

## **Time Management for Physicians – Why the Media in Your Country Want the Results (and How Completing It Can Help You Grow Your Practice)**

One plastic surgeon believes that all doctors fall into one of three categories: 1) those who are always on time, organized and constantly working, 2) those who stress about being unable to manage their time efficiently, and 3) those who don't do anything on time and are not bothered by it. The reality is more like a spectrum, with extreme organization and diligence at one end and a whirlwind of chaos at the other. Most physicians are (in)famous for their difficulty maintaining work/life balance. [Managing your time](#) in the office, the operating room and the field can be a challenge at the best of times.

- 1) Set specific, realistic goals. Short-term goals are those that can be accomplished in 1–3 years, such as offering professional development for your staff, learning a new procedure, or developing your own product line. Long-term goals typically require 5–10 years to achieve, including growing your practice significantly or publishing more research.

The key is setting up smaller milestones on the path to your bigger goals. A common mistake many doctors make is allowing themselves to become too bogged down in day-to-day details to focus on the long-term picture. You and your team need the professional and psychological reinforcement of accomplishing goals every so often, so you can be productive while you stay on track to meet your major milestones.

- 2) Use all available resources. Technology provides almost limitless tools for keeping track of your appointments, conferences and other demands. Outlook, Google and other platforms are helpful for organizing your time and sending you reminders of upcoming priorities. Most phones also have features like calendars and voice-activated notetaking programs that you can use anywhere, anytime.

And don't forget the human element that bolsters your business; your staff and office manager (if you have one) also need structured guidance to help them be as efficient as possible... which in turn makes your own job easier.

- 3) Balance, balance, balance. Your to-do list requires careful pruning and maintenance. Don't just add tasks to it without taking some away. Use your judgement to decide which tasks are most urgent, which need to be completed soon, and which are less important or optional. If you do add a new milestone, be sure you've first completed an older one, or have determined that it can be put on hold for now.

- 4) Make time for the things that are important, and focus on each of them in the moment. You can't build good relationships with your patients or staff if your mind is always divided between them and the other responsibilities you're facing. It's a lot to keep track of, and can seem overwhelming, but being "in the moment" makes you more relaxed, productive and efficient at whatever you're doing at that time.
- 5) Don't forget to take care of your most important patient: yourself. As the saying goes, you cannot pour from an empty cup; making time to relax and pursue your own interests is essential to avoid professional burnout.

Above all, your own attitude is a huge factor in what makes you successful. Lateness, stress, conflict and high expectations are an unavoidable part of the job sometimes, but they shouldn't overwhelm your focus on delivering the best quality patient care and professional service.