

Become more aware of reducing your reading pile

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Although workers have great intentions to read those e-newsletters, Internet articles, magazines and journals, it often doesn't become priority.

Most workers receive far more reading information in one day than could ever be read in an eight-hour work day. Unfortunately, there will never be enough time to read all the data that is received on a daily, weekly or monthly basis. We need to adjust what we read, where we read and how we read it.

There are varied purposes for our reading, and we need to segment our reading time and place to the type of reading we are doing. If you require deep understanding of a document or article, especially when a topic is new or difficult, this usually requires an isolated space and will generally require more time.

When you are trying to grasp general information and the topic is not difficult, then a communal, public or office area is sufficient. Quick review or skimming of material to grasp main points or highlights, such as e-newsletters, should be done immediately once the information is received or in hand. Skim reading, if delayed, will usually be forgotten and becomes outdated quickly, when truly it takes less than three minutes to skim the material and then delete or file the information.

Here are some other useful tips to manage the reading pile:

Schedule time: Workers typically spend 5 percent to 15 percent of their time reading for information. First determine how much time on a weekly basis should be spent reading, especially those materials that require more concentrated thought. Usually one to two hours per week is sufficient for the average office worker. Then, plan time in your weekly schedule.

Find a place: All of the nonskim type of reading usually requires a different location from your computer work area, where more immediate and quick actions will take precedence. Consider going to a coffee shop early one morning or possibly plan reading time during your commute to and from work or during business travel. Sometimes a different location within your office such as a side table, sofa or chair can provide a more focused environment for reading of this kind.

Purge and unsubscribe: If the reading pile has been neglected for longer than three months, consider purging outdated information. Create your own "purge" schedule so that after a certain point in time, reading information will be deleted and/or recycled if you haven't had the time to

review it. Consider unsubscribing to periodicals and newsletters that are not being read, are not a priority, and are neglected in your email in-box or the reading stack.

Create a location: Create a location for your reading material on your desk, in your office and/or email in-box; ideally near the area or location where you intend to read. Instead of keeping the entire magazine or publication, consider tearing out the articles you would like to read. This limits the size of the reading pile and makes transport to and from work lighter and easier.

Begin a reading club at work: In order to encourage yourself and your colleagues to stay up on current information, start a monthly reading club with employees at work. Each employee can take one of the many industry publications and/or require each person to bring one article that they think could have an impact on how the company or department does business. Have each person summarize an article and then discuss it as a group. This encourages a team to keep up with current industry information and reduces the responsibility for one individual.

As the old adage somewhat goes, "So much reading to do, so little time." If reading is important in your job and life, then create the time and space to make it a part of your work week. You will ultimately feel better with your accomplishment as well as enhance your knowledge.

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