it in your daily planner, put it on your laptop, or store it in your Blackberry. Take time the night before or first thing in the morning to come up with a plan for your day everyday.
- 2) **Everything Goes** – Everything goes on your schedule. We tend to only put things related to our jobs or a specific project on our lists. Many times things like salon appointments, little league games, lunch with mom, time to read a proposal, or time to respond to email don't necessarily make it on the list. If it is going to take up any of those 24 hours in that day, it needs to be on the list. This doesn't mean that you have to go as far as scheduling bathroom time. We can only hope it doesn't get down to that!
- 3) **Follow the Signs** – Once you come up with a plan and make your list for the day, FOLLOW IT. Not using your list is like punching in directions on your car's navigational system but, deciding you aren't going to listen to the nice lady when she tells you where to turn. What's the point?
- 4) **Know the Batting Order** – You should try to schedule the most important and difficult tasks first. You want to be sure you get around to the things that are top priority or time-consuming before you start getting interrupted. Oh yes, there will be interruptions and unexpected events. Plan on it!
- 5) **Take a Commercial Break** – Around midday, take a few minutes to review your list and decide which things you will absolutely finish by the end of the day and which tasks can be moved to tomorrow. There will almost, always be something on the list that you will not complete or it does not have to be completed that day. It's okay. You've got another 24 hours coming your way!
- 6) **That's a Wrap** – Decide what time your day will end. When it gets close to that time, check off your completed tasks and close out the final tasks of the day. Go ahead and add any tasks left over from today to tomorrow's to-do list.
- 7) **Take a Breather then Tune in Tomorrow** – Hopefully, your to-do list includes time to wind down before the day's end. Whether it's 30 minutes or 2 hours, give yourself time to spend with the family, with a good book, with a new movie, or with your favorite TV show stored on your DVR. It's okay to schedule a few minutes for you, whatever that means to you. Just remember to tune in to your to-do list again tomorrow - same time, same place.

You'll be amazed at how you'll slowly start to get some of those 24 hours back once you start making a plan and checking off those completed tasks. You'll become more focused and organized, leaving you time to do some of the extra things that never make it into your schedule. Who knows, you may even find a little time to go ahead and start that business you've been dreaming about.