



## Stop working and start thinking

Turn off your auto-responder for better results

by Natalie D. Brecher, CPM®

**T**o do your best work, sometimes you have to not work. Yes, a negative that is a positive. Do you take time to stop working and start thinking? If you don't, you may not be getting the best results you can.

Being busy is like wearing a badge of honor. In our culture, being busy means "I am important." After all, how can you be so busy if you're not important? If you called and asked someone, "What did you do today?" and he or she replied, "Nothing. I just sat around looking out the window," you might be a bit turned off and even perceive this person to be lazy and unproductive.

Yet busy is not the same as productive or efficient. Being busy and getting a lot of work done don't always count; getting good results is what matters most. And that takes thinking. Whether you are searching for solutions or creating new ideas, putting away work can help you improve your results.

### Stop Auto-Think

There are plenty of situations with which you are so familiar you don't even have to think about what to do—you know the answer, so your auto-responder kicks in. Yet following a "been there, done that" reaction will serve only to have you decide or act as you've always done in the past. "My response worked before," you ration-

alize; however, there may be a better answer out there.

In fact, implementing the same actions may not result in the same results you achieved previously because of changes in other causes and effects.

### Start to Think

To change, immerse yourself in the issue. Put aside work and focus on the issue. If distractions are present, remove them—or remove yourself—

tive ways of thinking, you will have the potential of generating more effective solutions and ideas. To increase the alternative views, include others in a brainstorming session. A simple way to see things differently is to use another set of eyes.

The next time your thoughts tell you "Don't stand there...do something!" (implying, of course, that doing anything is better than doing nothing), consider the reverse: "Don't

Being busy and getting a lot of work done don't always count; getting good results is what matters most.

from the environment. Create an atmosphere where you think best. The more important the issue, the better the "thinking environment" you need to create.

Try to think in as many different ways as possible, using "what if" to help. What if the situation were the reverse? What if you had eight more people as resources? What if this had happened last month? What if your biggest competitor had this issue?

By opening your mind to alterna-

do something...stand there!" Sit down, kick your feet up, and look out the window while you think. Your results just may prove to be better for it. □

Natalie D. Brecher, CPM (nbrecher@BrecherAssociates.com), is a performance improvement specialist, providing consulting and training relating to workplace performance and individuals' professional skills. Her keynote and training programs include leadership, management, and professional skill development and can be explored at [www.BrecherAssociates.com](http://www.BrecherAssociates.com).

Reprints: Material in this publication may not be reproduced in any form without written permission of the publisher. For volume reprints or e-prints, contact IREM Customer Relations at 800-837-0706, ext. 4650.

Copyright © 2008 Institute of Real Estate Management. All rights reserved.