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15 secrets successful time management book pdf

Project management seems so straightforward. You set a deadline. You set a budget. You select the right people. The project gets done. In reality, project management is rarely straightforward. The wrong people are assigned to the project. People don't know what is expected of them or get conflicting information. The scope changes. Deadlines aren't met. Put more succinctly: Stuff happens. So what can businesses, and project managers, do to improve the odds of projects being completed on time and on budget? Dozens of project leaders and project management experts share nine secrets to successful project management. [Find out how to pick the right project management methodology, beware the most common project management mistakes to avoid, and gear up with the 15 essential project management tools.] Get the latest insights by signing up for our CIO newsletter.]1. Ensure that you have full project details before starting. "Creating a completely detailed project scope approved by all stakeholders is a necessity," states Adam Balkwill, technical director, Garfield Group, an integrated marketing agency. "The scope should include interim milestones, with deliverable dates and a budget worksheet that represents all time involved. If the initial project writeup has enough detail, the better you and your client will interact through its production," Balkwill says. "Change requests will happen on every project, but this allows you to manage the client when something is out of scope."2. Have the right (and right-sized) project management team in place. In order for a project to be successful, you need to have the right project team in place, people whose skills and experience can benefit the project, from the project manager on down. It also helps to "limit the number of people involved," says Josh Meah, COO, JackMyRep.com, a reputation management company. [7 Must-Have Project Management Skills for IT Pros]"Amazon.com uses the 'pizza' team methodology based on the idea that a team shouldn't be larger than 6 to 10 people," he explains. "A manager really can only handle so many direct reports without losing grasp on either the vision for the project, details of the work involved, and personalities and personal requirements of their organization and staff," he says. "So, to maximize effectiveness, limit the size of your project management teams." And involve people whose skills match the project requirements.3. Set expectations -- and milestones -- up front. "Set relatively (based on risk) frequent milestones and check in often to ensure projects stay on track," advises Pat McGuinness, chief technology risk officer, GE Capital. "If you only set longer-term or high-level milestones, you won't realize a project is in trouble until it's too late. My team at GE Capital schedules multiple project benchmarks and iterative reviews to make sure the money being invested in an IT project is being used efficiently and that project goals are being addressed." "When [everyone] on the team clearly understands the [scope] from the beginning, you eliminate the ambiguity that can derail a project," adds Juan Velasquez, marketing specialist, Do It Wiser, a provider of toner cartridges and green office supplies. A good way to do this," he says, is to hold a kickoff meeting, where everyone involved attends. Kickoff meetings "help to set expectations," where you can "discuss the project in detail," create a workable roadmap and assign people roles and responsibilities. 4. Be clear about who is responsible for what --, and deadlines. "When multiple people are collaborating on the same task, assignments, deadlines and other important details often get lost in translation," explains Fred Mouawad, founder and CEO, Taskworld, a task management platform. To avoid confusion, "determine which team members are responsible for which pieces of work [up front], and enforce accountability. An online task management program is a simple way to do this." "It's important that each member of your team understands what is expected from them," adds Brandon Seymour, owner, Beymour Consulting, an SEO and inbound marketing firm. "This includes the full scope of the project and a precise timeline of when tasks need to be completed." Because every project is different, "it helps for all of the key players to have a solid understanding of how each of their efforts contributes to the project as a whole. Project milestones and benchmarks are great for managing these expectations and keeping teams on track with deadlines."5. Don't micromanage. "Meet regularly with the team members who will be working on the project. However, allow them breathing room to work without feeling micromanaged," says Shilonda Downing, owner, Virtual Work Team, a virtual assistant company. "Creating a balance here is key to ensuring that work is being done and that team members feel empowered to do their best work."6. Make sure you have a good system in place for managing the project, one that everyone can and will use. "Email seems the most obvious form of communication when managing a project, but it can hinder progress," says Chris Griffiths, CEO, DropTask, a visual task management solution. "Trawling through email threads for previous correspondence is a huge time waster. Using software that keeps all project information and communication in one place not only saves time, [it] maintains a productive workspace." "Our team and clients are located across the country, which means we can't share physical files," explains Amy Driehorst, lead project manager, Weaving Influence, which connects authors to online audiences. So "we use a digital project management application that not only allows us to manage all aspects of the project through task lists, but also serves as an online filing cabinet housing all the documents associated with the project as well as a discussion board," she explains. "The ability to [easily] add clients to the project allows for smooth communication and sharing of information."7. Keep team members motivated by rewarding them when milestones are reached. "It is useful to set milestones while planning projects," notes Ajay Kaul, managing partner, AgreeYa Solutions, a provider of business software. To ensure projects stay on track, "recognize team members whenever a milestone is met. Celebrating milestones can be a great way to track progress while keeping team members motivated."8. Hold regular project status meetings or calls, but keep them short. "Frequent communication with all members of the team as well as the client is the best way to ensure a project is on track," says Driehorst. "This is especially important in a virtual environment, where [you] don't have the luxury of popping into a colleague's office to check the status of a task. I find scheduling regular calls in addition to all the other forms of digital communication we use ensures open and clear communication for all concerned." While keeping everyone up to date on the project's status is essential, "you need a way to communicate everyone's status to the rest of the team without getting bogged down by the details," says Martijn van Tilburg, CEO, 10,000ft, a project and resource management solution provider. To avoid participants tuning out, "keep status meetings short and sweet [by limiting] everyone to [for example] 90 seconds of talking. This encourages team members to focus on the most relevant details about the past week."9. Build in time for changes. "In technology, projects don't ever seem to follow specifications exactly," notes Samit Shah, cofounder, EventEdge, which builds custom event apps. "To avoid pain points and save time, build in extra time for specification changes and requests. You will be thankful." Copyright © 2014 IDG Communications, Inc. Last Updated on June 1, 2021 "Busy" used to be a fair description of the typical schedule. More and more, though, "busy" simply doesn't cut it. "Busy" has been replaced with "too busy", "far too busy", or "absolutely buried." It's true that being productive often means being busy...but it's only true up to a point. As you likely know from personal experience, you can become so busy that you reach a tipping point...a point where your life tips over and falls apart because you can no longer withstand the weight of your commitments. Once you've reached that point, it becomes fairly obvious that you've over-committed yourself. The trick, though, is to recognize the signs of "too busy" before you reach that tipping point. A little self-assessment and some proactive schedule-thinning can prevent you from having that meltdown. To help you in that self-assessment, here are 7 signs that you're way too busy. 1. You Can't Remember the Last Time You Took a Day Off Occasional periods of rest are not unproductive, they are essential to productivity. Extended periods of non-stop activity result in fatigue, and fatigue results in lower-quality output. As Sydney J. Harris once said, "The time to relax is when you don't have time for it." 2. The Closest to You Have Stopped Asking for Your Time Why? They simply know that you have no time to give them. Your loved ones will be persistent for a long time, but once you reach the point where they've stopped asking, you've reached a dangerous level of busy. 3. Activities like Eating Are Always Done in Tandem with Other Tasks If you constantly find yourself using meal times, car rides, etc. as times to catch up on emails, phone calls, or calendar readjustments, it's time to lighten the load. It's one thing to use your time efficiently. It's a whole different ballgame, though, when you have so little time that you can't even focus on feeding yourself. 4. You're Consistently More Tired When You Get up in the Morning Than You Are When You Go to Bed One of the surest signs of an overloaded schedule is morning fatigue. This is a good indication that you've not rested well during the night, which is a good sign that you've got way too much on your mind. If you've got so much to do that you can't even shut your mind down when you're laying in bed, you're too busy. 5. The Most Exercise You Get Is Sprinting from One Commitment to the Next It's proven that exercise promotes healthy lives. If you don't care about that, that's one thing. If you'd like to exercise, though, but you just don't have time for it, you're too busy. If the closest thing you get to exercise is running from your office to your car because you're late for your ninth appointment of the day, it's time to slow down. Try these 5 Ways to Find Time for Exercise. 6. You Dread Getting up in the Morning If your days are so crammed full that you literally dread even starting them, you're too busy. A new day should hold at least a small level of refreshment and excitement. Scale back until you find that place again. 7. "Survival Mode" Is Your Only Mode If you can't remember what it feels like to be ahead of schedule, or at least "caught up", you're too busy. So, How To Get out of Busyness? Take a look at this video: And these articles to help you get unstuck: Featured photo credit: Khara Woods via unsplash.com You work hard to provide for yourself and your family and please your boss. Is there any way you could be working harder? I have no idea, but I am sure there are many ways to work smarter. Successful people don't necessarily work harder than you, but they do work smarter. Here are some of the techniques they've mastered. 1. Don't just look busy When the company manager walks down the hallway, everyone is on a call, in a meeting, or running errands. They look busy, but are they really busy? If you ask successful people, they will say "No." All the above are strong signs of "mindless productivity." This might get you lots of appreciation from your co-workers, but it definitely won't get you a promotion -- at least, not the promotion. To put it differently, working hard means you are on the track towards success, running 100 miles per hour... though not necessarily in the right direction. 2. Work smarter, not harder The key to becoming a successful person is working smart, not hard. Quit the "robot" state and find new ways to approach each task and each project. Employ strong time management rules and software, such as TimeDoctor, and stick to cutting down the time needed to do each task. You don't have to reinvent the wheel, but you need to find new ways to use it and look at it from a completely different perspective. In time, you will be thankful for your new routine. 3. Prioritize all your tasks Prioritization is the key for successful people -- they don't just solve all the tasks they have, they solve the most important first! Take example and find the most important tasks of the day right after you reach the office and solve them. When the most important tasks are done, you can say your day was successful, even if you don't get to solve all the other tasks of the day. Don't let the details drag you down, don't procrastinate! Perfectionists often get lost in details, as they try to make everything perfect -- this is a mistake, as unpleasant as it might sound. Focus on getting the large projects done, then take a second look at them, tweaking bits and pieces. Work gamification is a new concept, but it's already emerging as one of the best ways to raise your engagement and change the way you work. As the name implies, gamification is the process of turning work into play, without skipping the actual work. Gamification increases your wellbeing and allows you to objectify your achievements. Just like a game, when you plan each task you can divide the work into small batches of 15-20 minutes. Then, award yourself with a treat when each task is finished. That treat can be anything you want, from a smoothie to a small walk in the park or checking your social media account. One of the benefits of gamification is you will learn how much can be done in a short time, like 15 minutes. Another benefit is the fact you are able to take some time to appreciate what you've just made, which is a great way to stay motivated and focused. 5. Group related tasks The human brain is built to think of at one task at a time. When you have to do several different tasks, you need to use several parts of your brain, employing different types of thinking. If you group related tasks, your brain won't be forced to switch from one type of thinking, such as analytic, to another, like creative, over and over again. Doing several tasks which require the same type of thinking consecutively boosts your productivity and speeds up your work. Grouping tasks is a great time management secret, as it can enhance and revolutionize the way you work. For example, if you are a writer and you have to document an ebook, document a report, then rewrite two articles and write an editorial, you'll want to group the documentation work and the writing work. This way, you will be able to get them done quicker and easier. 6. Organize, organize, organize some more One of the best time management hacks is organization -- being organized is crucial for cutting down on the "dead" time in your workflow. Come up with a system and implement it as soon as possible. You will notice the huge difference which comes from knowing where the last week's sale reports are and not having to spend 30 minutes looking for them. 7. Learn to refuse projects From time to time, you need to say "No." Overworking yourself is not the way towards success, but the way towards fatigue and exhaustion. Successful people master the ability to refuse certain tasks in order to concentrate on more important ones. Be picky and only pick tasks which mean something for you and can really give you a boost. Dedicate all your time to these projects, erasing procrastination and distractions, establishing a personal deadline for the task at hand. For example, promise yourself to complete an article in one hour. When you finish the article on time or even before your self-imposed deadline, you will feel an amazing amount of self-accomplishment. This emotion can be overwhelming and highly motivational. After all that time management, you will notice there is still a pile of work on your desk. This is the moment when you need to use the most important secret of successful people: quit it and go home. Yes, that's right -- after all the strategies to cut down the "dead" time, eliminate the excess tasks, and focus on getting the project done, you have to know when to call it a day and go home. As I've said, as long as you prioritize tasks and solve the most important ones, you are ready to go home. Don't make the mistake of trying to solve everything. Instead, end your day when you are tired and you feel you've made a difference for someone. There will always be more work to do, but you have to live your life as well. Calling it a day is part of smart working -- the most important secret of smart working, even, because it allows you to disconnect from work and enjoy life. This is exactly what makes you successful! Featured photo credit: Flickr/Ben Smith via flickr.com

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