



“When you’ve given your work day the best of your time and focus, go home, turn off your phone and enjoy the people and activities that make life worthwhile, because they deserve your focus and attention too.”

Young Lawyers

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TIME IS ALL WE’VE GOT...

Time, as they say, is money. As young lawyers we have a number of things competing for our time. We are learning the practice of law, trying to impress partners or bosses, making our billable hours, trying to bring in clients, sitting on boards, volunteering and giving back to our communities, and trying to spend time with friends, family, spouses and children. Since we spend a great deal of our time at work, making sure that we are as productive as possible during our work day leaves us with more energy for the people and things we care about outside of work. In that vein, I would like to share tips that I find helpful in maximizing my work day.

Plan for Success

Most of us probably have a to-do list on our desk, including all the motions, discovery requests, depositions and other tasks we need to complete in the coming weeks and months. While such overarching lists have their place, I find that looking at a long list of daunting tasks when I arrive at my desk on a Monday morning makes me want to go get another coffee and re-check my e-mail. Instead, take 10 or 15 minutes at the beginning of each day to plan out the things to complete on that specific day. Writing out a daily action plan helps me to prioritize and handle my work and better navigate the “emergencies” that will surely pop up.

Additionally, I find it helpful to break down larger tasks into smaller ones so that they don’t feel so daunting. Rather than writing “Motion for Summary Judgment” on your daily to-do list, break the task down into manageable chunks that can be accomplished in less time. I expend much less mental energy worrying about the amount of work I have to accomplish during the day when I break big tasks into their component parts. Then, move the least favorite task to the top of the list so you don’t waste energy dreading doing that task at the end.

At the end of the day take a victory lap. Review your list of accomplishments. Take the time to log your time, if you haven’t already. Then start your list for the next day with the items that you did not make it to, so that you can head home relaxed in the knowledge that even though you didn’t finish everything today you have a plan for tomorrow.

Take a Message

One of the curses of modern technology is that most of us expect to have the immediate gratification of being able to reach out and communicate by e-mail, cell phone, text, etc. and receive an instant response. I have a hard time not taking calls when they come in. But each time you have to shift your focus from the task at hand to answer a call or e-mail relating to a wholly separate matter, you have to take a few moments to get reoriented and most likely lose your original momentum and train of thought. To combat this time and efficiency drain, set aside a couple of hours during the day for just saying, “take a message.” Allow yourself to finish an important task and return phone calls and e-mails later in the day, before you start a new task.

Close your E-Mail

It is all too easy, when faced with the most dreaded task of the day, to decide to go ahead and check your e-mail one more time before you start. Such a decision always leads to some other time-wasting diversion. Plan to check your e-mail a handful of (or fewer) times a day. Then close your e-mail. There is very little that can’t wait an hour or two for you to log back on and respond. Additionally, if the response will take time you don’t have at the moment, or you viewed it on your phone on your way somewhere, add the need to respond to your to do list so you can give the correspondence the time and effort it deserves. I’ve found that sending a response

too quickly, in an effort to get one more task checked off your list, may, in the end, create more work as you try to clarify, rephrase or even undo a hasty e-mail response.

Take a Walk

When 2 p.m. hits, get up and take a 10 minute walk around the block. A quick walk gets the blood flowing to your tired brain and relieves pent up stress better than an energy drink or yet another cup of coffee. An added bonus is that sometimes a nice breeze and a new view will help you organize your thoughts and come up with solutions so that you can come back to your desk ready to work.

Use the “Off” Button

When you’ve given your work day the best of your time and focus, go home, turn off your phone and enjoy the people and activities that make life worthwhile, because they deserve your focus and attention too. ■



November’s Military List in Nevada Lawyer:

Don’t be Left Out.

Nevada Lawyer’s November issue coincides with Veteran’s Day and the magazine editors would like take this opportunity, as in years past, to recognize State Bar of Nevada members with military backgrounds.



If you are a member of the State Bar of Nevada and serve or have served in the U.S. military, please send an e-mail to nvlawyer@nvbar.org.

Your e-mail should include:

- ★ Full Name as you would like it to appear;
- ★ Bar Number;
- ★ Branch of Service (Because of space limitations, we can include only branch per person; it is best to list only the branch you most prefer to be affiliated with);
- ★ Let us know if you served as a JAG officer; and
- ★ **PHOTOS:** Send us high res digital shots of yourself in uniform, if you have them. Keep it fair; if you sent a photo last year, let someone else have the space this year.

The state bar does **not** keep records of military service, so we only know if you tell us. Please send us your information so that we can include your name in this special feature. The deadline is **September 14, 2012. Please send us your information even if you have been included in past military issues!**