

THE BIG PICTURE: INFORMATIONAL SERIES

SALES TIME MANAGEMENT: QUICK HITS

We can all use more time. More time for reports, more time for emails, more time for meetings. What's happening for salespeople is that their face time with clients is shrinking and that's a bad thing.

At ProDirect, we see the need for sales people to spend more time touching clients during the sales week. We define a "touch" as a call, an email, an invitation to a conference or work event; any connection that adds value and moves a client or prospect in a desired direction. The problem is, most salespeople are terrible time managers. Why? Because we are all oriented toward action and not around planning. Here are a few quick tips to help you find more time to spend with your clients:

1. **Demand More:** ask more of yourself, your staff and your colleagues as you strive to create daily disciplines for connecting with clients. Strive for 75% contact with your key clients and prospects. Do what's "closest to the money" first.
2. **Get a Priority Check:** Schedule your calendar 3 months out and every week see what you can chop out, then chop again every evening before you leave work.
3. **Wipe Out Windy Email:** "Write" to the point. Focus on key points with key ideas first. Use bullets when listing information. If you require a specific action on the part of the reader - type ACTION REQUIRED in the subject line. If you're struggling over an email for over 10 minutes - pick up the phone. Also let people know that a reply is not necessary with "NRN." Let folks know that CYA is transparent. Tell your team to send you emails that are FYA - For Your Action, Not FYI. One of our clients cut his email traffic by 25% just using this tactic.
4. **White Space is Your Friend:** If you're like me, you fill in any available line that Outlook® provides you. Bad Idea. You get into trouble when your commitments run into one another and you're not centered for each call. Oh, and that appointment you're always late for - they don't care about you're other meeting that ran over. Only schedule 75% of each workday to leave time for any emergencies that pop up, and leave enough travel time in between calls. "Just in time" is great for supply chain management, not contact management.
5. **The Door ISN'T Always Open:** Open door policies sound great in a culture of influence and teamwork. But here is what we know - it is a policy that is abused. Sometimes you need time to think or create - times when we just can't afford an interruption.