

Structuring Your Day for Maximum Productivity

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Two things make your day productive - the first is what you do and the second is how you do it.

A number of advisors have begun using a simple idea to dramatically increase the return they get on their day, by ensuring they're focusing on high return activities. Making your time in the office productive requires intentionally stepping back at the start of the week and asking "what is the highest and best use of this week as a whole and each day within this week?"



Some advisors spend 15 or 20 minutes planning the week ahead, identifying their biggest priorities. Some do this at the end of the day Friday, others on Saturday or Sunday.

Just by doing that, advisors tell me they find their week has greater focus.

The other key to productivity is building consistent routines into your schedule, by using the tried and true approach of time blocking.

Routine simplifies our lives. Without routine, we'd all have to make so many individual decisions we'd spend most of our time deciding what to do rather than doing it.

Some of the most successful advisors have very consistent routines. Each day looks pretty much the same - as long as the routine is one that supports the right activities, it can boost your productivity dramatically.

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For many advisors, the best way to establish routine in your day is via time blocking, establishing time in your calendar for key activities.

Suppose you want to meet with your assistant Scott on Monday morning to lay out the week ahead. You can say to yourself - I need to talk to Scott when we both get in. Or you can say to Scott - "let's book a 15 appointment for 8:30 every Monday morning and build it into our routines."

Or perhaps you decide to spend at least three hours a week talking to prospects. You can try to find time during the week as it is available - or you can block off an appointment at 10 on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, focused on picking up the phone and calling prospects.

Here's another example. An advisor who participated in my video interview series decided to ramp up his number of client phone reviews.

He did a couple of things. First, he blocked off every afternoon from 2 to 4 for telephone reviews.

Then he sat down with his assistant and said: "I've set aside 10 time slots each week for phone meetings, one at 2 and one at 3 each afternoon. Your job is to fill those slots. Let's talk about who you should approach about those meetings. And let's talk about what needs to go out to clients in advance of those, an agenda, a PDF of their statement, anything else I want to refer to on the call."

As a result of building a key activity into his routine, he dramatically ramped up the number of phone meetings with clients.

When you think about it, you can approach your week two ways. You can have the desired activities drive the structure of your week. You can ask each Monday what you want to do this week and then fit it into your calendar.

Or you can have the structure of your week drive your activity. You can carve out the same hours each week to meet with staff and for phone meetings, client meetings and to contact prospects.

Putting these hours into your calendar and incorporating them into your routine dramatically increases the chances of making high return activities happen. You can deviate from your schedule if something more important comes up, but having a consistent routine for at least part of our week makes us much more productive.



** Dan Richards conducts programs to help advisors gain and retain clients and is an award winning faculty member in the MBA program at the University of Toronto. To see more of his written and video commentaries and to reach him, go to www.strategicimperatives.ca.*

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