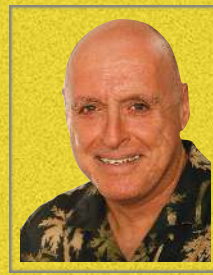


# THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



## # 269 Can You A/B Schedule Your Job?

Today, a different way of scheduling your work, dividing up the things you do in a way that makes it all flow better. I'm Jerry Roberts, and let's see if this system might work for you, next, on The Extra Point.

I came across an article in Fast Company magazine, which suggested that many of us would benefit from creating what is known as an A/B schedule out of all the things we do on the job. There's actually a formal name to it, "context switching," but we're going to stay with A/B for now.

Most people in an office environment, and especially those in small companies, are constantly juggling tasks. It's like wearing a bunch of hats all at the same time. However, much of the time we're reacting to demands upon our attention. Between customers, vendors, coworkers and supervisors, it's all too common that we're pulled in different directions throughout the day.

Sometimes we shrug it off and call it multi-tasking, but the reality of that is that unless we're using some sort of automation to take care of several jobs simultaneously, human beings are still limited to doing one thing at a time. We may change that from moment to moment, but it's still just one thing at a time. So how might we do things differently?

The A/B concept has us looking at everything we do on a daily basis and separating the tasks by day, and sometimes by week. In example, you invoice clients only on "A" days, while you handle payables on "B" days. A graphic designer might brainstorm new ideas and schedule presentations on A days, say Monday, Wednesday, and Friday; while doing the actual design work on B days, Tuesday and Thursday.

In my business I could coach managers on a

single A week per month, conduct training on two B weeks, and spend one C week monthly designing or redesigning courses. A/B, A/B/C, I think you can play with this idea and make it anything you want. I've been close to this a couple of times and I can tell you, I had fewer loose ends to deal with under such a system, fewer jobs that were incomplete when I found it necessary to switch off to something that was begging for my attention.

I also discovered that in lining up specific tasks all in a row, I got into a rhythm and worked faster, without sacrificing quality. This resulted in actually freeing up some hours.

The wild card in all this is that customers need service at any time, and sometimes you just have to drop what you're doing and handle their issues. If so, when you're done, you come right back to what you have scheduled.

Can anyone do this? I think it's worth a try. If you want to take a crack at it, break down your job into all the separate tasks you perform and how many hours you do it per day and week. Can you fit it all into one big block of a day, two half-days, or a week? Go through your task list and create these blocks, then see how you can piece them all together, making up your work week. You might be surprised.

If you try this be sure to let your clients and coworkers know you've made some changes, or they're going to wonder where you are.

That's The Extra Point. Get out there and make something good happen today. For 93.3 and the Ray Gibson Show, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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