Independent Banker  
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Portfolio

[tag] Leadership at All Levels

[hed] You’re a new community banker—now what?

[body]

Community bankers often tell us they wish they had a “how-to” list for new team members. In other words, answers to the big question, “Now what?” Over the next few months, we’re going to tackle that theme, offering tips that can be shared with team members on day one, and every day after.

**[sunbhed] How to prepare for your workday**

This month’s focus is on getting ready for work. Here are some tips for what to do the day before.

* **Think about what the next day will look like.** Review your calendar, upcoming meetings and focus work time. Check for deadlines and project milestones. Make your to-do list outlining priorities for the day. Do not randomly select things to do—make a plan. Consider highlighting the three most important tasks on your list to ensure a productive day.
* **Tidy up your desk at the end of each day**. Sitting down at an organized desk in the morning is a great way to focus your mind.
* **Mentally prepare yourself.** Whether you have a big meeting or a new task, getting into a prepared, positive mindset is key to success. Research shows that a mindfulness practice can be highly beneficial, but sometimes it’s as simple as going for a brisk walk.
* **Get a good night’s sleep.** Aim for seven to eight hours. Using a smartphone before bed has been proven to disrupt sleep patterns, having negative effects on both sleep quality and general health. So, avoid scrolling through your social media feeds for 30+ minutes before turning out the lights.

Now, let’s look at the morning before work.

* **Eat a healthy breakfast.** It is always better to start the day off with a good wellness regimen.
* **Dress for your day.** Something as simple as choosing appropriate attire can be a real confidence boost as you head into your workday.
* **Slow down.** It may seem counterintuitive as you are rushing to get to work, but stopping to think about your day or task ahead can give you the necessary mindset, focus and wherewithal to approach your day. This might mean waking up a few minutes earlier and carving out some time to focus on what the day ahead holds.
* **Give yourself enough time to get to work.** If you’re running behind, it will most likely affect your day. Pro tip: It’s best not to arrive at the office with seconds to spare. Being 15 minutes early can reduce your stress levels, and your boss will also appreciate your timeliness.

Once you’re at your desk, plan for the rest of the day.

* **Identify when you’re most productive during the day.** Set that time aside to focus on your highest priorities.
* **Do your research.** If you are meeting a new customer later in the day, do your homework on the goals of the meeting and the customer’s background. Review meeting agendas and spend time preparing for them in advance. Never show up to a meeting unprepared.
* **Limit distractions.** Put your phone away and close your email inbox. Consider wearing headphones with light music if you need to focus.
* **Revisit your to-do list midday.** This allows for a quick check to see if you are staying on track for the day. Adjust as needed.

In essence, it’s all about preparation and establishing good habits that allow you to optimize your workday—and ultimately your whole team’s productivity.

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