

MAKING ADJUSTMENTS in the NEW ENVIRONMENT

BY CASSANDRA R. LEE



Work in the office. Work from home. Work in a hybrid environment. These represent the ways in which we have worked before, during, and because of the pandemic.

I would imagine that you, like me, are adjusting to the new ways of performing your job responsibilities.

How are you handling the adjustments? Have you found a rhythm that works for you?

Are you finding you are productive and managing your time well with your new way of working?

I recently read an article on TheLadders.com, "Is remote working more productive? New findings give us an answer." The article revealed that the answer is "yes." Remote working is allowing employees and employers to be productive. In some cases, more productive than before.

Congratulations if you answered yes to my initial questions. You are confirming what the article revealed. You have adjusted well to the new way of performing your job responsibilities. Also, you have found a rhythm that works for you to be productive and manage your time well to accomplish the work of your day.

If, however, you answered no, kudos to you! I commend you for your honesty. This means that you, too, are revealing what the article touched on. Not everyone is as productive when working from home or using a hybrid work environment. This is your truth. It is also the reality that many employees are dealing with and employers must find a way to handle.

It is my goal with this article to share a few techniques and tips to help you better manage your time and improve your overall productivity.

First, let's explore three time management techniques that can help you to manage your time more effectively.

TIME MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUE NO. 1: CALENDAR YOUR TASKS

This technique helps you to visually see the important tasks you want to accomplish for the day, week, or month. When you put your tasks on a calendar, you will find that the calendar keeps you focused. In addition, you will better prioritize what you plan to do. Knowing which tasks are being completed on which day gives you an idea of when your high-priority tasks will be done.

Use the calendar type that works best for your style. A wall calendar, personal planner, desk calendar, monaplanner, calendar printout, or Franklin Covey Planner would be good to use. A sticky note with the date written at the top, along with a bulleted priority list, can be stuck to your computer

monitor. With this method, you can see the targeted priorities you want to complete for the day.

Of course, if you prefer, an electronic calendar can be used instead. Microsoft Outlook, Google Calendar, and Trello are examples of electronic tools you can use to calendar your tasks. These calendars will allow you to record multiple tasks for your day. You can also set alerts to notify you when tasks are due, which helps to keep you on track. That is the goal in suggesting that you calendar your tasks. I want you to stay on track, use your time wisely, and be productive with your day.

Again, the type of calendar you choose is completely up to you. I have learned that when you use what works for you, you will be consistent with using it. Therefore, choose the calendar method that works best for your style, and use it to calendar your tasks so that you can effectively manage your time.

TIME MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUE NO. 2: USE A TO-DO LIST

This is a foundational time management technique. I am sure you have heard this idea multiple times throughout your career. I would even imagine that before, during, and since the pandemic, you have relied on a to-do list to get things done. Like calendaring your tasks, a to-do list gives you a way to remember the most important tasks you plan to accomplish in your day.

The difference between the calendar and the to-do list is that the list will be in the garbage at the end of the day. Yes, you read that correctly, you will throw the to-do list away. My personal philosophy is that a to-do list is a disposable, daily snapshot of your day. The list highlights where you will put your time, energy, and effort.

Each day, create a brand-new list with no more than the six most important tasks written on it. Throughout the day, cross off the tasks you have accomplished. At the end of the day, review the current to-do list to see if any tasks remain undone. If you find you have a task or two left, put them on the following day's to-do list. Prep the list for the next day by focusing on the six most important tasks you plan to accomplish. If you added a task from the day before, add new tasks until the total is no more than six. Once you are done prepping the list for the next day, toss the current one. Start your day with the new to-do list. Use your "daily, disposable snapshot" to remain focused on your targeted tasks, better manage your time, and improve the productivity of your day.

“Set time limits for the tasks you want to accomplish. By setting specific time limits, you will be able to complete your most important tasks for the day.”



TIME MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUE NO. 3: SET TIME LIMITS

This technique will help you to accomplish more with your time. It is influenced by the basic notion of Parkinson's Law. Are you familiar with it? Simply defined, Parkinson's Law says, "Work expands to the amount of time available for its completion."

When I learned about Parkinson's Law years ago in a time management seminar, I found it fascinating. I realized this law was happening in my life all the time. I specifically saw Parkinson's Law at play whenever I shortened my workweek from five days to four days for a vacation. I observed how the amount of work I would complete in a five-day workweek could be accomplished in four days. This was mind-blowing for me. Have you noticed this too?

Of course, the key is to use Parkinson's Law to obtain the positive benefits of this time management principle. That is why I recommend you set time limits for the tasks you want to accomplish. By setting specific time limits, you will be able to complete your most important tasks for the day. Assign an hour to some tasks, such as team meetings. Give 30 minutes to other items, such as checking emails. Allow 90 minutes for a few tasks, such as researching and writing a performance review. Include 15-minute intervals in your schedule for breaks, and you will heighten your productivity. Setting time limits will give you assigned blocks of time, which helps to promote your productivity and improve your time management.

Mastery of these techniques will help you to be productive during the pandemic whether you work at home or in a hybrid work environment.

MANAGING THE DAYS OF THE WEEK

Now add in my tip of using the "Days of the Week Time Management Philosophy." Here is how it works. Think of:

Monday as **"Make It Happen Monday."** This philosophy will help you to start off your workweek with a level of productivity. In addition, it will help you to focus on the two or three most important tasks to get accomplished on this day.

Tuesday as **"Tackle It Tuesday."** This philosophy will get you mentally revved up to tackle four to six of the most important tasks of your day. You will find that on Tuesdays, your creativity, energy, and productivity will be at a higher charge for getting things done and off your to-do list.

Wednesday as **"Work It Out Wednesday."** This philosophy reminds you to proactively and productively get over "hump day" by accomplishing all six of your most important tasks before the workweek ends.

Thursday as **"Thorough Thursday."** This philosophy will motivate you to make progress in accomplishing your tasks. "Thorough Thursday" gets you focused on completing tasks that have been following you from list to list each day.

Friday as **"Freedom Friday."** This philosophy reminds you to wrap up and close out all-important tasks for your workweek. "Freedom Friday" allows you to end the workweek as you started it—getting a few important tasks done so you can close your productive week with pride.

Categorizing your workweek with my "Days of the Week Time Management Philosophy" can increase your productivity for each day and your results for the week. You will find that you accomplish more on your to-do list and that your most important tasks will not be forgotten.

The pandemic has forced you to review the way you work. Techniques and tips for maximizing your time and remaining productive are crucial. May the ideas shared in this article help you to be more efficient with your time and better with your productivity, whether you work from home, in the office, or in a hybrid work environment. [AQ](#)

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