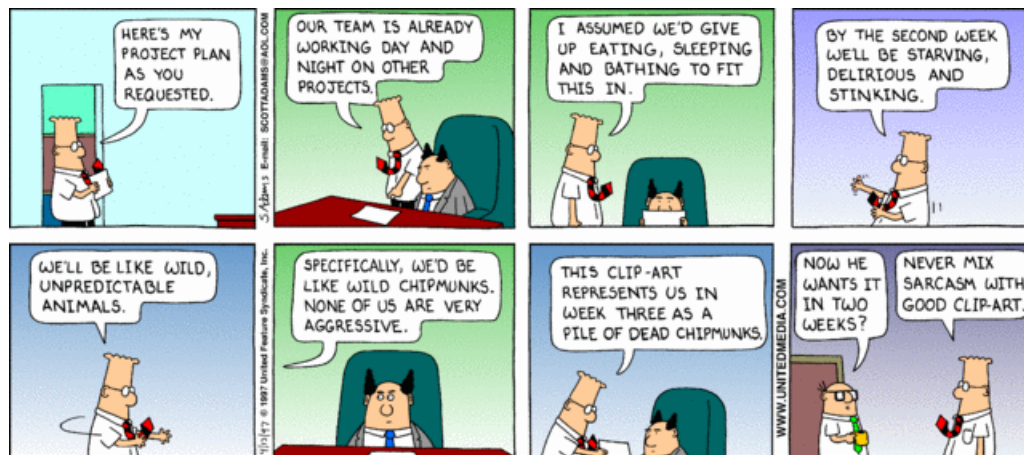# 5 Steps to Boost Your Online Productivity

By [Nicholas Cardot](#) [Practical Business Strategies](#) [44 Comments](#)

- November 14, 2011

Most bloggers, or rather, most people are plagued with a seeming lack of adequate time to accomplish all the tasks with which they are bombarded. Of course, the ideal and most practical solution would be that we all stop eating and sleeping. The time saved from these activities alone would add something like 6 to 10 hours per day giving us all more than enough time to get everything done. It would be something like the equivalent of having a 34 hour day.

Of course, an extensive study has been conducted that shows that this sleep and food deprivation may lead to behavior that resembles that of a wild chipmunk. I'll embed an image below that illustrates the source of this highly reputable study.

If you're not willing to throw away your comfortable sleeping and eating habits, then perhaps you will at least consider a few of the points below as you work to make the most of the miniscule amounts of time you have left each day after your nightly bout with the Sandman.

Move Your Taskbar

Before dismissing this point, take a moment to consider the raw math. All computer screens are wider than they are tall. Even the non-widescreen monitors sport at least a 4:3 aspect ratio. That means that you screen is 4px wide for every 3px tall. Most modern screens are even wider than that sporting a 16:9 aspect ratio. That means that the monitor is 16px wide for every 9px tall.

Practically speaking, you have much more screen real estate from side-to-side than you do from top-to-bottom. In fact, most websites are designed to be only a maximum of 900 to 1,000 pixels wide which means that you won't be cutting off any of the websites with the taskbar on the right or left. You are, however, cutting out parts of the browser having it at the bottom which ultimately leads to a smaller visible browser area and increased scrolling.

It took me a little over a week to get used to this change, but the math made sense so I stuck with it. Now I'm never going back. Give it a try for at least a week and I think you'll join me in my sentiments.

Use a Free Dropbox Account

Dropbox is by far the easiest, most effective way to share files across computers. It creates a folder in your *Documents* folder that remains perfectly synchronized across every computer you install it on. The best part? It's free. At least the first 2GB are completely free.

I have Dropbox installed on my laptop, my desktop, and when I was on active duty, I had it installed on my work computer. You can also access and download your files from anywhere simply by logging into their website. I use that feature to access my design files when I'm at school using their computers.

In every possible regard, this is a fantastic tool. Click here to get yours set up now! And if Dropbox isn't quite your thing, there are plenty of sites like Dropbox out there as well.

Install A Better Web Browser

If you're using Internet Explorer, it's time to switch. It is by far the slowest, most out-of-date web browser available on the market today. In a recent article titled *I Hate Internet Explorer and You Should Too!*, I compared this shockingly inadequate piece of technology to the red-headed stepchild with down syndrome of web browsers.

Switch to Chrome, Safari, or Firefox (listed in order of my personal preference). Even if it takes a week to get used to, I guarantee that you'll be amazed at how much more enjoyable and streamlined your online experience will be.

For more about this, be sure to check out Finer Browsing and join in our crusade against Internet Explorer.

Read Above Your Level of Understanding

If you're only reading the blogs and articles of your peers, you're missing out…big time. Every day that you spend reading fiction, beginner blogging articles, or just drivel is a day of reading that is wasted. I'm not encouraging you to completely avoid fiction and the blogs of your peers, but rather to find a healthy balance.

If you're looking to be successful in a business venture, don't just read my blog. Grab a copy of Fortune, Forbes or Money magazines and learn from folks who are light years ahead of us. If you want to improve your writing, find someone who is an expert at writing and study them like you're back in school.

The point is simple: find someone who is far above you in an area that you hope to grow and learn from
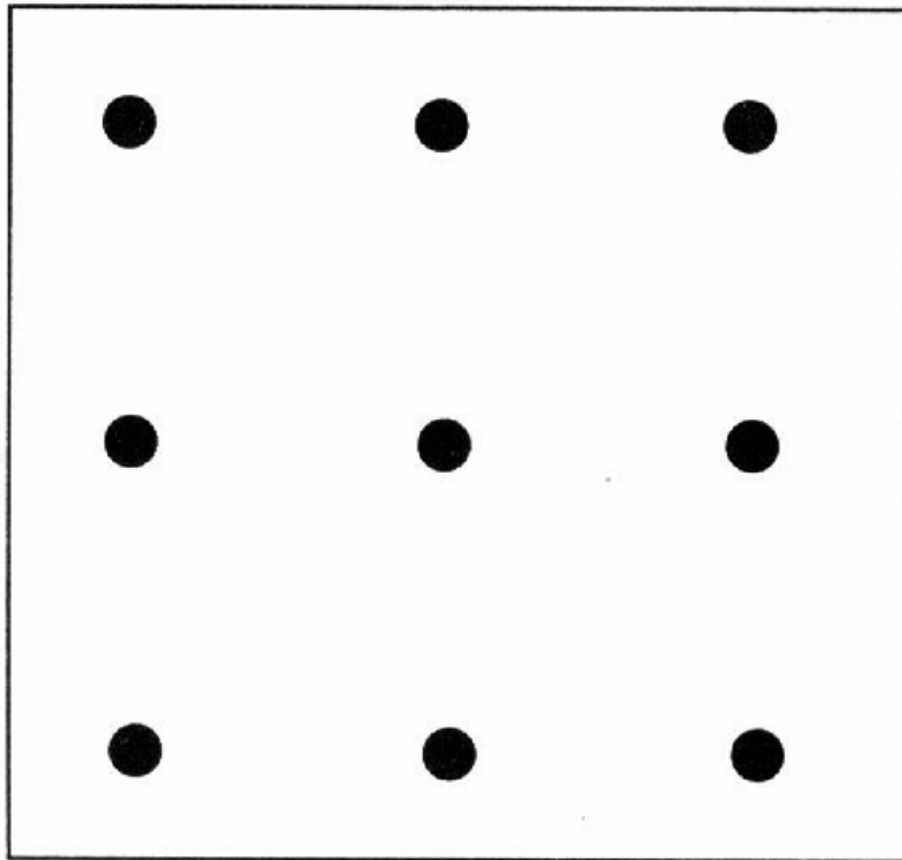
them. This is the fastest way to fill your mind with the information that you need to achieve real success in anything.

Expand the Way You Think

Most of you have heard the age-old cliché to think outside the box, but how many of you have any idea what that actually means?

Practical Exercise: Here's a quick test to assess your understanding of this concept. Below, I've drawn an image with nothing more than 9 dots evenly placed into 3 rows of 3 dots each. Your challenge is to draw four lines that intersect all 9 dots.

Here are the rules: You may only use 4 lines. You may not pick up your pencil or pen (In other words, each line must begin where the previous line ends.) Your lines may not be curved in any way. They must be straight.

I use this example because it is the perfect illustration of our adage. Once you've given up, click here for an image of the solution and a simple lesson that you can take away from this exercise.

Practical Example: This week I saw an amazing example of this principle in action over at Nicole Cook's recipes blog, The Daily Dish (www.dailydishrecipes.com). She has taken the time to create a Google custom search widget in which she has manually selected thousands of recipe blogs and websites to be included in each search. It is the ultimate recipe search.

But she even went one step farther in that she's truncated it all into two copy-and-paste lines of code that others can use to place the incredibly well-designed widget on their own blogs.

When you create something original you set yourself apart from the crowd, and that's powerful. You establish yourself as both a thinker and as a provider of solutions to whatever problem you're reaching out to solve with your creation. This will multiply your online efforts!

So take your pick. You can either give up eating and sleeping, or you can start working smarter and more efficiently in your daily workflow.

What's it going to be?

About Nicholas Cardot

It's my personal quest to enable every person that I can to unlock that dormant potential concerning their online influence. Also, I'm a geek.

44 Comments

- *Joseph* says:
  November 14, 2011 at 11:30 AM

  I wish i have more than 24hours of working time..
  Minus the eating and sleeping time.

  Reply
  - *Nicholas Cardot* says:
    November 16, 2011 at 3:13 PM

    You and me both.

    Reply
  -
- *david k waltz* says:
  November 14, 2011 at 1:30 PM

  Nicholas,

  Being a finance guy, the numbers example with the task bar is great!

  It is very unusual to try. A week huh? Never going back, huh?

You haven't steered us wrong yet, so I will try it for a week. After all, I know where you blog!

Reply

- *Nicholas Cardot* says:
  November 14, 2011 at 6:17 PM

  I've had my computers set up like that for a little over a year now, and it honestly feels awkward when I use someone's computer who doesn't use it that way. I'm so used to it and I enjoy it so much.

  And yes, if you don't like it, you do know where I blog.

  Reply

  - *David K Waltz* says:
    November 29, 2011 at 6:52 AM

    Nick,

    You are correct that it is not that hard to get used to. Thanks for the tip!

    Reply
  -
- *Khleo Thomas* says:
  November 14, 2011 at 3:25 PM

  I already use Firefox but one of your tips seems like it is worth trying. Moving my taskbar to the side so there is more verticle space. The improvement will be minor but should help with productivity.

  Reply
  - *Nicholas Cardot* says:
    November 14, 2011 at 6:20 PM

    Exactly. I'm constantly looking for little ways to change my workflow to become as efficient as possible. I'll sometimes spend a lot of time now setting something up so that it's automated for the rest of time. That's just how my mind works. I work hard to not have to work hard.

    Reply
  -
- *Brian Kinkade* says:
  November 14, 2011 at 9:03 PM

  To keep my productivity up, I try to keep all distractions away as much as possible. Like on my pc, you won't see anything not related to work on my desktop or taskbar. It definitely helps keeps my mind on work, as it should.

  I sure would rather work effectively than give up sleep. Thanks for your tips.

  Reply
  - *Nicholas Cardot* says:
    November 16, 2011 at 3:15 PM

    That's a good tip as well. I should probably do more of that. I usually have all 3 of my

monitors full of applications at any given time.

Reply

- *Tushar* says:
  November 15, 2011 at 1:42 PM

  i dont know people accept it or not but a good web browser is very important for a successful blogging career. You need to have the best tools around and the same goes with the browser

  Reply

    - *Nicholas Cardot* says:
      November 16, 2011 at 3:21 PM

      That's definitely true.

      Reply

- *Mark* says:
  November 15, 2011 at 2:29 PM

  I hope that I can stop time so that I can work and play the time when I wanted to be with my family.

  Reply

- *Mark* says:
  November 15, 2011 at 2:30 PM

  I also wanted to be a boss someday so I will know why the deadlines are just too tight

  Reply

- *Jack* says:
  November 15, 2011 at 10:04 PM

  IE makes me crazy. Pages don't render correctly and it just slows me down.

  Reply

- *Ava Jae* says:
  November 15, 2011 at 10:25 PM

  Once I switched to Chrome, I never went back. It's easily my favorite browser–so much so that I often accidentally do searches in the address bar when I'm using other browsers on computers that aren't mine. Oops.

  Reply

- *LaRae Quy* says:
  November 15, 2011 at 11:16 PM

  Thanks for reminding me I need to spruce up my website . . . you're right – it's important to set ourselves apart from the crowd.

  I tried Firefox but never got the hang of it . .

Reply

- *Prakash* says:
  [November 16, 2011 at 5:17 AM](#)

  Hi Nic,

  Using Chrome, Firefox, Safari instead of IE is a must for every one. Moreover being a web developer I hate IE, my site was not showing properly in IE (but the issue is solved now).

  Now getting to this post —> I guess my productivity tends to decrease as I invest more time in doing the same task and I guess it happens with everyone. So just let me know if you have any idea for that.

  My latest Post: [Top 10 Benefits of Comments in SEO](#)

  Reply

- *Ruby@Dazeinfo* says:
  [November 17, 2011 at 2:01 AM](#)

  As my point of view a good web browser is the most important for increasing our online productivity.I am using Mozilla-Firefox.it has so many plug-in.It is very helpful for all bloggers.

  Reply

- *Ruby@Dazeinfo* says:
  [November 17, 2011 at 2:06 AM](#)

  As my point of view a good web browser is the most important for increasing our online productivity.I am using Mozilla-Firefox.it has so many plug-in.It is very helpful for all bloggers.

  Reply

- *Robin Jennings* says:
  [November 18, 2011 at 1:02 AM](#)

  On a particular day when I need to concentrate I close my Email and Twitter Feed and simply not check it for 4 hours.

  Its amazing how productive you are when you're not distracted.

  Reply

- *Garry Stafford* says:
  [November 18, 2011 at 12:25 PM](#)

  Hey Nick,

  Thanks for the suggestions. Love Dropbox!

  Never considered placing the taskbar on the side. My desktop monitor is pretty big but my laptop is lacking, esp vertical real estate. Placed it on the side, and I'm sold. Not a week. A matter of minutes, it just works! Thanks!

  Reply

- *Allie* says:
  [November 22, 2011 at 9:34 PM](#)

Nicolas,

Always have to challenge me, don't you? Well, I already have intelligent people under my roof- my kids.

They already moved their task bars to the side.
My son just taught me about Drop Box (he puts all his school projects in it for sharing with me and saving.)
Everyone here uses Firefox and Chrome.
They are forced to read above their level.
And I'm pretty sure my son can solve that dot problem.
There. I got my kids challenging themselves already. That means I MUST raise the bar for myself soon. LOL.

Great read. I'll think about that task bar thing. Creature of habit and all.

~Allie

Reply

- *ecuador crafts* says:
  November 24, 2011 at 11:45 AM

  great blog…..personally i use Firefox but your tips seem worth trying. Moving my taskbar to the side so there is more verticle space. The improvement minor should help with productivity.thanks for your help..

  Reply

- *Cheryl* says:
  November 25, 2011 at 11:42 AM

  It is very unusual to try. A week huh? Never going back,

  Reply

- *Paul* says:
  December 2, 2011 at 5:31 PM

  I agree the only way to really improve yourself and push your limits is to take a step out of your comfort zone, force yourself in the right direction

  Reply

- *klaus* says:
  December 10, 2011 at 8:15 AM

  thanks for a great post.

  I do that every Sunday I sit down and spend 30 minutes to create a schedule for next week so I can see what time I should do what. that way I get things done without sitting and running around in the same.

  Reply

- *Robert* says:
  December 15, 2011 at 5:34 AM

I've been using Internet Explorer for years (probably just because it was already pre-installed on my PC). A few months ago, I installed Google Chrome and I realized that this is an entirely different world – so much faster, so much better… Now I wonder how I could have gone so long with what is probably the worst browser you can use.

Reply

- *Kane at Hood Web Management* says:
  December 18, 2011 at 4:50 AM

  I've had my start menu on the left hand side of the screen for almost 8 years now and it's amazing how much better it is. You can also see many more task bar items at a glance.

  I'd also recommend Spideroak as a Dropbox alternative. I think they do 2 or 5 GB free, they're cheaper for upgraded accounts, and they've got a great security policy I haven't seen elsewhere.

  Reply

- *Tom Smith* says:
  December 18, 2011 at 10:27 AM

  Awsome read, I have learned a lot from this.

  Reply

- *Loc* says:
  December 19, 2011 at 10:34 PM

  I totally agree. Internet Explorer sucks even after you do an update but I still have IE around. I do web design on the side, so I would need to see what it looks in IE as well as Firefox (which is 100% better) and Chrome.

  Reply

- *Swamykant* says:
  December 28, 2011 at 11:41 AM

  Last year, I felt that 24 Hours is no more enough. However now things have changed..

  I am sure these tips will help you to max.

  Reply

- *Shivkumar* says:
  January 3, 2012 at 4:06 AM

  As my point of view a good web browser is the most important for increasing our online productivity.I am using chrome.it has so many plug-in.I got this article really very useful thanks a lot

  Reply

- *Sheshnath* says:
  January 4, 2012 at 1:51 AM

  I think I acme at right place you have many thing to share
  really nice article

[Reply](#)

- *GC* says:
[January 4, 2012 at 8:12 AM](#)

  For anyone looking to boost their productivity i strongly suggest you get the book "Eat that frog" by Brian Tracy.

  The premise of the book is to pick one task each night before you go to bed that will be the focus of your energy the next day. And then when you wake up the next day you immediately start working on it.

  I have found it to increase my productivity so much and provide clarity in my mission.

  [Reply](#)

- *Kim* says:
[January 4, 2012 at 9:04 AM](#)

  I agree with 4 of the steps, but I won't recommend a dropbox account other than for purely private matters. It's never 100% secure to share files over the internet and when you share business related documents, it's just asking for trouble.

  [Reply](#)

- *Robert* says:
[January 10, 2012 at 5:22 AM](#)

  I'm constantly switching between my PC and my Laptop and recently I signed up for a free Dropbox account and this makes life just so much easier. Thanks for sharing your great tips – if only I had discovered Dropbox a bit earlier.

  [Reply](#)

  - *Nicholas Cardot* says:
[January 13, 2012 at 3:51 PM](#)

    I felt the same way when I started using it. I love it. It's so helpful. Plus you can log into the dropbox website and access files directly from a browser if you're on a public computer or on a friend's computer. I use it at school on their computers.

    [Reply](#)

  -

- *Amber* says:
[January 19, 2012 at 11:29 PM](#)

  You know, I'm guilty of having my dock on the bottom even though I have a 16:9 screen. I should look into whether or not there are any apps which split the dock between either side of the screen. I have a ton of program icons on it, and if I moved it to the side of the screen, I'd end up with eensy-weensy icons! But, you make a very good point about real estate on my screen.

  Eliminating IE as my browser was the best thing I ever did as far as accessing the internet goes. I can't remember the last time that I actually used it as my main browser. Sometime before Y2K I think? It's hard to remember when Netscape came about. I'm always stunned when I hear people talk about using it still today! I know I was definitely using Netscape exclusively 10 years ago. I just took a trip down memory lane, actually, looking up versions of Netscape and when they were out. I think I

was using it when it was still called "Communicator" in tandem with IE, and then never looked back once 6.2 hit.

Reply

- *nami* says:
  January 20, 2012 at 7:13 AM

  I don't like too much pressure, i do mine when I'm in the mood.(that's my wish lol)

  Reply

- *movieman* says:
  January 21, 2012 at 12:08 PM

  I can not understand why people still want to use internet explorer, I have couple of friends who have been using it for the last 5 years or so, thoug they know how different and cool chrome is….

  Reply

- *rahul roy* says:
  January 29, 2012 at 3:40 PM

  I think Having best tool is very important that should also involves your surrounding in which your are writing your blog post as it reflects on your writting skills.

  Reply

- *Four Things to Make You More Productive* says:
  March 8, 2012 at 4:44 PM

  [...] will help you be more productive. After you read these four things, you want more you can head over here for [...]

  Reply

- *Alan | Life's Too Good* says:
  April 2, 2012 at 3:44 PM

  You should have made this whole post about expand the way you think – it's at a different level than the other tips in this post.

  Are you kidding? Does anyone still use IE?

  Reply

- *Mys* says:
  April 18, 2012 at 6:36 PM

  Nick,

  I soooooo need a 34 hour work day! Like ASAP! But in the meager time I do have, your tips should help me not become a wild chipmunk. Thanks for the advice!

  Reply