



Procrastinate your way to increased productivity

Taking the time to brainstorm and let ideas simmer can result in creative approaches with clients.

BY STU SCHLACKMAN

Remember back in college when you knew you had finals lurking just a couple of weeks away and you committed to studying a little bit each night? You promised to be disciplined and not wait to cram everything in at the last minute.

And what happened? Sure enough, you put off cracking the books night after night, and then suddenly finals week was staring you right in the

face. The proverbial all-nighter was inevitable as you crammed for exams and scrambled to finish your projects.

Why do so many people wait to the last minute? Why don't they spread their workload out over a realistic timeframe? The bottom line: We procrastinate!

Procrastination is part of human nature. We live in such a fast-paced society that we're often

forced to juggle multiple balls on a daily basis, delaying our priorities.

But while procrastination may lead to a last-minute, stress-filled scramble, it also has its advantages.

Procrastination as a positive

So what is the advantage of procrastination? The longer you wait on accomplishing a project, task or creative endeavor, the more time you have for your ideas to simmer and develop. Ideas can mature in your subconscious without you realizing it. Procrastinating serves as an incubator for your ideas.

As we amass multiple ideas in our mind, we start connecting them to formulate new ones. Procrastination helps this process develop.

When team members have brainstorming sessions and log multiple thoughts on the board, we start to combine them to form new ideas. This is how creativity happens. It's connecting the dots of multiple ideas that brings about new ones.

In other words, it leads to great achievements and innovation.

20% of people identify themselves as chronic procrastinators.

— Psychology Today

So procrastinating might not be so bad after all.

For many of you who work 60 hours a week juggling multiple clients and opportunities, preparing a new presentation for a prospect might come down to the last minute. We kick ourselves for not being more organized in advance, but we often perform better under pressure. Also, we can expect our past experiences to kick in when we perform.

Quantity over quality

Sometimes quantity is better than quality. The quantity of ideas you have can lead to new, more unique and creative ones that just might fit the prospect's needs. Advisors often juggle many different tasks for numerous accounts, and that can help you be more original and creative.

It's like when your kids play sports — their grades are better than when they're not playing

10% of procrastinators are not thinking about how to get rid of procrastination — they like it.

— Procrastination.com

sports. You are more productive when you are busy. The more output you have, the more chances for originality.

So the bottom line when preparing for a major presentation or developing a large proposal is to gather your team members and generate as many ideas as possible as to why you're the right fit. Ask, "What can we communicate about our company, our value or competitive advantage?" The higher the number of ideas, the better your chances of quality ideas that are more creative than those of the past.

Playing quarterback

As an advisor, you are the quarterback on the team for your clients. You must be involved in crafting the plan, making the presentation and understanding the client's needs.

You need to leverage all your experiences to become more original. It's been said many times that you learn more from the sales you lose than the sales you win. That's where you gain experience.

After reflecting on your mistakes, you have more experience and insight as to what can work versus what might not work when the next opportunity rolls around. You learn how to read client situations as you relate them to those in the past that were similar.

When the pressure mounts at the last minute to get a presentation or a proposal ready for a prospect, realize that all the experience you've acquired over the years gives you a mental advantage in preparing that you weren't counting on.

So the next time you're down to the last minute in preparing for a prospect, realize there might be a silver lining in those final moments of preparation. Be open to the fact that a great idea for the client might be just minutes away. **KT**

Stu Schlackman is a sales expert, speaker and the author of "Four People You Should Know" and "Don't Just Stand There, Sell Something."



CONTACT:

Stu Schlackman
stuschlackman.com