

Executive Summary

A NEWSLETTER FOR
INDUSTRY LEADERS
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A Cure for Hurry Sickness

You see them pulling out of the parking lot at breakneck speed. No, not teenagers in souped-up Chevys, but sales reps in their mid-30s and 40s. These are people in a hurry—in their cars, in bank lines or waiting for elevators.

Constant time pressure invariably leads to anxiety and guilt about where and what you give your attention to. A cultural inability to slow down dogs many executives, even on weekends and vacations. This, in turn, impacts the quality of their work days. Even as more labor-saving and enhanced communication technologies are introduced, and your output and efficiency rise, your expectations directly increase. You become less satisfied with yourself for not doing more.

For many people today, life is one never-ending rush—and every day can seem like a battle to make the deal, deliver on time, complete the paperwork and make the calls, ad infinitum.

Although you may be relatively comfortable in your position, do you hurry to get to the next meeting, hurry to stay on top of the next project or hurry to conduct the affairs of your day? This misdirected sense of urgency stems from having far too many tasks and responsibilities. If you supervise others who always seem to be in a rush, maybe it's because you are.

Of course, it is appropriate at certain

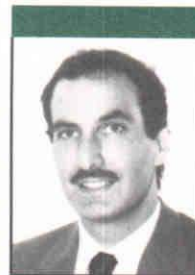
times to be in a rush. It is a problem, however, when it becomes standard operating procedure. No one works at their best at breakneck speed. Even worse, it is easy to lose sight of what you want to do with your life if you are always in a state of constant frenzy. If you notice yourself falling into patterns that resemble "hurry sickness," try these solutions:

- Take a 15-minute break once during the morning and again sometime during the afternoon.
- Don't eat at your desk. Get away so that you can recharge your battery.
- Invest in time-saving technology or equipment that offers you a significant return, i.e., pays for itself within a year and saves at least two hours a week of your time.
- Never hurry while you're driving, especially when on company business. Trying to make up for lost time in your car is a loser's game.
- Hold regular meetings with your team to discuss how everyone can be more efficient without rushing. Continually focus on the big picture of what you're all trying to accomplish. Often, new solutions to old problems will emerge and activities that seem urgent can be viewed from a broader perspective.
- Furnish your offices with plants, pic-

tures and art or decorations that inspire creativity and whole-brain thinking.

Tomorrow morning when you are getting ready for work, rather than switching on the radio or television, quietly envision how you would like your day to be. Include everything that's important to you—the commute, entering your building or your office, sitting down at your desk, handling tasks and taking breaks. See yourself calmly handling it all.

Envision interacting with others, going out to lunch, conducting or attending meetings, using the phone, finishing up projects and leaving the office in the evening. With this exercise alone, you'll begin to feel a greater sense of control even in aspects of your job that you previously considered uncontrollable. Apply the same technique to your home life. Hurry sickness doesn't need to be a part of your life. ▲



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