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Dec. 16, 2013

When do you or your employees get the most work done? If your business is like most in the U.S., its definitely not on Friday... or even Thursday.

Have a challenging project to tackle? Take it up on Tuesday, a new survey from [Accountemps](#) suggests. Thirty-nine percent of human resources (HR) managers interviewed rank Tuesday as the most productive day of the week. Thursday and Friday tied for the least productive day, each receiving just 3 percent of the response.

The results continue a long-held trend that has shown that Tuesday has been cited as most productive day since similar [productivity surveys](#) started in the mid-1980s.

The most recent survey was developed by Accountemps, the world's first and largest specialized staffing service for temporary accounting, finance and bookkeeping professionals. It was conducted by an independent research firm and is based on interviews with more than 300 HR managers at U.S. companies with 20 or more employees.

HR managers were asked, "In your opinion, on which day of the week are employees generally most productive?" Their responses:

- Monday – 24%
- Tuesday – 39%
- Wednesday – 14%
- Thursday- 3%
- Friday – 3%
- No particular day – 14%
- Don't know – 3%

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1. **Axe the excess.** Too often workers overestimate what they can accomplish and become frustrated by their lack of progress. Try a shorter, more realistic to-do list that leaves room for unexpected projects and interruptions will help you be more productive.
2. **Aim for quality, not quantity.** Multitasking seems like a good way to increase productivity, but repeatedly switching gears is mentally taxing and can slow you down. Do your best to focus on one item at a time.
3. **Know your prime time.** Use your internal clock to your advantage by tackling critical or challenging assignments during the [time of day](#) when you're most alert and productive.
4. **Dodge derailers.** When working on important assignments, boost productivity by turning off mobile devices and signing out of email and social media. Doing so allows you to give full attention to the task at hand. Also, don't be afraid to occasionally post a "do not disturb" sign in your workspace.
5. **Explore apps.** Take advantage of the wide selection of software specifically designed to help people increase productivity, keep track of projects, meet deadlines and be more organized. [Evernote](#) and [Focus Booster](#) are two free apps worth trying.
6. **Break down big projects.** Intimidation can lead to procrastination. So break big, complicated projects into smaller, more manageable tasks. You'll feel less overwhelmed. Plus, you'll gain a sense of accomplishment each time you reach an incremental milestone.
7. **Say no.** Sometimes you simply can't take on another assignment no matter how small. Give yourself permission to say "no" at times. While you want to build a reputation as a team player, you can't afford to become a doormat in the process.
8. **Closely monitor your online reading habits.** Keep your focus when online. If you're not disciplined, one second you're reading an industry report, the next

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1. **Give yourself a break.** It sounds counterintuitive, but taking breaks can help you get more done. Solutions to complex problems often surface when we're not intently focused on the issue. Likewise, getting some fresh air or engaging in water cooler banter can help you recharge.
2. **Clean up your act.** If you regularly lose time because you're scrambling to find files, come in early or stay late one day to do a clean sweep of your desk. Then, get into the habit of investing a few minutes each day to tidy up.
3. **Recondition your email reflexes.** Chances are you read email the instant it arrives. Fight the impulse to immediately react when you hear the pinging sound of an incoming message. Pick specific times to check your inbox throughout the day.
4. **Bring in reinforcements.** If everyone is efficient and productive, yet your team is still falling behind, consider bringing in temporary reinforcements. Hiring [specialized temporary professionals](#) is a cost-effective way to meet rising business demands while lifting the burden off overworked core employees.
5. **Communicate clearly.** When relaying information or giving instructions, make sure you're as clear as possible. When in doubt, *overcommunicate*. Covering the details upfront will save you significant time answering questions or making corrections later.

Human Resources • Small Business

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