

LISA 2010 guru
presentation:

Time Management for System Administrators

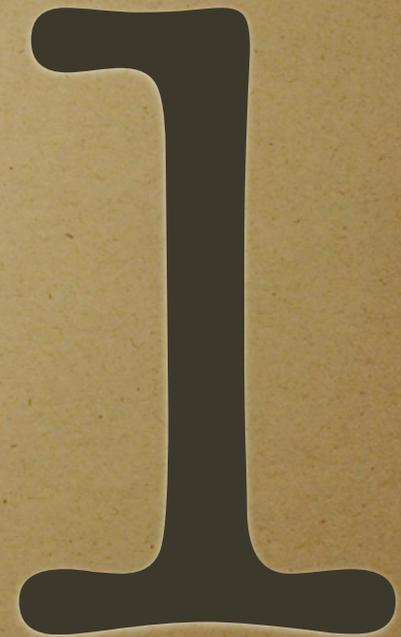
www.EverythingSysAdmin.com



Top 5

- #1 Create a Mutual Interruption Shield
- #2 Turn Chaos Into Routines
- #3 Record All Requests
- #4 Keep 365 Todo-Lists Each Year
- #5 Document Processes You Hate

Create a
Mutual
Interruption
Shield



Mutual Interruption Shield

Interruptions are the natural enemy of progress

Mutual Interruption Shield

- Take turns "fielding interruptions" with a co-worker to permit uninterrupted project time
- You field interrupts in the AM, they do it for you in the PM.

Turn
Chaos
Into
Routines



Get into that old, boring
routine!

Meeting with my boss

Opportunities

- Repeated events that aren't scheduled
- When procrastinating takes longer than the task itself
- Things you forget often
- Maintenance tasks: IT is like gardening

Record
All
Requests

3

Don't rely on your brain

- Reserve brain for task at hand
- Brain not good for long-term storage

- Immediate & personal things: PDA or notepad
- Customer requests: Helpdesk automation
- Software projects: Bug tracking systems

www.bestpractical.com's RequestTracker (RT)

Avoid the "Oh, I'll remember that!" Trap

- Maintain todo-list in your PDA/PAA
 - iPhone Apps: OmniFocus, Appigo "Todo"
- "Always":
 - Every day
 - When stopped in the hallway
 - When being interrupted

Keep 365
Todo-Lists
Each Year

4

Some todo-list systems
work better than others

Memorize Everything

-- VS --

Zillions of Scattered Notes

-- VS --

**The Never-Ending List of
Dooooooooom**

Why do “todo lists” fail?

- ❖ We rely on “known-faulty” hardware
 - ❖ (Our brain forgets)
- ❖ We don’t keep them all in one place
 - ❖ Many scattered pieces of paper
- ❖ We keep many lists
 - ❖ Half are out of date
- ❖ We keep one master list
 - ❖ Too big, too scary
 - ❖ The Never-Ending Todo List Of Dooooooooom!

“The Cycle”

- ❖ 365 “todo lists” per year
 - ❖ Doesn't rely on our brain
 - ❖ One place to keep everything
 - ❖ Prevents “list of doooooom”-like problems
- ❖ Keep it as simple as possible!
 - ❖ Even a TextEdit user can do it!

Monday, April 14:

~~✦ Task A~~ DONE

~~✦ Task B~~ DONE

~~✦ Task C~~ DONE

✦ Task D

✦ Task E

Move to tomorrow

Monday, April 14:

~~❖ Task A~~ DONE

~~❖ Task B~~ DONE

~~❖ Task C~~ DONE

Tuesday, April 15:

❖ Task D

❖ Task E

New item? Add to the list!

Monday, April 14:

~~❖ Task A~~ DONE

~~❖ Task B~~ DONE

~~❖ Task C~~ DONE

Tuesday, April 15:

❖ Task D

❖ Task E

❖ Task F

...or tomorrow's list!

Monday, April 14:

~~❖ Task A~~ DONE

~~❖ Task B~~ DONE

~~❖ Task C~~ DONE

Tuesday, April 15:

❖ Task D

❖ Task E

Wednesday, April 16:

❖ Task F

...or tomorrow's list!

Monday, April 14:

~~❖ Task A~~ DONE

~~❖ Task B~~ DONE

~~❖ Task C~~ DONE

Tuesday, April 15:

❖ Task D

❖ Task E

Thursday, April 17:

❖ Task F

The 4pm check

- ❖ Pause to consider the remaining items
- ❖ Items due today:
 - ❖ Option 1: Call requester, negotiate extension
 - ❖ Option 2: Pawn off task to co-worker
 - ❖ Option 3: Work late
- ❖ Other items... move to tomorrow!

Control your time!

1. Schedule your work
2. Prioritize what you do
3. Control the hours you work

Leave work with a smile

Document
Procedures
You Hate

5

What's on my wiki?

- Check-list procedures:
 - "New User Process"
 - "Account Termination"
 - "Setup New Workstation"
- Error-prone, infrequent procedures
 - "How to replace a bad hard disk on a RAID system"
- Procedures you dislike doing
- Result: Fewer errors. Do tasks "on automatic"

How does this save time?

The Wiki becomes:

- A list of things you can delegate to Junior SAs
- The basis of a job description for next new-hire
 - Tasks/responsibilities
 - Required skill-set.

If your boss ever hints at having permission to hire a new person, you have a pre-written list of what they would do.

Top 5 Time Management Tips

#1 Create a Mutual Interruption Shield

#2 Turn Chaos Into Routines

#3 Record All Requests

#4 Keep 365 Todo-Lists Each Year

#5 Document Processes You Hate

#6 www.EverythingSysAdmin.com

www.TomOnTime.com

