ITML Institute
IT Management and Leadership Institute

Community, Technology, Leadership and Career Advancement.

An eBook from the
IT Management & Leadership Institute

Executive Time Management 2.0
Prioritization is Only the Beginning

Managers and Knowledge Workers Work in Different Time Chunks

A Multi Time Zone Workforce

Maximize Your Productivity by Knowing Your Zone

Protect your schedule using the “Near-Time Far-Time” concept

Ten Things Your Department Can Do During Slower Work Times

Finding Department Productivity Killers

Time “on” and “in” Your Department

Meeting Times Based on Circadian Rhythms

Phone: 855-286-1110

www.ITMLInstitute.org
Info@ ITMLInstitute.org

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Executive Time Management 2.0
Prioritization is Only the Beginning

When most people think of time management, they generally think of to-do lists, task prioritization, and personal task management. While these are very valuable and time-tested techniques, as an executive, you have many additional opportunities to simultaneously increase your personal efficiency and maximize your team's growth and productivity.

To that end, this eBook, based on materials written by the ITML Institute Founder, Eric Bloom, discusses the following groundbreaking time management concepts and techniques designed specifically for executives and their management teams:

1. Managers and Knowledge Workers Work in Different Time Chunks
2. Spend Time "on" and "in" Your Department
3. Five Advantages of a Multi Time Zone Workforce
4. Protect your schedule using the "Near-Time Far-Time" concept
5. Ten Places to Find Department Productivity Killers
6. Strategically Picking Meeting Times Based on Individual and Team Circadian Rhythms
7. Maximize Your Productivity by Knowing Your Zone
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9. About the IT Management & Leadership Institute

Part 1

Managers and Knowledge Workers Work in Different Time Chunks

As managers, we work in 30 minutes and 60 minute time frames. That is to say, our schedules tend to be filled with half-hour and one-hour meetings. We learn how to efficiently move from topic to topic, conference room to conference room, and committee to committee. Our hands-on work, such as answering emails, writing performance reviews, writing status reports are also done in 30 and 60 minute timeframes because we work on them between meetings. I'm not making a value judgment as to whether this is good or bad, I'm simply making a statement that this is how it is. For a busy manager to survive, they must learn to work under these circumstances, and the more senior your job becomes, the harder it becomes.

Knowledge workers tend to work in three hour segments. That is to say, they start working on a particular project, writing a computer program, designing a building, developing a marketing plan, etc. They get in zone. They get totally engrossed in the task and a combination of insights, creativity, and high productivity are the result.

Speaking for myself, as a knowledge worker, when writing these columns, designing and developing new management training classes, or when writing a new keynote speech, I get in the zone and could go on for hours, until I get hungry, fall asleep from exhaustion, or nature calls.

As a manager, the problem is when you try to impose your schedule into a knowledge worker's day. If you do, you destroy their previously discussed creativity and productivity. Not to mention destroy their morale and motivation. To avoid this potential consider doing the following:

- Plan your staff meetings around natural breaks, most notably, first thing in the morning, just after lunch, or at the end of the day
- If they look deep in thought, don't interrupt them, once out of the zone it's difficult or impossible to get back to exactly the same place
- If appropriate, give the option to go to a meeting rather than requiring it
- Have meetings at predicable times so they can plan their work around them
- If they are in cubes, let them wear headphones as long as they can hear the fire alarms and are not bothering other people
- If possible, don't have your best knowledge workers in cube on main walkways, loud employees and hallway conversations can break their concentration

As a manager, this may sound like you must really go out of your way to make those in your group more productive. Well, yes it is and yes you should. After all, the more productive they are, the better it is for the company, and by association, the better it is for you personally as their manager.

When I was in a management role it was never above me to do the coffee run or do the photocopying if that's what it took to get the job done. I believe that as managers it's our job to make our team as productive as possible. Back to the topic at hand, if that means trying to schedule meetings around my team's "zone time", then I'll try to do it and suggest that you consider doing the same. I know that when I was a knowledge worker doing software development, business analysis, software testing, or other similar tasks, I really appreciated it when my manager allowed me the time and schedule to do my work right. Later in my career, I found myself paying it forward by giving the same opportunity to those who worked for me.

The primary advice and takeaways from today's column is to know that:

- Managers tend to work in 30 minute and 60 minute time frames
- Knowledge workers tend to work in three hour time frames
- When managers impose manager timeframes on knowledge workers creativity and productivity suffer

Until next time, manage well, manage smart, and continue to grow.

Part 2

Spend Time "on" and "in" Your Department

The idea of spending time "on" and "in" your department is best described using the example of a small one-person consulting firm specializing in management consulting. Like most small companies, the owner, has two primary responsibilities; first, generating revenue by doing hands-on consulting and second, trying, to find future consulting assignments. The problem is that if you try to maximize your revenue by spending all your time working on your current client, when your consulting engagement ends, you don't have your next client lined up. Alternatively, if you spend too much time marketing, you run the danger of not properly servicing your current client and/or reducing your billability.

Department managers have a similar dilemma. That is to say, if you spend too much time "In" your department working on tasks performed within the department, you don't have time to properly manage your staff and/or perform manager-level tasks such as salary planning and budgeting. Alternatively, if you spend too much time "on" your department, performing general management functions, then you run the risk of not properly managing your staff.

One of the hardest things for self-employed consultants and first-line managers is to properly divide their time between these two types of activities. This phenomenon is doubly true if the manager is in a player/coach type role where he/she officially has both managerial and individual contributor type responsibilities.

Some of the reasons that this balance is hard to achieve are:

- The pressure to complete department tasks on time and under budget prevents you from performing required administrative processes.
- It's more fun and personally gratifying to perform the tasks you like best (management or task oriented) and ignore other important tasks.
- It takes great discipline to go outside your comfort zone and work on items that you know should be done, but are afraid you can't do properly and/or are intimidated with the task in general.
- If you are a procrastinator by nature, it can be easy to delay work on managerial processes, such as writing performance reviews, particularly, if you have more interesting tasks to keep you busy. Then, you wake up one morning and realize that it's virtually impossible to get them all written in time to meet the required deadline.

Even under the best of circumstances, properly dividing your time between responsibilities can be extremely difficult, as anyone knows who has ever been in a professional role where you were 50% allocated to one task and 50% allocated to another. Unless you are very good and/or very lucky one of the tasks takes a back seat to the other or you find that you end up having two jobs, seemingly 100% allocated to each.

All that said, as a first-line manager or to anyone who has both supervisory and individual contributor type responsibilities, the following time management tips can help you manage your day.

1. General manager-related activities, such as writing performance reviews and budgeting, are generally scheduled months in advance. Put them on your calendar as soon as possible, even if they are months away.
2. Place meetings on your schedule for just you. These “me-only” meetings have two advantages. First, they build time into your day to get your important but not immediately required tasks done in a reasonable timeframe. Second, if an important issue arises, you will have a little flexibility in your schedule by converting your “me-only” meetings to other activities.
3. Delegate, delegate, delegate. One great thing about being a manager is that part of your job is to tell other people to do things. If you are overwhelmed with the quantity of work put on your shoulders, hand off some of it to the people in your team.
4. Prioritize your work and the work done by your department. As the expression goes, you can only fit one gallon of milk in a one gallon bottle. No matter how hard you work or how hard you push your team, there is only so much time and effort that can be expended. Proper prioritization will allow you to get the most important items completed and still hopefully provide a reasonable work/life balance for you and your team.
5. Work smart, not just hard. Look for tasks performed by you and your department that could be done more efficiently, or potentially not at all. Removing tasks from your plate provides you with more time to do other things. Removing and/or streamlining tasks performed by your team lightens their work load, thus providing you with additional opportunities to delegate your work to your team.

In closing, properly managing your time is not a panacea that will miraculously give you all the time you need to properly perform all your “on-department” and “in-department” tasks, but it can surely help.

The primary advice and takeaways from today’s column is to know that:

- If you spend too much time ”In” your department working on tasks performed within the department, you don’t have time to properly manage your staff.
- If you spend too much time “on” your department, performing general management functions, then you run the risk of not properly managing your staff.
- The combination of time saving techniques, proper time prioritization, and self-discipline can help you strike the proper balance between working “in” and “on” your department.

Until next time, manage well, manage smart, and continue to grow.

Part 3

Five Advantages of a Multi Time Zone Workforce

As a manager, having staff spread across the country or around the world is a mixed blessing at best. On the downside, managing staff in multiple locations causes various logistical issues, cultural divides, language hurdles, travel costs, and other problems. On the upside, time zones can provide you with increasable efficiencies. These business efficiencies include:

1. Cost effective 24-hour client service and technical support coverage
2. Cost effective 24-hour operational support
3. Maximized process throughput
4. Accelerated reiterative based projects
5. Maximizing technology utilization

Regarding **cost effective 24-hour client service and technical support coverage**, this is the most obvious advantage and the one most commonly experienced by customers of large companies. Employing staff at strategic locations around the world has four primary advantages:

- By following the sun and allowing people to work normal business hours (first shift) wherever they live, it makes it easier to attract and retain quality workers.
- There are cost advantages of hiring people in lower-wage locations.
- Having a worldwide presence can make it easier for you to sell your products and/or services worldwide.
- A geographical and culturally diverse workforce, if harnessed correctly, can provide incredible value when designing new products, defining new processes, and any other intellectual task that can be enhanced by multiple points of view.

Cost effective 24 hour operational support reference to internal company processes, such as managing a data center and monitoring manufacturing processes. When performing these tasks, having workers in multiple time zones has all of the advantages previously mentioned, plus the following, assuming that a physical presence is not required to perform the needed tasks:

- There is a lower chance of work fatigue because everyone is working during their local daylight hours. Given the critical importance of these types of jobs, time zone based workers can help improve both process quality and process safety.
- Technical workers can be very hard to find at a specific physical geographic location. Therefore, moving toward a multi-time zone operation has the additional advantage of allowing you to recruit new employees potentially worldwide.

A multi time zone workforce can help **maximized process throughput**, because work on your processes never stops. To properly maximize this advantage, design your processes in a way that follows the sun. For example, let's say you have a three-step process performed by a knowledge worker and each step requires on average five or six hours of work. In a one-shift operation, this task will most likely take three business days to complete. If your workers are strategically located seven or eight time zones apart, the task can be completed in one calendar day, thus reducing the overall time by two-thirds (one day instead of three).

Regarding **accelerated reiterative based projects**, there are many tasks that are reiterative by their nature, for example:

- Writing, proofreading and updating documents
- Writing, testing and correcting computer software
- Collecting data, performing analysis, and define additional data needs

If the steps related to each of these activities is performed in complementing time zones then work can be completed in half the time. For example:

1. A writer in the United States creates the first draft of a document, emails it to a proofreader in India, and then goes home for the evening.
2. The proofreader in India goes to work and the document is waiting for him/her to proofread. He/she proofreads the document, emails it back to writer in the United States, and goes home for the evening.
3. Steps #1 and #2 repeat until the document is ready for publication.

For my readers working in Information Technology (IT), **maximize technology utilization** by performing high speed data analysis by utilizing the computing power on the employee's desktops while they are sleeping. As an example, picture this scenario. Your company has data analysts in Boston and a subsidiary in Sydney with 100 people who have desktop PCs that they use during business hours. Then, while the people in Sydney are sleeping, the business analysts in Boston are utilizing the power of their PCs to perform very computationally intense data analysis on previously collected customer data.

In closing, these are five great ways to take advantage of a world-wide workforce. Analyze your existing and/or potential workforce with the goal of defining new processes at your company that will allow your department to follow the sun.

The primary advice and takeaways from today's column is to know that:

- On the downside, managing staff in multiple locations causes various logistical issues, cultural divides, language hurdles, travel costs, and other problems.
- On the upside, time zones can provide you with increasable efficiencies.
- Analyze your existing and/or potential workforce with the goal of defining new processes at your company that will allow your department to follow the sun.

Until next time, manage well, manage smart, and continue to grow.

Part 4

Protect your schedule using the "Near-Time Far-Time" concept

As an executive, very often your most limited resource is your own time. This concept, which I have personally used for many years, has three great benefits:

1. Helps protect you from filling your schedule with meetings and events that are less than optimal toward meeting your business goals
2. Used in reverse, helps you schedule time with other busy people
3. Used in reverse, helps you secure the best possible people for your future projects

This may seem like extraordinary advantages for a time management technique, but it's true and this is how it works.

The underlying concept behind this technique is that people are much more protective of their commitments and schedule in the near-time (the next two or three weeks), than they are of their far-time (out two or three months from now). The reason for this phenomenon is that people generally have a strong mental picture of their short term:

- Business commitments and work deliverables
- Longer range projects nearing their delivery dates
- Problems which have arisen and must be dealt with
- Unforeseen business opportunities that have seemingly come out of the blue
- Personal time commitments, such as doctor appointments and kids' soccer games
- The uncomfortable feeling that your calendar is so filled with meetings that you will not have time to complete/perform the previously mentioned items

For all of these reasons, busy people are very protective of their short-term time because they can mentally calculate their short-term workload.

People's far-time schedule is much less defined.

- Many business commitments and work deliverables have not yet been assigned
- Long range projects are still viewed as being long-range
- Future problems have not as of yet raised their ugly heads
- Unforeseen business opportunities are still unforeseen
- Doctor appointments have not yet been scheduled
- Children's future soccer schedules have not yet been emailed to their parents

As a result of these future unknowns, peoples' future calendars and time commitments always seem to be less overwhelming and thus, they are more willing to add meetings to their schedules and commit to personal deliverables.

The suggestion here for you personally is to be as protective of your far-time as you are of your near-time. The reason is that time marches forward. Two or three months from now, today's far-time, will become tomorrow's near-time.

Regarding scheduling meetings with others, the further in the future that you try to schedule a meeting, the more likely it is that your meeting request will be accepted. There is, of course, the potential that the person will reschedule or cancel the meeting as time gets closer, but if they do, they will be less likely to cancel a second meeting. As an additional thought, when trying to schedule future meetings, be careful not to request days during known busy times for the person you are targeting. For example, if you would like to meet with the VP of Sales, don't try to schedule the meeting the last week of the month, quarter, or year. He/she will most likely want to leave these times open to close pending deals within the current period. Requesting a meeting at these times shows a lack of understanding of their workflow.

Regarding securing the best future project resources, managers are generally more knowledgeable of their current resource requirements than their future resource needs because current projects have not yet run late, future requests have not yet been asked, and future production and business issues have not yet come to light.

The primary advice and takeaways from today's column is to know that:

- People are much more protective of their commitments and schedule in the near-time (the next two or three weeks), than they are of their far-time (out two or three months from now).
- Be as protective of your far-time as you are of your near-time.
- Use this technique in reverse when trying to schedule meetings and/or gain commitments from others.

Until next time, work hard, work smart, manage well and continue to build your professional brand.

Part 5

Ten Places to Find Department Productivity Killers

My department is totally overworked and it's starting to burnout my team. I can't reduce my department's workload and I can't get permission to hire additional people. Any thoughts on what I should do?

Thanks for your question and I agree, you're in a difficult situation and I give you credit for trying to find ways to give your staff some relief. Given that you can't reduce your workload or increase your staff, my advice to you would be to look for:

1. Processes that can be streamlined
2. Non-mission critical tasks that can be postponed or discontinued
3. Internal department projects that can be postponed
4. Reporting processes that can be redesigned

What all of the above items have in common is that they reduce your team's activity. Having a keen eye for these productivity killers can have the effect of reducing your team's workload through the combination of fewer and/or improved processes and the removal of unrequired tasks.

A second potential way to reduce your department's overall workload is to look for things outside your department that have an adverse effect on your team's productivity. These types of items include:

1. Calls coming in from outside the department that reduce team performance
2. Cross-department projects in which your team members have been asked to participate
3. Required corporate training classes that can be temporarily postponed
4. Work coming to your group in the wrong or incomplete format, thus requiring extra work/processing/time by your department

Lastly, look for modifications to the input and output of your department's deliverables that could enhance your productivity, including the following:

1. Modifications in the way information is sent to your department, with the goal of reducing the preparation time needed to prepare incoming work for processing
2. Ways to modify your department's product output in a way that still meets your clients' needs, but is easier for your team to produce

The trick here is to carefully analyze your department's tasks, processes, obligations, and distractions in search of opportunities for incremental productivity improvement. Over time, multiple small improvements can have a very positive effect on your team's overall productivity and morale. Productivity improves for three primary reasons; first, there is less work to do, second, the tasks being performed each take a little less time, and third, there are fewer interruptions. From a morale perspective, your team will certainly enjoy having a little less work, but they will also truly appreciate that you, as their manager, are doing everything you can to reduce their workload.

As an additional suggestion, analyze which tasks are assigned to which employee. Some people can do things faster than others; you may find the opportunity to modify staff assignments with the goal of assigning tasks to the person that can complete them the most quickly and efficiently.

Lastly, don't forget to analyze your own workload, processes and responsibilities. Upon this analysis, you may find some small ways to improve your own productivity. This in turn will give you more time to optimize your team's productivity and even take on a task or two yourself.

The primary advice and takeaways from today's column is to know that:

- If your team is overworked and there is no relief in sight, look for ways to streamline your processes, postpone or discontinue non-mission critical tasks, and reduce interruptions that come from outside your department.
- Additionally, analyze your own workload with the goal of freeing up time to help your team on needed mission critical activities.

Until next time, work hard, work smart, manage well and continue to build your professional brand.

Part 6

Strategically Picking Meeting Times Based on Individual and Team Circadian

When during the workday are you most energetic, wide awake, and ready to take on the world? On the other side of that coin, when during the workday would you prefer to be taking a nap to recharge your internal batteries? Enough about you, when during the workday do you think your boss, staff, clients, customers and peers are most awake or half asleep?

The answers to the previous questions can be of great value to you in regard to your staff's productivity, when negotiating with your peers and customers, and when trying to get your boss to agree to a proposal that's near and dear to your heart.

The rationale behind how this works can best be described by explaining an old business trick. The trick is to negotiate a deal with someone when you are totally mentally awake and the person you are negotiating with is at slightly less than full capacity. No, I don't mean alcohol or other mental recreational substances; I mean a delicious bowl of pasta and meatballs (actually one of my favorites).

Imagine this scenario; you bring your future client out to lunch at your favorite restaurant. Your future client, by your recommendation, orders a big bowl of pasta with turkey meatballs. Meanwhile you decide to get a big salad with light dressing with the excuse that you're watching your weight. Then, right after the meal you start negotiating the contract. Guess who's wide awake and who's a little bit sleepy? Now guess who will probably fare better in the contract negotiation?

This story illustrates the advantage of knowing your daily mental cycles and the mental cycles of those around you. Listed below are a few practical applications of this technique:

- If you would like to have a very fruitful brainstorming session with your boss on an important business issue, schedule the meeting at a time of day when both you and your boss are as mentally alert as possible.
- If you want to reduce your department's productivity loss associated with weekly staff meetings, have it at a time of day when your staff, on average, is less mentally alert, leaving their most productive time of day for work on important tasks.
- If you are negotiating with a business peer about who gets the office overlooking the ocean and who gets the office overlooking the parking lot and the dumpsters, schedule the meeting when you are most mentally alert and he/she is less focused. Alternatively, invite him/her out for a nice pasta lunch, your treat :)
- If you are interviewing for a new job over lunch with a potential new employer, be very careful what you eat to assure you are on the top of your game. Maybe even have a cup of coffee before you go.

- If you are obliged to attend committee meetings where you have no vested interest other than to make an appearance, try to schedule the meetings when you are at your lowest mental strength during the workday.
- If you are giving an important presentation to upper management or a prospective client and want them fully engaged in the conversation, try to schedule it at a time when you, the presenter, and they, the audience, are as sharp and cognitively alert as possible.

This concept/technique is by no mean foolproof, but it does have merit. My goal in teaching you this technique is not so you can take advantage of others. As seen in the above examples, (except of course for the office facing the ocean) are ways that you can increase your team's work efficiency, maximize your personal productivity, and enhance your communication with others.

The primary advice and takeaways from today's column is to know that:

- Scheduling important meetings based on the time of day that you, your staff and others are at their best and worst mentally can be used to your advantage.
- The trick is to negotiate a deal with someone when you are totally mentally awake and the person you are negotiating with is at slightly less than full capacity.
- This concept/technique is by no mean foolproof, but it does have merit.

Until next time, work hard, work smart, manage well and continue to build your professional brand.

Part 7

Maximize Your Productivity by Knowing Your Zone

My department has more work than it can handle. We're working really hard, but we can't seem to keep up the workload. Any thought on ways I can increase my productivity?

Thanks for your question. My belief is that there are millions of other people asking the same question. I think the best way for me to answer you is to tell you what I do. I'm a big believer in working in your highest zone. The rest of this column will explain this statement.

Let me begin by explaining my concept of being in the zone. In the zone is being:

1. Mentally clear on the task to be performed
2. Highly focused on a specific task
3. Physically able to perform the task
4. Motivated to perform the task

By **Mentally Clear**, I mean having an exact understanding of what you want to do. It could be something simple, like deleting spam email, or something intense, like designing the new structure for your company's communication backbone.

By, **Highly Focused** I mean single-mindedness, namely, being able to free yourself from mental distractions, like thinking about other projects, all the emails you must answer, or a presentation you are making later in the day.

By **Physically Able**, I mean that at this moment you are able to perform the task. For example, I know that if I'm very tired, I have great difficulty doing mentally challenging work like writing my columns, answering important emails in a concise manor, or making important decisions.

By **Motivated**, I mean is this a task that you want to (or have to) work on right now.

For me personally, and I know anecdotally by speaking with others, that when people are truly in the zone on a task, regardless of the task's simplicity or complexity, you are more productive, more innovative, and do a better job. This powerful combination of productivity, innovation, and quality is why you, and me, should strive to be in the zone on any task we are performing.

Now, with these definitions in mind, **Your Highest Zone** is the task at that time that best fits the above descriptions. Using a previous example, if I'm mentally exhausted and have two hundred emails to review, my highest zone work at that time may be simply deleting spam and other irrelevant emails from my inbox. If I am mentally alert, the deadline for my next IT WORLD column is quickly approaching, and I have a great topic idea in mind, I'll write my column, even if my email inbox is a mess.

Given these two examples, of cleaning out my email or writing my column, from a personal productivity perspective, it would be a mistake for me to spend my time deleting emails, if at I have the ability, motivation, and focus, to write my column. I can delete my old emails later, when I am less mentally sharp.

The final lesson for you here is mentally dividing the items on your to-do list by zone levels. These levels could be:

1. When I'm at my best
2. Business tasks I can do on auto-pilot
3. Busy tasks that must be done but don't require mental challenge
4. Things you do as long as you are not asleep

Then, pick the task to be performed based on your physical, mental, and motivation at that time.

In addition to using this technique to enhance your personal productivity, as the department manager, you can also enhance your department's productivity by doing the following:

- Teach this concept to your staff to help them maximize their productivity
- Always assign tasks to each staff member related to all four levels, thus, allowing them the flexibility to implement this time management strategy
- When possible, provide appropriate lead time on deliverables to not force high level work during low level zone efficiency
- Understanding the general times of day when your team members are not in their highest zones, thus, allowing you to schedule meetings and other low-energy activities at appropriate times

Until next time, work hard, work smart, and continue to grow.

Part 8

Ten Things Your Department Can Do During Slower Work Times

Wow, in today's economy and business environment this may seem like a very strange time to be writing about what to do when your group has extra time on their hands. In many cases, staff reductions over the last few years have left companies lean to the point of very often being understaffed to perform needed tasks.

With that said, then why am I writing this column now? The answer is that many jobs have work cycles. Accountants tend to be busiest at the beginning of each month, when trying to close the books from the previous month. Sales people tend to be busiest just before month end trying to close deals before the period ends. Other jobs also have daily, weekly, monthly, and/or yearly busier times and slower times.

This column discusses things you can do to help your team renew their energy, maximize their productivity, and maintain their motivation during the less crazy times in their natural business cycles.

To help renew your team's energy:

1. Celebrate the end of each difficult/hectic business cycle with a department lunch. If you don't have the funding, make it a "pot-luck" lunch where everyone brings a different type of food to share. If you don't think a pot-luck will go over with your group, you can just have everyone bring their own lunch.
2. Have a speaker come to an extended staff meeting, teaching your team something new. It could be an internal company executive from another part of the company, a vendor, or even a senior member in your team.
3. Show videos at an extended staff meeting. This is easy and free. Do a little research on You Tube and find instructional and entertaining videos that relate to your team's profession and activities.
4. Have a "Floating Friday Afternoon", allowing one or more of your staff to leave work early, based on some pre-organized and fair scheduled basis.

To help maximize your team's productivity

1. Have a brainstorming session analyzing how existing internal department processes can be streamlined.
2. Have a brainstorming session analyzing what new processes should be created.
3. Have a "Clean your office day". This may sound a little odd as a productivity tool, but generally speaking, people can be more productive if your personal workspace and

department workspace are clean and orderly. For example, it's easier to find new printer toner cartridges if they are in right place.

To help maintain their motivation

1. Cross-train members of your team on each others' jobs. This has the dual benefit of providing free training to your team and increasing your future job assignments as their manager.
2. Have mini one-on-ones with your team members with the goal of helping them to grow professionally.
3. Have your boss come to a staff meeting and answer company-related questions for your team.

If your team is working full throttle on an ongoing basis, the thought of downtime to do any of the above activities seems unrealistic. For your team, the above activities can help save your team members from burning out, or at least burning out as quickly. That said, try to do abbreviated versions of the above activities. Rather than doing an extended staff meeting with a speaker, have a speaker for 15 minutes during a staff meeting. Call an impromptu staff meeting on a Thursday afternoon from 4:30 to 5:00 and instead of talking about business, show a short five-minute business oriented video on You Tube, thank your team for doing great work and working so hard and send them home twenty minutes early.

These types of activities, big and small, can help make work a little more fun and a little more interesting. This in turn will help you energize your team, thus maximizing their productivity, motivation, and overall morale.

The primary advice and takeaways from today's column is to know that:

- Many jobs have work cycles.
- There are things you can do to help your team renew their energy, maximize their productivity, and maintain their motivation during the less crazy times in their natural business cycles.
- If your team is working full throttle on an ongoing basis, the above activities can help save your team from burning out, or at least burning out as quickly. That said, do abbreviated versions of the above activities.

Until next time, manage well, manage smart, and continue to grow.

ITML Institute
IT Management and Leadership Institute

Community, Technology, Leadership and Career Advancement.

Part 9
About the IT Management & Leadership Institute

The Information Technology Management & Leadership (ITML) Institute is the governing body for two IT leadership certifications:

- **Information Technology Management and Leadership Professional (ITMLP)**
- **Information Technology Management and Leadership Executive (ITMLE)**

Over the years, hundreds of people have received ITMLP and ITMLE training, taken the exam and become certified. The knowledge they have gained and the credibility it provided has been of great value to their careers and the companies they serve.

The ITML Institute is dedicated to help IT professionals, supervisors, managers, directors and future CIOs be as successful in their management endeavors and their career advancement!

Information Technology Management and Leadership Professional (ITMLP)

The ITMLP Certification contains a collection of ten key IT topics designed to increase the effectiveness of new and would-be IT managers by widening their knowledge of IT. It includes techniques to enhance user satisfaction, providing insights into motivating technical professionals, and providing information on the use of various IT best-practices.

ITMLP
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