5 Ways to Turn TGIF into TGIM

BY PETER ECONOMY

The way you start next week has everything to do with how you end this week. To really rock your Mondays, be smarter about the way you spend your Fridays.

You know the feeling: The weekend flew by and suddenly it's Monday morning, the most groan-inducing time of the week. It doesn't have to be that way. Use Friday afternoons to plan your Mondays. It's a great way to get a jump on next week even as you put a bow on this week. Here's a simple five-task checklist that will make your Fridays and your Mondays better--and probably your weekends, too.

1. Finish It Off

As Friday afternoon approaches Friday evening, it's easy to mentally clock out and get distracted by your weekend plans. Or, Friday afternoon procrastination might force you to work Friday evenings. Take a few minutes to assess what projects can be finished before the (regular) end of day, or at the least what would constitute a respectable stopping point. Make a habit of trying to wrap current projects on Fridays instead of starting new ones. Set yourself up for success by finishing the most important things early in the day, leaving time in the afternoon to focus on your employees, and on the company as a whole.

2. Write It Down

Outlining your most essential Monday tasks before you head out on Friday is a surefire way to make sure you'll hit the ground running next week. Write down what exactly needs to be accomplished, and be sure to build in time for something that makes you happy. Remember that Mondays are rough on everyone, so don't wait until then to set times and places for meetings; have your day laid out as much as possible.

3. Clean It Up

A clear workspace is essential for a clear mind. The last thing you need on a Monday morning is to be rooting around your paper-strewn desk trying to find those notes from an important client meeting. Just 10 or 15 minutes spent de-cluttering today will seem like a great investment come Monday, and is likely to become a habit you'll be glad you developed.

4. Talk It Over

Set aside an hour or two each Friday afternoon to reach out to your people, preferably in person. If you can't meet face to face, initiate a video chat or a phone call with your team. Address any outstanding issues or conflicts, sure, but also use the time to simply make sure everyone is in the loop on everything they (and you) need to know about.

5. Leave It Behind

Two days away rarely seems like enough, so do yourself a favor and take advantage of Fridays by freeing your weekend from work-related tasks. Respond to phone calls and emails before you leave, try to keep work calls to a minimum over the weekend, and if responses can wait until Monday morning, let them. Although sending a quick response doesn't take much time, it can often needlessly take you out of the weekend bubble. Your weekend will feel longer and less stressed if you learn to keep your work at the office and attack it truly refreshed on Monday.

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