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TESTIMONIAL

"Working with McGhee helped me develop a system to ensure that I am on track with what I need to do to accomplish my objectives. My weeks are well planned with activities that contribute towards my objectives, and I can track these at the end of each week. It's amazing how an eight-hour session with the consultant can yield so much in terms of enhancing productivity."

- Sanda Ojiambo,
Corp. Responsibility
Manager,
Safaricom Kenya

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Many people look forward to the New Year as a way to get a new start on changing old habits. It is clear that in 2010 we may need to dump many of the old habits entirely. This month we kick off the year's first *Insiders Link to Productivity* with commentary on the dangers of repeating history, tips for managing interruptions in open environments, an invitation to a live webcast featuring John Wittry and more. Thank you for being our partner in 2009 and many good wishes from our team to yours for a truly new year in 2010.

- Laurie Oswald, Director of Sales & Marketing

To learn more about McGhee's products and services please [click here](#).

Rewriting the Rules for 2010

It's no surprise that most executives bid adieu to 2009 with a sigh of relief, and despite lingering economic challenges still present, many are embracing the dawn of the new year with readiness and hope. According to a poll by [The Business Roundtable](#), 68% of CEOs said they expect to see revenues increase this year.

In order for any U.S. business, large or small, to prosper in 2010 and beyond, executives cannot risk falling back on comfortable strategies that may have worked in the past. Many shifts have occurred in both the U.S. and global markets over the last few years which have transformed the economic landscape. Unless businesses execute and properly implement vision-based strategies steeped with competitive positioning, global competition will likely eradicate more companies this coming decade.

So what does this mean for executives? It means that the economic crisis has rewritten the rules and it's time to reset your expectations and strategies. Surviving the economic slump required a 'trim the fat' mentality of slashing costs and utilizing technology to produce higher output with fewer workers. Setting a course for growth in the recovery will require a completely different set of leadership skills. Executives will need to be skilled at repositioning, aligning, and focusing the organization on the things that truly achieve key objectives, in order to create sustainable cultures with integrity and accountability.

We believe that 2010 is anything but a return to business as usual, and there is an eminent danger of another crisis if the need for fundamental long-term shifts in businesses and government is ignored. Simply driving "more, better, different" is not sustainable. Transformation is a permanent shift in form and a way of operating such that there is no going back. McGhee's Strategic Team Plan (STP)

SPECIAL OFFER

Free webcast by Microsoft featuring John Wittry, Executive Consultant and Partner.

Subject: **Effective Delegation (Level 100)**

Wednesday, February 17, 2010 11:00 AM Pacific Time (US & Canada).

[click here to register](#)

TIPS & TRICKS

Use McGhee's [TBYL 4Outlook Add-in](#) to analyze how you are spending your time.

Many of our clients categorize their calendars by clients, projects, objectives, etc. It is a powerful and eye-opening tool for any individual or organization.

All you need to do is categorize your appointments and click **'TBYL'** on the main ribbon in the calendar view. Then click **'Calendar Excel Report'**. From there, choose a date range and run the report to see how you are spending your time.

[Click here](#), to download a 14-day fully functional trial version of the Add-in.

process allows executives to identify learnings from the past and create new guidelines for success. History can repeat itself, but with commitment and a process for leveraging experience, it doesn't have to.

To learn more about how our consultants can help your organization align strategies with vision and create an environment driven by accountability, e-mail: info@mcgheepro.com

Controlling Interruptions in a Cubicle Environment

What do you do when people walk up to your desk or pop their heads over your cubicle wall and ask "Do you have a second?" Is it really ever just a second? Learning to control interruptions when working in a cubicle environment is important, especially when you consider the lost time and energy that every interruption represents.

Cubicle environments can be great in supporting collaboration and controlling building costs, and can also be very economical from both a short-term expansion as well as a long-term re-org point-of-view. These factors are traditionally what drive the decision for a cubicle environment.


The downside is that 'in person' interruptions can greatly increase and are significantly harder to manage with this configuration. Depending on the task, it can take an average of 15-20 minutes to return to the pre-interruption level of concentration; multiply that by the number of unnecessary daily interruptions and the result is a significant loss in productivity.

All is not lost, however, and with some creativity and communication, you can establish boundaries to help reduce unnecessary interruptions, even in a cubicle environment. McGhee's clients have used the following approaches with great success:

Visual and physical boundaries - Create effective visual boundaries to reflect your availability:

- A picture or sign posted outside the cubicle that represents "Please Do Not Disturb."
- Flags; lowered = interruptions are okay and raised = interruptions are not OK
- Color coded cards outside your cubicle, e.g. red (no interruptions), yellow (only interrupt if it's urgent) or green (come interrupt me)





Tools - Provide an alternative to the interruption by providing another means for leaving a message or dropping off items for your review:

- A small white board/pen mounted on the outside of your cubicle wall
- A strategically located inbox (outside your cubicle) with sticky notes and a pen available for items and messages

Behavior modification - Be aware of how you may be creating interruptions - do you:

- Keep a candy jar on your desk?
- Post cartoons on your bulletin board or at the entrance to your cubicle?
- Have your chair face the entrance to your cubicle?

Communication - No matter which solution you choose, communication is essential; provide guidelines regarding:

- The value of uninterrupted time, e.g. too many interruptions lead to distraction and the inability to complete your work in a timely manner
- Possible alternatives - use one of the solutions above or create your own

Setting and maintaining your boundaries to support you and others in completing your objectives minimizes interruptions and can lead to better work/life balance. Be bold, be courageous, *set boundaries* and *Take Back Your Life!*

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McGhee Productivity Solutions, Inc. (McGhee) provides consulting services, tools and education to increase productivity and work/life balance. Based in Denver, CO, McGhee integrates its proven methods and protocols with Microsoft technology to deliver innovative action-management strategies to individuals and organizations worldwide. From the boardroom to the knowledge worker, the McGhee approach maximizes technology investments, improves job satisfaction and drives sustainable productivity throughout an organization. Sally McGhee, CEO, is the author of the popular book series Take Back Your Life! Using Microsoft Outlook to Get Organized and Stay Organized.

McGhee is in the process of becoming a Certified Woman-Owned Business