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Making Time for the Things That Impact Your Success

Published on Thursday, September 10, 2009, 3:53 PM Last Update: 9 hour(s) ago by [Dirk Zeller](#)

If controlling time and gaining discipline to invest hours in better, higher-value activities were easy, everyone would be making big money in real estate sales. Facts prove otherwise. On average, newer agents make less than \$20,000 a year. Almost certainly, the low-income statistics correlate with poor time-allocation choices.

To allocate larger amounts of time to success-generating actions, follow what I call the four D's:

1. Decide that your time management skills, habits, and activities are going to change.

This is a challenging first step for most people. That's because changing behavior isn't easy, and time usage is a behavior. To avoid change, people search around for solutions that will allow them to keep doing what they've always done. In doing so, they waste yet more time by vacillating between the change they know they must face and the hope that they won't have to face it.

I believe that the biggest waste of time occurs from the moment you know you need to do something and when you actually set out to do it. That's why it's so important to make an immediate commitment to change your time management patterns and habits. Make the decision to change today!

2. Define what needs to change.

This step involves two phases. First you have to determine the specific activities that are causing you to waste time or sacrifice productivity. Then you have to figure out how you can remedy the situation.

For example, do you need to get to your office earlier each day? Does that mean you need to go to sleep earlier each night? Do you need more prospecting time or more time for lead follow-up? Does that mean that you need to turn off your cell phone to minimize distractions when you're trying to undertake these activities?

What is barring your success?

I worked with a client a few years ago who had difficulty getting into the office early enough to begin his day. We tracked it back to the fact that he was going to bed too late to be able to reach his office consistently by 8 a.m. when he needed his day to start.

We further determined that he needed a certain amount of time in the evening to have dinner as a family, play with his children, put them to bed, and then have time with his wife before their bedtime. He needed to be home from work by a certain hour for all of this to happen efficiently and consistently for him.

Once he made the necessary changes, by coming in earlier and leaving the office on time, his income shot up dramatically. The quality of life with his children and wife skyrocketed as well – all the result of defining the problem, designing a solution, and managing time accordingly.

3. Design a time management plan.

Get proactive rather than reactive. Typical day planners, Day-Timers, Franklin planners, and Palm or Blackberry devices are reactionary time management tools. They allow you to schedule time for client needs, appointments, and limited activities, but they don't help you take control of time for your own priorities and purposes. You need to do that part on your own.

To master your time, you need to adopt a time-blocking system that dedicates predetermined periods of time to your most valuable activities. The key point is that you can't leave your days vulnerable to the time needs of others. You must block out periods of time for your own priority activities. Otherwise, you'll risk giving your days away to the appointment or time requests of clients and colleagues, leaving yourself no time for your own needs. No wonder so many agents feel burned out and as if are being pulled like taffy by others.

4. Just Do it!

Growing up in Portland, Oregon and graduating from Beaverton High School, I lived my early life down the street from a famous company's world headquarters and within constant earshot of the marketing slogan "Just Do It!" Nike urged the world to take action now. I interpret their three words as a life success slogan.

Don't wait to analyze every aspect of every problem, to design the absolutely perfect solution, and then and only then to take action. Waiting promises only unrealized income, unfulfilled potential and limited wealth. Instead, decide what to change, define how to change, design a time management plan that allows for change, and then just do it.

Dirk Zeller is a sought out speaker, celebrated author and CEO of Real Estate Champions. His company trains more than 350,000 Agents worldwide each year through live events, online training, self-study programs, and newsletters. The Real Estate community has embraced and praised his six best-selling books; Your First Year in Real Estate, Success as a Real Estate Agent for Dummies®, The Champion Real Estate Agent, The Champion Real Estate Team, Telephone Sales for Dummies®, Successful Time Management for Dummies®, and over 300 articles in print. To learn more, please visit: <http://realestatechampions.com/thesuccesstrio/>.