



Best Practices: 6 Tried-And-True Time Management Tips

More billable hours *and* more time for my personal life? What magic lamp do I have to rub for that miracle? Well, in lieu of the lamp, get your hands (and head) around some of these tried-and-true productivity enhancers:

1) Use a gatekeeper. Sounds simple, but too many of us fail to do it. Train your assistant to protect you from unwanted interruptions.

2) Set up telephone-free time. Again, training is the key. Educate your clients as to when you usually accept or return calls; you may be surprised at how they comply. Mark off on your daily schedule the times when you accept phone calls and when you don't — and make sure your gatekeeper knows them.

3) Learn to handle your email efficiently. Save up to an hour a day by having your assistant check your email, get rid of the junk and reply to routine correspondence. Also use your junk mail filters and know how to use folders to organize your email. And turn the instant notification off so that your computer doesn't ding every time you have email (it's too easy to stop what you are doing to read).

4) Close your door. Nothing stops unnecessary conversations like a closed door. Educate your partners about your work habits. They won't be offended if they understand when you need to be left alone.

5) Give yourself sacred time. Plan a time with no interruptions — every day. Take 20 to 30 minutes to review

your progress, prioritize work and set your schedule.

6) Under-promise and over-deliver. Give yourself a reserve of time. If you can prepare the contract by Thursday noon, tell your client you'll have it done by Friday afternoon. Deliver it on Thursday and you'll be a hero.