

2 TIPS FOR AVOIDING INTERRUPTIONS AT WORK



Many of us have witnessed significant changes in the workplace over the past couple of decades. Perhaps the most noticeable change is the expectation that each worker accomplish more in a day.

For many people, this can be a stressful situation. How do we get more done in a day when we have the same amount of time and resources? For most of us, this means using our time and resources more efficiently.

One way we can gain a good deal of productivity is to limit the amount of interruptions we experience during our workday. Many people feel that interruptions are inevitable and uncontrollable. It may be true that some interruptions are unavoidable, but by structuring your day to minimize them, you may find that you have more control than you think.

First we must keep in mind that interruptions reduce productivity - but not because the subject matter of the interruption is unnecessary. You may argue that many of the interruptions you experience during the day are for legitimate work matters. What causes the decrease in productivity is the amount of time it takes for you to remember what you were working on and to get back in the flow of the project.

There are a few ways that you can strive to minimize interruptions. The first tip is a simple one. If possible, arrange your office so that someone needs to stop and look into your office to see if you are there. By doing this, someone who is simply passing by will be less likely to stop and chat.

Second, when someone enters your office who has a habit of lingering beyond the point of productivity, stand while talking to them. If you remain seated you encourage them to do the same, and this often means a lengthier visit.

Another way to shorten the time lost on an interruption is to let the individual know that you are in the process of finishing a task, and that you will join them their office shortly. Doing this puts the length of visit under your control. When the reason for the interruption is resolved, you can cut the meeting short by excusing yourself. Or, if you don't have time to meet with them in a few minutes, ask to schedule a meeting in the near future.

One thing to keep in mind before you strive to eliminate all interruptions is that a brief ten-minute discussion may be preferable to an hour-long meeting. In many cases, simply resolving a matter when it presents itself is better than dragging a group of people into an unproductive meeting.

Overall, remember this – an open door policy is good, but always being available can be counterproductive. In many cases, it may be in your best interest to establish blocks of time in which your door is open for questions and time when you are not to be interrupted. You may be surprised to see that it only takes an hour or two of uninterrupted time per day to really make a difference.