

Evaluating your time-tracking sheets

The most successful real estate salespeople are brutally honest with themselves and confront their strengths and weaknesses. They're able to look at their performance in an objective, real, honest, and constructive fashion. To get the most out of your personal evaluation, you should assess where you currently are with your time management before you plan how to allocate your time, noting where you're doing well and where you have room for improvement. Use your time-tracking sheets to identify how much time you spend in each category and when you perform tasks of a certain type.

Looking back at your day

How often do you exclaim at the end of the day, "Where did the time go?" When you feel as though you've gotten nothing of significance done in the last eight hours on the job, go back and review the mix of PSA, IIPA, and DIPA. Then pinpoint the problems, plan for the next day, and nail down a schedule that ensures maximum productivity and keeps you on the path toward success. Ask yourself the following questions to identify what to change for tomorrow.

- ✓ When did you invest in DIPA in your day? Did you put off tackling your DIPA tasks until your day was derailed by interruptions?
- ✓ Were you so engrossed in IIPA tracking that you spent more time than you intended in analyzing the results?
- ✓ How did you break down DIPA time in terms of prospecting, lead follow-up, and sales presentations?
- ✓ Did you lose momentum by jumping back and forth between prospecting, lead follow-up or other actions?

Keep a level head as you evaluate your productivity by accepting that although today is gone, tomorrow is a new opportunity to get it right.

Reflecting on your week, month, quarter, and year

At the end of each week, wrap up with an evaluation of how you did, asking yourself the following questions. This shouldn't take any longer than 30 minutes.

- ✓ How much time did you spend in each category? Is your time investment a little off-balance?



- ✓ How many contacts, leads, appointments, listings taken and buyer sales did you complete? Were those numbers better or less than your goals for the week?

When you're comfortable that you have a good handle on what happened this week, then evaluate what needs to happen next week:

- ✓ What needs to change next week to close any gaps?
- ✓ Which areas of DIPA do you need to focus on?
- ✓ How much DIPA time do you need to hit or exceed your sales goals?
- ✓ How can you increase the hours you invest in DIPA and who or what can help you do so? What are the barriers to increasing DIPA time?

Repeat this process at the end of the month, quarter, and year, asking yourself how far behind you are for the month, quarter, or year to date. Your monthly reviews may take an hour; a quarterly evaluation, perhaps a few hours. And at the end of the year, you may want to set aside a day or two to replay the whole year. Your yearly reviews differ in scope from your weekly and monthly recaps because you're looking for big-picture trends rather than daily or even hourly work routines.

Several years ago, my annual self-evaluation uncovered that if I don't take an extended break from work at about the ninth week, my effectiveness drops dramatically. I need at least a five-day break to recharge my batteries. If I don't put that break in my schedule, my intensity, focus, concentration, and results drop dramatically with each subsequent week. I discovered there was a rhythm to my work. If I didn't follow that rhythm I was in trouble. I would have not discovered this without the weekly, monthly, quarterly, and annual evaluations. ***What is the rhythm of your work?***

Planning your day around DIPA

Your first step in improving your time management is to decide to make DIPA a priority, to commit to it, to just do it! Stuff happens, and this is no greater a truth than in the world of real estate sales. With problem transactions, emergencies, and short sale deals, we really have our time management plate full. If you don't place your direct income-producing activities in your schedule, chances are that stuff will come along to commandeer your time—and the DIPA won't get done. ***If you fail to plan out the where, when, and how of your***

DIPA for the week or day, you can plan to fail. You also can't expect to execute.

Set out to increase your DIPA hours daily. Most real estate salespeople invest less than 20 percent of their workday in DIPA when they should be investing in excess of 60 percent of their time in DIPA every day.

Scheduling your DIPA time

To make sure you focus on the most essential direct income-producing activities, be sure to separate out the most important and devote a specific amount of time to each. Of the many DIPA functions that you regularly undertake, a handful are critical to perform regularly, if not on a daily basis. To stay focused, set aside time specifically for each function. Don't lump everything together in a single "DIPA" time slot.

As you schedule time for your direct income-producing activities, consider these tips:

- ✓ **Batch like activities together.** Don't make two prospecting calls, do a couple of lead follow-up calls, and then go back to more prospecting. This disintegrates into multi-tasking, which is inefficient. You will also gain momentum in your activities because you are linking them together. You will warm up, improve, and get into a rhythm for the day. If you book an appointment from your prospecting you will gain confidence so you can build on that confidence with more and better calls.
- ✓ **Set aside at least one hour at a time.** Give yourself enough time to build momentum for greatest productivity.
- ✓ **Schedule a break between activities.** Giving yourself 15 minutes to stretch your legs, take a quick walk, return some calls, or even get a cup of coffee enables you to clear your mind and transfer your thinking to a new prospect, lead follow-up call, or other action.

Picking a time for DIPA and using that slot wisely

Because DIPA tasks are the most important, you want to put those actions in the part of your day when you have the most energy, intensity, and focus. When are you better, sharper, or thinking most clearly during your day? When do you have the most energy and greatest focus? For most people, this period of high productivity is typically in the morning.

Aligning your most productive time periods with your most important DIPA tasks is critical to your success on a daily basis. Whether you're an up-at-daybreak person like me or more like my wife, Joan—whose engine is misfiring until her second latte kicks in some time between 9:00 and 10:00 a.m.—you want to determine your personal prime time sooner rather than later.

The best way to arrive at your alignment is through personal observation. Monitor yourself for a few weeks. You might even journal through your day, finding the sweet spot where you're most productive. You can also seek out the opinion of those who know you well. Ask your spouse or significant other, your co-workers or your sales manager. You could even ask a parent, someone who's followed your biorhythms from your birth.

If you discover that your best time of day is the afternoon or evening, be especially diligent in protecting that high-powered period. As your day progresses, you encounter more opportunities for stuff to happen and derail your plans for an afternoon of DIPA. I'm not saying you can't do it, but just be aware that if you book your direct income-producing activities later in the day, you must be extra wary of distractions, glitches, interruptions, and other trip-ups.

Most of the push back I get from agents about morning lead generation and lead follow-up calls is the percentage of people that are home. I will grant the argument that more people are home in the evening. I agree with you; you will probably find more people at home at night than during the day. What you have to accept is that unless your high productive energy time is in the evening, the odds of you consistently engaging in the lead generation and lead follow-up in the evening is not likely. In fact, I would tell you it would be less than 25%.

If you won't make the calls because you are too tired, stressed out, wiped out from your day, it doesn't matter that people are home a greater percentage because most agents won't make the calls. Do your calls when you are most likely to consistently do it!