

7 diary management skills for busy entrepreneurs

As any professional will know, time is a valuable commodity and it must be managed wisely. For investors and busy entrepreneurs however, this is particularly important. Often, entrepreneurs are required to work on numerous tasks or projects at once and this can result in demanding schedules and time-sensitive conflicts.

Dealing with investors, media and clients, as well as running the business and taking on new staff can leave entrepreneurs with very little free time. Whilst an existing company may have the resources to hire additional in-house personnel, building a business can be the busiest time for entrepreneurs.

Due to this, it's essential that diaries are managed properly. Entrepreneurs who are struggling to find enough hours in the day may notice that a few key changes to their diary management releases a significant amount of time. With that in mind, we've rounded up some of our most useful diary management skills for busy entrepreneurs...

1. Plan your diary in advance

Last-minute meetings or urgent calls will always crop up, but planning your diary in advance will ensure that everything else is scheduled. Although you'll need to add events to your calendar on a daily basis, taking a few minutes to plan your diary at the start of each week can help you to visualise what the next seven days will entail.

Following this, you can schedule additional meetings, conferences or calls at times which are appropriate for you.

2. Take advantage of colour codes

Most professionals rely on electronic or online diary management and this offers many advantages. Easy to update and accessible from anywhere, online calendars ensure that you can always check what's coming up.

However, it's important to get the most out of diary management software and there's bound to be numerous features you're not using. Colour coding your engagements can be an extremely useful way to organise your diary.

Highlighting different types of engagements in varying colours means that you can see what events are approaching, just by glancing at your diary. Meetings with potential investors, conferences with in-house colleagues and even important family events can be categorised so that you're able to recognise them instantly, rather than having to read through your daily list of appointments.

3. Factor in breaks

Unfortunately, entrepreneurs often find it hard to switch off and don't usually take as many breaks as they should. Over time, this can have a negative effect on their professional lives, as well as their health and well-being.

When managing your diary, it's vital to include regular breaks and time away from the office. In addition to factoring a daily lunch break into your diary, for example, you may need to include specific days off.

Whilst most people work at least five days per week, busy entrepreneurs often end up working more than this. When launching a business, working over the weekends, early in the morning and late into the evening isn't uncommon. Although your business may require such input at the start, it's crucial that you schedule regular breaks so that you don't suffer from the strain of overwork.

4. Collate as many details as possible

When adding something to your diary, don't be tempted to simply note down vague details. Whilst you might have additional information stored in your head, it can be difficult to recall it at a later date.

For example, rather than simply diarising a meeting with specific person, you'll need to make a note of where the meeting is to be held; the topic (including any preparation that might be required); any other attendees; the nature of the meeting and the contact details of the host.

Whilst you may have the information elsewhere, adding these details to your diary means that you can access it quickly and easily, should you need to.

5. Use your time wisely

When you're arranging events or diarising meetings, it's vital to be aware of other engagements. For example, if you are arranging two out-of-office meetings you may want to schedule them on the same day, at nearby locations. This can cut down on your travel time and ensure that you aren't left idle between events.

Similarly, determine whether face-to-face meetings can be changed to phone calls, or even video conferencing. Often this cuts down on the time a discussion takes but still enables you to achieve the same results.

6. Back-up your diary

Once you implement all of your diary management skills, you'll realise just how useful your diary is. In fact, most entrepreneurs and professionals would struggle to operate without a properly managed diary.

It's vital, therefore, that your calendar is properly backed up, in case there is an electronic or internet issue. Unfortunately, this can happen all too frequently and you risk losing anything you haven't secured.

Having a data recovery plan and keeping your diary backed up via cloud computing, for example, ensures that you can access the document from wherever you are and that you aren't solely reliant on hardware. If a hard drive or server fails, it could delete crucial data, but if it's also stored virtually, you'll be able to access a back-up instantaneously.

7. Get professional help with diary management

Organising a diary is no easy feat, particularly for a busy entrepreneur. Whilst it may be tempting to overlook the management of your calendar when you have so many other tasks to do, but this can result in you missing important events, being ill-prepared and losing crucial time.

By accessing [professional remote help with diary management](#), however, you can ensure that your engagements are managed effectively and that your time is put to good use. Often, the additional time gained by having a well-organised diary means that entrepreneurs are able to spend more time at home or commit to additional professional endeavours.

An experienced PA, for example, will have specific expertise when it comes to diary management. By allowing an accredited professional to manage this aspect of your career, you'll benefit from their experience and you should notice that your engagements are more streamlined. As well as building a cohesive diary for you on a regular basis, using a professional PA will enable you to do what you do best – sourcing new investors, liaising with the press, increasing new revenue and, ultimately, building your businesses.

When outsourcing your diary management requirements, you can also gain assistance in other areas. By using a highly trained, virtual PA, for example, you could also access help with email management, call handling, documentation and research. Whilst it may not be viable for an entrepreneur to hire in-house staff to complete these tasks, outsourcing your business or administrative needs will allow you to focus on the more crucial aspects of your business.

When time is precious, it makes sense to use it wisely. Rather than attempting to handle your diary management alone, using an accredited PA is a cost-effective way to increase efficiency and productivity. In addition to this, working with a virtual PA who has experience in your industry could help you to streamline business processes, increase sector-specific research and, ultimately, to create a successful and thriving business.

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