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NEXT STEP

BAD HABITS YOU NEED TO BREAK TO BE MORE PRODUCTIVE



reservoir of mental energy. If you keep putting off tough tasks for later in the day just because they're scary, you're basically saving them for when you're at your productive worst. Even if you're not a morning person, you will never be satisfied with your output. So dig into the difficult stuff early in the morning or with plenty of time in hand.

8. TAKING YOUR PHONE TO BED

We're all guilty of this one. For some reason, we feel that watching YouTube videos is the best sleep-time routine, whereas it's probably the thing keeping us up till odd hours. Blue light emitted by tabs, laptops and smartphones plays an important role in our mood, energy level and sleep quality. Sunlight also contains blue light and when we're directly exposed to it, it halts the production of melatonin, the sleep-inducing hormone. That's why we get sleepy as we go through the day. But if you're still getting exposed to blue light at 12 in the night, it's going to interfere with your ability to fall asleep. Result: lethargy all throughout the next day.

Best thing you could do for yourself is to stay away from your devices right after dinner. TV is okay as long as you're seated far enough from the set.

9. OVER-INDULGING YOUR SWEET TOOTH

You can't function without sugar. Too little and you're tired; too much and your mind is all over the place. Scientists advise you to limit your intake to around 25 grams pre-work. This doesn't mean that you should take these 25 grams any way you like. Refined sugar in junk food like soda and processed foods give you an energy boost that lasts only 20 minutes or so. Brown rice, lentil, whole-grain and potatoes contain complex carbs that release their energy slowly, allowing you to retain your focus for longer lengths of time.

AMIYA HALDER

Observe your cubicle long enough and you'll start picking up on a slippery pattern of inefficiency. Letting go now and then is fine, but if your bad habits are getting the better of you and you don't even notice until the damage is done, it's time you sit down and figure things out before your creativity takes a serious hit.

Here are nine of the most common behaviours you may be exhibiting. Get a hold on these pesky troublemakers and enjoy the high, professional and creative, that comes with improved self-control.

1. SURFING THE WEB LIKE A ZOMBIE

In positive psychology, "flow, also known as the zone, is the mental state of operation in which a person performing an activity is fully immersed in a feeling of energised focus, full involvement, and enjoyment in the process of the activity." How do you achieve that? 15 consecutive minutes of focus. Research suggests the workers in a flow state are five times more productive. But every time you log in to Facebook, you effectively pull out the flow state and it'll take another 15 minutes to get back into it. Pull out enough times a day and you can go through an entire day without experiencing flow.

2. STUBBORN PERFECTIONISM

Writers like Ernest Hemingway, Kurt Vonnegut and Haruki Murakami are self-professed early risers who started their mornings with writing. Writers will spend countless hours and pages on material they might never in put in the book. And yet, the average person becomes paralysed at the very thought of starting on something. We tell ourselves it's "no good" before we've even written a line or jotted down an idea. So quit the overanalysing and give your ideas time to incubate.

3. MULTIPLE MEETINGS IN A WEEK

While a lot of us are reformed meeting-addicts, many are yet to change their ways. Nothing wastes time like meetings, especially in the age of e-mail and Facebook Messenger. Meetings are time-consuming and draining. If absolutely unavoidable, inform members well in advance so they're prepared to give their

fullest and participate. Stick to the schedule, don't go over time and you'll find that people are a hundred times more focussed.

4. REPLYING TO E-MAILS RIGHT AWAY

Yes, it's good to be alert and not delay work-related communication. But a lot of people, especially those who deal with a high volume of correspondence, allow their e-mail and messages to be a constant companion of their work lives. It's pretty obvious how this can be counter-productive. If you're on one these people, set aside a specific time(s) every day to respond to messages. And if you're worried about offending a customer or a client, set up an auto-responder to notify their sender

when you'll be checking your e-mail again.

5. FIVE MORE MINUTES

How many times have you woken up and hit the snooze button and woken up again to be groggier than the first time? Chances are your brain was in the middle of a new cycle and your second alarm messed it up. You might end up going through the day without ever shaking off the grogginess. So get into habit of getting up at the scheduled time if you want to have a non-excruciating morning and a more productive day.

6. MULTI-TASKING

Multi-tasking is a hoax. In fact, substantial research confirms that multi-tasking or

attempting to multi-task, which is in fact what we actually do, is less effective than doing a single thing at a time. Researchers at Stanford found that when you try to do more than one thing at once, your brain loses to ability to perform either successfully. They even found that test subjects who believed that multi-tasking works for them were doing worse than those who were doing a single thing. Multi-tasking can severely disorganise your thoughts because you're dealing with multiple channels of information, which might not even be connected.

7. DELAYING THE DIFFICULT STUFF

As you go through the day, you exhaust your

WINNING BACK LOST CUSTOMERS

INFOGRAPHIC BY: Shahriar Sharif

Does your industry have high turnover? Perhaps it's time you started thinking about these lost customers.

1. Identify the ones you want to win back
You don't want someone who will depart again soon. Also if they were hard to work with, it might be better to just let them go. You could also try and predict the lifetime value of each customer to identify the ones worth winning back.

2. Find out why they left
Research suggests customers whose discord is price are more likely to return than customers who left because of quality, who in turn are more likely to return than those who left for both. Answering this question can provide a company valuable insight.

3. Make the right offer
Once you know the reason behind a customer leaving, give them an offer based on that. A customer who left because of price can be offered a discount while someone who cancelled because of quality can be given an upgrade. You could also offer a bundle, i.e. a combination of both.

4. Take responsibility and measure the costs and returns
If customers leave because of your own mistakes, take responsibility for it and fix it. They may still choose not to stay, but giving them a nice experience may lead to their referring you to others. Also measure the costs against the returns of the offers you roll out to exes.

A telecom measured the ROI of its winback strategies, which are outlined below:

UPGRADE > DISCOUNT > BUNDLE

SOURCES: Harvard Business Review | American Express Open Forums

Making a DIFFERENCE

Bangladesh is rapidly moving towards middle income status by 2021. Our businesses definitely offer immense opportunities for the growing economy and this diversity needs a stage for the stories untold. See Bangladesh make its mark on the global map as Making a Difference brings you our proudest success stories from across the country.



HOW TO ACT MORE CONFIDENT

Let's be real here, no matter how confident you are, there are always those intimidating situations where we could all use a little help. Be it your first interview or your first presentation, here are a few pointers that can help you.

DRESS WELL

No, you don't have to be dressed in million-dollar designer clothes to appear confident, but if you are comfortable in what you are wearing, you are more likely to give out a positive vibe. There's no denying that appearance does make a difference, and looking sharp indeed creates the impression of a more amicable personality. Not only appearance, but maintaining a good hygiene and a healthy lifestyle, also contributes to the aspect.

IMPROVE YOUR POSTURE

Stand straight and walk with your shoulders pulled back, and while standing balance your weight across both feet so that you can be still. Slouching, and even fidgeting are often associated with anxiety, which automatically makes you unconfident.

CHANGE YOUR BODY LANGUAGE

Too much hand movement can appear anxious, but when done right, hand gestures can be a vital

part of the process. Keeping your arms at waist level, make most of your gestures within that region to seem bolder. Also, slightly lean in while listening to others. This gives people the impression that you are interested, and makes you seem more confident.

SHAKE HANDS FIRMLY

A firm handshake instantly makes you more approachable. Grip the other person's hand firmly, and maintain eye contact. A good handshake shouldn't last longer than 2-3 seconds. For those of you with sweaty palms, keep a tissue to wipe off the sweat before shaking hands.

SPEAK SLOWLY AND CLEARLY

Take a moment to organise your thoughts before you start speaking to avoid stammering or jumbling up words. This will not only relax you, but it will also make you seem confident and in charge. Moreover, it will help other people understand what you are saying better and will induce a genuine interest from others in the topic.

SMILE OFTEN

A natural smile can instantly make you seem more approachable. Not only does it make others feel more welcome, they will also find it easier to talk to you. If you have trouble

keeping a natural smile up, smile briefly and then switch to a neutral expression. Avoid giggling, as it can come across as nervous or forced.

STOP IMAGINING WHAT OTHER PEOPLE ARE THINKING

This is one of the main reasons why we get so self-conscious! When you focus on your qualities, and not how you appear to others, you will appear more confident.

SOCIALISE MORE

Practice makes perfect. So, the more you go out and talk to new people, the more confident you will become over time. Set yourself personal goals on the number of new people you want to meet at each event. This way, you will soon get over your fear of challenging situations, and find it easier to talk to people.

EMBRACE YOUR FLAWS

Be honest with yourself and accept that you have limitations, but also the fact that you possess some amazing qualities that others do not which makes you special and talented. If you're struggling to do this, make a list of all your accomplishments, and constantly remind yourself about it. You'll be surprised at how big the list really is!

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