

The Law of Planning By Brian Tracy

Every minute spent in planning saves ten minutes in execution. The purpose of strategic planning in a corporation is to reorganize and restructure the activities and resources of the company so as to increase the "return on equity," or return on the money invested and working in the company. The purpose of "personal strategic planning" is for you to increase your "return on energy," the return on the mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual capital you have invested in your life and career.

Every Minute

Every minute that you spend planning your goals, your activities, and your time in advance saves ten minutes of work in the execution of those plans. Therefore, careful advance planning gives you a return of ten times, or 1,000 percent, on your investment of mental, emotional, and physical energy.

10-12 Minutes

It takes only about 10-12 minutes for you to make up a plan for your day. This investment of 10-12 minutes will save you time of approximately two hours per day, or a 25 percent increase in productivity and performance, in ROE, from the first day that you begin planning your day in advance.

Time Planner

The key to personal efficiency is for you to use a good time planner. Virtually any planner will work if you will discipline yourself to use it as the core of your time management system. Today, Palm Pilots and personal digital assistants (PDA), in combination with personal computers, can enable you to plan your time with greater efficiency than has ever been possible.

Master List

Begin with a master list as the foundation of your time planning system. Write down everything that you can think of that you will need to do for the indefinite future. As new ideas, goals, tasks, and responsibilities arise; write them down on your master list. Don't trust them to memory. Plan each month in advance by transferring the appropriate items from your master list to your monthly list. This is best done the last week of each month. Plan each week in advance by transferring items from your monthly list to your weekly list. This is best done the weekend before.

Plan Everything in Detail

Plan every project, meeting, and goal in detail, before you begin. The very act of planning forces you to think better and more accurately about everything you do. The more you think about and plan something on paper, the faster and more efficiently you will accomplish it when you start work.

Regular Planning

Regular planning assures that you spend more time on activities of higher value. This increases effectiveness and your efficiency in everything you do. Perhaps, the most important rule of all is for you to "think on paper!"

Action Exercise

Discipline yourself to work only on those activities that have the most significant impact and influence on your life. Get them done quickly and well. Once you develop this habit of planning and prioritizing, your stress level will decline, your productivity will increase, and your career will take off.