



Turn Your TO-DO List into a TA-DA List

**Making major productivity and time management improvements
and ignite your performance!**

Cathy Sexton, Productivity Strategist & Coach

Are you overwhelmed with the sheer volume of work, constant deadlines and demands on a daily basis? With the constant influx of things to do, how do we keep up with it all? It amazes me how many people do not even have a To-Do list/system to track what needs to be done. From productivity stand point I feel everyone should use some type of To-Do list/system to track tasks, get more done and improve time management. When we try to keep all those to-dos in our head there is no way to organize, prioritize, or cross them off.

There are many ways to track your task: In your head, legal pad(s), electronic tasks or time management system, in the clouds, smartphones, spreadsheet, Post-It notes, napkin, scratch paper, ticker system, planner pad, preprinted note pads, etc. It really does not matter what you use just make sure everything is on one list and that you use it.

By keeping a To-Do list you make sure that you are capturing all the tasks you have to complete in one place. Having everything in one place is essential if you don't want to forget things and want to reduce stress. With a To-Do list/system you will be more organized, and more reliable. As simple as it may seem, when people start to use a To-Do list/system consistently they often make major personal productivity/time management improvements. Write it down, do a brain dump and get everything you have to do out of your head and into your system

1. Think next action not end result.
2. If it is going to take more than 1 hour to complete, break down to tasks that are less than 1 hr.
3. Then for each item ask yourself these questions
 - a. Is this a valuable use of my time? (If not delegate it or take it off the list)
 - b. How long will it take to complete? (Now double that – we tend to largely underestimate time needed)
 - c. When is it due?
 - d. Does it involve others to complete?
4. Then review the list again and prioritize it in some method; this is the most important step. Prioritizing each item will ensure that you are completing the most important and most beneficial tasks. It does not matter what system or process that you use to priorities just use one.
 - a. A, B, C, D
 - b. Highly Important, Important, Unimportant at this time, Someday
 - c. I personally use the due date as my guide
 - i. Today
 - ii. This week
 - iii. This month
 - iv. Someday
5. Now make two lists one with the first two categories and one with the last two categories. Place the second list somewhere so you can review next week to move items needed to the current list. Having these items on a list that cannot be done now just adds to our frustration of everything we have to do. This will make your list more manageable and allow you to concentrate on the most important items.



6. It is better to plan the night before for next day's work.
 - a. Now look at your today list and what are those 3 most important items you need to work on? I call these my Daily T.I.P.S.®* (Top Important Priorities). Start working on these first. Daily T.I.P.S.® is my way of keeping track of what are the most important items to complete each day.
 - b. Keep this list in sight so if you get distracted or interrupted it is easier to refocus on the task at hand.
 - c. Keep close by a pad to record all interruptions that are not for immediate action so that you can add these to your To-Do list later on. This will insure you don't forget them and avoids the feeling of doing them at the point of interruptions.
7. Once you have completed and narrowed down your list it's time for action. If it is going to take more than an hour of time make sure you mark off time on your calendar.
8. Start on your most important project of the day before looking at email and answering phone calls.
9. You have taken the time to prioritize so work on your list is in that order. Ta-Da you are accomplishing more with less stress and effort.

Using some kind of To-Do list/system is one of the most important things you can do to become really productive and efficient. I challenge you to I.G.N.I.T.E. your performance personally and/or professionally by implementing what you have just learned. Start by using these steps:

- Intention: Know your intention, ask why this is important? What are the benefits?
- Get started: Take action on one strategy you learned within the next 24 hours.
- Commit: Your Time, Money, & Energy
- Engage the process: Motivation, celebration, evaluate what's working or not working to keep moving forward and ask someone to hold you accountable. Your success depends on it.

I would love to partner with you on improving your productivity. Visit my fan page at www.facebook.com/cathysextonproductivity where I share resources, articles, tips and techniques to help you become more productive.

Contact me for personal help, coaching, training or to join one of our Clutter Buster Programs where you get a day of motivation, celebration and accountability support you need for working on your organizing project. As a productivity strategist and coach, I am passionate about helping individuals discover their personal productivity style so they can accomplish more with less effort. I use my passion and empathetic nature to help people live healthy productive lives! I know the health risks of being a workaholic; I have lived it. My purpose in life is to provide coaching, teaching, and tools to people who are hungry to spend more time with family, enjoy their careers and live a less stressed and carefree life. For more information please visit. www.cathysexton.com or www.TheProductivityExperts.com

*Daily T.I.P.s. note pad/mouse pads where you have your To-Do list at your fingertips. It is sectioned in these areas.

- Top three important priorities
- Next important tasks after your top three are completed
- Call list
- Current Project list
- Interruption list – gives you space to jot them down as they come in.
- Goals

These pads are available at www.theproductivityexperts.com or contact Cathy at 314-267-3969