

Stop Multitasking – Start Selling

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The situation:

- ✓ Brains are most efficient at one activity at a time.
- ✓ Don't let a sense of hurry get in the way of success.
- ✓ Read this column without the TV on.

It's time to debunk a myth among sales people, now, before it costs sales professionals and companies anymore time and money: Multitasking does not save time or money.

NeuroImage, a science journal, says that managing two mental tasks at the same time significantly reduces the brain power available on either one. *The Journal of Experimental Psychology* found that it takes your brain four times longer to recognize and process each thing you're working on when you switch back and forth among tasks.

Think about it. If it takes you ten minutes to get oriented to the new task every time you switch gears, and you switch gears ten times a day, that's one hour and forty minutes of wasted time.

Sales professionals don't have one hour and forty minutes to waste each day. To reclaim your day, increase your sales and refocus your thinking, take the following steps to stop multitasking.

Turn off the message alert button on your email. One of my clients in financial sales, routinely stopped what she was doing every time her new message notice appeared on the corner of her screen; she opened the message and read it. When we met for the first time, she checked her new messages while we were talking. After she checked the messages, I had to repeat what I said. Bad use of time. Immediately responding to new messages wastes your time.

Do not create email and talk on the phone. Ever been on a conference call with your sales team and you could hear the clicking of the keys in the background? The person was clearly not engaged in the sales call, and if prodded probably couldn't tell you what the call was about.

Look at it this way - have you ever been lost when driving? Do you reach over and turn down the radio? Brains work best one task at a time.

If multitasking does not work, how can you get your sales calls made, proposals completed and appointments scheduled? Put together "like tasks". Group all of your phone calls, emails to send, proposals to write, filing, and reading together. Your brain can focus on one task at a time and through repetition gets increasingly more efficient.

Finally, determine when you are going to execute on tasks. In my last article, I mentioned that my client checks his email "Waiting For" file at a set time. He has a set time on his calendar for checking and tracking follow-up items. Block time in your calendar to get the work done.

Stop multitasking. Start proactively planning and executing on your day. Watch your sales grow.