11 Productivity Tips from Successful Entreprenuers

When everything's a priority, how do you maximize your productivity and continue getting things done? We asked eleven entrepreneurs about their strategies for staying on top of mounting piles of work, focusing on what's important, and otherwise holding on to their sanity while building a company.

Outsource, outsource, outsource

Everything may be a priority, but you are not equally brilliant at everything. Eliminate the unnecessary tasks and outsource your weaknesses so your time and focus is directed to where you'll make the biggest impact for the business.

Kelly Azevedo, @krazevedo, She's Got Systems

Focus on one thing at a time

It may seem like a no-brainer, but multitasking can actually cut back on your productivity. Instead of juggling multiple projects at once, schedule out blocks of time — or even entire days — during which you only focus on one task or one project.

Steph Auteri, @stephauteri, Word Nerd Pro

Take on what's time-sensitive

Do time-sensitive tasks, then divide into projects. Look at all of your to-dos and first identify which ones are time-sensitive — the ones that need to be done that day or that week. Do those tasks at the start of each day, then pick one big project per day to tackle once the time-sensitive items are done.

Stephanie Kaplan, @stephaniekaplan, Her Campus Media

Figure out your prime time

Identify when you are the most productive and focus on the tasks that are the highest priority to complete during that time. To do so, eliminate distractions — such as calls and email — and instead use the time you are at your mental best to accomplish your most important tasks.

Doug Bend, @DougBend, The Law Office of Doug Bend

Get an outside perspective

It's easy to get overwhelmed and too emotionally involved in everything that is happening to make clear decisions. Engage someone else — such as a business partner, mentor, coach or friend — to

help ask you the right questions and sort out what's really most important now. An outside perspective can open you up to new possibilities.

Elizabeth Saunders, @RealLifeE, Real Life E

Go into bunker mode

In the event that you find your plate filled with all high-priority tasks, you must remove all external distractions. This includes other people, emails, phone calls, and all social media sites. Now that it's just you and your work, focus all of your energy on one task at a time until it's complete, and then move on to the next one. Once all priorities are cleared, you may rejoin society!

Anthony Saladino, @cabinetkings, Kitchen Cabinet Kings

Don't dwell

You'll never get everything done, so don't dwell on it. Split your time between what's urgent and what's important. If you handle all the things that pop up as soon as they come to you, you'll never move forward as a business. Make an even split between handling urgent issues and working on long-term solutions. As you grow, you can hire people to handle more urgent matters.

Nick Friedman, @NickFriedman1, College Hunks Hauling Junk

Not everything is a priority

It's important to stay focused on what really matters. Spend some time on upfront planning to determine the most critical tasks that you need to take on. It's usually much better to concentrate on one or two priorities and do them really well, instead of being spread so thin that you have mediocre output.

Ben Rubenstein, @yodle, Yodle

Break out the rankings

Written lists are still my best tool for productivity. When I feel like I have too much on my plate, I do a brain dump, then I give each item a numbered ranking based on priority. If I owe deliverables to others, I make sure to ask them when they need them by so that I can rank them appropriately.

Allie Siarto, @allieo, Loudpixel

Define roles and divide work

Make sure everyone on the team has distinct roles defined, and divide work accordingly. Everyone on a proactive team will want to do everything, and clearly defined roles make it clear who should do what.

David Gardner, @david_gardner, ColorJar

<mark>**There's a tool for that**</mark>

Pivotal Tracker is a free tool that allows you to track task lists. It forces you to prioritize your to-do list. If you keep the list current, you will always know what the next most important task is.

Aaron Schwartz, @ModifyWatches, Modify Watches

The Young Entrepreneur Council (YEC), an invite-only nonprofit organization composed of the world's most promising young entrepreneurs. The YEC promotes entrepreneurship as a solution to unemployment and underemployment and provides entrepreneurs with access to tools, mentorship, and resources that support each stage of their business's development and growth.