

## Boost productivity by ditching to-do lists

Replace your to-do list with a more effective method for capturing your commitments: your calendar. Instead of writing a laundry list you never complete, assign each task a specific time on your schedule.

*Guarantee you will meet your commitments with this system:*

■ **Schedule each step.** When you agree to do something, put on your calendar the time it will require, not only the deadline. If you are going to write a report, for example, block time for research, writing and revision. When you schedule a meeting, set aside time to prepare for the meeting and for

follow-up activities such as preparing and distributing the minutes.

■ **Include recurring tasks.** Set times each day and week for the routine actions that usually don't show up on to-do lists, such as checking e-mail, planning and organizing.

■ **Check availability.** Before you volunteer for or accept another assignment, look at your calendar.

*Bottom line:* When you use that system you gain a realistic view of the time you have available to work.

— Adapted from *The 85% Solution*, Linda Galindo, Jossey-Bass, www.josseybass.com.

## Find solutions

Find the answer to a tough problem by looking at it from a new angle. *Take these approaches:*

■ **Give advice.** Imagine that someone else is facing the problem. What would you advise that person to do? If you still don't have an answer, what other resources would you point the person toward?

■ **Work backward.** Pretend that you already have solved the problem. Then think about how you arrived at the answer, where you were and what you did.

■ **Spot opportunities.** Instead of approaching from a negative viewpoint, look at the prospects for improvement it represents.

— Adapted from *Emotional Fitness at Work*, Barton Goldsmith, Career Press, www.careerpress.com.

## Bring order to document reviews

Avoid hassles while still reaping the benefits of having multiple people review an important document. *Apply these guidelines:*

■ **Allow adequate review time.** Complex documents can take hours or days to review, and reviewers may need to go through the document more than one time. Allocate enough time in your project plan for reading, making changes and checking corrections.

■ **Detail assignments.** Explain what each reviewer should concentrate on. Should they check for accuracy, such as whether it's possible to follow directions in the document? Do you want reviewers to recommend changes in writing style, to improve readability? Who is responsible for checking consistency, such as whether the page numbers in the table of contents are accurate and whether cross-references refer to the correct pages or items?

■ **Assign authority.** Don't wait until reviewers disagree before you decide who will have the final say on proposed changes. Also designate backup authorities in case someone on the team is unavailable. *Example:* If a reviewer in China is unavailable when you need an answer, can a colleague in London fill in?

■ **Manage versions.** Choose an electronic review system that will allow you to see and review each person's comments. *Examples:* the review tools in Microsoft Word or Adobe Acrobat. Make sure that whatever system you use works smoothly with each participant's computer system, so you don't discover at the last minute that three team members have an older, incompatible version of the software.

— Adapted from "Manage Document Reviews at a Distance," Will Kelly, Web Worker Daily, <http://webworkerdaily.com>.

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# Time-Saving Gadgets

## Ask your network

Tap into the knowledge in your extended network without annoying your contacts. The free Aardvark Web service (<http://vark.com>) sends your questions only to the people who are likely to have the answers and are willing to respond.

By linking to your Facebook account, Aardvark finds your friends and friends of your friends who have related expertise and then sends your question. Most questions are answered within five minutes, according to Aardvark.

You can submit questions through the Aardvark Web site or via e-mail, instant message or Twitter.

— Adapted from “Review: Need Advice? Aardvark Can Sniff It Out,” Rachel Metz, ABC News, <http://abcnews.go.com>.

## Translate by phone

Instead of packing a Spanish-English dictionary, rely on a \$25 application for your iPhone or iPod touch. Jibbigo quickly translates spoken English or Spanish into the other language, both by voice and through written transcription.

It's programmed with a 40,000-word vocabulary and is designed to work in travel and medical situations. You also can preload common translations that you will need. Plus, the program is designed to learn and become faster and more accurate as you work with it.

The Spanish-English speech translator is available at the iTunes Store. Mobile Technologies plans to add more language options. Learn more at [www.jibbigo.com](http://www.jibbigo.com).

— Adapted from “Not Bilingual? \$25 iPhone App for That Translates Spoken English and Spanish,” Tom Kaneshige, *CIO*, [www.cio.com](http://www.cio.com).

## Trim the time you are wasting

Quit wondering where the time went. You will stay on task with a Web-based time management tool, RescueTime, that tracks how you spend your time without your having to enter data.

While you are working, RescueTime notes which application window is active on your computer. You also can fill in gaps after you step away from your computer, by clicking a button to show what you were doing in the interim, such as attending a meeting or talking on the phone.

When you want to focus on an activity, click a button to set the amount of time in RescueTime, and the program will block you from activities you have designated as time wasters. For example, it can prevent you from checking Twitter

for the next 45 minutes while you work on employee reviews. You also can set goals for how much time you want to spend on certain activities, and RescueTime will alert you when you exceed the time limit.

To analyze how you spend your days, RescueTime will generate reports that you customize. You can see graphs, charts and data sets that show what you did when, including using applications, visiting Web sites, working on certain documents or working at offline activities you designate.

Individual accounts range from a free version to a Pro account that is \$8 a month or \$64 a year. Business plans also are available. Learn more at [www.rescuetime.com](http://www.rescuetime.com).

— From the editors.

## Send signatures via your smart phone

Add your electronic signature to documents right from your iPhone or BlackBerry device with the new version of DocuSign.

The electronic signature application now loads quickly on mobile browsers. *DocuSign Version 9 also allows users to:*

- Request data without signatures.
- Fax back documents.

- Require senders to attach additional documents, such as a copy of a driver's license.

Try the free Lite version or learn more at [www.docuSign.com](http://www.docuSign.com). The Individual Professional plan starts at \$191.40 a year.

— Adapted from “Sign Documents via BlackBerry, iPhone With DocuSign,” Jamie Lendino, *PC Magazine*, [www.pcmag.com](http://www.pcmag.com).

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# Technology Shortcuts

## Use your middle mouse button

Master the middle button on your computer mouse for faster operations. Whether you have a button or wheel, you can take these actions:

- **Close browser tabs.** No need to click the “X” to close a tab in Internet Explorer or Firefox. Just click the tab with your middle mouse button and it will close.

- **Open tabs.** Click a link with your middle mouse button and it will open the page in a new tab.

- **Open a group of favorites.** If you have saved favorite Web sites into bookmark folders, you can open every site in a folder in a new

tab with one click of your middle mouse button. *Example:* Go to your Favorites folder for news sites, click with the middle button and each site will open in a tab.

- **Scroll.** Click and drag the middle mouse button and it will move you up and down an application or browser page like a scroll wheel. If your middle button is a scroll wheel, the click-and-drag method may allow you to navigate more smoothly.

— Adapted from “Bring Your Middle Mouse Button to Life,” Rick Broida, *PC World*, [www.peworld.com](http://www.peworld.com).

## Link files to task

Gain more value from your Outlook task list by linking information you need for each task.

*Here’s how:*

- Open the task and go to the Ribbon to click on Insert.

- Choose Attach File to add a document, such as a Word or Excel file.

- Choose Attach Item to add an Outlook link, such as an e-mail, calendar entry or contact file.

When you are ready to work on the task, everything you need will be at your fingertips.

— Adapted from “Linking Information in Outlook,” Jan Jasper, *Work Smarter, Not Harder News*, [www.janjasper.com](http://www.janjasper.com).

## Harness presentation tweets

Instead of bemoaning audience members’ propensity to use Twitter during your next presentation, take advantage of the social media conversation. *Here’s how:*

- **Encourage tweets.** Add your Twitter user name and a hash tag for your presentation to your presentation’s title slide. That invites people to follow you online and makes comments about your presentation easy to find.

- **Format your key points.** Write messages in text that fits within Twitter’s 140-character limit. That makes it easy for attendees to

tweet what you want others to know.

- **Respond in real time.** Build into your presentation times when you will call up your Twitter stream to answer questions and respond to comments.

- **Add longevity.** Extend the reach of your presentation by posting slides and key points online, on your blog or through a Web site such as SlideShare. Audience members can link to those sites to refer other people to your information.

— Adapted from “Use Twitter in Your Next Presentation,” Carmine Gallo, *BusinessWeek*, [www.businessweek.com](http://www.businessweek.com).

## AutoCorrect more

Use Word’s AutoCorrect option for more than fixing your typos. It’s sometimes a better option than AutoText to save keystrokes.

If you have several blocks of text that start the same way, the AutoComplete feature of AutoText won’t take effect until you reach the different character. *Example:* “United States Department of ...”

With AutoCorrect, however, you can create a short group of characters to trigger the correction with the full name. *Example:* “dva” could become “United States Department of Veterans Affairs.”

*Caution:* Don’t choose an acronym you may use as your AutoCorrect entry, or it will create the full name when you don’t want it.

— Adapted from “Using AutoText and AutoCorrect Effectively,” Allen Wyatt’s WordTips, <http://word.tips.net>.

## Eliminate duplicates in Excel

Excel 2007 includes new tools for finding and deleting duplicate records.

*Here’s a method that works in older versions too:*

- Click on a cell.
- From the Data menu, click Filter and then Advanced Filter.
- Choose the action “Copy to

another location” and fill in the range and “Copy to” boxes.

- Check the box for “Unique records only” and click OK.

You will have a new copy with no duplicate records.

— Adapted from “How to Find Duplicates in Excel,” Susan Harkins, TechRepublic, <http://techrepublic.com>.

# Productivity Boosters

## Prompt creativity

Instead of waiting for inspiration, create an environment that triggers thought. *Adopt these habits:*

■ **Routine.** Have a set time, place and environment for working on creative tasks. That primes your mind to act. Author Stephen King, for example, sits down in the same place at the same time each morning. He has tea or water and plays music in the background.

■ **Process.** Adopt a method for capturing and storing ideas. Then no matter where an idea strikes you won't lose it. *Example:* Set up a notes folder on your smart phone.

■ **Breaks.** Give your subconscious time to work on what's puzzling you, by breaking free of your workspace. A 10-minute walk can result in greater progress than agonizing at your desk for three hours.

— Adapted from "RSS Creativity: Routines, Systems, Spontaneity," Mark McGuinness, 99%, <http://the99percent.com>.

## Build cooperation

Design collaboration into any new office space. *Use these elements:*

■ **Lower cubicle walls.** Team members will be more likely to talk with colleagues instead of sending e-mail to someone nearby.

■ **Glass walls.** Staff members will be more likely to talk with you when they can easily check your availability.

■ **Gathering spots.** Informal areas encourage team members to chat and build camaraderie.

*Caution:* Maintain private work areas for team members whose assignments require quiet concentration or confidentiality.

— Adapted from "Office Personal Space Is Crowded Out," Sarah Needleman, *The Wall Street Journal*, <http://online.wsj.com>.

## Start each meeting with purpose

Guarantee that everyone in a meeting is headed in the same direction, by asking this question at the beginning: "Why are we here?"

Members of the group that invited you to the meeting may have very different ideas about what they want to accomplish. *Example:* One person may consider the meeting a project update, while another wants to ask for a change in the project or for additional resources.

Asking that question will not

only focus the action but also show you if the group is united. In addition to listening to the answers, watch the body language of the group members for signs of disagreement.

Once you have agreed upon the objective, ask this question: "Do we all need to be here?" Give members permission to leave if they could better spend their time elsewhere.

— Adapted from "Everything on One Calendar, Please," Adam Bryant, *The New York Times*, [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com).

## Spur problem solving with incentives

To resolve a lingering issue, give team members a compelling reason to do so. The right reward will lead them to solve a problem or complete an overdue project.

One software firm awarded a Nintendo Wii to a developer who, outside of work time, solved a programming problem in two weeks. That was *after* the company had spent two years and tens of thousands of dollars trying to solve the same problem, without success.

When the same company offered a \$1,000 bonus to the person who solved a problem, that

didn't work, although other prizes did spur creativity and action.

*The key:* Make the reward a "trophy" that you can display during the competition.

You can even offer a reward to make mundane or dreaded assignments fun. *Example:* The prize goes to the team member who handles the rudest customer each month. That will keep service representatives smiling through their frustration.

— Adapted from "How to Make Solving Problems Fun," Peter Bregman, *How We Work*, <http://blogs.harvardbusiness.org>.

## Close the loop on unfinished projects

Even when you stop working on a project, it can sap mental energy if it is incomplete. Free yourself from the distraction of an unfinished project by taking one of these approaches.

■ **Formally end it.** Notify others involved in the work that you are officially shutting it down. Store or delete the files you no longer need.

■ **Settle for partial achievement.** Even if you don't intend to take the project to its planned com-

pletion, can you reap some value from the work already done?

■ **Commit to completion.** For those projects you don't want to kill, set a deadline for finishing. Update the task lists with the steps remaining to be done, and set interim checkpoints to keep yourself on track for finishing.

— Adapted from "Do You Have Dozens of Unfinished Projects? Here's What to Do," Ali Hale, *Pick-TheBrain*, [www.pickthebrain.com](http://www.pickthebrain.com).

# Powerful Management

## Leave no doubt about resolution

Ensure that a team member understands your expectations after a corrective feedback meeting. Follow up with an e-mail or memo outlining your discussion and the action steps you agreed on. *Take these steps:*

- **Summarize your discussion,** the solution the team member agreed to and the consequences if the person doesn't correct the problem behavior.

- **Copy relevant people,** such as your HR department.

- **Require a response.** End the memo with directions for the team member to respond with any questions or additions, and to acknowledge in writing having received the document.

That documentation will leave no doubt that the team member understood your expectations and the consequences of not meeting them.

— Adapted from “Assertiveness Techniques That Give You Power and How to Stand Up for Yourself,” Linnda Durré, [www.drduerre.com](http://www.drduerre.com).

## Forecast the future

To stay competitive, focus your team members on finding opportunities and threats. *Organize their efforts this way:*

- **Assign** each team member to monitor something: a customer base, a competitor or an industry player. Periodically rotate assignments so that each person gains a greater understanding of the landscape.

- **Schedule** regular meetings for team members to share with the group what they have learned.

- **Require** instant updates on major developments.

- **Train** team members to wrap up their reports by explaining what the information means to your organization.

— Adapted from “Five Simple Suggestions for Minimizing Management Myopia,” Art Petty, Management Excellence, <http://artpetty.com>.

## Test your leadership traits

How well do you measure up as a leader who your team members trust and respect? *Answering these questions will give you a clue:*

- **Do you prioritize every assignment?** Calling every task “important” leads to burnout and frustration.

- **Do you share information?** Some information must remain confidential, but if you keep employees in the dark about everything they

will not feel committed to the organization.

- **Do you give direct answers?** Move forward with confidence, knowing that you won't be right every time.

- **Do you model work/life balance?** You will reap more from the team during work hours if you respect their time off.

— Adapted from “Ten Reasons Your Team Hates You,” Mike Figliuolo, *Baseline*, [www.baselinemag.com](http://www.baselinemag.com).

## Bar the blame

Publicly blaming a team member for a problem can infect an entire organization, researchers say. Staff members become defensive, start to avoid taking risks, blame others and stop learning from mistakes.

*Better:* Instead of assigning blame, focus your team members on what they can learn from a bad situation. Intel calls its process “When Learning Hurts.”

By publicly discussing your own mistakes and by assigning blame only in private—and only when necessary—you create a culture of accountability and learning.

— Adapted from “People Like to Play the Blame Game,” Karen Lowe, USC News, <http://uscnews.usc.edu>.

## Write more specific job descriptions

Home in on the right job candidates by being more specific in your hiring advertisements. *Add these elements:*

- **How skills are used.** Detail the skill level you are seeking. If you just say “Excel” that could mean doing data entry or being able to create and work with pivot tables.

- **Goals.** Think about the performance goals on which you will judge the new hire, and include them in the advertisement. *Example:* Will increase revenues 5% within the first six months. During interviews, ask the candidates how they would set

about reaching those goals.

- **Typical work.** Instead of mentioning only the most exciting parts of the job, give applicants a realistic view of what they would do during a common week. *Example:* Will handle an average of 20 customer calls per hour, taking orders and resolving complaints.

- **Team culture.** Leave no doubt about whether the position demands someone who works well alone, a team player or other qualities.

— Adapted from “4 Job Description Ingredients Candidates Would Love,” Scot Herrick, <http://cuberules.com>.

# Proven Effective Habits

## Innovation formula

Balance taking care of business with developing your vision for the future. Allocate your time according to the 70/20/10 formula that Google uses:

- 70% devoted to your core business.
- 20% focused on building new areas off of that core.
- 10% reserved for “crazy” ideas that may turn out to be brilliant or nothing at all.

That creates room for breakthroughs without sacrificing your existing operations.

— Adapted from “Powering the Google Engine: Innovation Is Key,” Karen Cho, INSEAD Knowledge, <http://knowledge.insead.edu>.

## Adapt to both genders

Take advantage of what researchers have discovered about male and female tendencies. Plan your communications with the following in mind:

■ **Don’t confront men in the morning.** Testosterone levels—related to aggression—spike in the morning and around 8 p.m. If you’re dealing with a touchy subject, opt for an afternoon meeting.

■ **Allow women to connect.** Women process information through connections, so don’t bar them from bringing up other subjects during a discussion. They are seeing how everything relates.

— Adapted from “Decoding the Workplace Communication Differences Between the Sexes,” Jean Kelley, [www.jeankelley.com](http://www.jeankelley.com).

## Network with a live testimonial

Instead of bragging about yourself at a networking event, bring a partner to do it for you. Work the room with a colleague you admire and who feels the same about you.

Here’s how to make glowing testimonials naturally part of the conversation: As you are talking with someone, your friend approaches. In making the introduction, say something outstanding about your colleague.

*Example:* “Chris, I’d like you to meet Pat Warner, head of our marketing department. She has won

three national awards for innovative campaigns in the past four years.” Pat, smiling and shaking hands, returns the favor by saying, “What Sandy isn’t telling you, Chris, is that all those campaigns were for successful new product launches that he headed.”

Later, as your partner is talking with someone you can walk up and be introduced. Both of you will be more memorable than if you work the room alone.

— Adapted from “Have an Extra Edge at Networking Events,” Patricia Fripp, <http://fripp.blogs.com>.

## Attack problems from the outside

Solve a difficult problem by discussing it with someone outside your field of expertise. That’s more likely to lead to success than hashing out the issues with your colleagues who have similar backgrounds.

Scientific breakthroughs often come from weekly lab meetings, where scientists discuss their results, rather than from working in isolation. In addition, when two labs encountered the same problem, scientists who were all experts in the same field took weeks to solve it, while a group composed of dif-

ferent types of scientists and medical school students hashed it out after just minutes of debate.

*Why it works:* Discussing a problem with someone who is unfamiliar with your work forces you to think about it in new ways as you search for metaphors and analogies to explain the issue. That leads you to take a fresh look at the data and recognize as important the facts you may otherwise have overlooked.

— Adapted from “The Neuroscience of Screwing Up,” Jonah Lehrer, *Wired*, [www.wired.com](http://www.wired.com).

## Foresee changes from multiple angles

Keenly observing cultural trends allows you to spot opportunities early, but don’t rely on your own insights alone. Invite experts in various areas to lunch, and ask questions like these:

- “What’s happening in your field?”
- “What’s new or unexpected?”
- “How do you see that

affecting your field?”

- “How might that go with or against other developments?”

The answers to those questions will give you a more complete view of opportunities for or challenges to your organization.

— Adapted from *Chief Culture Officer*, Grant McCracken, Basic Books, [www.perseusbooksgroup.com](http://www.perseusbooksgroup.com).

# Best organizing practices: Tested ideas that work

## Commit to action

Stop talking about ideas and do something. *Adopt this habit:*

■ **The first time** you discuss an idea, write it down.

■ **The second time** you discuss that idea, highlight it in your notes.

■ **The third time** the same idea pops up, commit to doing something to move it forward or quit talking about it.

That will force you to take action and quit wasting time talking about what you “could” do but have no intention of acting on.

— Adapted from “Pursue Your Idea,” Doug Sundheim, *Doug’s Weekly Success Tips*, www.clarityconsulting.com.

## Target stress

Identify the recurring sources of stress in your life so that you can deal with them effectively. For a few weeks, every hour jot down the most recent stress you experienced, what you did to deal with it and how effectively you are working.

Analyzing the data will show you the most stressful situations you encounter, the recurring stresses and the impact they are having on your work. Then you can look at your coping strategies to find ways to deal with them more effectively.

You may find, for example, that while a team member’s interrupting to ask you a basic question is a minor stress, it happens so frequently that it is taking a heavy toll on your productivity. A simple list of answers to frequently asked questions could save you hours each week.

— Adapted from “Stress Diary,” James Manktelow, *Mind Tools Newsletter*, www.mindtools.com.

## Start right

Before you turn on your computer in the morning, ensure that you will end the day feeling successful. Review your list of priorities and decide what you need to complete to make meaningful progress toward your goals.

Then open your calendar and schedule the time you will work on those two or three items. That gives you a plan for success before you can become sidetracked by the morning’s e-mail.

— Adapted from “Manage Your Time to Be More Productive,” Donna Nebenzahl, *Ottawa Citizen*, www.ottawacitizen.com.

## Look ahead

Schedule one hour a week to look toward the future and prepare for what you will be facing. *Analyze these factors:*

■ **Game-changing events.** Look beyond cyclical changes in your market to emerging trends. Will a new technology affect your market? Are your customers behaving differently?

■ **Upcoming problems.** What will your organization be facing? *Example:* If you know you are entering a traditionally slow cycle, how will you manage cash flow? Look also at what problems your customers will be facing. Being ready to solve their problems will make your organization a leader.

## Professional changes.

Based on what is happening in your field, what new skills will your career success require?

Carving out an hour a week to look ahead will allow you to plan for—rather than react to—changes.

— Adapted from “Plug Into Your Future by Unplugging From the Present,” Daniel Burrus, www.burrus.com.

## Save family time

Find balance in your life even when work is pressing. *Practice these lifesavers:*

■ **Eat with family.** Take a break from work to share a meal with your loved ones, giving them your full attention. Then, if you must, you can work from home after dinner. If you can’t attend dinner, make breakfast your family meal.

■ **Limit distractions.** If during family time you think of something concerning work, quickly jot down a note and then return your full attention to your loved ones.

■ **Plan around vacations.** Make your time-off plans and reservations months in advance so you will schedule projects and other deadlines around them. That way you will never work through an entire year and discover you never found time for a vacation.

— Adapted from “Five Resolutions to Save Your Life From Your Business,” Tim Berry, OPEN Forum, www.openforum.com.

## Free E-Letter!

We have created a new e-letter, *The Organized Executive’s Priority One*. Delivered right to your inbox twice each month, this free publication offers you quick tips to increase your productivity and efficiently manage your priorities. Don’t miss an issue! Sign up today by visiting [www.briefings.com](http://www.briefings.com). You will find the link in the left-hand column on the Web site.

# Quick Tips & Time-Savers

from the editors of *The Organized Executive*

**1 Add an outbox.** Designate a spot, a folder or a tray for items that you will distribute to team members. When you are leaving your office, you can grab those papers and drop them off on your way.

**2 Summarize as you go.** As you complete each item on a meeting agenda, sum up the action your team is taking and any assignments made. That ensures agreement before you move on and also makes it easy for the note taker to record the minutes.

**3 Be the center of attention.** Project a blank screen during your presentation when you want to guarantee that the audience stays focused on what you are saying.

**4 Purge easily.** Place new items in the front of your to-read file. If unread material piles up, it will be easy to toss the old papers from the back.

**5 Highlight deadlines.** Instead of burying the due date in the body of an e-mail message, put it in the subject line. Your message will grab the attention it needs. *Example:* Expense reports due Tuesday.

**6 End default meetings.** Have staff members keep a time slot clear for weekly meetings, but hold sessions only when necessary—that may not be every week. If you don't meet, team members will have clear time on their schedules to tackle priority projects.

**7 Plan connections.** As you review your schedule for the day, think about the other people who will be attending the same meetings. Prepare to talk with them about other matters you need to discuss or to schedule a time to do so. *Example:* "Stuart, if you have five minutes after this meeting I'd like to discuss the Collins project."

**8 Schedule the unexpected.** Include time in your schedule each morning and afternoon to deal with unexpected work that pops up. If you pack your calendar too tightly, one wrinkle can throw off your entire day.

**9 Prefile for speed.** If you prefer to file papers in batches, instead of as you go, place them in a rough order. Drop papers into either an A-Z accordion-style folder or one of two folders: A-L and M-Z. When you take the papers to their final destination, the filing will go faster.

**10 Plan return calls.** When you need to call someone back, ask for both the phone number and the best time to reach that person. That will increase your odds of connecting the first time you dial.

**11 Cut off question hogs.** If an audience member begins to ask a lengthy question or series of questions after your presentation, politely invite the person to talk after your presentation or to contact you another way. *Example:* "If you will e-mail those details to me, I will answer your question that way. Now let's give others a chance to ask their questions."

## What to Say When ...

### ... saying 'Thank you'

Show that you recognize team members' importance when you say "Thank you." Explain how the person's actions made a difference. *Examples:*

■ "Your quick thinking to resolve the problem, and calling the customer personally, saved a \$120,000 account. Thank you."

■ "I appreciate your attending the meeting for me. During those two hours I was able to revise our budget for the next quarter and to

free the resources we need to launch another new product."

■ "We value the time experienced team members like you spend mentoring new hires. That's important both to bring new workers up to full productivity quickly and to keep them on the team for the long term."

In addition to individual thank-yous, show that you value team members when you discuss your organization's accomplishments. Talk about individual contributions

or tell a story that shows your team's values in action.

*Example:* "Our division's profits rose 10% last year, because of efforts that included Rhonda's team launching a record number of new products and Hank's department implementing energy-savings processes that cut our costs by \$30,000."

— Adapted from "Make Your 'Thank You's' Count," Susan Mazza, Random Acts of Leadership, <http://randomactsofleadership.com>.