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
Some todo-list systems work better than others
Memorize Everything

-- VS --

Zillions of Scattered Notes

-- VS --

The Never-Ending List of
Doo000000om
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  - Half are out of date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 Doooooooom!
“The Cycle”

- 365 “todo lists” per year
  - Doesn’t rely on our brain
  - One place to keep everything
  - Prevents “list of dooooom”-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!

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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

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#2 Turn Chaos Into Routines

#3 Record All Requests

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#5 Document Processes You Hate

#6 www.EverythingSysAdmin.com
   www.TomOnTime.com