

How to Track and Measure Employee Productivity

There is a fine line between measuring employee productivity and micromanaging your staff. Here are some less meddlesome ways to track and measure employee productivity without negatively impacting team morale.

Measure performance, not time. There's no shortage of time tracking software available today that enables you to measure the amount of time it takes employees to complete a task. However, these tools are unable to measure the quality of their work. Performance should be measured by tasks completed and quality of work, not the amount of time it took to complete them.

Employ end-of-day updates. Instead of having employees log their activity and track their time, have them simply send an email at the end of each day updating you on their progress.

Focus on deadlines, and only deadlines. Rather than tracking time spent on particular tasks or projects, just keep track of deadlines. Your productivity chart needs only two columns: 'met deadline' and 'failed to meet deadline.'



Paper May Be Bad for Trees, but It Has Its Benefits

Many of us feel obligated to be more eco-friendly these days, and as a result believe printing has no place in the modern world—especially with the alternative that digital provides us. However, deeper consideration reveals the use of paper has a number of positive impacts that we cannot ignore.

For starters, paper's benefits to comprehension are powerful. Research has shown that students reading a passage on paper score much better on comprehension tests than those who read the same content on a computer screen. In other words, we learn more when reading from paper than a screen.

Using paper also has benefits for the environment itself. Waste material from lumber mills is used to make paper. According to the U.S. Forest Service, much of the paper in use today comes from waste material left over from lumber mills. Processing this waste into paper helps spare our landfills of unnecessary waste.

Paper continues to be a valuable medium and is not without its benefits. Printing in a more responsible manner and recycling the paper you do use allows you to enjoy its benefits while mitigating the environmental impact.

How to Remain Active in the Office

Stand when you can – Take advantage of opportunities to stand when they present themselves. Stand or pace when on a conference call or reviewing a paper document.

Talk to your co-workers in person – Rather than relying on an email, phone call, or inter-office messenger, get up and go to your colleague's desk or office and relay your message in person.

Use your legs – If your office is higher than ground level, always use the stairs instead of relying on an elevator or escalator.

Schedule regular group walks – Find other co-workers interested in getting active and schedule a couple of brief walks together during the day.



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Do You Know How Much Your SMB Spends on IT?

IT is a critical component of business, and companies are devoting a large portion of their budgets toward it. This trend is expected to grow as we become increasingly reliant on technology in the workplace. This anticipated growth is not limited to large companies—a new update of the Worldwide Semiannual Small and Medium Business Spending Guide from International Data Corporation (IDC) forecasts that total IT spending by small- and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) will approach \$568 billion during 2017. Moreover, this number will increase by more than \$100 billion to exceed \$676 billion by 2021. These statistics show that SMBs recognize the value of IT, with hardware, software, and services helping to improve productivity and keep up with the competition.

However, unlike larger corporations, many smaller organizations simply don't have the room in their budgets to keep these IT expenditures in-house. That's why SMBs are increasingly outsourcing the management of their IT environments to Managed Services Providers (MSPs). In addition to benefits such as access to a team of trained IT professionals, partnering with an MSP will save your SMB money. Here's how:

Reduce your IT overhead - By partnering with an MSP and outsourcing the management of your IT, you're no longer responsible for the financial burden of paying for hardware, software, or network connectivity. You'll eliminate expenses such as servers, storage devices, and even network cabling. Your staff members can devote their time to value-adding tasks rather than time-consuming chores such as software updates.

Lower energy costs – Without the need for servers, routers, storage devices, and other hardware in your building, you'll be spared the energy, network, and HVAC usage required to operate and keep them cool to prevent overheating. This seemingly benign technology requires a good deal of power to run and to ensure it keeps running. Those energy costs are assumed by your MSP, as this hardware will be located in their facility, not yours.

Decrease payroll – Without an in-house IT staff of your own, your payroll will not be bloated with the salaries of these well-paid employees. In addition to salaries, employing your own IT team requires thousands of dollars in ongoing training to keep their competencies up-to-date. This is why most SMBs elect to outsource their IT environment—it makes economic sense.

If your SMB is struggling under the weight of a costly in-house IT staff or unable to afford the IT resources you need to keep up with your competitors, outsourcing the management of your IT environment to an MSP could be the answer to your technology problems. **Contact us today to learn more about our Managed Services solution!**



Based in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, Kelly Office Solutions is locally owned and operated, and has been servicing the Triad since 1947. Kelly Office Solutions is proud to offer a wide selection of copiers, printers, digital duplicators, fax machines, and multi-use systems. With three of the most reputable digital imaging companies backing us — Savin, Canon, and Konica Minolta — we can evaluate your needs and provide the solution that fits. Whether you are looking for a small black & white copier, or a full-scale networked color multi-use system, our sales team can show you how to get the most out of your digital imaging investment.



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Charitable Initiatives: How Giving Back Benefits Your Business

Here are some of the ways charitable initiatives are a win-win proposition, and your company will benefit from getting involved.

Increase employee morale – Corporate giving increases engagement within employees, as people are likely to respect leaders who actively try to make positive changes in the lives of others. By encouraging employees to participate in charitable work, they'll experience the rewarding feeling of making a difference in your community.

Improve brand reputation – Clients, vendors, and prospects are more likely to think highly of a business that supports charities or causes in their community. The boost in reputation that comes along with showing your company cares about others will make you more attractive to potential customers.

Build stronger partnerships – Charitable giving provides executives with a unique opportunity to network with other business leaders. Encouraging other area businesses to join in your charitable efforts can create lasting, mutually-beneficial partnerships.



Why MPS Is a Sound Investment for Your Company

According to The Gartner Group, adopting a Managed Print Services (MPS) program typically saves an organization 30 percent on its print-related costs. How is MPS able to provide such a sound investment for your business?

Analyze and assess your printing needs – Which printers are used most often? Which devices are used the least? Which departments print the most? Do you have the right devices to meet your needs? Are you engaging in inefficient practices?

Reduce the size of your printer fleet – You'll no longer waste money on unused machines, while ensuring your fleet is cost effective and can handle your workload.

Automate support and supply delivery – With MPS, your devices are remotely monitored, mitigating the risk of unexpected and costly downtime. MPS also touts automatic consumables fulfillment, shipping toner directly to your office when your devices run low.

Your company can save a ton of money by drastically reducing your print-related costs through Managed Print Services. Contact us today to get started with an assessment of your printing environment.



Tips to Help You Win when Negotiating

Negotiation skills are among the most overlooked items one should have in their professional tool belt. Here are some useful tips to help ensure a more favorable outcome when negotiating.

Mirror your opponent – Repeating key words or phrases can get your opponent to tip their hand and reveal more information that could be valuable to you. 'Mirroring' others also promotes camaraderie by showing you are interested in what they have to say.

Ask for more than you expect – Make your first offer a better outcome than you expect. You might just get it. Even if you don't, you will establish goodwill by showing you're willing to compromise and back off your initial offer.

Make the first move – Studies show that those who make the first offer in a negotiation are more likely to get what they want. By doing so you set the stage—the starting point—for the negotiation, which gives you the upper hand.

Utilize silence and pauses – Long pauses before you speak can encourage the other side to fill in gaps in the conversation, often providing you with valuable information. Silence can also be more effective at rebutting an outrageous offer than a verbal protest.

Streamline Business Processes by Automating Document Workflows

In the so-called 'Digital Age,' it's remarkable to think that so many businesses are still utilizing manual, redundant tasks in their operations. This is particularly curious when it comes to the continued use of paper documents in workflows. While documents remain an integral part of business processes, organizations continuing to work with them in paper form rather than digital or electronic versions are turning their back on technology, which offers upgrades to efficiency and productivity. By simply automating your workflows with the help of a document management solution, you can stop shuffling paper and streamline your business processes.

Paper is hardly the most efficient medium for information. When in paper form, documents: are easily misplaced or lost; must be physically handed off from person to person or department to department; and require employees to proactively move the workflow forward, rather than an automated process. All of this adds up to paper moving slowly and tediously through your office.

An automated document workflow, on the other hand, streamlines your business processes, promoting efficiency, speed, and accuracy. Contact us today to learn more.



Hot Products

BTA Fall Colors Event

At the BTA Fall Colors event in Asheville, NC, Tim Renegar (second from right) joined the expert panel to discuss the benefits of growing organically, and through acquisitions.



Over Achievers

Tim Renegar, center, congratulates September's Over Achievers. Pictured L-R: Earl Alberson, Heidi Merrill, Mitch Lowrey, Jade Bullins

Sharing Information and Expertise

Tim Renegar, pictured second from left, participated at the Channel Pro meeting in New York as a panelist for converging markets for the managed IT providers.

