

# How to Be a Better Leader – by Working Less!





## HOW BUSY ARE YOU?

If you are like most business leaders today, it seems there are simply not enough hours in a week to get everything done.

But working more doesn't necessarily make you a more effective or impactful leader. You can actually improve productivity by putting in fewer hours.

Of course, this requires the right approach. In this eBook, you will learn how to get back more time by:

- Sharpening Your Saw
- Making Meetings Matter
- Delegating Wisely
- Sleeping More
- Protecting Your Weekends
- Developing a Strong Team

Ready to discover how to be a better leader by working less?

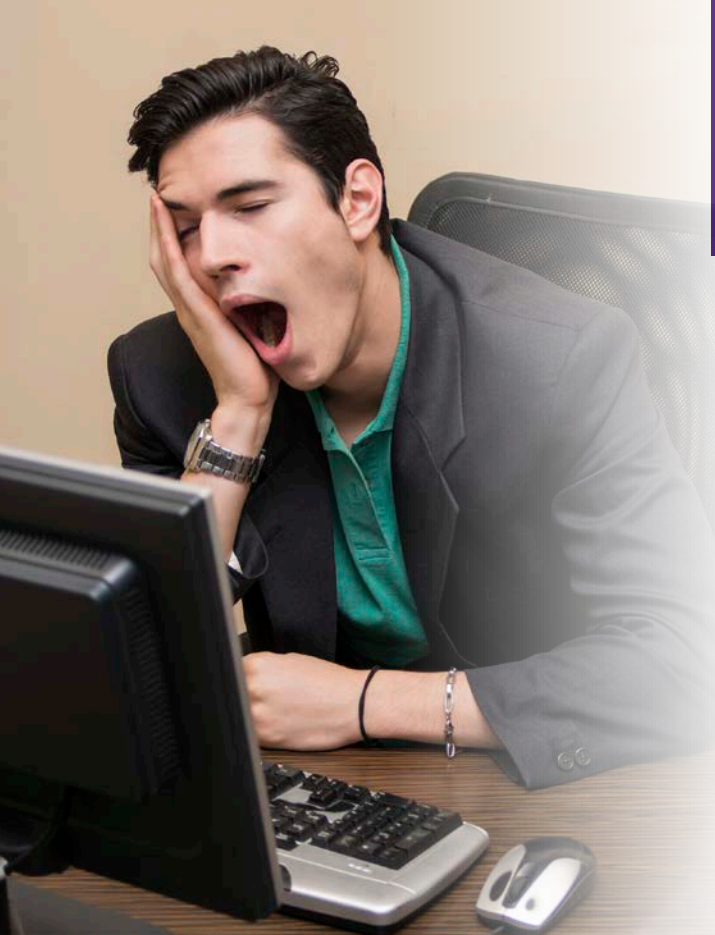
An American flag is shown on the left side of the slide, waving. In the background, a city skyline with several skyscrapers is visible, overlaid with a semi-transparent red and white striped pattern that matches the flag's colors.

# Americans Work More Hours Than Anyone Else

With an average workweek of 47 hours, Americans work longer hours than any other industrialized nation in the world. To compare, consider:

- Britain's average workweek is 38 hours.
- 32% of U.S. employees work 45 hours or more, compared to 18% in Germany.
- 40% of U.S. workers report working 50 or more hours per week.
- 20% of U.S. workers say they routinely work 60 or more hours per week.

Americans also take off work less than their counterparts around the globe. U.S. workers receive an average of 15 days off per year, but typically only take 14 days. Europeans, however, receive an average of 28 days and workers in Asia-Pacific regions receive 19.



# All Work, No Play Makes You...Unproductive

With U.S. workers logging so many hours, productivity should be through the roof, right?

## **WRONG.**

Output falls drastically after 50 hours, and drops even more after 55 hours. Someone who puts in 70 hours per week produces no more than someone who works 50.

This drop in productivity could be a result of a lack of sleep. People often work long hours at the sacrifice of rest. According to research, people who said they sleep less than six hours a night work 1.5 hours more than those who slept longer.

If you work more than 50 hours a week, take stock of how much you are really getting done. There are strategies you can use to change your approach and get more done in far less time.

<sup>1</sup> <http://ftp.iza.org/dp8129.pdf>



# SHARPEN THE SAW

In 7 Habits of Highly Successful People, Stephen Covey tells a parable of a woodcutter.

His saw becomes more and more blunt as he works to cut down trees. If he would simply stop, take a break and sharpen his saw, he would get more wood cut more quickly and save time and energy.

Take a break and sharpen your saw. In order to get the most out of your work hours you need to balance:

- **PHYSICAL WELL-BEING:** Exercise, eat well, get enough sleep.
- **SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING:** Spend time with friends and family, make and keep real connections.
- **MENTAL WELL-BEING:** Reduce stress and distress.
- **SPIRITUAL WELL-BEING:** Whether you attend church, meditate, practice yoga or engage in a hobby that restores you, your spirit needs nurturing, too.



## A sharp saw helps you avoid burnout. Consider this:

- Your brain can only stay focused for 90 minutes.
- After 90 minutes you need at least 15 minutes of rest.

Take a break every 90 minutes to reset your attention span – even if you can only find 5 or 10 minutes to do so. Get up and walk away from your desk. You might take a walk outside or just do a lap around the inside of the building, chat with a colleague, or even visit the break room to read a magazine or newspaper for a few minutes. When you come back to your desk, you will be ready to refocus on your next task.



# MAKING MEETINGS MATTER

If you skipped every meeting on your calendar for one week, how many hours would you get back for more productive activities?

Most meetings are wholly unproductive – especially the proverbial “meetings about meetings.” While you may not be able to control the meetings your own leaders call, you can make the meetings you lead much more productive.

Strategies to consider:

- **SET AN OBJECTIVE FOR THE MEETING:** What is the purpose of the meeting? If you cannot justify it against a clear goal, don't waste your team's time.
- **SET AN AGENDA:** A meeting without an agenda will take much longer than a meeting with a set plan.
- **DESIGNATE A TIMEKEEPER:** Designate a time for each item on the agenda, and assign someone to keep time. When time is up, move to the next item.
- **ELIMINATE CROSS-TALK:** When you are discussing an agenda item, that should be the only topic of conversation, and only one person should speak at a time. Eliminating cross-talk and divergent subject matters can save precious time.
- **SET A HARD STOP:** If you schedule a 30-minute meeting, it should end at the 30-minute mark.

With a little bit of practice, you and your team will get the hang of using your meeting time wisely.



# DELEGATE WISELY

As a leader, it can be easy to fall into the trap of thinking you have to do everything yourself. But you hired your team for their skills and competencies, and strategic delegation can benefit both you and your employees.

Delegation isn't about "passing off" work you don't want to do. A strategic approach will help maintain productivity and deadlines, enhance the value of your team, and ultimately create a more engaged group, starting with you.

When you delegate wisely, you experience the advantages of:

- Freeing up time to focus on your core responsibilities.
- Knowing that even when you are out of the office or engaged in a meeting, the work will still be done.
- Increase your value as a leader as your team begins to see you as someone who invests in their development.
- Your own career progression will be enhanced.

At the same time, delegation can benefit your employees:

- They will develop and enhance their own skill sets by taking on additional responsibility.
- Potential future leaders will have opportunities to step up and develop their management muscles.
- Team members will feel more valued when they know you trust them with key tasks.





# DON'T SKIMP ON SLEEP

Working late into the night and sacrificing shut-eye isn't a good idea. While leaders like Margaret Thatcher, Jack Dorsey and Marissa Mayer claimed to require just four or five hours of sleep a night, only two percent of the population can survive on so little rest.<sup>2</sup>

The majority of us need seven to nine hours each night. A lack of sleep can lead to:

- Memory problems
- Diminished decision-making skills
- Stifled creativity
- Difficulty regulating stress and emotions
- Greater intake of sugar, caffeine and alcohol
- Increased illness

If you find yourself staring at your laptop into the wee hours, break yourself of the habit. If those emails don't get sent until 8:00 a.m., will the world come to an end?

For those who simply cannot break the late-night work habit, consider making time for a power nap when you get home from work or after dinner. A brief period of rest can help you recharge your batteries.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.cnn.com/2015/04/01/business/sleep-and-leadership/>



# MAKE WEEKENDS SACRED

Weekends can be extremely busy. People use Saturdays and Sundays to run errands, tackle chores and home projects, spend time with kids...and catch up on work.

You need your weekends to recharge your batteries and get yourself ready to roll on Monday. It can be difficult to protect your weekends, and many people simply can't avoid a working weekend every now and then. You can protect your leisure time through strategies like:

- **DESIGNATE ONE OBLIGATION-FREE DAY:** Shoot for Sunday so you will be rested on Monday. Whichever day you choose, designate it completely free from work, errands and chores. Use the time to relax, work on a hobby, spend quality time with your family, etc.
- **GET WORK OUT OF THE WAY QUICKLY:** Try to get any lingering work done first thing in the morning so those tasks aren't hanging over your head.
- **DISCONNECT:** Turn off your push notifications for email. That way you won't be tempted to answer work emails when you're on your own time.

Don't forget that your team members need their weekends, as well. Allow them the same space to recharge their own batteries and reconnect with things that make them happy.

Remember, happy employees are productive employees.

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# BUILD A GREAT TEAM AROUND YOU

## (With a Little Help From a Trusted Expert)

As a leader, you can only be as productive and successful as the team around you. But candidate searches can eat up a significant amount of time, and one bad hire can cost you money and even more of your precious time. When you need extra help to cover increases in demand, the time you spend hiring can cut into your ability to hit critical deadlines.

Partnering with a strategic staffing agency can not only give you back critical hours in your workweek, it can also improve the quality of your hires and ensure productivity remains high, no matter what external pressures you face.

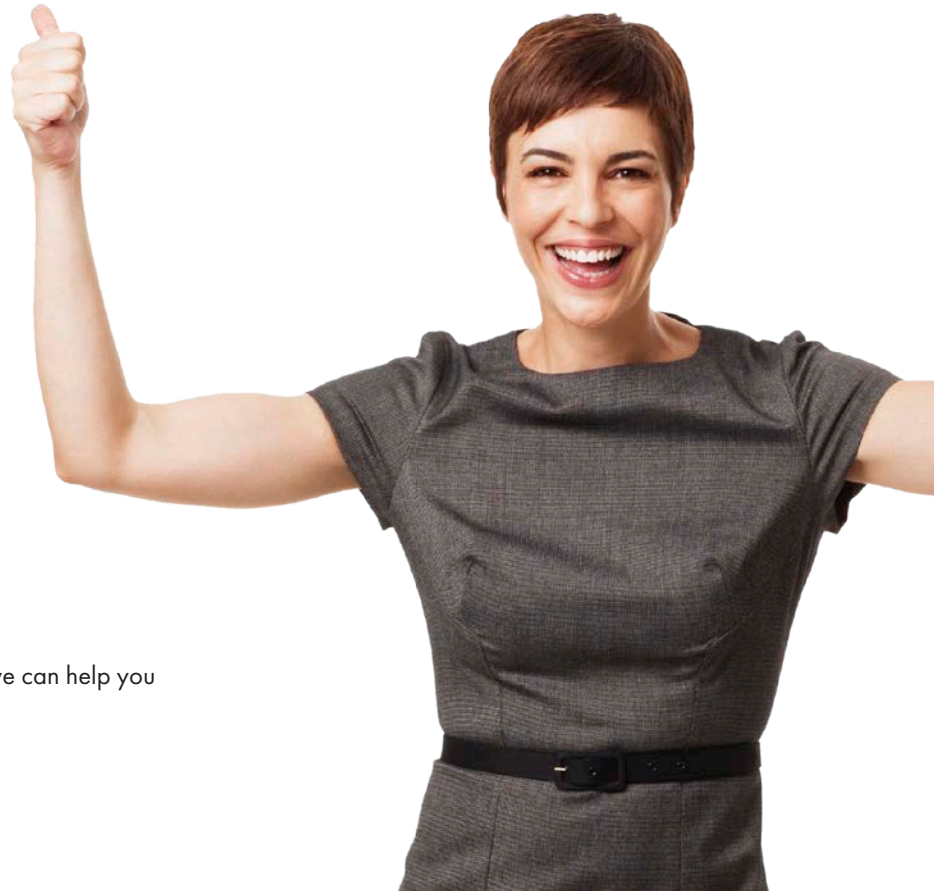
The expert recruiters at PrideStaff can help keep you focused on what truly matters. We will work closely with you to understand your real workforce needs as well as your company culture to ensure the strongest candidate match.



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- Control benefits costs
- Meet project deadlines
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- Manage resource constraints
- Stay focused on top priorities
- Avoid hiring mistakes
- Reduce turnover
- Improve morale
- Test new ideas
- Improve profitability

Reach out to the experts at PrideStaff today to learn how we can help you (and your team) get more done in less time.





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