

## MDS Alert

### Efficiency: 5 Tips Guarantee That You Stay on Track

**To get a better grip on the amount of work you can complete in you work day, try the following tips.**

You've got 20 tasks awaiting your attention, and they all need to be completed yesterday. So how can you cope?

Managing your schedule means more than just being organized. It also means having a positive attitude and showing respect for others so they can show respect for your time in return. Here are five tips for improving your schedule:

**Remember you're the "director of first impressions" for your office—no matter how stressed you are.** Don't act angry at interruptions, no matter how disruptive they may seem. If you treat others with dignity and kindness, then they'll give you "top billing" when it comes to respecting your time. This may seem like a customer-service tip, but it's actually the number-one rule of time management.

**Communicate priorities clearly, and ask for the same from others.** Never let anyone tell you something needs to happen "ASAP." This just leads to a million projects, all due ASAP, and that leads to confusion. Instead, ask people for a definite time by which they need you to do something, and try to ask for the longest possible time frame. That will allow you to decide which tasks you really should do first.

**Provide updates on your progress.** Let your co-workers know that you're working on a task, and give them a definite time by which you'll finish it. That will save them the trouble of asking you how it's coming along and make them feel secure that everything is under control.

**Use positive reinforcement.** If you're waiting for someone else to finish a task, let them know that if they finish it by a certain time, you'll be able to do something else for them.

**Use a desk-management system that allows you to keep everything in process.** Don't have an "in box," have a "sort box." That way, instead of assuming that things will simply sit in the "in box" until you complete them, you can think of the items in that box as needing to be sorted and moved to the next stage in your system, either a tickler file or some other method of keeping them in progress.