

## **A BALANCING ACT - TIME MANAGEMENT**

**By Donna-Marie Coggins**

Anyone in small business knows that effective time management is crucial in successfully balancing work and personal time. To find extra time in your day, first keep a journal of how you spend your time for two – three days. Include everything, even time on the telephone, watching television and reading. Next use that journal to identify your greatest timewasters, and then determine where you can eliminate or limit them.

Some handy time management ideas include:

- Plan to have 'in days' and 'out days'. On your 'in days', stay in your workplace all day. Have a list of prioritised tasks and do them – one after another. You will achieve so much that you'll feel better about spending quality time with your family or doing something for yourself in the evenings. Similarly, on your 'out days' list all errands to be done and just do them.
- Plan your meals ahead and go grocery shopping only once each week. Prepare a few meals to freeze for quick meals later.
- Make sandwiches in advance and freeze them, too. Each morning just grab a sandwich out of the freezer and pop it into the lunch box. Being frozen will help the sandwich remain fresh longer and it will defrost by lunchtime.

- School bags and clothes can be prepared the night before. If you find yourself pushed for time of a morning, put all bowls, breakfast cereals, cups and vitamins on the table or bench too.
- Use your diary appropriately, tending to matters when they need it (the longer you leave it, the harder it will become).
- Keep your home and workspace tidy. You can easily waste hours looking for misplaced items.
- Consider outsourcing chores such as lawn mowing, cleaning or bookkeeping. How much do you earn per hour? If you can earn \$30 per hour or perhaps \$80 per hour, how much is three hours of ironing really costing you?
- For friends who drop in unannounced – ask them to make you a cuppa and then do some filing while the two of you chat. I guarantee if they don't get the hint and leave, at least you'll be catching up on some mundane chores.

The trick to finding extra time each day is to work smart, not hard. Be organised and have everything well planned, and you will find that you have more time to spare.

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