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Distraction Summary

We are currently living in an age blessed with the advancement of technology and benefits it brings to our quality of life. While technology significantly improves our lifestyle, it also comes with its own set of issues in the form of distractions. As technology has evolved over time, these distractions have formed out of our daily habits and tendencies. These digital distractions lead the way in wasting the most valuable resource we have, time. “Recognize time as the most precious commodity in life and be intentional with it. Devise a time management approach that ensures the most critical items on your schedule and plan are done first and promptly. Devise a habit-nurturing approach that divides the available time into categories and ensures your focus and emphasis is on the highest value items. “(Falayi, Forbes.com). While these distractions can be tempting, there are strategies we can adopt to avoid them at work and at home.

Dealing with distractions at work can be detrimental to your productivity and can leave you falling behind on tasks and falling short of your goals. The top three digital distractions that are commonly seen in the workplace are cell phone notifications, Microsoft Teams socializing, and social media. Cell phones notifications are a major digital distraction and top this list for good reason. Cell phones are very useful devices that opens the channel to communication with everyone no matter where you are. They have evolved our communication for the foreseeable future but also pose a great distraction in our everyday lives. Cell phone notifications that result

from apps, messages, and phone calls can instantly interrupt what you are doing at work and pose a great challenge trying to ignore these notifications. These notifications can easily carve out 10-15 minutes of your time multiple times per day. These frequent pauses in your daily activities can add up and become an issue for your productivity and staying on task.

The next digital distraction is Microsoft Teams socializing. This distraction is one that I even fall victim to. At work, the use of Teams is very important to quickly communicate with your coworkers and set-up meetings. This ease of communication helps streamline tasks and delegation for the benefit of your teams. With this though, opens the opportunity to socialize with your coworkers. Everyone needs a break at work, but everyone also takes breaks at different times. Coworkers can easily fall victim to continuously having side conversations with each other while at work to pass the time which leads to time lost and constant interruptions that can disrupt your focus on completing important tasks. The last digital distraction is social media. Social media has further expanded our communication and allows us to stay connected with others around the world. Social media also has contributed to being a major distraction in our daily lives. Posts from others, viral videos, and articles are all temptations that can drive people at work to lose focus and get stuck in the continuous scrolling. This can lead to a lot of wasted time at work. Social media is a relaxing distraction, and this relaxation can get your body into a unmotivated state while at work which can hurt your productivity.

While it is easy to get sucked into these distractions there are some strategies you can follow at work to avoid them. The first strategy is to just turn off or mute notifications on your cell phone and computer for apps that are not urgent. According to Lillian Gregory from the Institute for Human and Leadership Excellence: “turn off pop-ups, turn down the volume, schedule response times and develop a personal emergency notification system. If there is

someone who needs your attention right away, ask them to text or call you directly. This approach will allow you to manage technology instead of allowing technology to manage you.” (Gregory Forbes.com). Organizing your notifications and phone settings can help you manage how often your phone could pose a potential distraction. An important thing to note is that you should only turn off notifications rather than turning off your phone. ““Turning off” is simply not a tenable solution in the digital age; with so much work, communication, and socializing taking place on screens, few of us can afford to be off-line for significant portions of the workday (or even evenings and weekends).” (Samuel Hbr.org). Turning off your phone can cut you completely off and in urgent situations you won’t be reachable.

The next strategy you can adopt is setting your status to busy on social media apps and apps such as Microsoft teams. This strategy can help you send the message to others that you are busy and trying to focus on something without you having to tell them you are busy. This removes the awkward situation where you must end a conversation early so you can get back to work. Some people struggle with this because they do not want to feel like they are being rude to the other coworker. This strategy gives everyone a great option to avoid this and is easy to access. The last strategy is to allocate small breaks throughout your workday dedicated to just relaxing and browsing your phone or computer. This can help you set aside your temptations to scroll social media for a few minutes or play a game on your phone and focus on your work knowing you have a small break to look forward to. Keeping your schedule organized and properly allocated can help you stay productive and stay on track to meeting your work deadlines.

Work distractions are important to manage but home distractions are equally as important. When you get home from work, everyone wants to sit back and relax from a long day

at work, but there are still certain things that people must do every day prior to relaxing such as schoolwork, taking care of children, taking care of animals, and cleaning. Finding a way to avoid distractions to take care of those things to free up time for relaxation is a challenge in today's world. The top two digital distractions at home are television and computer/cell phone games. Television has become a great way to pass time and has given people a chance to dive into their favorite genres of shows and movies and enjoy their afternoon or night. While this is a relaxing get away from the duties of life, it can also distract you from staying on task. Coming home and turning on the T.V. can pull your focus away from what you need to get done that evening and can keep your eyes glued to the screen instead of focusing on other items that need to be completed first such as cleaning or schoolwork. I fall victim to this distraction all the time as I typically play T.V. in the background while I do schoolwork so that I have some sort of background noise while I try to focus. This typically helps but if something comes on that I have some interest in, it is very difficult to not shift my focus to the T.V.

Another form of relaxation and entertainment that a lot of us fall into is video games. While it is ok to sit back, relax, and play some games, these can be highly addictive as they are designed to cater to people's interests. This can pose a great distraction as it tempts people to rush through their at-home responsibility's to get onto their favorite game quickly. People also tend tell themselves that they will just play a couple then get started on their daily tasks and end up actually never getting offline and playing for the entire night. Video games can relieve a lot of stress and help people relax but they lead the way in at home distractions.

These distractions help us relax but can make it difficult to juggle at-home responsibility's. There are strategies however to still enjoy these distractions without them interfering in daily tasks. The first strategy is applying a weekly schedule that allocates time for

these entertainment systems and setting a timer that shuts off these electronics outside of the dedicated time to help you break away from these distractions. This can help you make sure you are making time for your daily tasks and giving yourself time to relax and enjoy T.V. or video games. Another strategy is to ask for help. Having your significant other, friend, parent, or sibling there to help you stay on task and working together on daily responsibilities can help you both stay focused. With two people focused on helping each other avoid getting distracted, you are more likely to complete your at-home responsibilities quicker and free up time for recreation.

Between work and home digital distractions, there are not many differences in why they are used and why they have such an impact on our lives. Everyone falls victim to these distractions to escape life for a few moments or relieve stress. Regardless of if it is work or at home, there are always responsibilities and to do lists that we have to complete and that is where these distractions often come into play. Whether we are scrolling social media at work, watching T.V. at home, or playing on our phone in general, we are using these to step away from our daily tasks and relax for a moment. The real key that everyone struggles with is ensuring this moment stays as only a moment and not an extended period of time. That is why adopting these strategies are very important to ensuring that we are using these distractions as a brief escape from our current responsibilities and then getting back on track to staying productive and effective.

Works Cited

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