

► Productivity Hacks for Marketers

BY KIM LONGETEIG, FRBMA

I get it. It's not that you want to procrastinate, it's just that you have so much to do, and there are so many distractions during the day, that many of your top priority items keep getting pushed to tomorrow and the next day and the next. It's time to stop taking one step forward and two steps back. I've got some productivity hacks for you that are sure to save you some time each day.

Keep Track of Your Notes

You know you wrote it down... on a Post-it note, maybe? Or maybe you added it to the notes in your iPhone. Or saved a Word document from the conference call. Or stored it in Dropbox. But which one was it?

If you're like most people, you don't have one set process in place for taking and keeping track of your notes. Depending on where you are when a note was necessary, it could be in one of several places. Well, you can stop searching high and low for your notes and allow Evernote (www.evernote.com) to help you get organized.

Evernote is a super-lean Web-based app that effortlessly syncs all of your notes on all of your devices. You can create separate notebooks for work and personal notes, add reminders, and tag your notes so that they are easily searchable by specific keywords or by browsing your tag list. Snap a photo and tag it, or scan a document that is either handwritten or typed with the camera on your phone and the OCR scanning feature, available for a reasonable premium fee, allows you to search the text for keywords inside the document. You can also save a clip of a Web page from your mobile phone as a note to one of your notebooks. So now, when you're on the go and trying to remember a great resource from the Web, clip it, tag it, and store it where you can easily refer to it later.

Collaborate Like a Pro

Trello (www.trello.com) is a project-management powerhouse. If you love to whiteboard or have ever ended up with a wall of Post-it-note ideas during a brainstorming session with your team, this Web-based app is for you. Create your organization, add lists related to projects you're managing, and start creating cards within those lists to tackle the tasks necessary to complete the project. You can assign members to tasks along with due dates and attachments. Members can drag and drop cards between lists or change the order of the cards to reorder priorities. If one of your goals is 'inbox zero' you'll want to check out the email-to-card feature that allows you to automatically create cards in Trello just by sending an email to your board. No more searching endless email chains for the status of projects or forgetting to send the latest update to each

person on your team. Trello keeps track of all of it, gets you brainstorming virtually, and ups the ante on productivity.

Low Hanging Fruit

Studies show people who work in an office environment get interrupted an average of four to 11 times per hour. If you work in the marketing department of your facility, I'm here to tell you your primary responsibility is not to sit at your desk and answer emails all day long. Adopt certain times within the day—morning and 4 p.m., for example, to check, answer, delegate/complete, and delete whatever hits your inbox. Set expectations so the people who send you emails know that you'll answer emails on this schedule and then shut it down. With fewer distractions, you'll be able to focus for longer periods of time and accomplish more each day.

I can't speak for Android users, but iPhone users, did you know you have a "do not disturb" button on your phone? Much like email, you don't work at 9-1-1, and being available every moment of every day is not only unnecessary, it's also driving your productivity into the ground. Don't be afraid to activate your DND and use the peace and quiet to your advantage. Just be diligent about checking your voicemail so that more urgent matters don't go without attention.

Finally, take it on the road. How many times have you felt like you were beating your head on the wall, figuratively speaking, of course, because you had writer's block, couldn't come up with a fresh idea or just lacked focus, only to get out of your office for a while and have the answer quickly come to you? If you have the flexibility to work remotely, take your laptop and get outside the four walls. Try working from a coffee shop or another location where you feel inspired. If you don't have this flexibility, just make some time to go for a quick walk. You don't need much time to get your second wind.

Everyone wants to learn how to do things better and quicker. Break free from the swarm of distractions. Ask yourself what you can do to be more productive. Try adopting a couple of these suggestions and your productivity is bound to improve. ■



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