

Converting Filler Time to Foundation Time

By Bob 'Idea Man' Hooley

One of the secrets to regaining control of your time and life is in the conversion of 'filler' or wasted time into 'foundation' or constructive time. Recapturing those seemingly 'insignificant' slices of time (5 - 15-minute chunks) and converting them to constructive use will make a major difference in your life and career advancement.

What I'd like to suggest here are a few ideas that might help you do just that - capture those 'insignificant' minutes and convert them to useful time. Useful time, which builds a foundation for success under your dreams and goals. Useful time, which leads you productively in the direction you've laid out for your future. Useful time, that previously was thrown away. Feel free to add your own suggestions. If you have some new or unique ideas, I'd love to hear them and will include them in subsequent versions.

At home...

- Bunch or group your errands.
- Spend 5 minutes each day planning your schedule and activities.
- Trade off with neighbors or friends and share common chores - i.e., kids to school
- Use your time in the shower as planning time to mentally go over your daily schedule.
- Coordinate and lay out your business clothing before you go to bed.
- Coordinate your business clothing to include suits, shirts, ties, accessories, etc.
- Never make more than one trip if at all possible. Don't backtrack!
- Use a voice mail system on your phone. Some systems assign voice mailboxes for each family member.
- Open your mail over a recycling bin.
- Multi-task to combine activities that would normally demand down time or waiting time, for example, cooking and laundry or menu planning.
- Agree on a special family time to discuss and plan family activities.
- Other ideas that may come to mind. _____

At work...

- Spend 5 minutes each day reviewing the current day and planning activities and goals for the next day. Revise your schedule based on 3 Ps of Personal Performance principles.
- Keep a folder with required reading close at hand for those 'on-hold' fun times.
- Keep a career enhancement book close at hand for creative reading breaks.
- Open your mail over your wastebasket.
- Batch your phone calls for specific times each day.
- Plan what you are going to say before you make a call and have the relevant information or files available for quick reference.
- Multi-task to do more than one job, alternating back and forth between activities instead of just waiting for something to warm up, print or load.
- Trade off with co-workers to create some 'uninterrupted' planning and creative time.
- Other ideas that may come to mind _____

While waiting...

- Carry a book or something to read with you.
- Use your Cel phone to retrieve and return messages.
- Have a mini recorder to dictate letters or brainstorm ideas.

- Other ideas that may come to mind _____

While commuting...

- Turn your car into a mobile university - listen to audiotapes enroute.
- If using public systems - use a personal tape player and earphones.
- Open mail, skim and sort at stop lights. Often, you'd be able to go through your whole batch enroute to or from work.
- Spend the time revising your schedule and revisiting your priorities and goals.
- Other ideas that may come to mind _____

While traveling...

- Pre-select your seat if at all possible. Some airlines will allow you to do this in advance of coming to airport. This also saves you time during check in as you can go right to the gate.
- Carry selected reading to review enroute.
- Take along postcards to send notes and thank you's to selected friends, customers, suppliers and other important people in your life.
- Take time to review and plan your week in relation to 3 Ps of Personal Performance.
- Take the time to specifically plan and revise your planning tool.
- Review magazines and articles that apply to your field of study.

I realize the above are not the 'end all - be all' of how to recapture your time. The exercise here was to show you a few examples of areas, where you could reclaim a few minutes here and there to free up time for better or more productive use.

As you become more focused on recapturing and reclaiming your time, you'll become aware of a multitude of ideas and activities that you can use to convert your filler time into foundation time.

Don't despise those 'insignificant' minutes. Just like the 'secret' of compound interest, those minutes if captured and reinvested in your career or future will pay fabulous dividends.

If you come up with some unique or creative ideas, would you please email me and share them? If included in subsequent versions of this work, we will credit you and send you a copy of the updated version for your own use.

"Carpo Momento" - seize the moment!

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Bob 'Idea Man' Hooey, DTM, PRA, CKD-Emeritus, Accredited Speaker, 2011 Spirit of CAPS recipient is an inspirational leader, speaker, and a prolific author whose works include **'Legacy of Leadership, Strive for significance – lead on purpose!'**, **'Speaking for Success'** and **'The Courage to Lead!'** His articles have been featured in a multitude of North American trade and global consumer publications. He is a respected leader who has been honored by CAPS, NSA, Toastmasters, and the United Nations for his leadership contributions. His creative Ideas At Work have allowed him to travel the globe sharing insights, encouragement in 61 countries, so far. With Covid-19 he has been zooming around the globe to share his ideas. His **innovative Ideas At Work!** have been successfully applied by global leaders as well as Canada's 50 Best Managed Companies.