

Time to lead and succeed

Bob 'Idea Man' Hooey

Would an extra 8 to 10 hours per week of recaptured or repurposed time:

- **Make a difference in your workday or week?**
- **Make a difference in your productivity?**
- **Allow time for more training and delegating?**
- **Help you with career advancement?**

I frequently share these 60-second ***time nudges*** with my audiences and readers with the encouragement to explore them to see where they fit in their situation. Each works to liberate or create **5 to 30 minutes** a day by better use and leverage of your time and/or by eliminating time wasters. Some even more! Not all of them will fit your use, but you might glean an idea from each one. **First, a few foundational ideas.**

15-minutes a day works out to approximately 120 hours over a normal work year. 30 minutes a day is equivalent to 240 hours or a six- week work period. WOW! Perhaps, you can see where you might be able to better invest that recaptured time to grow yourself, your career, your team, or your business. Each can be explored and applied in less than 60 seconds. Good luck in your quest to regain control and leverage your time to be more effective in your life and career.

These small ***seemingly insignificant*** choices (minutes), when reclaimed and invested wisely over the course of your life, could give you the equivalent of an *advanced education* in a field of your choosing. Would this make a difference in your career path? **I would say YES!**

- For example: if we read an average of twelve pages a day (about 15 minutes), we could easily read 17-18 *self-study* books per year.

Considering the North American average is **only ONE non-fiction book per year** – you might begin to see the competitive advantages of investing 15-minutes a day spent in self-study.

- We enjoy a definite advantage or an edge for success when we are well read. Reading **BROADENS** our experience and expertise and expands our possibilities. Sadly, statistics show that approximately **40% of North American adults are not *fully* capable of reading even their daily working material;** they are *functionally* illiterate. Investing as little as 15 minutes a day could effectively teach them the fundamentals of reading and make a major impact in their lives and employment prospects.
- The average North American drives about 12,000 miles (19,000 km) which translates into about 300 hours that can be leveraged for your growth. Turn your car into a mobile university by listening to top business leaders. Use your phone or MP3 player if you travel by transit for the same purpose. **Learn as you go is my motto.**
- Alternatively, these same ***seemingly insignificant*** choices could help us get into and stay in shape while tuning up our heart. I'm told just 15 minutes of cardio-vascular (aerobic) activity 3

times a week is all we really need to maintain a healthy body. Hmmm... INTERESTING! Only 15-minutes you say? ...maybe tomorrow?

- Perhaps these *seemingly insignificant* choices could be spent or invested in personal meditation or spiritual contemplation, helping to bring your soul, mind, and spirit into balance.
- Maybe, these *mini-moments* could be shared exclusively with your family or close friends engaging in real, quality communication to create and build healthy life-long relationships?

“Don’t waste time,” wrote Australian pioneer Arthur Brisbane, *“Don’t waste it regretting the time already wasted... you have time enough left (for accomplishment and recovery) if you will but use it... while life and time remain.”*

Your life and *time* management are in your hands. It is within your power to choose to invest it well for your benefit and the benefit of those you love and with those you lead. Or, you can choose to let others rob you of your life’s blood or squander it on useless pursuits.

It is your choice - and it’s about your time!

A 60-second time nudge

Here are some quick reminders of simple, yet effective ways to be more productive and make better use of your time. If you are an extremely busy leader or manager, these will help. Are you serious about increasing your effectiveness as a leader and/or your income through sales, building your business and team, and finding ways to profitably create repeat buyers? **Learn and leverage my friend.**

Consistently and wisely using your time will allow you to free up time for face-to-face interaction with current and potential clients as well as working with employees to allow more time for the sales and management process. This *liberated* time can be leveraged by investing in equipping and motivating your team to grow and to win. Lead by example and get your team to apply these reminders to help them become more effective in their roles.

Strive for flexibility and balance

In the process of learning to effectively leverage your time, strive to find and maintain a flexible balance between your personal and business time. This is crucial to your long-term success! This is the only way you will find a *sensible* path that allows you to be productive, make the necessary changes needed to regain control of your life, and not burn out yourself, your colleagues, or your family members.

Strive for personal organization

Keep focused on what is important for you in each area of your life and career. Create your own *Focused Five* list where you outline the *single* most important action that will move that area (e.g. family, career, community, work, and self-growth) productively upward. Start each day with time focused on *planning* and then *schedule* what is truly of top value for that day. ***Schedule your priorities!***

Remember: schedule around your personal energies and priorities to ensure the most important and creative activities are scheduled for that time when you are at your best. Time management is really a personal leadership choice to leverage your skills and priorities!

Configure your office for maximum productivity

Your on-site productivity starts with making sure your working environment is ergonomically designed and organized. Reduce the chances of repetitive strain injury (RSI) or long-term loss of energy by ensuring things are within easy reach and located where they offer you the best efficiency. I have learned the value of a well-organized workplace where I can easily access and find what is needed without needless wasted time. This one area can free up large blocks of time, a minute here and a minute there. That adds up over a day!

Learn and leverage using technology

With the advent of improved and cost-effective computers, printers, software, office networks, cell phones, etc. we finally have access to a group of tools we 'can' leverage to free up time. If you are looking for a competitive edge, you will find it by exploring and expanding your use of technology to systemize your business and reduce repetitive activities to a minimum. This is an area where you can design systems or access apps and programs which will allow you to free up and leverage larger increments of time.

Leveraging this area has allowed me to expand my ability to create programs and products to better serve my audiences and clients around the world.

Use your website wisely

Smart business leaders and their teams are learning how to unleash the power of the Internet and harness the power of their websites by turning them into virtual assistants and sales agents.

Use your website as a client service tool; an information and resource base for potential and current clients. Create a website that can show your potential clients the depth and scope of your skills, services, and commitment to their growth, and success.

Our **ideaman (.net)** website has been consistently revamped to do just that and it is paying for itself every year with client contact and contracts. We haven't even added the retail component yet. 😊

*A few years back we revamped our **www.ideaman.net** website by asking some of North America's top experts to share their thoughts in '**A Creative Collection of Wisdom and Writing**' and have expanded the meeting planner section to offer assistance and free downloadable meeting and conference checklists, tips, and techniques from the experts.*

Use your email effectively

Investigate ways of harnessing email to provide ease of access to clients, using autoresponders to answer common questions. Develop more effective ways of maintaining and initiating a true two-way communication with your suppliers, colleagues, employees, and clients. **Allocate specific times to access and respond to your email.** Use spam filters and create rules (which move regular emails from one source to a folder for later reading). Create contact groups for group emails and use autoresponders where applicable.

Get outside help

As you learn to leverage your time, do what other successful business leaders are doing in increasing numbers – find and engage outside help. Use the services of a virtual assistant. Look for ways to outsource repetitive and non-revenue or sales generating and marketing activities.

Perhaps you can work with a colleague to share the load or engage a part timer who is tasked to free you up for those high priority activities. This also creates more time for interaction with your team.

Leverage your marketing and promotion with assistance from others

If you are not marketing, you are marking time; and if so, it is only a matter of time until you are marked for failure. Can you team up to better reach your market?

Years back, I returned from our annual Canadian Association of Professional Speakers convention, after investing a weekend with 340 fellow speakers, trainers, and facilitators. One of the speakers reminded us that we were first a marketer, secondly a businessperson, and thirdly a speaker. This hit home with the volatile market following 9-11 and again with the economic melt-down in 2008.

Focus on the most productive form of marketing and promotion – your sales and service efforts

Each client you sell and then *successfully satisfy* can become a marketer/ or advocate for you and your services. Each client who continues to visit or do business with you can become a fan and champion on your behalf; *each employee too*. Ask for help in the other areas, such as networking, advertising, direct marketing, and public relations.

In 2006, I created a series of online promotional websites as a contribution to help some of my colleagues, along with myself, work together to better reach our potential clients. www.AlbertaSpeakers.com has been very successful over the years, as have the other regional websites we created. Still going strong!

Leverage your time by better use of outside services

When you are busy and productively investing your time in the management, sales, and service process, make sure you work to minimize other activities that would distract you or deplete your time and/or energy. This one might be a more personal tip to free you up for more productive investment of time in your leadership role to train and equip your team to productively grow.

Look for ways to offload personal activities such as shopping services, personal assistants, cleaning services, etc. Use the Internet to its full advantage for services and products you need for your business and personal life as well.

For example, many on-line office supply services will deliver to your desk if your order meets certain levels. When you consider the time and expense of shopping personally, it just doesn't add up.

Plan monthly (or quarterly), schedule weekly, and LEAD daily!

*I have been preaching this focused formula around the world for the last 17 plus years. And, I am still learning. My experience and those of thousands of my readers and audience members has been to use this idea-rich success formula as a **strategic** freedom or planning tool.*

- When you know what is truly important and are clear and honest with your values, you can say NO to things that do not fit and YES to those who do.
- Invest regular time either monthly or quarterly to think, reflect, dream, and then focus to gain freedom and to see your life become more productive, flexible, and balanced.
- Take the results of that process one step further and use that information to schedule focused time for specific activities on a weekly basis to systematically achieve your goals.
- *Personally, it frees me up to live and enjoy my life (on and off the job) on a daily basis.* I would hope it would serve that purpose for you.

This list of reminders or **time nudges** helps keep you on track as you strive to grow yourself and your team to the next level. Accomplishing this challenge will demand your continued *diligence* in getting the best results on investment (ROI) or *payback* from your investment of time and resources. Investing those resources and the time with your team will help you reach this level of success and the significance your desire.

More importantly, as you use these nudges to free up or recapture time (**5 to 15 min blocks**), make sure you know where you are going to reinvest this newly *found* time. Deciding in advance where you will *reinvest this liberated time* is a strategic move; one that will enhance your abilities to grow and to leverage your time for increased success and profitability. It will also allow you to inject a bit more fun in your life.

Strive for significance – lead on purpose!

© 2006-2022 Bob 'Idea Man' Hooey

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.