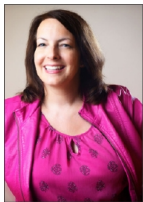




Time management: “Compartmentalization is key”



By Sonia Byrne

Compartmentalization simply refers to dividing a larger activity or issue into smaller, more reasonable pieces. It is also a word I use to describe a time management tool for entrepreneurs—especially women entrepreneurs. Women entrepreneurs still hold the larger portion of responsibility for household and family obligations while operating a business. Therefore, women are natural compartmentalizers. We have had to

learn to balance the needs of our families, friends, and communities while running a business.

The unpredictability of our lives and the multiple influences in our days can leave us feeling overwhelmed and inefficient. However, we can use our natural ability to compartmentalize to our advantage with the following five time management tips.



Plan your time (and your rest)

Like a sailboat without a sail, our unplanned time can head in any direction. Using a simple time planning chart can illustrate the opportunities to make more effective use of time. Simply draw seven columns on an 8.5" x 11" piece of paper placed horizontally. Each column represents a day of the week. Divide each day into three sections: morning, afternoon, and evening.

- Step 1:** Place an “X” in your preferred days/times off from your business endeavours.
- Step 2:** Place an “F” in areas of family obligation.
- Step 3:** Review the open times and select two or three areas for self-care. Write “SC.”
- Step 4:** You now have the times that you can devote to your business in a typical week. According to your business activity, you may wish to delineate marketing time, client meeting times, creation time, etc.



Stay present

The enemy of being effective in any present moment is our predisposition to send our focus to the past or the future. Take some time this coming week to be an observer of your thoughts while you carry out your business activities. Do you find yourself replaying negative scenes from past business issues that you have no way to remedy in the present? This is a time waster. Do you find yourself worrying about the future and things that you cannot control in your business? This is also an ineffective use of your time. Bestselling author Louise Hay is known for saying, “The point of power is always in the present moment.”



Break down large projects

When we practice compartmentalization, larger tasks and projects are broken down into smaller pieces as we ask ourselves, “What can I do right now that will contribute to the completion of this project?” It’s like following a food recipe: each step builds on the previous step and contributes to the finished dish. Keeping our focus on what’s right in front of us can reduce the feeling of overwhelm that can occur when we undertake large projects.



Outsource

If you often experience resistance to a business activity, perhaps it’s time to consider outsourcing that activity. There is a whole world of entrepreneurs offering virtual assistance, marketing, social media, IT support, cold calls, etc. available to you. We are more time-efficient when we are doing the things that we do well. No budget for outsourcing? Consider bartering or trading services with other entrepreneurs. My business got off the ground with the help of an IT person who loved perogies!



Celebrate milestones

Take the time to celebrate the small wins! Since you have compartmentalized and reduced your larger projects to smaller, more manageable tasks, you will find yourself completing tasks more regularly—with more opportunities to celebrate and reflect on how far you have come!