PRODUCTIVITY
HACKING

10 Things You Can Do Right Now to Become More Efficient & Productive in your Business

By: Kim G

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Contents

Who is Kim?

I am glad that you asked. I am a techie at heart, and founder of the Small Business Sense website - a blog sharing tips, resources and other helpful information for independent small business owners and entrepreneurs.

My question to you is this: Are you struggling to say productive and get stuff done in your business?

If you are, I have news for you---you are not alone!

Just recently I read an astonishing statistic from the Center for American progress that states that the "U.S. is the MOST overworked developed nation in the world".

I'll be the first to admit that as a fellow entrepreneur and business owner it's very easy to get distracted and overwhelmed—and even harder to stay focused at times.

Even as I am writing this eGuide, I have the urge to login to Facebook—to view the latest stories in my newsfeed—or check my Twitter feed to see who my latest followers are. The list goes on and on.

In spite of this, throughout my entrepreneurial journey--there are a few productivity cheats that I have picked up along the way that I implement and use in my business.

In this eGuide, I am covering my top 10 list of productivity tips that I use to save time, increase efficiency and stay as productive as I can in my business.

I hope that these tips will help you in some aspect of your business.

Alright…Let's get to them.

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10 Things You Can Do Right Now to Become
More **Efficient & Productive** in your Business

Staying productive in your business can be a challenge. Here is my list of top 10 productivity tips that I use and implement to stay productive and organized.

1 Use Productivity Apps to Manage and organize your tasks and to-do lists

One of my favorite task management and productivity apps that I fall in love with more every day is [Evernote](#).

On the surface, Evernote may seem like just another note-taking application. But, I've come to find that it's much…much more than that.

Three of the main reasons that I absolutely love Evernote are:

1. You can create Notebooks to organize and group your notes based on topic and interests.

2. You can set up reminders in your phone to alert you of upcoming events and tasks that you need to do.

3. All of my notes, reminders and other information recorded in Evernote <u>automatically</u> sync across all of the devices that I have the Evernote application installed on. The power of Sync is an amazing thing of beauty!

2 Systematize your business processes
This tip is critical!

If you read interviews and backstories on some of the world's leading companies and even prominent small businesses, there is one thing that they have in common: Their businesses are <u>systematized</u>!

What is a System?

Systems are essentially a set way of completing projects – that are written down and can be:

1. Easily replicated
2. Used over and over again (by anyone)
3. Can be executed without you

As an example for social media marketing purposes, this year I created a marketing system and schedule (that I have passed down to a virtual assistant) that is used to pre-schedule and post content to my social media accounts.

Here is a snippet of the system:

Day of Week	Social Media Account	Time of Post
Monday	Twitter	11AM CST
Tuesday	Twitter	12AM CST
Wednesday	Facebook	1PM CST

As you can see, this is an easy to follow social media marketing schedule and guide. Although this is merely a sample of the complete system that I use—it is one that anyone can follow.

Some Examples of Processes that You Can <u>Systematize</u>

1. A follow-up system for contacting potential prospects
2. A system for hiring employees
3. A system for outsourcing projects and hiring virtual staff

3 Use automation tools to spend less time doing repetitive tasks.

Automation tools are huge time savers. Referring back to the previous example and productivity tip of systematizing your business processes, automation tools can be used to carry out these tasks.

One of my favorite automation tools is [Hootsuite](#). I use [Hootsuite](#) to:

1. Manage all of my social media accounts
2. Preschedule social media posts
3. Automate the majority of my social media marketing activities

I do want to make one thing very clear…

Due to the fact that social media is based on "**Engagement**", I do take the time to manually thank my new followers, Facebook fans and individuals who share or retweet my content.

4 Use virtual staff to oversee and work on some of your projects.

I know…I know. Outsourcing is a topic that you may have heard me mention several times (via the blog).

The simple fact of the matter is this: You cannot do EVERYTHING on your own. If you are an independent business owner like myself—and even if you are not, outsourcing is a practice that you will find very useful in your business.

Here are a few of the main reasons that I outsource projects:

1. To save time and money and avoid the costs associated with hiring full-time staff
2. To leverage the skillsets of freelancers that have experience in areas that I do not
3. To take some of the business load off of me (I am a one-woman show)

So what can you outsource? Check out my blog post via Small Business Sense entitled 15 responsibilities you can delegate to get ideas for projects that you can outsource to freelancers.

5 Use trend tracking tools to keep up with the latest and greatest in your industry.

[Feedly](#) is one of my favorite FREE trend tracking tools. Feedly is a news aggregator that you can use to keep up with your favorite blogs and publications in your niche.

Not to mention the [Feedly app](#), can be downloaded to your desktop and mobile devices so that you can always stay on top of what's happening in your industry at all times.

Google Alerts is an additional freebie that you can use to keep up with trends in your industry as well.

6 Create email filters to organize and manage your inbox.

[Gmail](#) is my email service provider of choice-and believe me I use their email filtering feature to organize and clear out as much clutter from my inbox as I possibly can.

Email filters are one of the most simple, yet powerful tools that you can use to keep your inbox under control.

7 Join an accountability group to mingle with like-minded individuals in your industry.

I want to preface this tip by stating this: Accountability starts with you.

Nonetheless, earlier this year, I made the decision to join an accountability group with peers in my industry.

Quite frankly, this has been one of the best decisions that I have made this year—and one that I am highly recommending to you.

If you want an extra boost and push from other fellow small business owners and entrepreneurs in your industry who will help you stay focused, productive and motivated, consider joining an accountability group.

Meetup.com is a great resource that you can use to look for groups that you can join that have individuals with similar interests as you—professionally and personally.

8 Eliminate Distractions. Set aside "Do Not Disturb Time.

One of the things that I usually do to eliminate distractions is to set aside 30 minutes to an hour of "DND" time—Do not disturb time where I absolutely do not want to be disrupted (unless it's a life threatening emergency!)

I will usually tuck myself away into a quiet corner of my house, put my phone on silent, turn off the television to let my creative juices flow.

9 Create a nightly to-do list. This will help you focus and have clear goals set for the next day.

At the end of your work day, make a to-do list for the next day. This will help you establish a clear set of goals for your next day.

This way, you don't have to scramble around to figure out what tasks you need to complete at the start of your work day the next morning.

10 Take vacations. Give yourself a mental and physical break to regain focus.

In order to keep my sanity, I take frequent breaks and more importantly--a vacation when I have the opportunity to do so. Stepping away allows me to de-clutter my mind and regain focus in my business.

Here's the thing: The paperwork, clients and list of all of the other **gazillion** things that you may have on your plate as a small business owner will be waiting on you when you get back.

I am not sure about you, but I've noticed that when I am overworked and burned out—I am less productive.

This is why I believe it is so important to take vacations and breaks from your business every chance that you can to recharge—regroup—and regain focus.

Well we have come to the end of this eGuide. I would love to hear your thoughts on the information mentioned.

You can reach out to me via email at chicgeek@small-bizsense.com, Find me on Twitter, and also Facebook.

Cheers!

Kim G.

Now, let's recap what we've covered in this eGuide:

Top 10 Productivity Tips

1. Use Productivity Apps to Manage and organize your tasks and to-do lists

2. Systematize your business processes

3. Use automation tools to spend less time doing repetitive tasks.

4. Use virtual staff to oversee and outsource some of your projects.

5. Use trend tracking tools to keep up with the latest and greatest in your industry.

6. Create email filters to organize and manage your inbox.

7. Join an accountability group to mingle with like-minded individuals in your industry.

8. Eliminate Distractions. Set aside "Do Not Disturb Time"

9. Create a nightly to-do list. This will help you focus and have clear goals set for the next day.

10. Take vacations. Give yourself a mental and physical break to regain focus.

Resources Mentioned

1. Evernote
2. Hootsuite
3. Feedly
4. Meetup.com
5. Gmail