

Tips, Insights & Tactics

8 Productivity Myths

Nearly every business and individual is tasked to do more with less.

Increased efficiency and productivity are worthy goals, but there are plenty of misconceptions on how to get there.



1. Work Harder

Productivity gains driven by cracking the whip, threats and fear are short term schemes that produce short term results. The best way to motivate employees to do their best is through coaching, respect, professional development, increased responsibility, recognition and trust.

2. Work Longer Hours

There's no doubt that working harder and longer boosts productivity. But as the days and weeks roll by, these conditions also boost job dissatisfaction and burnout. Overtime is a useful short term strategy. Long term, the math doesn't work. Even after a single 8-hour day, productivity wanes as the hours wear on.

3. Stay Busy Every Minute

Today's desktops are loaded with distractions. Email, IM, social media, websites and app updates barrage us with continual interruptions. There's no problem staying busy, but staying productive means producing something beneficial to your business. Keep your focus on the task at hand. Busy does not equal productive.

4. Hear the Place Humming

Chances are your office is not as quiet as a library. Despite the open design of most office space, it's not always conducive to productivity. Nearby conversations, cubicle conference calls, unattended ringtones and auditory desktop alerts frequently distract attention from the business task directly in front of you. Lead by example and mute your disruptive work habits.

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5. Do Everything By the Book

Sometimes it's more effective to think of productivity in terms of guidelines or suggestions rather than hard, fast rules. What works efficiently for one person doesn't necessarily save someone else time. Aspire to the goal of peak productivity, but allow some individual flexibility in how to get there.

6. Double Your Output

Multitasking means performing two or more tasks simultaneously. Today's computers do it very effectively. Research shows that each individual task suffers efficacy when people multitask. Focus on one task, finish it; then move on to the next. It's faster and more effective. Leave multitasking to the technology built for it.

7. More is Better

Quantity and quality are inexorably linked. More is better as long as quality isn't its casualty. One only needs to recall the recent housing loan crisis to see what happens to customers and business when quantity jumps and quality drops.

8. Track Your Results

Metrics are only as useful as what they measure. If you measure input, such as how many sales calls were made, you can calculate the cost per call. But if you measure output, such as sales closed, you can calculate the cost per sale. Measuring output can be more difficult than measuring input, but it's also more useful in guiding business decisions.



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When a print file requires paper that isn't online, perhaps legal-size paper or even an empty paper tray, the printer won't print until the specified paper is replenished. With most printers, every subsequent print job gets hung up in the print queue until the original problem is resolved. Not very efficient.

With exclusive Xerox Print Around technology, any print job with the correct paper-size available is routed around jobs stuck in the print queue. It's a simple idea, but it's surprising how often it makes workgroup printing more efficient.

