



Sometimes it may seem like being a business owner goes hand in hand with being overwhelmed and not having time. It is well known that if you want a different result you must take a different action. You're reading this because you want a different result for your business. The first action you need to commit to is making time to work ON your business and not just in your business. If you're like most of the business owner's we've coached over the years that might sound a lot like Never Never Land: great to imagine, not so easy to implement.

The good news is that our business coaches have worked with hundreds of business owners, just like you, with great success of implementing time to work "ON" the business and not just "IN" the business...as Michael Gerber describes.

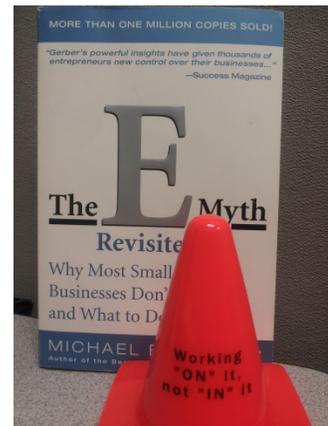
And today we're giving you the system our clients rave about: **How to Implement Do Not Disturb Time**. We challenge you to use it as a checklist. Read it once then take each step and work on implementing the advice in that section before moving to the next step. You will see results.

1. **Change Your Mindset:** The first barrier to creating Do Not Disturb Time is the belief that you cannot create it. Many business owners feel that it's hard for them to implement this technique. The truth is you probably implement it at certain times already. For instance who takes care of the fires when you are with a client? When you take time off for work life balance? When you are on vacation? Part of changing your mindset is making your business development time a priority. Your Do Not Disturb Time should be as high of a priority as a meeting with your hottest lead or top client. You can implement this technique; it just takes commitment and implementing the following steps.
2. **Who Else Needs to Know:** Before you start to implement this technique, identify who else will be impacted by this change. Common examples include staff, managers, family/friends, vendors, and sometimes clients. Once you have identified who needs to know, decide how it will be communicated that you are not available during this time. Your staff, managers, and even family and friends can be notified of the changes before you start. You will need to tie them to the vision as to why this is beneficial to the company and them. If you can connect them to the importance of the Do Not Disturb Time you will find it easier to implement. Provide staff with the language to use when letting clients and others know that you are not available.



3. **Set Guidelines:** Especially when you first get started, there are going to be questions on when you can and cannot be interrupted during Do Not Disturb Time. The “What Ifs” are too exhaustive to cover individually. At the same time, “Only Interrupt Me in an Emergency” is too vague. Set a few guidelines to help staff decide when they should interrupt you. Use these carefully, as you want to make sure that this time is a priority. It will be tempting to allow staff to interrupt when a certain client calls or for a certain fire you are dealing with that day. While you can do this, be aware that it starts to diminish the priority of the Do Not Disturb Time for you and for your staff. Guidelines that work well:
- If someone is bleeding or 911 is being called, interrupt me.
  - If you would interrupt me when I’m with a client, then it’s okay to interrupt me.

4. **Create a Visual:** Sometimes the ability to create awareness that you are in Do Not Disturb Time is as easy as shutting your door. However, for some this might not work due to layouts of offices or even that your employees are in the habit of interrupting you even when your door is closed. It is important that you create awareness for staff to know when they can or cannot come to you with an issue. In this case a visual works well. If you can close your door, hang a sign on it that lets people know you are in Do Not Disturb Time. If you cannot close your door then you might consider the use of headphones, a flag, or find another creative way of bringing awareness to staff that might be tempted to interrupt you. The picture to the right shows the method we use at Benchmark Business Group; it is a small construction cone that reads, Working “ON” it, not “IN” it. Also, one of the first visuals should be the time blocked-out on your calendar!



5. **Time Blocking:** Start with small time blocks of time and work your way up to your ideal calendar. When blocking time, think about what best fits your personality and working environment. If your morning starts off hectic it may be best to start your Do Not Disturb Time an hour after getting to the office instead of right away. Of course during that Do Not Disturb Time you will eventually be working on the systems to ensure that the mornings are not as hectic as they are now! For some, two hour time blocks might be more efficient than one hour blocks. When possible try setting a schedule for the Do Not Disturb Time such as one hour every day at 10 AM. This gets you and your staff into the habit of knowing that you are not available from 10 AM to 11 AM. If one hour a day is not feasible right now then set a goal for the amount of time you can block.



Make it a bit of a stretch goal, but remember what was mentioned in step one; you have to change your mindset in order for this to work.

6. **Stop Distractions:** Take proactive steps to block things you know are distracting. Check if your phone system has a Do Not Disturb feature that will prevent it from ringing and forwards your calls to staff. If emails are distracting, turn off your email notification. You may consider listening to music so distracting sounds are blocked out.
  
7. **Create Time After to Deal with Issues that Occur:** There will most likely be phone calls or emails for you to respond to after your Do Not Disturb Time. Don't let this stop you from implementing this technique. Instead plan for it. If you plan to take one hour of Do Not Disturb Time, then schedule 15-30 minutes directly following to deal with issues that came up during that time frame. This way you can be proactive and not feel as overwhelmed.
  
8. **Practice Makes Perfect:** Know that the first week, maybe even the first two weeks, will have bumps on the road. You might miss a day. You might cut it short a bit. Your staff might interrupt a few times. That's fine. You are not going to be perfect out of the gate. Instead, keep a log that records when your Do Not Disturb Time doesn't go as planned and why it didn't. Then daily or weekly look at the log and start to make the necessary changes to make sure it doesn't happen again. Remember that you are building a habit, which takes time. Pretty soon you'll wonder how you went so long without the Do Not Disturb Time.