How can you manage your time better as an entrepreneur?

Morning routines, time hacks, and other tricks for saving time are all very helpful for entrepreneurs whose time really is money. Mickaël Cabrol and Hubert Reynier offer some good tips that you can use to stay organised and avoid being overwhelmed.

Temps de lecture : minute

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We always have good intentions of staying on top of things: a fresh start after time off, a new calendar, and a promise to put our business in order. But good intentions go down the drain pretty quickly when there are urgent matters at stake like calling clients back, getting lunch with a partner, meeting with a journalist, having a meeting with investors, being here and there, basically being everywhere at once. Unlike an X-Man outfit, the CEO's attire needs to be adaptable for just about anything, and have impeccable time management. If being everywhere at once isn't your style, remember that managing your time takes a while to master, but time and energy spent on being organised is never lost. Here are 5 key tips to help you manage everything.

Calendar, telephone, and emails: time to get organised

Managing your calendar requires time, but if you sacrifice one hour at the beginning of each month and 20 minutes every Monday to managing it, you will be off to a good start. It's a good investment of time. For more

clarity, separate your pressing tasks from the more open time slots. Focus on your important or urgent tasks and decide which ones can wait a bit longer. The only exception is that you can never push back a pre-agreed deadline.

Make sure you separate your long-term "corporate" calendar from your weekly calendar. Your corporate calendar should reflect your managerial role, which means defining and executing your business strategy (ideally, plan it from September to December of the following year).

Managing emails and phone calls can be very time-consuming. Make yourself a couple of rules and stick to them for an efficient time management routine. Don't check your emails more than four times a day (9:00, 11:30, 3:00, and 6:00) and limit the number of emails you send by not responding to the flock of received emails automatically, instead, set aside a specific time for the responses. It is always good to make sure that your inbox is empty at the end of each day, using the archive tool for the emails that you weren't able to respond to that day.
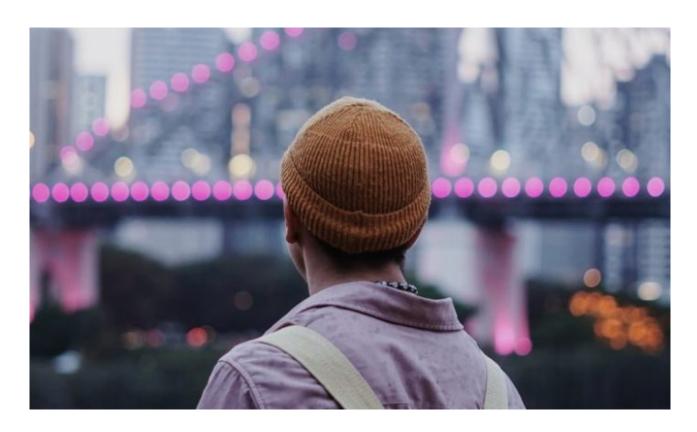
Finally, try and leave voice or text messages rather than having an entire phone chat. Filter your calls in order of importance. To help do this it is important to register as many contacts in your phonebook as possible.

Meetings: time that can be saved

It's no secret that having meetings for the sake of having meetings is one of the biggest ways to waste time in business. According to a study done by OpinonWay in April 2017, employees spend about 4.5 hours a week in meetings, and you can double that number for the time spent planning for them! Only 52% of these meetings are considered productive. But you can change that to be better at time management!

For starters, limit the length of all your meetings to 45 minutes. Prefer conference calls and fix a maximum time length. Be strict with your schedule. An appointment or meeting must start and end on time.

Three more essentials: turn off your mobile to lead by example; always ask for a very clear order of business (there's no point in having a meeting without a defined goal or a plan of action); finally, encourage concise presentations like mind-mapping and limit the number of slides in presentations.

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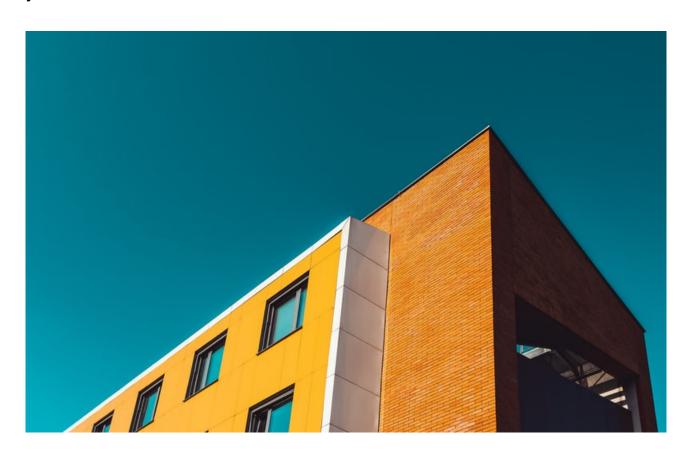How are millennials shaping the future of work?

Relationships with employees: time to interact together

Relationships with your team are essential to effectively manage your time. Think *agile* and make your employees aware of their

responsibilities. Focus on feedback and repetition rather than the traditional waterfall effect. Delegate your tasks as much as possible and always give tasks to people you trust rather than doing it yourself.

You want to keep your door closed, all the while making sure that others know that it is always open in case there is a problem. Use the *wandering around management* technique by walking around your business to see who's there and working. It's a good way to engage with your employees and create a bond. In addition, you can learn about smaller things that are going on and small decisions can be made during this time.

Overall, value your employees. Know their strengths and they will help you be more time-efficient.

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Relationships outside your company: time spent sparingly

Business trips and meetings outside the office are time-consuming and honestly being present *IRL* isn't always necessary. When you can, delegate these tasks and "sacrifice" your presence a little. For those who absolutely need to see you, politely offer video conferences, it'll give a boost to your time management. The quality and time-saving aspect of these are unbeatable.

Apply the principle of receiving guests rather than visiting them and avoid lunches or dinners that last more than two hours. You should also try to limit business lunches, instead suggesting breakfasts when there is a real business case - and if there isn't, learn how to say no (and thank you).

Keep any talk about future plans or initiatives that aren't ready yet as short as possible. You aren't there to "produce" or "compensate" so don't try to be an expert, rather position yourself as the decision-maker. Accepting that you don't know some of the technical details.
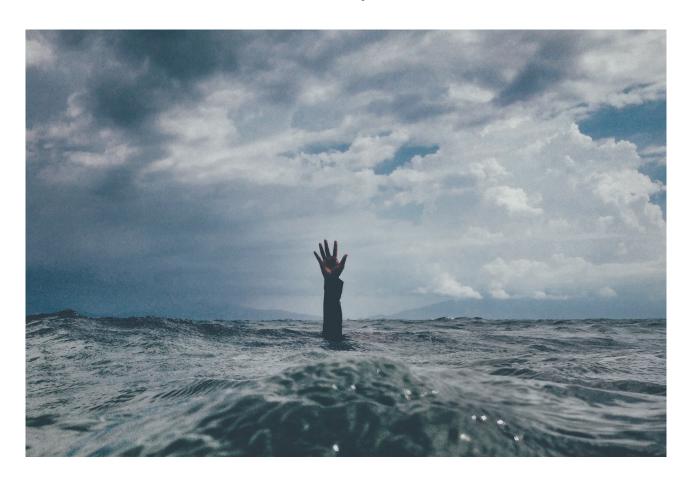
Holidays and the work-life balance: time for yourself

These tips should hopefully help you manage your balance between your professional and personal life better, ideally freeing you up to spend (a little) less time working. Your involvement shouldn't keep you from regularly taking holidays to recharge your batteries.

The ability to disconnect or work remotely isn't just for your employees, you can do it too. You won't set a bad example by taking a half-day to

work remotely each week! It is actually a good way to take a step back and get on top of things on your own terms.

Finally, stay in shape and exercise, even if it is just to clear your head. Read a book. Go to an exhibition, watch a film, see a friend, pick your kids up from school. Take a nap (if you don't have to get your kids after school…). Take a break. Breathe. Take *your* time. You will work better.

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