5 PRODUCTIVITY HACKS TO GET MORE DONE

Introduction

Getting through the workday can be challenging. Sometimes it can feel as though there just isn't enough time to finish everything that you need to get done in a day. For some people, being productive and getting more done comes to them naturally. For others, it is a skill that needs to be practiced every day until they can find the best method for improving productivity that works best for them.

People who manage to get more accomplished every day, aren't superhuman, but instead, they've been able to master a few simple habits that have provided them with a boost in productivity. The good news is that anybody can improve their productivity with the right techniques and strategies. You can actually leave work feeling more satisfied and fulfilled with what you've accomplished. All it takes is a few productivity hacks to help get you there.

While you probably know a few tips for improving your productivity, like keeping your desk organized and getting eight hours of sleep a night, there are so many other things that you can be doing to guarantee a boost in your daily productivity. Here are five productivity hacks that can help you get more done in less time.

1) Implement the Pomodoro Technique

The Pomodoro Technique helps to train your brain to focus for short periods and helps you remain on top of deadlines and can even improve your attention span and concentration. The methodology of this technique is simple when you are faced with an enormous task or series of functions, you break down the work into short, timed intervals, called Pomodoros, that are spaced out with short breaks. It is a cyclical system where you work in short spurts, which ensures you remain productive while taking short breaks that help to bolster your motivation and helps to keep you creative.

The Pomodoro Technique is probably one of the most straightforward techniques to implement because all you need is a timer. Beyond that, you don't need to use any unique apps, tools, or books. Here's how to get started using the Pomodoro Technique to boost your productivity.

1. Choose a task that you want to complete.
2. Set your timer for 25 minutes.
3. Work on the task until the timer expires, then put a check on a sheet of paper.
4. Take a short break, usually around 5 minutes.
5. After your break, set the timer for 25 minutes and start the process again.
6. After your fourth cycle, take a more extended break, usually around 25 minutes.
7. Start the process again.

Completing the process several times throughout your workday will help you accomplish more. It is essential to understand that a Pomodoro is a unit of work that can't be divided. That means that if you become distracted during your 25-minute session of work, you either have to end the Pomodoro early and restart it later, or you need to postpone the distraction until later.

2) Utilize Parkinson's Law

The famous British historian and author stated, in 1995, that work expands to fill the time available for its completion. In the realm of productivity, this has become known as Parkinson's Law. Parkinson had worked in the British Civil Service and saw first-hand how bureaucracy works. Bureaucracy is itself a by-product of our culture, thanks to the limiting belief that spending more time working is somehow better than working smarter and faster.

When it comes to Parkinson's Law, it means that if you give yourself a week to finish a two-hour task, then the task will increase in complexity and will become even more daunting in order to fill the week. The job may not even take a week to accomplish, but the extra time will be filled with more stress and tension about having to complete it. When you can assign the right amount of time to your tasks, you can gain back more time, and the task will ultimately reduce in complexity.

One way to utilize Parkinson's Law to improve your productivity is known as running against the clock. To

implement this idea into your workday, you need to make a list of the tasks that you need to complete. Divide the tasks up by the amount of time that it will take you to achieve them. Then give yourself half that time to complete each task. For this to work, you have to see accomplishing the task in the given time as crucial. You need to treat each of these time limits as any of your other deadlines. Part of reversing the thought that you have to work harder, not smarter, is to see the deadlines that you set for yourself as unbreakable, just like the deadlines that are set by your boss or clients.

When you first implement this technique, it will be partially an exercise in figuring out how accurate your projects are or the tasks on your list. Some of your time projections will be accurate, and you won't be able to beat the clock when you cut the time allotment in half, so you'll need to experiment with different times until you find something that works.

3) The Five-Minute Rule for Beating Procrastination

One of the biggest obstacles to our productivity is our innate ability to procrastinate. Most people tend to procrastinate at the beginning of a project out of fear or uncertainty, and sometimes it's a combination of both. To overcome the unclear or daunting start of our work projects is to give yourself a five-minute rule for getting started. So how does the five-minute rule work?

As stated before, most procrastination is caused by either fear or uncertainty. Even if you are motivated to finish a task, fear of failure, criticism, or stress, ends up pitting us against ourselves. While we may want to complete the project, you also don't want your fear to become a reality. This conflict makes it seem as though it would be unwise or impossible to move forward in accomplishing the task. This explains why we often tend to procrastinate even when it doesn't make any sense.

The five-minute rule works to lower that inhibition and lulls us into the idea that we can quickly dip our toes in a project with no strings attached. This allows you to reconsider your engagement in a task after the initial five minutes of work. This, in turn, can increase your feeling of being in control and providing you the ability to make an autonomous decision, rather than feeling like you are being forced to do something that you don't want to do.

This tactic will also lower what psychologists refer to as the cost of an activity. This includes the emotional cost, opportunity costs, and effort costs. Our motivation to engage in the action, after we've worked on it for five minutes, increases while our costs decrease.

The real intrigue of the rule though is why we continue to work after the allotted time has expired, once we've started to work. This is partly due to our expectations about how you'll feel during an activity are imprecise. Once you've started on a task, you often end up with a more positive attitude about the task at hand. So, if you are suffering from procrastination, merely start a task and work on it for five minutes and see how quickly it creates a boost in your productivity.

4) Apply the 80/20 Rule

Vilfredo Pareto originally developed the Pareto Principle or the 80/20 Rule. As an Italian economist, he determined that 80 percent of the world's wealth is owned by 20 percent of the population, while the remaining 20 percent is owned by 80 percent of the population. Not only does this rule apply to economics, but it can also be used in other aspects of your life, including your productivity or lack thereof.

The 80/20 rule states that 80 percent of your results, comes from just 20 percent of your efforts. This doesn't mean that you should only go into work one day a week and give it a 20 percent shot and then leave, The 80/20 rule has nothing to do with time. Instead, it is suggesting that you need to focus your efforts and work harder in the areas that matter most while accepting that it is okay to let the smaller stuff slide from time to time.

You can apply the Pareto Principle to all aspects of your life and dramatically increase your productivity. When it comes to using this principle to your daily to-do list, you want to tackle two or three of your most significant projects, commitments, or tasks first. Rather than spending your time on the smaller, trivial tasks, you need to use your energy and time to complete the more significant items on your to-do list. Take the time to prioritize them and recognize that you are doing so because those tasks will more than likely give you 80 percent of what you want.

You can take it even further to increase your productivity even more. The 80/20 rule states that when you're working for a long time on a task, you've most likely hit a majority of your goal after expelling 20 percent of your effort. This

doesn't mean that you should only spend 20 minutes on a task and then call it a day. For example, if you're a freelance writer, you may break down the process of writing an article into five individual steps.

1. Write the draft.
2. Look for grammatical errors.
3. Find an image for the article.
4. Correctly format it for the web.
5. Set a date to publish.

The 80/20 Rule states that you'll get the majority of your results from 20 percent of your effort. More than likely, writing the draft will give you the most significant return on your effort. This means that the smaller details of the task will only account for 20 percent of your outcome, which means that while they are essential, you shouldn't stress or waste your time worrying about them.

When you focus your efforts on the tasks that will give you the most substantial return, you can increase your productivity and get more done in less time.

5) Stop Multitasking

While multitasking seems like a good way to get more done in less time, it is something that can actually kill your productivity. When you multitask, you may believe that you are accomplishing a lot at once, but research has shown that our brains aren't nearly as good at handling multiple tasks as we think. Recent studies have shown that

multitasking can actually reduce your productivity by as much as 40 percent.

So, what is it that makes multitasking so detrimental to your productivity? While it might seem like you are accomplishing a lot at the same time, what's really happening is that you are quickly shifting your attention and focus from one task to the next. When you quickly switch from one thing to another, it can make it extremely difficult for your brain to tune out the distractions around you and can cause mental blocks to slow down your progress.

Recent research has shown that when you switch from one task to the next, your productivity takes a severe hit because your brain has to continually shift and refocus which takes precious time. What's worse is that the more complex the task, the more time that you lose when you try to multitask. So, if you want to increase your productivity, you have to stop multitasking and start focusing your attention and energy on completing a single task at a time.

Conclusion

Improving your productivity isn't a difficult task to accomplish. All it takes is creating the right habits that will allow you to get more done in less time. These five productivity hacks are simple to implement into your daily routine and will help you to improve your productivity dramatically.