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Overcoming Procrastination For Internet Marketers

Welcome to another edition of Michael Rasmussen's Internet Marketing Success Newsletter. In this issue, you'll learn my powerful five-step strategy for dealing with (and overcoming) procrastination in your online business.

Procrastination is one of the biggest 'silent killers' in your business. If you allow yourself to indulge in it, your income will suffer, and believe it or not, so will your mood. It can make you so unproductive that you never get anything done, and your business never grows. And as we all know, a business that never grows will eventually fail.

So this is a pretty important topic we've got here. We've got a lot to cover, so let's jump right in.

Step #1 - Write Down ALL Your Tasks

Sometimes it's easy to feel overwhelmed when you've got a lot to do, and there's no end in sight. One of the easiest ways to snap out of that overwhelm is to write down every single thing you have to do for the day. I also like to do this for the week, so I can schedule the most important tasks first.

Once you can look at all your tasks objectively, you'll be in a much better position to deal with them in a way that makes sense for you.

Step #2 - Prioritize All Your Tasks

No rocket science here. Start out by deciding what the most important and urgent task is, and then label that task #1. Then do the same for #2 and #3, and so on.

Make sure you deal with the tasks that are both important and urgent first. Get them out of the way, so you can free up some of your mental space to deal with the other stuff.

Step #3 - Find Out What You Can Outsource

I love outsourcing. It allows me to get SO much more done every day. Let's say your list looks something like this:

1. Write and send a promo to my list
2. Add an upsell to my order process
3. Initiate a split test on my sales copy
4. Answer customer emails
5. Do keyword research for my market

With a list like that, you could outsource almost all of that work. Here are some sample outsourcing solutions for the items on that list:

1. You could hire a copywriter to write you a killer email promo, and then you can send it to your list once he's done.
2. Hire the same copywriter to create an upsell page for you, and get all the order links hooked up. Then all you need to do is upload and test it.
3. Ask the copywriter what aspects of your sales letter he thinks should be split tested, and then initiate the test. If you don't have a split testing script installed, then hire a programmer to install one for you.

4. Hire a virtual assistant to handle all your non-urgent customer emails. Let's face it; most customer emails can be handled by someone else. You may need to write a set of 'canned replies' at first (or hire a writer to do that for you), but then your assistant can handle making different versions of that reply from then on.

5. Post a job on one of the freelance sites and get a search engine expert to do the keyword research for you.

You see, all this could only take you an hour (at most) to set up, and then you can work on other, more important aspects of your business that only YOU can do. Things like:

- Relationship building
- Setting up joint ventures
- Brainstorming on how to improve your visitor value

You get the idea. Give it a try. But for those things you don't want to outsource, there's one step you need to take before you get to work...

Step #4 - Eliminate All Possible Distractions

When you work from home, it's SO easy to goof off. Before you know it, you'll find yourself browsing the discussion forums, and then without realizing it, you'll find yourself getting caught up in some heated discussion on the forum, and then it's already time to go to bed.

When you're getting ready to do some work on your computer, turn off ALL your instant messenger programs. Yes, all of them. Close the browser window that has the discussion forum open. Turn off any music that has words to it, and put on an Internet radio station that plays music with no words at all.

PERSONAL TIP: I use Winamp to listen to my favorite radio station: <http://www.di.fm>. I listen to the trance station, which has no words (usually), and blends right into the background, allowing me to concentrate.

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Turn off the ringer on your phone. Close your email program. Eliminate ALL distractions, and get ready for...

Step #5 - Work In 25 Minute Chunks

There's something magical about timing yourself that allows you to concentrate on the task at hand. Most of the time, the reason we blow off big, important tasks is because we're afraid of it taking too long, and stealing part of our day. We'd much rather be doing fun things... things that feel good and bring us pleasure.

I do things in 30-minute segments. I like to work in 25-minute chunks, and then goof off for the remaining 5 minutes. What do I do during those 5 minutes? It depends. Sometimes I do push-ups. Sometimes I grab a snack. Sometimes I indulge in the guilty pleasure of browsing the discussion forums. Or worse, sometimes I'll turn on AOL Instant Messenger, which is usually the END of my productivity. :)

You want to make it easy on yourself. The reason I like doing it this way is because I know that I'll never have to work straight for longer than 25 minutes. Does it work? You bet.

If you measured how much time you spent doing actual, productive work, you'd be surprised that it's not very much at all. When you time yourself, however, it's like pushing a button that eliminates your tendency to goof off for that time period. The time ends up flying by, and you get a lot more done during the day than you used to. Pretty cool, huh?

Two Final Tips To Get You Over That Hump

We all know that feeling you get in the pit of your stomach when you're trying to avoid doing any actual work. Suddenly that magazine that has sat on your shelf for months looks really interesting, or you suddenly realize that you forgot to call your friend Steve the other day, and you should *really* do that now.

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Believe me, I know how you feel. Here are a few tips that I've picked up to help me get more done, especially when I notice that I'm procrastinating.

Delayed gratification - If you're trying to tempt yourself into going out for ice cream instead of writing that article, just promise yourself that you'll get that ice cream as soon as you finish writing. By rewarding yourself after you do your work, you'll get a lot more done (and a lot more rewards).

The 80/20 rule - Remember... only 20% of your activities contribute to 80% of your success. Don't bog yourself down with activities just to have activities to do. Find the things that make you the most money, and just do those. If the other things are important too, then just outsource them. Most of the small stuff can be deliberately ignored, though.

In Conclusion

Procrastination is a real stinker, there's no doubt about it. One of the easiest ways to get stuck in procrastination is to create a work environment that allows for easy distraction. That's why instant message programs can really kill your productivity.

When you get more work done, you feel better about yourself. Also, as an Internet marketer, when you get more work done, it usually means that you make more money. And don't we just LOVE more money?

Good luck building your business, and as always... if you know anyone who you think would benefit from this premium newsletter, please pass it along to them, but then also ask them to sign up for a free subscription themselves. They can do that here:

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