

# The Nielson Report

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Volume 3 Issue 4

THE NIELSON GROUP  
COACHING ORGANIZATIONS FOR BREAKTHROUGH PERFORMANCE

## Time Wasters

### Tips For Getting The Most Out Of Your Day

Many of us wonder why some days aren't as productive as we intended them to be. We work hard but still have unfinished projects or our to-do list grew instead of shortened.

Here is a list of some identified time wasters.

### The Telephone

We spend about 2.5 hours each day on the phone, averaging 12-14 calls a day. About 20% of this time is wasted. The most common culprits are wandering calls, long distance weather reports, forgetting some of the important issues, or calling every time we think of the next topic. On average, an unplanned call takes 5 minutes longer than one that has been planned. Planning can be as easy as spending 30 seconds to outline what you want to say. Without those few seconds you're wasting an hour a day.

As for incoming calls, 68% of phone interruptions are less important than what they interrupted. We have been trained since childhood to answer the phone when it rings. Instead, block some quiet time to concentrate.

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### Motivational Quotes

*"The first great gift we can bestow on others is a good example."*

— Thomas Morell

*"This will remain the land of the free only so long as it is the home of the brave."*

— Elmer Davis



### Is Time On Your Side?

## Learning Leadership From Rudy Giuliani

Are you wondering how to lead your staff during a crisis? Well former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani certainly showed us how to lead during a crisis. He gave us all comfort and direction leading us through the worst disaster in recent history.

Here are only a few of the things Giuliani did correctly and what you can do when faced with a crisis:

**Ground Zero.** In the aftermath of the September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 terrorist attacks, Rudy Giuliani stood tall at ground zero to console and encourage not only New York, but also the entire country.

All too often leaders hide behind closed doors, trying to turn things around, when they should be standing side by side within the crisis area inspiring their people to greatness.

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## Lack of Priorities

We accomplish the most when we know exactly what we want done. Unfortunately, too many think goals and objectives are yearly, not daily considerations. The result is days spent majoring in the minors. Plan your day.

## Trying To Do Too Much

Many of today's high performers seem to share a common thread: the "Superman/Superwoman" ideal; i.e., Taking on everything and trying to get it done by tomorrow. Success or failure seems to be measured by the state of busyness.



We know we can't do justice to everything at once and we often don't have a proper perspective about all we have going on. It's like tossing another ball to the juggler...33 at once for the average busy executive. Focus on what counts.

## Drop-In Visitors

The five deadliest words in today's office are "Do you have a minute?" Everyone's the culprit: colleagues, clients, family, friends, superiors, subordinates ... they all want a piece of you! Close your door, work at home, hide, or just say, "No."

## Ineffective Delegation

Good delegation is a key skill, yet the average manager spends 45% of his or her time on tasks that could be done by a staffer. "I can do it better and faster," you say. Sure you can, but ultimately you are judged on what you can cause to happen, not just what you can do on your own. As a general rule of thumb in non-critical cases, if another person can accomplish a task 80% as well as you, delegate.

## Inability to Say NO!

Those around you will give you all the work you are willing to take. This is true in both our business and personal life. Some of the most stressed people can't say no to the next fund-raiser, the next committee, the Little League, the church, etc., etc., etc. Politely, but firmly say, "No."

Continued next column –

## The Messy Desk

Do you have "desk stress?" Is your desk or credenza piled with pending and unfinished work? The average businessperson spends 3 hours each week looking for things plus 2 hours being distracted by the stuff lying around.

Do you still use the 'archaeological-dig' method of filing? Does your peripheral vision keep everything in mind, causing constant distraction? Are you always saying, "I know it's here somewhere!"

Put it away, file it, delegate it or trash it. The most effective people work from a clean desk.

## Procrastination

The big "P," the "thief of time", is not decision-making but decision avoidance. "I'll take care of it when I get around to it." The average person spends 45 days a year procrastinating; stalling, holding on to projects, redoing reports, putting it off until a better time. There's even a Procrastinators club. Their newsletter is called "*Last Month's Newsletter*." By reducing procrastination, you can substantially increase the available time in your day. Do it now.

## Meetings

The typical manager spends 17 hours each week in meetings plus 6.3 hours getting ready for them. Nearly a third of the time in meetings is wasted. That works out to about six full weeks of your year wasted in useless meeting time.

**Managers spend  
17 hours each  
week in meetings**

You've seen the symptoms: hastily called meetings, no ending time stated, no agenda, no official record of what was done or said, no follow-up. If even one hour per week is saved, it means two additional workdays per year!

The paradox of time is that if we slow down to think and plan, we'll have more of it. By paying attention to the time wasters, you just may "find" an extra four to five hours each week to enjoy the things most important to you.

## It's your life. Don't waste it.

Adapted with permission from Gary Lockwood, (800) 272-1575 or visit [www.BizSuccess.com](http://www.BizSuccess.com)



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**Identify the damage from the crisis and communicate a direction.**

Giuliani never downplayed the attacks' devastation and effects. However, at the same time, he showed determination and faith that New Yorkers would handle the situation and be stronger and closer together than ever before.

**Provide a direction and vision of the future.**

Giuliani gave New Yorkers a larger sense of perspective and helped them to see the future, especially when setbacks confronted them and could have easily immobilized them.

Rudy Giuliani helped all of us by standing tall right in the middle of it all. His leadership abilities blossomed when we needed it the most.

**Thanks Rudy!**



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## Web Site Of The Month!

FastWEB is the largest online scholarship search available, with 600,000 scholarships representing over one billion in scholarship dollars. It provides information on obtaining money for college and expert tips on financial aid, careers and more...all at not cost to the student.



Check it out at: [www.FastWeb.com](http://www.FastWeb.com)

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## ONE MINUTE IDEAS

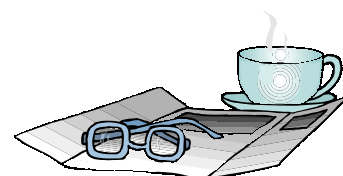
### **Productive Meetings**

Hold more productive staff meetings – with greater employee participation – by posting a blank agenda for the employees to write down suggestions or issues they would like to discuss. You may find that there are some areas that need your attention or concerns that you were unaware of.

### **Encourage Communication**

A manager at the Mirage Hotel in Las Vegas found a simple way to encourage communication between management and staff.

Each month she asks her employees; “What is one thing I could do better this month?” After listening to their suggestions the manager says; “Great, and here is one thing you could do this month that would help.” This helps build relationships and “buy-in” with company improvements.



## *How To Make Training Last*

We all want to make sure we receive our “moneys worth” (a.k.a Return On Investment or ROI) when training our employees or receiving training ourselves. We are more likely to retain the training information if there is good follow-up.

About one week after the training session, hand out a questionnaire that asks the participants:

- ◇ “What was the most effective thing you learned at the training?”
- ◇ “What have you changed or are doing better due to the training?”
- ◇ “What part of the training are you having difficulty with or did not understand completely?”
- ◇ “Have you had any successes or failures related to the training that you received?”
- ◇ “What follow-up training would you like to have?”



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