

# During your workday, are *interruptions* the exception or the rule?

BY KATE SHIRLEY



It is so easy to feel overwhelmed and distracted at work these days. The sheer volume of information we deal with can cause us to feel like we are being pulled in too many directions. Try incorporating some of these tips for organizing your office life, and see how much you can increase your productivity while staying focused and organized!

Plan your day to maximize your time. Determine the best time to do repetitive or tedious tasks as well as those that require more brain power. It can be helpful to plan to complete tasks that require a lot of effort when you're

feeling alert, like after your morning coffee. Working on mundane tasks may be better left for the end of the day when you tend to be more tired.

Rather than working on a project until it is done, try breaking down large projects into manageable components. This will help you keep your work fresh and engaging throughout the workday, and will leave you with a sense of accomplishment.

Allocate time slots for planned interruptions. Check your work emails at designated times rather than

looking up each time the email alert beeps. Also, instead of having people stop by your desk every 10 minutes and to ask you questions, let your colleagues know the best time of day when you can be interrupted. At all other times, you can really get some work done.

Set up filters in your email client to sort out important and urgent work emails from personal stuff or junk email, which can wait. Instead of dealing with a single inbox with hundreds of unread email, you can deal with smaller folders categorized by project, priority and context.

## Online Learning Center



Take the extra step and check out this thirty minute online personal development course offered by IRWA through the Business Training Library. In just half an hour, you can learn great tips to advance and inspire you in the workplace!

Creativity and Innovation in the Workplace

**Code:** PD0030

For the entire list of IRWA skill-building courses offered through BTL, visit [www.irwaonline.org](http://www.irwaonline.org).

- People in an office get interrupted an average of 7 times an hour (that's 56 times a day!)
- Multi-tasking may cause efficiency to fall dramatically, even though people think it boosts productivity
- People spend an average of 11 minutes on a project before being distracted
- Once distracted, it takes about 25 minutes to return to a project, if they return at all