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# Work Smarter, Not Harder: How Even the Busiest Administrative Professional Can Get More Done

A 60-Minute Interactive Audio Conference

with **Kerul Kassel**

# Work Smarter, Not Harder: How Even the Busiest Administrative Professional Can Get More Done

- ▶ Working Smarter =
  - Clarity of purpose and priorities +
  - optimal management of resources
- ▶ What we're covering:
  - A holistic set of strategies targeted toward not one, but a range of areas in which to make professional development improvements
  - A reasonable, yet rigorous, level of performance enhancement ideas and a perspective that melds respect, acknowledgement, and appreciation for who you are, the challenges you face, and what you're already doing well

# Purpose and Priorities

- ▶ Purpose: are you 100% sure of the purpose your position serves in the company?
- ▶ Purpose: are you and your director or supervisor in agreement as to your duties and how to best accomplish them?
- ▶ Purpose: have you discussed and/or negotiated with him or her processes by which you'll accomplish your agreed-upon goals?
- ▶ Priorities: how well do you use your calendar or other system to ensure optimal focus?
- ▶ Priorities: how often do you check in with both your own goals lists and those of your director or supervisor in regard to changes in priorities and timetables?

## Types of Resources

- ▶ Time - we all have the same amount. It's an important resource, but it's not the only resource
- ▶ Physical space - the better your physical surroundings support you in your work, the easier, faster, and more effectively you can complete it
- ▶ Supporting structures - do the equipment, systems, and processes you use enhance or hamper your productivity?
- ▶ Accountability - objectives, milestones, deadlines, and reporting (formally or informally) can boost not only your efficiency and effectiveness, but also reduce internal drag
- ▶ Energy level - your physical health, including fitness, nutrition, sleep, and recreational time can significantly influence your performance for better or worse
- ▶ Mental focus - office politics, personality conflicts, and company culture all influence you, for better or worse, but they are manageable through enhanced emotional flexibility
- ▶ Co-workers - can offer moral support, ideas, tips, networking, help with work

- ▶ What we've already covered:
  - Lack of clarity about your position, responsibilities, priorities, and goals
  - Shyness about discussing and negotiating the processes and systems that improve your effectiveness, within company/director guidelines and constraints
  - Friction from clashes or disagreements and need for greater skill in deflecting or redirecting negative or distractive emotional energy
  - Need for better systems, processes, equipment, or more skill or training in the use of existing ones
  - Reduced physical energy and mental sharpness
  - Hesitation in asking for help, support, resources, connections
  - Resistance to change

What we haven't yet (explicitly) covered

1. Your own expectations that are either too high or too low
2. Failure to acknowledge the goals, development, and skills you have already achieved
3. Ignoring all that is working and going right for you, both in your personal and your professional life
4. Not taking brief restorative moments throughout the day, in addition to personal recreational opportunities outside of the work environment
5. Loose or non-existent personal and professional boundaries that drain your time and energy
6. Complacency about your skill levels, technical and systems knowledge, and hesitancy in requesting funds or time to improve them

1. Understanding your role and how you contribute to your organization and creating or updating common perceptions of them (regularly) will help to automatically prioritize how you allocate your resources and enhance your effectiveness.
2. There are more resources at your disposal than the way you spend your time, and failing to attend to some of those resources will sharply reduce your productivity. Give each of these resources an examination and tune up the top 2 or 3 (no more than that at one time) that will give you the biggest boost for your efforts.
3. Develop your negotiation muscle: learn how to articulate arguments for changes you might propose to your duties, timelines, processes, systems, skills and knowledge to further build the value you (and your department and directors) provide to your organization. Remember that your reasoning must appeal to the professional values of those who supervise you.
4. Upgrading professional skills and knowledge should only comprise about half of your continual self-improvement program. Personal self-growth leads to professional success. This includes physical health and emotional flexibility; regular mental breaks keep your focus sharp and your energy fresh.