



Clone Yourself! Good energy timing drives productivity

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Have you ever watched how an unpleasant item on your To Do list can repeatedly slide from one day to the next? After the third day, it starts smelling like spoiled meat. You keep smelling its constant aroma, but you always have something else do.

We're heading into our second success driver: energy timing. It's one more way to get closer to "cloning ourselves" for accomplishing the best possible results in our time available. Last month we discussed goals and priorities; next month we'll tackle the issue of focus.

The spoiled meat phenomenon described above is affected by energy timing. It occurs with two types of items:

- Items you don't want to do or are unpleasant — such as addressing performance issues with a rep
- Non-urgent items. Coaching falls into this category.

What happens when we procrastinate? We feel nagging guilt at the back of our minds, sending messages such as, "You avoided it again, you idiot!" Or, "What's wrong with you?" Or, "Poor me! There's too much to do!"

These negative messages affect our overall energy and our quality of work, whether we feel it consciously or not. We become frustrated, overwhelmed or disgusted.

The same thing happens with your reps. Some items they avoid are giving customers bad news, discussing credit problems and prospecting. Prospecting is also the primary non-urgent item, doubling its probability of ongoing procrastination!

The solution, for both you and your reps, is to use what I call "energy timing." First, know when your energy is highest. For most people it's first thing in the morning. Second, use this high-energy time for doing items you've procrastinated! Make progress before the day's avalanche hits you.

Let's say you've put off discussing a difficult issue with a rep. Address it head-on, first thing tomorrow morning! You could set up the meeting right now and make it the #1 priority tomorrow. I'll wait while you schedule it.

Now, let's say that it's tomorrow morning, and you've had your discussion. How do you feel? Proud of yourself? More energetic? More effective? Yes!

When we conquer those difficult or pesky issues right away — even if it's just a portion of one of them — a magnificent thing happens: Our energy increases for the entire day!

For your reps, high-energy time is best used for prospecting, whether by phone or in person. They'll get the same improved attitude and energy increase. When they begin the day with servicing or implementing, it can needlessly steal hours or the entire day.

The second key is to do less important things when your energy is lowest — typically at the end of the day.

Push into that timeframe all your administrative work: phone calls, e-mail, paperwork, etc. If you have to schedule a meeting about process, set it for 4:00 p.m. To use a competitive media analogy, think and act in terms of prime time and non-prime time.

Reps are amazed at how much servicing they get done when they hold it for the last portion of the day. With a self-imposed deadline of getting home on time, servicing usually whizzes to completion.

You'll discover amazing energy changes by timing your tasks with your energy. And that spoiled meat smell can be gone forever!

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