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Strategic People Reminders for the Busy Executive

What I'm hearing

"I don't have enough time. What can I do?"

What it means

This summer, I'm giving three presentations to various groups and conferences:

- "Time: Keeping the Monkey from Becoming an Elephant"
- "Own It! Five Tips for Managing Your Career and Performance"
- "What Motivates People? The Answer Might Surprise You… (A Development Plan Workshop)"

As I consider the issue of time, it occurs to me that the basic question I'm addressing in each of these sessions is just that: *time*. Managing time comes down to three fundamental practices:

1. Owning your time and making choices based on what's important.
2. Managing your time using some basic, time-tested habits.
3. Focusing the limited time that you have with your team where it will have the greatest impact.

What you should do

1. Own it

Over the next week, keep track of your time-use each day using this tracking sheet. On Friday, set aside 30 minutes to do the following:

1. On a single sheet, total the time you spent on each of the items you tracked.
2. Answer the following questions (paraphrased from *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* by Stephen R. Covey, p. 146):
   a. Identify two goals or priorities for your personal life, and two goals or priorities for your professional life.
   b. How does your time usage align with the personal goals you identified? What one thing could you do (that you aren't doing now) that, done on a regular basis, would make a tremendous positive difference in your personal life?
   c. How does your time usage align with the professional goals you identified? What one thing you could do in your professional life would help to advance these goals?

   Pick one of the two ideas you've generated (from either "b" or "c" above), ask a close friend to hold you accountable to it, and do it.

2. Practice effective time-management habits

- Start and end all meetings on time, and *never* have a meeting without an agenda.
- Answer emails *only* at noon and during the last 20 minutes of the day. Turn off all email and messaging alerts and tell your people to call if an answer is needed in fewer than four hours.
- Do not make to-do lists; everything that has to be done must go into your calendar.
- Limit all emails to fewer than 100 words. If a longer communication is needed, call or setup a 10-minute meeting.

3. Maximize your leadership time

People are not motivated solely by money, car allowances, or even words of affirmation. People have good days when they get things accomplished, feel supported and see the bigger impact of what they're doing. As a leader, the best thing you can do with your time is to:

- Check in daily to ask about successes, hear questions and provide support where needed.
- Carve out monthly one-on-one time to touch base in a more organized and accountable setting.

I have a passion for individuals, teams and organizations going through transitions. Time management requires change to do it better. To support you in this change, here is a special resource page with some great resources. **As always, if this topic**

feels too big or if you're having trouble finding the *time* to address it effectively, contact me. Scott@thetrugroup.com