



The Staff Scoop

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Next Meeting: February 1st at 10:00am (Community Room)

Editor: Judy Ford

PLAN YOUR WORKDAY'S START FOR MAXIMUM EFFICIENCY



Your first few minutes at work can set the tone for the entire day, so don't waste them. Here are some tips for launching a productive day from the very start:

- **Arrive on time.** Nothing throws you off your game like having to catch up with everyone else. Get the rest you need, and give yourself plenty of time to show up when you need to be there.
- **Settle in smoothly.** Don't take too much time for this. Spend just a few minutes reviewing your to-do list (updated the night before!) and checking in with your boss and employees. Plan your day, but be ready for interruptions as they arise.
- **Check messages—briefly.** Don't bother answering every email and phone message you've received since yesterday. Review them quickly, deal with any that require immediate attention, and then move on.
- **Think.** Your brain is fresh in the morning, so use it to make plans. Review your long-term goals as well as your most urgent tasks for the day, and spend a little time analyzing your priorities so you can put your energy where it will do the most good.
- **Choose your most important task first.** This may be the task you least want to do, but putting it off will only distract you and drain your energy. Look over your to-do list and pick the job that will have the biggest impact, and take it on while you've got maximum energy.
- **Plan a break.** Don't push yourself to stay at peak energy all day. Schedule a quick break at some point in the morning so you can double-check your priorities, revise your plans, and get a little rest to prepare for the rest of the day.

WHY LISTEN TO A GROUNDHOG?



Most of us know the tradition of Groundhog Day. On February 2nd, the legend goes, a groundhog that comes up out of its burrow to check the weather will go back inside if it sees its shadow, and winter will continue for six more weeks. But if the sky is cloudy and it casts no shadow, the harsh winter weather is over.

Punxsutawney, PA, hosts the best-known Groundhog Day event, featuring "Punxsutawney Phil" (who gained fame in the 1993 film *Groundhog Day*), but other towns in Pennsylvania and Maryland hold similar celebrations.

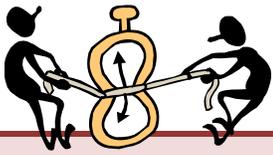
Where does the legend come from? It may have origins in ancient European beliefs involving a badger or a bear as a weather forecaster, as well as the Pagan festival *Imbolc*, whose traditions point to a bear or a serpent as a herald of good or bad weather. In the United States, Ground Hog Day can be traced back to 1841 when a Pennsylvania shopkeeper wrote in his diary that Candlemas day (Feb. 2nd) was the day on which, "according to the Germans, the Groundhog peeps out of his winter quarters and if he sees his shadow he pops back for another six weeks nap, but if the day be cloudy he remains out, as the weather is to be moderate."

So keep an eye out for the groundhog's report, and dress appropriately!

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 7 Jerri Wilson
- 10 Roger Cowan
- 18 Carla Combs
- 20 Roberta Fienning
- 23 Nancy Beaman
- 24 Kevin Kouns





A Little Time Management Might Be Just The Thing

Do you need to manage your time at work? Who doesn't, right? But if you really want to shine at work, one of the first things you're going to have to take control of is your time. It always seems like there's not enough time to accomplish everything when you're working hard, but Bob Nelson in *1,001 Ways to Take Initiative at Work*, says there are some steps you can take to rescue your time. Here is some of his advice:

- When you get to the end of your day, make a to-do list for tomorrow. Put whatever's most important to accomplish at the top of your list. That way, when you walk in, you'll know just what you need to do and where to start.
- Make a commitment to arrive at work a half hour early every day. That way, you can get started on whatever's most important and work without interruption for that period of time.
- Don't jump down on your list to lower priority tasks until you have made enough progress that you are satisfied on your higher priority tasks.
- Use a calendar and plan. It will organize you, and you won't have to spend time asking what you're supposed to be doing. You'll already know.
- Go through your in-box at least once a day and prioritize it.
- Say goodbye to unimportant meetings. If you don't need to be there, don't go. It will waste your time, and your list won't get any smaller.
- Focus on what only you can do. Then, when possible, delegate to others.
- Take a couple of hours every week to sit down and look at your big picture goals. Are you getting there? Set or reset goals appropriately.
- Learn to say no. Be polite, but firm. Otherwise, you won't have the focus or energy to attain your goals.

Plan each day.

Evaluate how you're spending your time.

Practice the 10-minute rule. Work on a dreaded task for 10 minutes each day. Once you get started, you may find you can finish.

Say no to nonessential tasks.

Prioritize your tasks.

Get plenty of sleep.

Limit distractions.

Exercise regularly.

Break large, time-consuming tasks into smaller tasks.

Eat a healthy diet.

Take a break when needed.

Take a time management course.

Delegate.

Ask for help.

Take the time you need to do a quality job.

Getting more done doesn't always mean doing more things. Sometimes it's about doing less. Don't try to schedule every minute of every day. When you make and prioritize your to-do list, leave yourself some flexibility to handle interruptions and unplanned tasks that are bound to come up during the day. You should block out segments of your day for important tasks (that's part of reviewing and prioritizing your to-do list), but be sure to reserve enough time so that you don't have to rush through things. Taking your time can sometimes be the best use of your time.