

Distractions Can Impact on Productivity in the Workplace

The most focussed business professionals do admit that distractions occur on a daily basis in the workplace. Regardless of the type of distraction or when they occur, the result is usually the same, the disruption of a productive day. There are several ways to keep distractions at a minimum, thereby allowing the employee to complete assigned tasks.

Whitson Gordon, a contributor to the 'Lifehacker' website, in his article 'Top 10 Ways to Defeat Distractions and Get Your Work Done' lists some applicable methods that can be used to avoid workplace distractions.

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Many employees believe that they are great multi-taskers. However, doing more than one task at a time, means that one's attention is being shared. Any task worth doing should be done well and should be given a one's full attention. For example, when using a computer at work, pop-ups should be blocked as they could become distractions. In going full screen, one's focus can be kept solely on the task at hand. If this is not an option, delete any extra icons that may be visible and close all other open windows.

Silence Notifications

Most business people rely heavily on their mobile devices to keep them on track and updated on tasks and meetings throughout the day. Although these notifications have the ability to aid a

productive person who wishes to be kept abreast of events as they happen, they can also be distracting. When attention is needed to complete a challenging task, it is advisable to limit notifications. If this is not possible, consider applying a silent tone to the notifications during your most productive time. This will allow for the uninterrupted completion of a large percentage of your tasks for the day.

Schedule the Day

Most persons suffer from a 'slump' period during the day. However, there is also a time in the day when employees are their most productive. It is wise to recognise these periods of the day and schedule assignments around them. Thus, important and complex undertakings can then be scheduled to coincide with productive periods. Moreover, writing a to-do-list can help by keeping a person attentive to the tasks needed to be undertaken. By focussing on getting the list completed, attention to any unnecessary interruption is limited.

Prevent Co-Worker Interruptions

There are some employees that can be a bit chatty. They are usually very friendly, but when there is work to be done, they can be an unwanted distraction. A pair of headphones work well in sending the message that the individual is occupied and does not want to be disturbed. If this does not work, a more direct approach may be needed.

Track Time Spent on Activities

It is important to track time spent on work activities. Less important tasks that come up throughout the day may take up valuable time that should be spent on your core duties. If too much time is spent on simpler and less important tasks, this is the time to re-organise your work day in order to make the most out of it

Offload Distractions For Later

Depending on the nature of an employee's work, it may be difficult to keep distractions at bay. However, it is possible to prevent them from becoming a disruption to the daily work flow. For example, a notepad can be used to jot down any activities or distractions that are not critical to the current work flow to be dealt with at a later time.

Break Down Tasks

When a task seems impossibly huge, it is very easy to lose focus and become distracted. One way to stay motivated on a challenging project is to divide it into smaller tasks. It is easier to motivate oneself into carrying out smaller tasks.

Train the Brain to Focus

It is easy to get distracted with unwanted thoughts especially when encountered with challenging tasks. If it is difficult to control your thought patterns, then it would be useful to train the brain to focus on the task on hand. In other words, when interruptive thoughts occur the brain must be guided back on track. One can train the brain to do this by trying to stay focussed for as little as five minutes and then slowly increasing the time interval until the brain is able to focus for longer periods.

To conclude, there are days when distractions keep employees from completing assigned tasks. However with a little determination, concentration and motivation it is possible to limit these distractions and enjoy a productive day.