SIGMA
Leadership Series

Great Leaders Are Productive

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GREAT LEADERS ARE PRODUCTIVE

> ❝ Until we can manage time, we can manage nothing else.
>
> — Peter Drucker

Productivity is essential in successful leaders. Productive individuals keep up with the demands of their role by focusing on both the quality of their work and the amount of work they need to get done. In particular, leaders often have numerous demands placed on their time, including handling requests and interruptions from others, ensuring teams and direct reports are on track, and managing interpersonal issues, on top of their own day-to-day functions. Leaders serve as role models in their organizations, so it is important that they are viewed by others as productive. The level of productivity at the top of the organization will often trickle down to other levels within the organization, creating norms for typical work output.

Productivity involves accomplishing an above average quantity and quality of work. Productive individuals are able to efficiently manage their time and maintain their focus on important work tasks. Productive individuals do not do *everything,* but rather are skilled at focusing on which tasks are important and what resources are needed to be able to complete these tasks.

In assessing your ability to be productive, ask yourself the following questions:

- Am I striving to create high quality work?
- Am I producing enough work within a workday?
- Do I set specific and difficult goals for myself?
- Am I willing to put in the effort necessary to be efficient in my work?
- Do I think about my areas for development and ask for feedback?
- Am I motivated to work hard throughout my workday?

Improve Your Productivity

Understand the importance: Increasing employee productivity is a major concern for organizations. Leaders set the norms for their companies, so it is particularly important for them to produce a high quantity and quality of work. In addition, top management cannot effectively promote the importance of productivity if they themselves are not productive. Increasing your productivity not only helps you to get more done, it also directly impacts employee productivity and your company's bottom line.

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Break it down: It can often be overwhelming to think about all of your work requirements, projects, and priorities at once. Instead, try to think of your work in terms of simple, manageable tasks. Breaking down your projects into specific tasks can help you to identify the knowledge and skills needed to accomplish each specialized task[1]. Once you have a good understanding of the requirements for a task, you can devote the necessary resources to accomplishing the work. Dividing your efforts into simple tasks can help you to create a plan of action that will not only help you finish more work, but also to create high-quality outputs.

Find meaning in what you do: While it may be a cliché, taking a step back to understand the broader impact of your job can leave you feeling motivated to produce great work[2]. If you are struggling to see how your work is impactful, think about how it is connected to tangible outcomes of your organization. Understanding how you contribute to the goals and mission of the organization can promote motivation and engagement in your work.

Start Doing These 3 Things Now to Be More Productive

The following steps can help you become more productive:

1. **Set tangible goals.** Setting goals for yourself that are realistic but difficult to achieve can improve performance by 8-14%[3]. Addition, goals that include a measurable, tangible outcome are much more effective in increasing productivity than setting vague "do your best" goals. Learning to set goals and keep track of your progress can have an immense positive impact on your productivity. Try setting a goal for your week. Consider what you want to make progress on and how much progress is realistic. Think about the deadlines, priorities, and other engagements you have in your week. At the end of this week, reflect on your progress. Did you accomplish your goal? What factors contributed to your success or setbacks? Use this information to identify new goals for the next week, repeating this process until you are comfortable setting attainable goals that help you to push yourself at work.

2. **Ask for feedback about your performance.** Managing your performance and seeking feedback has been found to yield long-term improvements in productivity[4]. It is one thing to put the effort into producing a high amount of good quality work, but it is another to ensure that the effort you are putting in aligns with others' expectations. Consider who is familiar with your work and plan meetings to discuss your performance. Acting on the feedback you receive can ultimately lead to greater productivity.

3. **Use project management programs to keep tabs on work projects .** A great way to measure your progress on various tasks is to use an online project management program[5]. These programs often allow you to track how much time you spend on specific tasks, helping you to hold yourself accountable for how much you accomplish in a day. Further, it can help you to identify those tasks that take more time, which is the first step in becoming more efficient. Use these tools regularly to understand your pace of work and find opportunities to streamline your processes.

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Resources

watch [How to Gain Control of your Free Time](#)

read [Create a Productive Workflow that Works for You](#)

develop **Develop** your productivity by taking advantage of SIGMA's coaching services.

Contact SIGMA for coaching on developing your skills as a leader.

SIGMA Assessment Systems, Inc.
Email: support@SigmaHR.com
Call: 800-265-1285

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