

# Business Opportunities

## It's About Time: Time Management Expert Provides Tips For Using Technology To Increase Productivity (T)

(NAPSA)—Time is money. Modern life may be defined by constant change, but that one kernel of wisdom has withstood the test of, well, time. In fact, in many ways, it's more relevant now than ever. With an invigorated focus on the bottom line, effective time management is critical to organizations that plan to remain viable in today's increasingly fast-paced marketplace.

Dr. Larry Baker (<http://drbakercenter.com>), a 25-year veteran in the time-management field, sums up the increased importance of productivity in one word: competition.

"As a result of the re-engineering and downsizing that began in the 1980s, and the fact that we now exist in a global economy, there is simply more work per employee and competition than there used to be," Baker said. "Today's workplace has changed, and effective time management can help employees regain control of their sometimes-hecktic lives.

"Technology, when used properly, is one such tool that can help employees better manage their time and be more efficient and effective in their jobs," he said.

For starters, technology can help increase speed and flexibility. Baker says that information workers are expected to perform multiple tasks more quickly and more effectively than ever. "Every organization and individual must be as dynamic as the world in which they operate," Baker said. "If not, the world will pass them by. Technology can be a real asset in this area."

Baker cites information-sharing as another key way that technology helps improve time management. "E-mail offers so many

options for staying connected," he said. "Whether you're away for only a few hours or on a longer business trip, it's easy to stay informed about what's going on without spending a lot of time trying to track down details."

And being informed, Baker says, can lead to improvements in one of the chief hindrances to productivity: meetings. Technology—particularly e-mail, presentation software, note-taking technology such as Microsoft Office OneNote 2003, and automated calendaring systems—can help people be more prepared for meetings and, of equal importance, follow up on items discussed during the meeting.

"Unexpected phone calls and drop-in visits used to be the No. 1 barriers to productivity, but they've been overtaken by e-mail," he said. "E-mail can definitely be a distraction, but popular e-mail programs, such as Microsoft Office Outlook, have sophisticated filtering capabilities that can help manage inbox overload."

The key to using technology to improve time management skills is training, Baker says. He urges organizations and individuals to take advantage of as much training as possible. "Training is a strategic investment," he said. "To take the view that it costs too much or consumes too much time is shortsighted."

To learn more about improving your productivity and receive personalized time management tips, consider taking Microsoft's Personal Productivity Challenge, an assessment tool that takes from five to seven minutes to complete. To take the online survey, visit <http://www.microsoftofficeppc.com>.