

THE EFFECTIVE EDGE

Sharpening Your EDGE

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Thank you for subscribing to the 'Sharpening your EDGE' e-newsletter. Graduates asked us for ongoing practical, useful, and inspiring reminders to continue enhancing their productivity. Each newsletter will take less than 2 minutes to read.



KEEP YOUR AGREEMENTS AND DELIVER WITH CONFIDENCE

It feels good to meet deadlines. We have more confidence when we deliver what we promised on time. But for many of us, our plates are so full that we struggle to meet our commitments, assuming that we can even remember what they are. It is easy for us to forget a promise made to a colleague in the hall way or to a family member on the drive home.

When we don't keep our agreements, we feel bad. It causes us to lose confidence and achieve less. And, when we break our commitments, people stop trusting that we'll follow through. Our reputation is in large part based on our ability to keep the promises we've made.

Your EDGE system can help you keep your promises and feel confident that you are accomplishing what you said you would do. The first step is to write down all of your agreements in your System using the Task/To Do lists. You are more likely to keep your agreements if they are in front of you. Be sure to capture due dates and deadlines if there are any. Review your list of commitments at the beginning of each day and as part of the Weekly Recharge.

The second step is to only commit to what you can deliver. This is a tough one! Many of us like to say "Yes" to everything, but then we can't finish it all. It is okay to say "No!" And, it is better to say "No" on the front end than to have to explain why you didn't complete the project the day before it's due. When you are capturing all of your agreements in your EDGE system, you'll easily be able to see what you've committed to and be able to more carefully evaluate whether you can take on that new opportunity.

When you do make a commitment, keep it! Set realistic expectations (under promise and over deliver) as you set deadlines. A good rule of thumb is to use the "time and a half" method to set deadlines. If you think it will take 2 days to complete, set the deadline for 3 days.

Finally, if you do have to re-negotiate a deadline, do it at the first sign that there might be a delay, not at the last minute. Use your Weekly Recharge to evaluate the status of your commitments and determine if you need to reschedule. It is better to reschedule than not deliver at all.

TIP OF THE MONTH: How to Say "No" and Feel Good About It

For many of us, it is hard to say "No." We want to please our team, colleagues and family but end up making more promises than we can keep. So, how can we say "No" without feeling guilty?

First, recognize that there are limits to what you can do. There are only 24 hours in a day and you can't work all of them. If you try, your health, family and welfare suffer. You will over promise and under deliver because you can't give 100% if you are burning the midnight oil all of the time. By putting all of your agreements in your EDGE system, you can see what you have committed to and what you are willing to add to your plate.

Second, when you say no, explain why. Often the "no" is really a "not right now." Other people aren't familiar with your deadlines and commitments, so they don't know if what they are asking for conflicts with something else. If their need is an emergency, then they can help you prioritize.

Finally, don't be afraid to use your Someday/Maybe list. We all dream up more than we can accomplish. Using your Someday/Maybe list, you have a place to let those great ideas incubate until you do have time to commit to them.

One client, a Human Resources executive at a major computer



manufacturer, used to tell new employees, "Remember that the company will take from you whatever you give it. You have to draw the boundaries."

Go draw your boundaries and make agreements. And keep them with confidence!

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