

# 10 productivity hacks: How you can achieve more with less time

Take control of your tasks, time and schedule! Use these powerful ways to be the master of your schedule and tasks and get more done in less time.

*“Productivity is never an accident. It is always the result of a commitment to excellence, intelligent planning, and focused effort.” — Paul J. Meyer*

➔ **What is a productivity hack?** A productivity hack is a shortcut, skill, trick, method or work-around that increases productivity and efficiency in an ingenious or inspirational way. But a productivity hack is useless or even harmful if it doesn't help you drive strategic change. Being more efficient at doing something contrary to achieving your goals won't help you succeed. (See exhibit on back.)

➔ **Hack 1: One repository** Use OneNote (or Evernote or a similar program) for notetaking, ideas, planning, saving articles. It auto saves, eliminates paper, allows access across all your devices, and is always with you. Use Google Drive, OneDrive or a similar cloud storage site for files, both for backup and access across devices.

➔ **Hack 2: Task lists** Use OneNote (or Evernote) for task lists. Checking off completed tasks is positive reinforcement.

Use an A-B-C task list, review it daily, and move items to today's list. Tackle harder tasks first, when you are fresh.

➔ **Hack 3: Routines** Routinize the usual so no forethought is needed. Nest automatic routines: e.g. early morning email in the bathroom, phone calls and audio books while driving.

➔ **Hack 4: Eliminate** Ask, why do this? Eliminate or say no to unneeded, non-strategic activities. Put the ball in the other person's hands and schedule follow-up. Then move on.

➔ **Hack 5: Speed it up** Analyze the process for repetitive activities that take time and look for shortcuts. Time yourself and try to beat your P.R.

➔ **Hack 6: Reuse** Find what's already been built – odds are what you need is on the web for the taking. Build it once, reuse it over and over. Look for your previous work to copy or use as a template.

➔ **Hack 7: Time blocking - including the fun** Schedule blocks of time during the week, the month and the year for work and for personal activities.

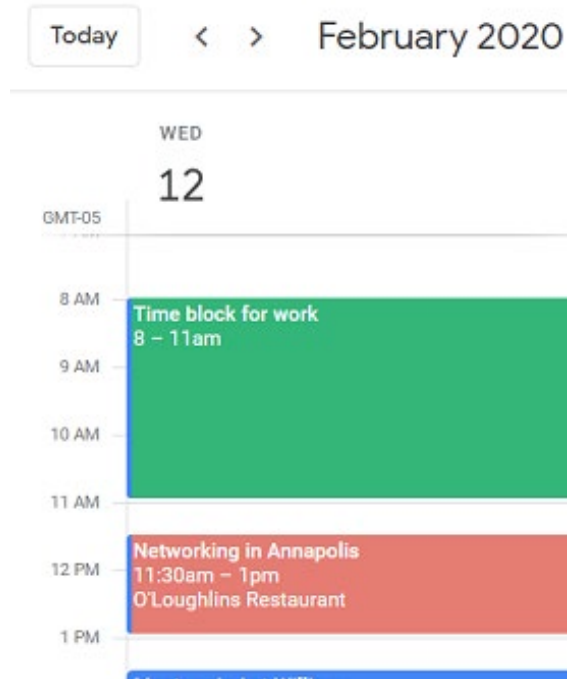
The screenshot shows a productivity application interface. On the left is a sidebar with a list of sections: Networking meetings, Olympia Fields, Planning workshops, Poetry, Presentations, PWs, Rebecca White, Research notes, Running, Sailing, Sales School, Schreffler seminar - Org..., Selby Scaggs, Schedule, SMC estate, SMC medical, and SMC Services. The main area displays a page titled 'Productivity hacks' with a table of contents. Below this is a 'Today' section for Saturday, February 8, 2020, with a list of tasks including 'Productivity presentation', 'Manage Streak pipelines', 'Write Elizabeth's schedule', 'Write Steph's schedule', 'Pay MDDOT', 'Email EYC LRPC members', 'Call EYC re Margaret', and 'BBQ at EYC'. To the right is a 'Completed tasks' section for Wednesday, January 22, 2020, with a list of completed items: 'Website punch list', 'Social media posts', 'Navy tix!', 'Business cards', 'Do pricing analysis', and 'Figure out profit margin'. Further right is a 'List 1-22-2020' section for Wednesday, January 22, 2020, with a list of tasks: 'Solicit new clients for run coaching', 'Solicit new business coaching clients', 'f/u Maryland Hall', and 'Sign Cornerstone contract'.

Include slack time: Don't schedule things back-to-back.  
Put time in between for transition and recovery.

Break up big tasks so they are not overwhelming.

Schedule social media and ignore it otherwise.

Try the Pomodoro Technique: Break down tasks into 25-minute blocks. Between blocks, take a 5-minute break. After 4 Pomodoros, take a 15-30 minute break. Being on the clock, you can focus on one task and not shift focus or multitask, and ignore email, Facebook, texts and other distractions.



➔ **Hack 8: Set alarms, timers, and reminders.** Your calendar, smartphone and smart speaker are your best friends:

- Place an automated trigger in your path to prompt you to do what you have scheduled or want to make into a habit.
- Set timers for time blocks.
- Set up meeting and appointment notifications: Program alert times that work for you.

➔ **Hack 9: Take control and make the most of meetings** Take control if you can: You propose and set the time and place for meetings and calls.

Create and stick to timed agendas. End meetings on time – no matter what, short of an emergency!

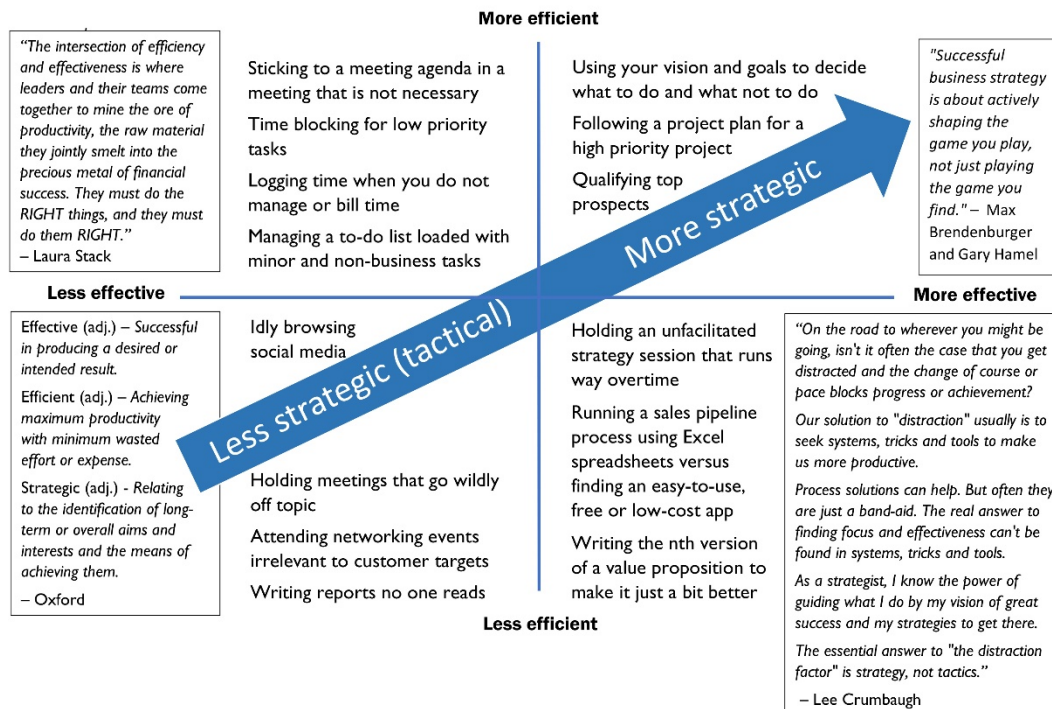
Park off-topic items on a “bike rack” for later consideration...time allowing.

To learn more and make more connections, be early to important meetings and events and stay after.

➔ **Hack 10: Plan projects and document processes** Plan project steps and milestones. Assign timelines and responsibilities. Set updates and alerts. Try project planning software such as Teamwork.com.

Define and document processes...and then delegate what you can.

**Efficiency only makes sense when it is effective and strategic**



© Forrest Consulting, 2020



Better strategy.  
Better decisions.  
Better results.

© Forrest Consulting, 2020. All rights reserved. Lee Crumbaugh, SMP President

leec@strategicbusinessleader.com | office 1-630-909-9360 | cell 1-630-730-9619 | www.forrestconsult.com