

Productive to the Max

Productivity

Performance

Profitability

Procrastination

MaxTips February 2005 Vol 2 #2

I received an e-mail from one of my workshop participants last week. I would like to share the sentiments with you as they reflect many of the situations I constantly encounter.

"I attended a workshop that you presented last week, and I just wanted to thank you for the two days. Although I had heard some of your advice concerning organizing and filing before, it never hurts to have advice gathered together into one well-wrapped package, especially when there are new things added. It was very satisfying to see that other people have also started cleaning out a closet, then sat back on the bed to remember the history attached to something, then wandered off to another room and begun cleaning out a drawer there, pattered off to the kitchen for a snack, started to go through a pile of papers there, remembered the closet, and just accomplished nothing but beginnings. At the end of the day, I just push everything back where it was - for another day! One of the things that you said made me reflect on myself and my habits. You said that procrastinators should ask themselves why they are avoiding a certain task. I recently underwent some significant life changes. As a result of your comments, I was forced to realize that I put off organizing my financial papers and my budget outline and cash flow from fear. I see now, after what you said, that I am procrastinating from fear which is rather silly. Human perhaps, but pointless as it won't change the situation - and looking on the bright side, it might not be as bad as I think. So, thank you very much indeed!"

We all procrastinate at some time in our lives. Some of us exhibit this trait on a regular basis. What are we afraid of?

- imperfection?
- the unknown?
- making mistakes?
- success or failure?
- change?
- too much or too little?
- having to live up to a high standard?
- responsibility?

- feelings?
- finishing?

To overcome procrastination, try some of these tips:

1. Sometimes we lack a starting point. Start with a little bit at a time, use a timer and reward yourself after you have completed the particular piece of the task.
2. Make sure you have all the facts and that all your research has been completed and is readily available. The same for your supplies.
3. If you are too close to the project or have been too involved you will not be able to obtain a good perspective. Get away for a while, take a walk, get input from others.
4. If you don't believe in the value of what you are doing or the way you have been told to do it, you will have difficulty completing the task. Analyze the pros and cons on paper. Get help from an associate or friend and obtain recommendations for a different course of action.
5. Write everything down that is stopping you from completing the action. This removes the mental clutter from your brain and allows you to confront one task at a time.
6. Break everything down into little pieces and complete one piece at a time.
7. Tell others your deadline so they can encourage you to finish the project.
8. If you are fatigued, walk away for a while, or work on something else to obtain a fresh perspective.
9. For goodness sakes "just do it."

If all else fails ask yourself the ultimate question: ***"What would happen if my worst fear came true in the most horrible way possible?"***