

# Don't Overbook Your Time

2006-11-23 17:48:43



One of the most important tools in operating a successful work-from-home operation is time management. In a lot of cases, working from home can make an individual feel like time is no longer at a premium; there is a lot to do in a day, for sure, but there are also a lot of hours, right? Wrong.

Working from home does not mean that all 24 hours in a day can be used up, although it can seem like it. We still need to take time out to sleep and eat, as well as those crucial hours to spend with our families. A lot of home workers made the decision to work out of the home based on their family in the first place, but many find they are actually seeing less of their family than they had thought because of the limitations of time. Here are some areas to keep in mind so that you will not find yourself unable to meet all of the requirements you have on any given day.

## Travel

Losing the commute is a big pull when it comes to working from home. Just because you do not have to drive in to work every day, however, does not mean that you will not have to travel. It is likely that you will have to go out to get supplies, to meet with clients, and for household chores. The time it takes to get places is just as important to consider when deciding on how long you will be out as the time it will take to accomplish the task is. You will have to account for the distance to the store or to the meeting place as well as the traffic levels at that time of day.

Fortunately, working from home does give you some control over the amount of time actually spent in commute. Try to plan trips when traffic is low and traveling is quick; make sure that you have already filled up the vehicle with gas at another time so that you don't find you are taking an extra fifteen minutes to do on the day you go out for supplies. Set up meetings and do your shopping at areas that are closest to you. Remember to include the travel time in your schedule so that you have plenty of time to go and get back before your next scheduled task.

## Meetings

Another area where a lot of your time can be taken up is in meetings, whether in person, on the phone, or over the Internet. The best strategy here is to book meetings with a few extra windows around them on your calendar. Plan on the meeting going for at least fifteen minutes longer than it is scheduled to. Add another fifteen minutes in case it goes even longer than that; if you are ever actually in one of these meetings then this last little bit of time is where you will want to drop some heavy hints that you have to get going. The best way to plan a meeting is to have an agenda and an awareness of the person you are meeting with; lay out the details for them and know if they (and you!) are the type of person who is inclined to be drawn into sidetracking conversations.

## Keep To Your Schedule

Make sure that you are committed to your schedule, especially when it comes to time wasters and business details. Set aside a block of time each day where you take care of messages on the computer and on the phone, and deal with them in the time allotted.

Each day in a business will bring new challenges in time requirements, so it is best to keep a detailed

calendar from week to week. Make sure that you have a very good idea on what work you need to get accomplished and how long it is likely to take, and always allow for a little bit of extra time for emergencies or unforeseen difficulties. Time is very limited, even for the person who works from home, so good management skills and solid planning are the key to reducing stress.