From Distracted to Productive:

Finding Your Productivity and Focus in Today's Hyper-Interrupted, e-Distracted World

Presented by
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President, *Randall Dean Consulting & Training, LLC*
A Leading Time, E-mail &
Distraction Management Training Firm

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So why are people so distracted???

E-mails

Text Messages/IM

Smart Phones & Tablets

Voice Mail

Faxes

Social Media

"Snail" Mail

Office Clutter

Traditional Media/News

Interruptions

Even Family & Friends

The "Rise" of A.A.D.D.

The Squirrel Syndrome!

Agenda of Program

- Introduction
- Handling & Managing E-mail & Info Overload
- Dealing w/ Your Clutter
- Reducing the Impact of Unexpected Interruptions
- Planning/Working Your Day For Higher Productivity
- What About Your Phones/Social Media?
- Owning Your Technology (Rather than it owning you!)

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Let's Talk E-mail!
The Harsh REALITY

__ HOURS

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Distraction Reality
The Troubling Statistics

- More than half of professional e-mail users spend 25 – 50% of their day doing e-mail
- Only 1-3% have had formal training
- Average user reads EACH AND EVERY e-mail 3-7 times before taking action on it, "tasking it", or adding to calendar
- 20-25% of workers check their e-mail 20 or more times per day
- 13% of Smart Phone users now show signs of clinical addiction
- The typical user looks at their phone 150 times per day!
- Many people report getting interrupted between 10-25 times daily by work-related phone calls, "stop bys", and texts
- 95% report being "distracted" at some point during the day
- Those reporting higher distraction also report higher overwhelm

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To Control Distraction, You Need Strategies!

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The Two Key Ways E-mail is Owning You:

1. Checking far too often
2. Reading same messages over and over again

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Don't "Bling!"

- Resist temptation to constantly monitor
  - Manage sounds & pop ups
  - But, identify most important senders!
- Consider a regimen: check at set points throughout day (except for most important)
  - To balance productivity with responsiveness
- Are you being forced to "bling"?
  - Ask for a "habit change"
  - Consider the quick courtesy reply

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THE Definitive CLUTTER Buster!

The 3-Minute, One Touch Rule

Every piece of information *(paper, fax, e-mail, v-mail, etc.)* that you get you should touch one time.

If you can take care of this task (accomplish, reply, file, read, forward, delete, toss, etc.) *in three minutes or less,* DO IT RIGHT NOW!!!

If not, convert to task item or calendar (**Drag & Drop!**) to be accomplished in order of priority or urgency (you decide).

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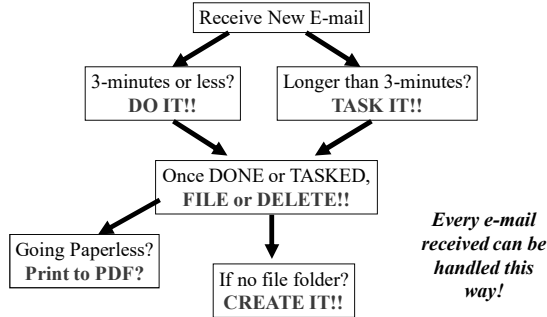### *"Taming E-mail" Decision Tree*

Receive New E-mail

3-minutes or less? **DO IT!!**

Longer than 3-minutes? **TASK IT!!**

Once DONE or TASKED, **FILE or DELETE!!**

Going Paperless? **Print to PDF?**

If no file folder? **CREATE IT!!**

Every e-mail received can be handled this way!

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A Key E-mail Time Saver

- Use your "Signatures" tool as an "Auto-Emailer"
  - Great way to automate "frequently recurring" e-mail messages
  - Allows your quality of communications to improve over time too
- Related "Quick Parts" helps with shorter text
  - Great for FAQs, contact info, directions, etc.
  - If SPAM gets through, SHIFT-DELETE!

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Want Less E-mail?

- SEND LESS E-MAIL!!!
  - BEWARE "Reply All"
  - Consider BCC for group distribution
  - PUTP!
  - P&G Memo Rule
  - Simple text & task, or not?
  - Is e-mail smart for urgent messages?

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Can Help for Office/Desk Clutter Too!

The 3-Minute, One Touch Rule

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LET'S GO TO OHIO!

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Let's Go to OHIO!

Only Handle It Once!

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Three Key Reasons
People Have Clutter

- TOO BUSY!
- Filing isn't "Easy"
- Letting the little stuff "stack"

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To reduce clutter and find
focus, you have to
make decisions.

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Randy's Productivity "Cockpit"
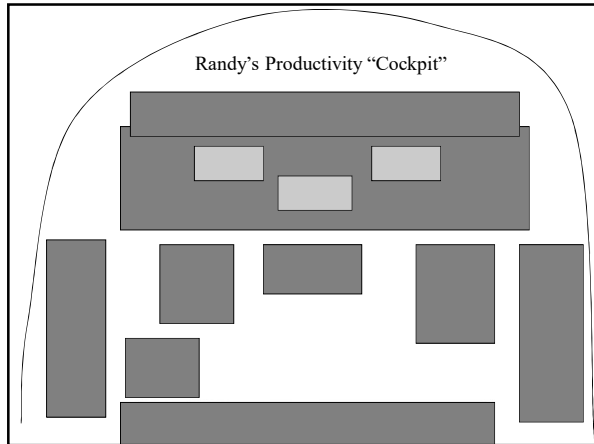
Key Point:

Proximity = Productivity

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Clients, Projects, Tasks, "Traction", and Interruptions

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Cost of Interruptions to American Business:

$650 **Billion**/Year

Average Time Lost Per Interruption:

4-15 Minutes

Two Primary Kinds of Direct Interruptions

- The Phone Call (Text?)
  - You CHOOSE to Answer
  - *Voice Mail IS an Option!*
- The "Stop By"
  - They FIND You (if you let them!)
  - *Sometimes the worst place to get work done is your office/workstation/desk!*
- A GREAT question to help reduce less urgent interruptions …

"Smart Phones often make for stupid people."

Smart Phone Sanity

- Manage Your Attention – Own Your Device!
  - Check notification settings – phone, text, social, apps, etc.
  - *See which apps are distracting you – adjust their settings!*
  - *Consider special ringtones/notifiers – most and LEAST important people*
- Put it away if you really need to focus
  - Consider who you give your number/text
  - *Technology should be an enabler, not a disabler or distractor*

Smart Phone Sanity

- Can be very useful and truly helpful!
  - Send myself task/event reminders
  - Reply to e-mails quickly using voice
  - *Use for quick search, GPS, reference*
  - *Even document creation, PDFs, more*
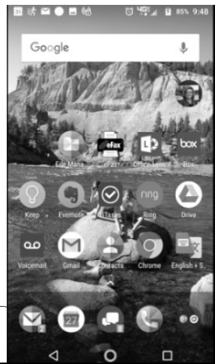 - *Use social to maintain/build relationships and connections*

Your Center Productivity Panel

Reference/News

- Wikipedia & AskWiki
- Encyclopedia Brittanica (paid)
- Dictionary & Thesaurus apps
- White Pages (full app-based phone book)
- Zip Code Tools & Instant Area Codes/Area Code Tracker
- WolframAlpha
- Google Earth, Maps, Moon, Mars, etc ...   ***Tons of Knowledge At Your Fingertips***
- Major News Apps (TV, newspaper, etc. CBSN, Bloomberg favorites right now – full stream)
- Language/Translation Apps (check out Google Translate!)
- Specific Reference apps (what's your interest?)

One GREAT way smart phones can help reduce distraction:

Noise Canceling Headphones!

Texting/IM

- Manage Your Attention – Own Your Device!
  - Only give your text number to your most important people?
  - Recommend others e-mail you instead?
  - Check your phone settings for special notifiers within text?
  - Have a discussion on when texting is and is not appropriate

"Social media is training us to compare our lives, instead of appreciating everything we are. No wonder why everyone is always depressed."

– Bill Murray

Social Media

- Manage Your Attention – Own Your Info!
  - Like e-mail, get social on some form of regimen (and less than e-mail)
  - Only check on your personal devices?
  - Consider setting a timer?
  - Limit your "channels" – pick one or two that you focus on more than others

  - The interesting counter-statistic …

Let's Talk Input "Addiction"

- Science is actually showing a significant number of people with clinical addiction …
  - To their e-mail …
  - And/or phones
  - And/or social media
  - And/or traditional media
  - And the creators of these tools/apps/services are actually enabling this addiction for profit and presence!

Let's Talk Input "Addiction"

If this is you, you must acknowledge and address!

… or it could ruin the quality of both your work and life

And finally, consider this …

*The MYTH of
"Multi-Tasking"*

BETTER:

*Find
"The Flow"*

What about family & friends?

- If in the middle of something critical, consider voice mail/replying later …
- But also remember – time flies …
  - These are your most important people
  - How about disconnecting from your tech so you can "reconnect" with your peeps?
  - Even physically separate yourself from access to tech …
  - Set specific tasks and calendar items for your most important people
  - Give them your most important asset – your undivided attention

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Let's chase away these squirrels!

A Simple Strategy for
Getting Key Clients, Cases,
Projects, Activities First

A Final E-mail Error: Checking First!

- Can cause for an "e-mail hijacking"
- Consider different routine:
  - Calendar First (today and forward)
  - Then build a "smart" task list for today …
  - That reflects your key projects/clients/responsibilities
- Then, e-mail and other inputs …
- And a better way to work your day (task, task, task, e-mail …)

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First:

*Know what your key projects,
Clients, customers, cases, activities
and events even are!*

A Project Kick-Start: The "Next Step" Habit

- Never "backtrack" on a project
- Also great for interruptions
- Low-tech: The Sticky Note
- High-tech: Software/Smart Phone/Tablet
- Mid-tech: Come see me!!

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Outlook is GREAT for managing projects/tasks/clients!

- Feeds my "Type A" nature!
- Capture key projects/roles in categories
- Use individual tasks for "next steps"
- Favorite views are "Today" & "Active Tasks"
- Can also sort by "Category", "Complete"
- "Next Steps" for Family & Friends?
- Capturing **Projects & Roles in Your Category List** Helps w/ Focus & Balance

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A Calendar/Tickler Tip for the Guys

- Ever forgot a birthday? Or anniversary?
- NEVER do it again!
- Use the same "recurrences & alarms" strategy for meetings and appointments

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Managing Your Calendar

- Includes **Work** AND **Personal** commitments (two calendars?)
- Recommend it be FIRST thing you look at daily
- Think about long-range tasks, projects, vacations, trainings, birthdays, anniversaries, etc.
- Next, think shorter range about upcoming internal/external meetings, events, phone calls
- Then, enter/review current commitments for today and this week
- Finally, make commitments with yourself   (Strategic Time Blocking)

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A New Daily Process

- At least once a week: Review Priority Memo
- Every day:
    - Check calendar first – look ahead!
    - Check today's calendar – how much time?
    - Revise task list per priorities and calendar
    - Plan delegations/follow ups
    - Check e-mail/voice mail/snail mail
    - Revise task list again per available time
    - GET TO WORK (Task, Task, Task, E-mail …)

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Final Thoughts:

- Lots of info to chew on here:
    - Pick the ideas/strategies that work best for you
- Come back to your notes later to integrate more
- Consider all of your inputs, technology, distractions – look for opportunities to better manage and control
- Continue learning/practicing/perfecting your use of time
- Keep finding ways to get the most important things first!

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"Be the change you wish to see in the world."

– Gandhi

Where to Get More Info:

- Randy Dean's *Taming the E-mail Beast* (Available on Amazon.com – search *"Taming Email"*)
- David Allen's *Getting Things Done*
- Malcolm Gladwell's *Blink*
- Randy's E-newsletter: *Timely Tips – 1 Tip a Month to Save You Time! http://www.randalldean.com/signup.html*   *Or just send me an e-mail (randy@randalldean.com) w/ "Timely Tips Please" in subject line – there is no cost to subscribe and you can unsubscribe anytime*
- Randy's *Taming E-mail Facebook Fan Page: http://www.facebook.com/TamingEmailBeast*
- Randy's *LinkedIn Page: http://www.linkedin.com/in/randydean*
- **Twitter: @timelyman and also on YouTube & G+**

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Other Randy Dean Programs:

- *Taming the E-mail Beast:* Key Strategies for Managing E-mail & Info Overload
- Finding an Extra Hour Every Day *Workshop*: Time Management Strategies for Busy Professionals
- Optimizing Your Outlook: Time Management Strategies for Busy Outlook Users
- Time Management in "The Cloud": Using Google Apps to Manage Your Time, Life, Work, Projects, People & More
- Smart Phone Success & Terrific Tablets: Getting More Productivity From Your Smart Phone/Tablet Devices
- Managing & Leading Great Staff & Team Meetings
- **Go to *www.randalldean.com/programs.html***

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We're Done!!!

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