



Cairn

One step at a time

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Welcome to all new subscribers since last month.

It's been a pretty busy month this month. My article finally made it into Zest magazine, or rather my contribution to the final article. I haven't been able to scan it in – my scanner refuses to work at the moment but when I do, I'll put it up on my website for all to see.

If there are any busy mum's out there wondering how you can juggle all those tasks – looking after young children, running a business and having some 'me' time – then just ask me for some of my top tips from the article. Also, if you're in the Sussex area there's a great new company running monthly seminars aimed at helping Mums in business who have recently started or are thinking about starting up their business. See details in the What's On section.

I've got a new car – well, actually a new, old car. Not that I don't enjoy driving my MG but it's time for something a little more practical and economical. When you're hacking down the buddleia at the end of the year, you really want to make just one trip to the dump and not several. I always get a strange look when I turn up in my little two seater and then unload all my garden waste – all the woody stuff that's too much for the compost heap.

I ran my second Time Management Seminar in Sussex at the end of last month – showing local businesses how they can apply key strategies to increase their productivity and become more organised. I enjoy running these as I get a chance to deal with people's own particular challenges and help them identify ways of working more effectively. Sometimes reading books and articles just isn't enough to actually make the change.

Finally, I was down in Somerset for a long weekend last week, which is why this newsletter is going out slightly later in the month than usual. A few days catching up with friends, enjoying the last of the warm weather, out walking with their new, slightly scatty chocolate Labrador, although they've decided she's just a chocolate coloured version of something else as she's quite leggy and not very lab like, except for her penchant for eating anything unsuitable she finds in the fields.

You can catch up on the rest of what I've been up to in my blog – <http://www.clareevans.blogspot.com>.

Enjoy the rest of this newsletter.

- Planning Your Time
- What On, What's New
- Recommended Reading
- This Month's Quote

Planning Your Time

One of the most important things you can do to improve your productivity is to plan your time.

If you don't currently plan your time then the chances are that you start the day and just deal with things as they come in, some things get done, some things get forgotten, some things get missed and other priorities take over. By getting into the habit of planning regularly, you will ensure that you're focusing on the right things.

Plan First

First thing every Monday morning (or Sunday evening if you prefer) spend 15-30 minutes planning what you need to do over the coming week. What actions **MUST** you take this week that relate directly to your goals.

Spend the first 10-15 minutes each morning planning your tasks and actions for the day. This should only take a few minutes and is the most effective use of your time. Don't launch straight into the day dealing with the most urgent action or the one that's more interesting to do.

If you don't plan you're more likely to end up spending all your time being re-active rather than pro-active and get to the end of your day wondering what you've achieved.

One diary.

How many diaries, calendars, schedulers do you have – one for business, one for personal use, one at home?

Whether it's paper-based or electronic, keep **ALL** your personal and business appointments in one place. That way you will have all important dates and events available when you're planning your time and booking appointments - include birthday's, anniversaries, children's activities, school events, social gatherings etc. You won't end up missing important events or having to juggle or cancel activities at the last minute.

Check a few days ahead so you are making a mental note of up-coming appointments. You'll be less likely to have to change plans at the last minute if you know what's coming up.

Do you have lots of bits of paper with to-do lists, notes, contact details? Try to keep them all in one place – either combine this by using your diary or carry a notebook with you in which you can jot everything down. I have an A4 book I carry around with me – I use it for meeting notes, action lists, ideas and reminders. It's useful for when something comes to mind or if I've got a few moments to spare.

Electronic organisers such as the Palm Pilot, iPAQ and Blackberry resolve the size issue, as they're much smaller than carrying round your diary. They can be synchronised with your laptop or PC as long as you remember to plug them in when you get back to the office. Paper organiser systems such as Franklin Covey - have both appointments and to-do lists as a page a day. Useful for keeping things together and for your daily planning.

Chunking

When you're planning your time, make sure you're also planning in time for your usual daily tasks, checking emails, making phone calls, working on a report, writing articles etc. not just for meetings and appointments.

Schedule in chunks of your time. It's more efficient to work on one type of task at a time. If you have several phone calls to make – block out an hour of time to make them rather than making calls sporadically throughout the day. You'll get through them quicker and more efficiently.

If you need to read and respond to emails – block out a couple of time slots in the day to do that. **DON'T** check your emails throughout the day.

If you've got a report, article or newsletter to write, block out the time you need across the week – or schedule in a time slot each week if this is something you do regularly.

Get yourself a timer and set yourself a limit of 10, 20 or 30 minutes particularly when dealing with emails, so that you don't run over and are less likely to get distracted.

Give yourself a break.

How often do you work through your lunch break, grab a quick snack during the day or don't take a break until it's time to finish for the day? Make sure you plan breaks into your day – even if it's just for a few minutes.

The brain is only able to concentrate effectively for short periods of time. The longer you spend doing one thing, the more ineffective you become. Sitting in one position for long periods of time doesn't do you any good physically or mentally.

Take a break at least once every two hours. You will be fresher and better able to concentrate. Get up and stretch, take a few deep breaths, get a drink of water.

Always take a proper lunch break – if you've planned your day effectively you deserve it and your body needs it! If you can, get some fresh air and exercise. Don't rely on stimulants such as coffee and sweet snacks to give you a boost when you're flagging. Take a break and do something different.

What could you do to improve your planning for the rest of the month and the rest of the year?

If you'd want to have more hours in your day just give me a call or send an email to info@clareevans.co.uk

What's On, What's New

Up-coming teleclasses, workshops:

Time Management Seminar in Sussex – If you'd like to have more time in your day, improve your productivity, manage your to-do list, tackle your email more effectively then take some time to make some time. A two-hour seminar to enable you to develop ways to **work smarter not harder**. **Wednesday 28th November, 12.30pm-2.30pm**. For full details see <http://www.clareevans.co.uk/services/TimeManagementSeminar.htm> .

Intro Teleclass: Get Control of Your Money - Would you like to be organised in managing your money? Discover a few simple ways to save your pennies and start making your money work for you. Register for the **Money Management Teleclass** on **Tuesday 27th November**. <http://www.clareevans.co.uk/services/GroupCoaching.htm>

Mums In Biz - Business start up seminars that focus directly on ideas and issues that affect busy mums and provides answers, fun and inspiration to get your business moving! Their next seminar is on **December 6th** in Brighton Marina Village. <http://www.mumsinbiz.co.uk>

Recommended Reading: How To Be Organized In Spite of Yourself

A great little book that will convince even the most hardened dis-organised person that you can be more efficient and organised. Don't force yourself to implement a system that will never work for you. Work with your own

<http://www.amazon.co.uk/exec/obidos/ASIN/0451197461/clareevans-21>

To see my previous Book Recommendations – click [here](#).

Website of the Month: Free Rice

Increase your word power, learn new words and help the hungry. I managed to get up to level 46 at one point.

<http://www.freerice.com/>

This Month's Motivational quote:

"You'll never plow a field by turning it over in your mind." Anon

What would you like to achieve by the end of the year that you haven't managed to do already? Get planning now and see what you can do to step up a gear by the end of the year. If you need some motivation and support then just give me a call.

If you were forwarded this issue of the newsletter you can register to receive your own copy each month by sending a blank email to claresnews@aweber.com. If you want to stop receiving these then just click the link at the bottom of this email.

Until next month.

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