

This month:
**WASTING
TIME**



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According to our old buddy Oscar Wilde, "To do nothing at all the world." The most difficult that is unless you come from Missouri. from Missouri' now takes on a whole new meaning. The folks from the good people from the 'biggest time wasters in America' state.

is the most difficult thing in It turns out that the phrase 'I'm 'Show Me' state are now also

This month's Newsletter is dedicated to the impact of time wasting at work. Sure, we all do it, don't we? A few phone calls here, an email or two there. But workers in Missouri have it down to a fine art. They ranked first in the USA, averaging 3.2 hours, or 40% of the workday, doing anything but work. And before you start feeling too smug, people in Indiana, Wisconsin, and Kentucky were right behind at 2.8 hours a day. We're almost afraid to ask about the Canadian statistics...

Is it any wonder we lose so much time at work? One survey indicated that people are interrupted at least 16 times a day with non-work issues and that it takes nearly three minutes to refocus after each one of these interruptions. Lost time at work is a chronic problem and it is not going away.

Is reading the TriOpus Group Newsletter considered time wasting at work? We're not going to answer that - but it'll only take you five minutes to get through. Thanks for reading along...

are you using all of your work hours effectively?



If your staff is finding a challenge with their own Time Management, TriOpus Group can help. We've shared our program, "Time Management That Counts" with large and small teams alike. We:

- Discuss the role managing time plays in our lives and in our success.
- Examine where we are currently spending our time.
- Identify the tangible cost of lost time.
- Acknowledge and understand the role of procrastination in time management.
- Identify time saving techniques.
- Create a plan to make the best use of our time using proven strategies.

for more information, visit
our website or call us at
1-800-864-2721.

"Half the time men think they are talking business, they are wasting time."

- Edgar Watson Howe



www.triopusgroup.com

I know I'm not talking about you and me when I bring this subject up, but I've just discovered that there are a lot of people in our world who are wasting time at work. Who knew? I've also learned that this is having a major negative impact on business in general.

I want to share three statistics that you may have seen recently, and they all have to do with this issue of wasting time at the office. Here they are: **2.1 hours; \$759 Billion; and 27 minutes**. Let's look at them one at a time.

According to recent surveys by AOL and Salary.com, office workers waste, on average, about **2.1 hours a day** at work and this does not include lunch – extended or otherwise - or coffee breaks. Interestingly enough, Human Resource specialists build in about one hour a day into their salary structures to compensate for wasted time. This brings me to my second statistic. These same Human Resource folks estimate that the extra hour they have not allowed for, costs businesses about **\$759 Billion each year** in salaries paid for work not done. Ouch!

So how are employees wasting so much time? Well it's the usual suspects: socializing; doing personal business; running errands; making personal phone calls; applying for other jobs; and arriving late and leaving early. But the biggest culprit of all, according to ten thousand people that were surveyed, is surfing the Internet and writing and reading personal email. And that's where the third statistic comes in. Another survey just out from the UK determined that, on average, each office employee spends **27 minutes a day** sending personal emails on company time.

What is really interesting to me are the reasons or excuses that people use for wasting time at work. Here are a few of them: they feel underpaid for the job they are doing; co-workers distract them; there is not enough time after work to do the personal things they need to get done; and the biggest reason of all is they feel they don't have enough work to keep them busy.

So what, if anything, can companies do about this? Well, many have tried limiting access to the Internet and email. The challenge with this is that if the Internet and email have considerable value to the organization's and the employee's success - which I think most would agree they have - then removing or heavily restricting the use of these tools may be counterproductive. It would be the same as taking away an employee's telephone because the employee is making too many personal calls. It makes little sense.

If companies would like to get 'time wasting' down from two hours a day to one hour, taking employees' reasons for time wasting at face value is a possible solution. Let's look at each one.

Employees are underpaid

If this is true, it is an issue that the company must address at once. If it is not true, then employees must be informed of the market value of their jobs and be reminded that time wasting is a performance issue.

Distractions from other workers

This is legitimate in many cases. Involve employees in coming up with solutions to this such as: rearranging office and cubicle space to deter interruptions; encouraging working from home some of the time; using 'do not disturb' signs in offices and cubicles.

Not enough time after work for personal things

This isn't really acceptable. However, time management is a challenge for everyone. Find time management training programs that address not only the best use of time at work but also the best use of time outside of the office.

Not enough work to do

If this reason is genuine, this is a major downfall on the part of leadership. This must be overhauled to make sure that employees have plenty to do. Either redefine responsibilities or reassign employees to more needed areas of the workplace. If they still have nothing to do, the company is overstaffed.

Time wasting is probably happening in your workplace. Employees are not 100% at fault for this nor are leaders totally blameless. Fixing it is everyone's responsibility.