

Women in Business
Eliminate Distractions to Boost Productivity
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How often have you thought about or heard the expression; “I wish I could be my own boss!” ? People tend to believe if they were responsible for all work decisions more would get done and happiness would ensue. Be careful what you wish for! Many entrepreneurs tell me they wish their days were more productive. They are extremely busy, yet often feel they are not accomplishing important tasks. Although this often causes much frustration, it provides an excellent opportunity for personal growth.

Entrepreneurs often describe to me the overwhelming number of distractions they encounter when trying to be focused and productive. They are surprised by this, and remember being more productive in their traditional work roles. So what has happened? Suddenly there are so many choices and corresponding decisions. No one is saying, “no you can’t do that!” and the only person they are accountable to is themselves. Self-discipline was never more important or more difficult. Unfortunately there is not a “one size fits all” solution to this. Rather, it is a process of recognizing what works for them.

The challenge is to create a structure that is customized for each work style. Most people I have coached have found it helpful to define working hours. They write a schedule on the calendar and stick to it. It may be appropriate to choose specific days to attend meetings or for administrative tasks. For example, a business that includes a significant number of client meetings could set aside Mondays and Wednesdays for client meetings and Friday as bookkeeping day. The goal is to limit distractions and inefficient uses of time. For women entrepreneurs working at home, it may be vital that they find uninterrupted blocks of time. Talking to other women entrepreneurs can be very encouraging as women are adept at helping one other to find strategies to help balance the business/family/home conundrum.

I have found it helpful for people to make a list of various roles and tasks they are responsible for and prioritize. Which roles and tasks are the most important? ? How much time will each require and which provide the highest ROI (return on investment) of their time? It is important to be realistic when planning; no one can be 100% efficient. If the list of important tasks that are required to get done and the time required to accomplish is scheduled for more hours than there are in the day something has to change! An experienced coach will help entrepreneurs to review how they spend their time and how to increase their productiveness. The goal for entrepreneurs is to find ways to work smarter, not harder!