

MAXIMIZE YOUR PERFORMANCE

10 Techniques To Increasing
Your Personal Productivity

BY BRIAN TRACY

“ It is only when you concentrate your efforts on your key result areas that you will achieve the most significant results possible for you in the shortest period of time. ”

-Brian Tracy

There are a series of techniques you can practice to increase your productivity and performance, and improve the rate at which you get things done. These are methods used by the highest-paid and most productive people in every field.

1. **Concentrate your powers.** Use the principle of “concentration of power.” This requires that you concentrate your talents and abilities where they will yield the highest payoff to you at the moment. It is the key to personal productivity and is essential to success in personal strategic planning.

In corporate strategy sessions, managers focus on the goal of increasing “return on equity” (ROE). The purpose of business strategy is to allocate the company’s resources in such a way that they yield the highest possible financial return on the equity invested.

Here is another kind of ROE for you. In setting personal strategy for yourself, your goal is to get the highest “return on energy.” Your job is to allocate your talents and abilities in such a way that you achieve the highest possible return on the mental, emotional, and physical energies that you invest in your work. Your highest return on energy is almost always that task where you combine your unique talents and abilities with the specific needs of the situation. You then focus and concentrate single mindedly on that one task, which is the key to high productivity.

Whenever you have a new job to do, ask yourself: “Does this job give me my highest return on energy invested?” Discipline yourself to apply your skills where you can achieve the greatest results and rewards for both yourself and your company.

2. **Concentrate where superior results are possible.** Resolve to concentrate on the few areas where superior performance will bring outstanding results. Usually less than 5 percent of what you do accounts for most of your results. Continually ask yourself, “What can I, and only I, do that, if done well, will make a real difference?”

Discipline yourself not to work at those tasks that, no matter how well you do them, cannot help you or advance you in your career. They do not give you as high a return on energy as something else.

3. **Do things you’re better at.** When you do things at which you excel, you get more done, make fewer mistakes, and achieve greater personal productivity. Not only that, you enjoy your work more when you are doing things that you do well. What are the few things that you do better than anyone else? What is it that you do easily that seems to be difficult for others? Focus on your unique talents and concentrate on those few areas where you can achieve superior results. This is the key to peak performance.
4. **Focus on opportunities.** Concentrate your strengths, and the strengths of others, on your major opportunities. Focus on the opportunities of tomorrow, rather than the problems of yesterday. Concentrate your best talents and energies, and those of your best people, on those few areas where major breakthroughs are possible.

Many companies make the mistake of putting their best people to work to salvage the mistakes of yesterday, rather than deploying them to maximize the opportunities of tomorrow. Keep asking yourself, “What are my biggest opportunities for the future? Where can I make a real breakthrough if I concentrate?”

5. ***Fish for whales.*** Fish for whales, not minnows. Remember that if you catch 1,000 minnows, all you have is a bucketful of fish. But if you catch a single whale, you will pay for the whole voyage.

In business, you must look at your marketplace and try to determine who or what the whales might be. You then make a plan to go after them. Sometimes, landing one big customer, or selling one whale of an order, will be enough to make a business or individual successful.

6. ***Focus on key result areas.*** Identify the key results you are expected to get by answering the question: “Why am I on the payroll?” Once you’ve identified your key result areas, work in them exclusively.

Each person has five to seven key result areas where they can make an important contribution to their job and to the organization. It is only when you concentrate your efforts on your key result areas that you will achieve the most significant results possible for you in the shortest period of time.

7. ***Set and keep deadlines.*** Set deadlines for important goals and stick to them. Deadlines force you to work harder and more effectively as the deadline approaches.

A goal or an assignment without a deadline is usually an exercise in futility. It has no motivational force behind it. It creates no compulsion for closure. It is something that you easily procrastinate on and put off until the last minute.

Set deadlines for everything you do. Promise other people that you will finish certain jobs by the deadline. When you promise others, you motivate yourself to fulfill the promise. When you place your honor and your ego on the line by making promises to others, you find yourself internally driven and motivated to get the job done exactly as you said, on schedule.

8. ***Allow enough time.*** Allow enough time to do everything well. Take the time to complete the job in an excellent fashion. Practice the “30 percent rule,” which says to always allow yourself an extra 30 percent of time to complete any task. Build in a cushion for unexpected difficulties, delays, or setbacks. Highly productive workers always allow enough time to do the job right.

9. ***Maintain a steady pace.*** Don’t hurry or rush around frantically to get the job done. Maintain an easy pace and work steadily. Remember the fable of “The Tortoise and the Hare”? Highly productive people work with a certain rhythm that allows them to flow through enormous amounts of work without becoming stressed or anxious. As Thomas Carlyle said, “Our great business in life is not to see what lies dimly at a distance, but to do what lies clearly at hand.”

A hallmark behavior of successful salespeople, executives, and entrepreneurs is that they do one thing at a time. They do the most important thing in front of them, and they stay with it until it is complete. They set priorities and they single-handle their tasks.

10. **Think about results.** Result orientation, the ability to get things done, is a key quality of all peak performers. You can develop the ability to concentrate single-mindedly through practice and repetition, over and over, until it becomes an ingrained habit of success. Once you develop the skill of getting things done, the skill will serve you for the rest of your life.

About the Author

Brian Tracy is Chairman and CEO of Brian Tracy International, a company specializing in the training and development of individuals and organizations. Brian's goal is to help you achieve your personal and business goals faster and easier than you ever imagined.

Brian Tracy has consulted for more than 1,000 companies and addressed more than 5,000,000 people in 5,000 talks and seminars throughout the US, Canada and 80 other countries worldwide. As a Keynote speaker and seminar leader, he addresses more than 250,000 people each year.

He has studied, researched, written and spoken for 30 years in the fields of economics, history, business, philosophy and psychology. He is the top selling author of over 50 books that have been translated into dozens of languages.

He has written and produced more than 500 audio and video learning programs, including the worldwide, best-selling Psychology of Achievement, which has been translated into more than 20 languages.

He speaks to corporate and public audiences on the subjects of Personal and Professional Development, including the executives and staff of many of America's largest corporations. His exciting talks and seminars on Leadership, Selling, Self-Esteem, Goals, Strategy, Creativity and Success Psychology bring about immediate changes and long-term results.

Prior to founding his company, Brian Tracy International, Brian was the Chief Operating Officer of a \$265 million dollar development company. He has had successful careers in sales and marketing, investments, real estate development and syndication, importation, distribution and management consulting. He has conducted high level consulting assignments with several billion-dollar plus corporations in strategic planning and organizational development.

He has traveled and worked in over 90 countries on six continents, and speaks four languages. Brian is happily married and has four children. He is active in community and national affairs, and is the President of three companies headquartered in Solana Beach, California.

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Brian is the president of Brian Tracy International, a company that helps individuals and businesses of all sizes achieve personal and professional goals.

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