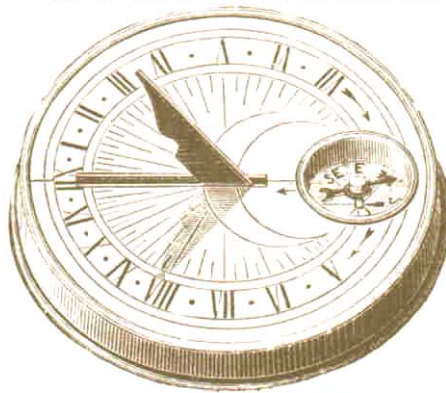


# FAVORITE EMPLOYEE --- **TIME**



# **WASTERS**

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By Jeff Davidson

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A number of activities other than those for which they are paid occupy the time of employees during business hours. Below is a review of favorite time wasters that infringe upon the productivity of an organization. While isolated instances may not in themselves produce a sizeable effect on company performance, repeated occurrence by numerous employees will have a pronounced effect, indeed.

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### ***Coasting Until Check-Out Time***

Many employees have a tendency to quit work 15 to 30 minutes before the end of their workday and "coast" until check-out time. While it may not be possible for everyone to remain productive during the closing minutes of each day, widespread coasting until check-out time, within a department or throughout an entire company, can create a net loss that is staggering. As an illustration: if 45 employees earning an average of \$6.00 an hour habitually coast for the last 15 minutes of each day, one month of coasting (twenty workdays) will cost the company \$1,350 for non-productive time, for an annual total of \$16,200. Adding benefits and other costs incurred yields a figure of over \$1,600 a month or \$19,200 a year.

If the time spent coasting is used to plan the next working day or to make mental preparations for future tasks, this use of time becomes productive. However, if many employees use the closing 15 or 30 minutes of each day merely to observe the hands of the clock finally reach the hour of five, a major problem exists.

Clock watching may also occur before the lunch hour. When many employees coast for 15 to 20 minutes before lunch, as well as before coffee breaks, department meetings and other planned events, the cumulative possibilities are mind boggling.



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### ***Organizing and Reorganizing***

Another favorite time waster is the continual organization and reorganization of desks, files, shelves, etc. One's working materials can only be organized so many times before a state of diminishing returns is reached; as a general rule, someone who is able to extract needed information from a desk or files within a minute or two is sufficiently organized. Any further time invested in the organization or reorganization of materials is wasted.

One note, however: it is important not to confuse unnecessary reorganization with necessary reorganization. Some employees use the

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last 15 to 30 minutes of the day to organize themselves for the next day, so that they may start fresh on new projects or resume with renewed vigor. So, it is possible that employees may appear to be "coasting" until check-out time, or to be overorganizing, while they are actually engaging in a useful and productive period.

### ***Carefully Reading Junk Mail***

Mail order houses, manufacturers and distributors, and business and professional services groups all use the mail to build business. Any employee who has been with an organization for longer than three months may start to receive a steady stream of junk mail as his or her name is added to an ever growing number of mailing lists. It is quite possible for an employee to receive five to ten pieces of unsolicited mail a day. When this occurs, it is important for the employee to accurately judge what should be discarded immediately.

Unfortunately, many employees take delight in reading every piece of information that has been sent to them and using the reviewing of mail as a procrastination technique.

It is nearly impossible to legislate how mail should be circulated to

