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# IDEABRIDGE



The IdeaBridge White Paper Series:  
Time Management and  
Sealing the Cracks!

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## TIME MANAGEMENT AND SEALING THE CRACKS!

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### Summary

As managers are pulled in so many directions in the average work week, it's not unusual that certain things tend to fall through the cracks. The outline that follows spells out a comprehensive method to "seal the cracks" and prevent just about anything from every slipping by your radar. Followed consistently, this process will take only about 30 minutes each week.

- **Deal with all Loose Papers** - Dump all scraps of paper, business cards, receipts, and miscellaneous paper into your In-Basket and process them all. Do not leave the office until your in-basket is completely empty and all paper has been appropriately processed.
- **Review and Process all of your weekly Notes** - Review any "Journal/Notes" types of entries, phone notes, meeting notes, and miscellaneous notes scribbled on notebook paper, napkins, envelopes, Palm Pilot, etc. Convert notes to Action Items, transfer to project files, client files, waiting-for's, Palm Pilot task list, etc.
- **Review the Prior Week's Calendar Data** - Review expired daily calendar pages in detail for remaining action items, reference data, etc. Transfer into your data capture system.
- **Review Next Week's Calendar** - Review your calendar for next week's meetings, presentations and tasks. See if preparation is necessary; create Action Items accordingly.
- **Do a "Mental Download"** - Do a brain-dump of everything that's on your mind, whether business or personal. Put down everything as it randomly comes to you, onto one sheet of paper. Once you've "dumped" everything you can possibly think of, then record the Action Items into your various to do list categories, such as projects, delegated items, client folders, etc. This process should take about 5 -15 minutes.
- **Review all Project Lists** - Evaluate the status of all your projects. One by one, take note of any items that require action. Taking special note of any task and date slippage, record immediate action steps required to get the project back on track.
- **Review Projects for any "Hot-Spots"** - Hot Spots are those things that can crop up and derail your project. It's best to spend time each week doing some mental contingency planning. What could go wrong and how can I prevent that from happening? What contingency plans can I make if so-and-so fails to materialize? A separate Hot Spot list should be maintained for each project. Use a Palm Pilot for a quick tool to record Hot Spots.
- **Review "Next Action" Lists & Frequently Used Lists** - Review all of your lists to catch up on what has already been accomplished. Look for reminders of additional tasks and further action steps. Make sure that nothing is falling through the cracks.
- **Review all Pending & Support Files** - Browse through all work-in-progress support material and files to trigger new actions/completions/waiting for's/delegated items, etc.
- **Review "Reminders" Lists** - Is there anything you haven't done which you need to? Any checklists need reviewing?
- **Review Someday/Maybe-type lists** - Review for any projects which may now have become active, and transfer to "Projects". Delete all dead items.



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- **Review "Waiting For" List** - Record appropriate actions for any needed follow-up. Check off received ones.
- **Clean up your email In Box** - Review all of your email and sort into your various email folders such as "To Do Items" "Delegated" "Waiting For" or other misc. client folders. When completed there should not be more than a few remaining emails on your screen, as they should all be filed into your various action or pending email folders.
- **Back up your computer data** - If not already done automatically, make a backup copy of all your computer files. Label the disk "Backup" and record the current date.