

Cultivating A Productivity Mindset

If you talk about it, it's a dream, if you envision it, it's possible, but if you schedule it, it's real." - Anthony Robbins, Author of *Get the Edge*



Every day we are faced with a myriad of choices; “staying in bed for a half an hour longer or getting up earlier to exercise, buying a beautiful new dress or suit or investing that money in a retirement savings plan, taking the stairs or the elevator.” Life is filled

with limitless choices, but even when they are difficult we make them, often effortlessly. What makes the real difference is when we make a personal decision to recommit daily to our choices- to own them!

Productivity is defined as “*the measure of the efficiency of a person, machine, factory, system, etc., in converting inputs into useful outputs.*” As employers become increasingly aware of employees’ contribution to organizational productivity, more emphasis is being placed on finding innovative ways to keep employees engaged and motivated, thereby ensuring greater results for the organization. The challenge with such an approach is that the perceived gain is often temporary. While employee engagement is extremely important, understanding the root cause of employee inefficiencies will translate to more sustainable results.

More often than not the major hindrance to productivity is the “mindset/culture” which exists within the organization. While we can’t force others to change their mindset/outlook, we can make a personal decision to make changes to our own mindset. Imagine the extraordinary productivity organizations could achieve if each individual decided to make a personal commitment to change?

Personally I think that the very same principles which are applied to a project can be adapted to our lives. When we decide to embark on a project, we always ensure that we have a detailed plan in place, we establish goals and objectives, we monitor progress and reevaluate goals, we update the plan. Why not use the very same method to help us achieve our personal productivity? Here are seven (7) simple steps to get you on the right track to improving your productivity:

1. Want it

As with any project, buy-in is key. You are the Project Manager and if you aren’t excited about your project, or fully committed, there is no way it is going to work. You can’t wish to be more productive, you have to truly want it, immerse yourself in the lifestyle and continuously work at maintaining it.

2. Write it down

So you’ve decided to commit to this personal productivity project, but what is really stopping you from breaking this decision just like you have a million other resolutions? If you want it to happen then you NEED to write it down. Get a post-it and a pen and write down your decision. Place it on your mirror or fridge or another prominent place in your home or office space. This will help to ensure that your productivity project is always top of mind.

3. *Select one or two areas that you wish to work on and set measurable objectives*

You want to be productive? That's a pretty broad statement! The key to a succeeding is taking this want and breaking it down into more specific areas you want to change and then setting measurable objectives. *E.g. You have identified that your lack of organizational skills is hindering your productivity. You can then decide that for the next six weeks you are going to work on your organizational skills as opposed to productivity on a whole.*

4. *Determine a detailed plan of action, establishing timelines for achieving different milestones*

This is where you plan the work you will need to put in, how you plan to achieve this work (process) and the tools you will need to succeed. You will also determine the length of time required for the project based on your goals and different milestones which will be sort of a checkpoint that you are going in the right direction.

5. *Do it!*

With your plan in place your main focus here is *doing the work* that you set out to do in your plan.

6. *Regularly review/re-evaluate your plan to determine progress and update plan where necessary*

While carrying out this project you will regularly review to see how close you are to achieving your objectives. You may realize that certain goals or objectives need to be reviewed or that your approach needs to be changed.

7. Detail Lessons Learned

Your project is completed but the work is not over as yet. A very crucial component of your project is establishing lessons learned. There may have been processes which worked better than others, results which were particularly noteworthy and other key information which is worth writing down. By establishing lessons learned and making notes of successes and challenges, you are setting the pace for how other personal projects will go.

Cultivating a productivity mindset may seem like an insurmountable task but even the most meaningful work seems daunting at first. By making daily choices and acting on these choices, there is so much you can achieve.

About the National Competitiveness and Productivity Council (NCPC)

Established in October 2013, The National Competitiveness and Productivity Council (NCPC) is responsible for the identification of key issues related to competitiveness and productivity in Saint Lucia.

The NCPC and its Technical Secretariat is committed to providing the necessary advocacy and research to produce timely and effective recommendations to policymakers on issues that affect both competitiveness and productivity on island. For more information about productivity or on the NCPC, visit www.stluciancpc.org; www.facebook.com/stluciancpc, call 468-55718/5576 or send an e-mail to stluciancpc@gmail.com