

## Tips for Proactive Professionals

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We're halfway through the first month of 2020 and this is the time when a surge of new ideas come to life! You may have set ambitious goals for the year and feel your motivation grow with an urge to roll up your sleeves and get to work. Before you dive in, consider pausing for a second and remember the simple things you do to keep your sanity and prevent you from overextending or getting tripped up.

I am here to cheer you on, watch you reach your 2020 goals, and offer you a few tips I've found helpful this time of year and keep me sane – most of the time. As you read through, you may feel like you're already rocking some of these tips (way to go!), while others might feel more like a gentle reminder. Being a business owner myself and working with other business owners and leaders, I see these simple proactive tricks often get neglected and cause problems later. So, refer to this list when you're feeling a bit overeager and remember to B-R-E-A-T-H-E:

### Focus on the Big Picture!

Move past the small stuff that hinders your ability to see the big picture. You know where you want to drive your business. You know how to get it done. You see the vision in front of you. It's expansive with a bright open view. So, don't get caught up in the small things that will not make a big difference in the long run.

Real progress is made when our focus is dialed in on the big picture/goals rather than the exhausting time spent on minor details. Now, this doesn't mean that small details aren't necessary because some definitely are! But if you find yourself going back and forth on whether a detail is important or not...you may already have the answer.

### Learn to Say "No"!

When you open your schedule, does it look like events and commitments threw up all over the place? I know there are times when I look at my calendar and think, "Erica, you lost your mind and no magic wand will help you get through this week!" In these moments, I'm reminded that I am human and there's only so many hours in the day.

Figure out what is most important to you in your life. What are the areas of your life that are an absolute priority? Every. Single. Day. For me, my family is at the top of my list. It may be different for each of you reading this but dig deep and stay mindful about what that top priority is as you go throughout your day.

Once you figure out what your top priorities are, HOLD YOURSELF TO THEM. Think of priorities as promises. I could stay after work and help my team problem solve, BUT if my kiddo has a school event I want to make, I will say no to work. I will walk away and keep my promise to making family a priority. Those emails? They can wait until tomorrow morning. And the client calling nonstop for your help during lunch? They can...wait for it...hold off until you are done with lunch.

## Know What's in Your Control!

There are certainly things within your control, such as most of your commitments and schedule. There also are, and always will be, things OUTSIDE of your control! "Gasp!" says any organized professional!

It's bound to happen. Even throughout all my years of helping corporations thrive, there are always things that happen outside of my control. Being proactive means taking the project in front of you, using creative solutions and getting the job done. A proactive professional won't dwell on the past bumps. They won't worry about the future.. well, ok maybe a little, but they won't be consumed by the "What if's" that may come. What life decides to throw at you is not always in your control BUT how you decide to act is.

Remember to see reality for what it is and create a plan to move forward towards your goals. Embrace adversity with open arms and be mindful in your plan of action.

## Give an Early Heads-Up!

Don't forget that while you are scheduling your days and priorities, all your teammates and clients are doing the same thing. If you know that there may be a small setback, delay, or emergency on the horizon— keep them in the know. It's ok to have moments of humility and check-in with one another.

I feel it's always better to overshare your timeframe than under-share and apologize for the delay. Those you work with will thank you for setting proper expectations rather than leaving them in the dark.

## Use Your Phone to Set Reminders!

I am thankful for Siri.

"Hey Siri, remind me to pay my phone bill tomorrow morning."

"Hey Siri, remind me in 30 days to check in with Barbara from The Summit event".

"Hey Siri, remind me to post my latest blog on Thursday."

I use Siri to keep myself honest with reminders. My hands are dipped into many different pots, and sometimes a girl just has to use her phone robot to help her out every so often! Think about it, our computers and phones are staples of our corporate world, so why not treat them like employees? Simple reminders on your phone will keep you accountable, but they also store nicely in an app that you can access when needed.

As you put more work into your business and actualize your 2020 goals, consider applying these simple "house cleaning" tips to manage work more effectively. Stay authentic and mindful to yourself and your goals, so that you're constantly putting your best foot forward and remember to B-R-E-A-T-H-E.



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## Creative Solutions to Everyday Challenges Within the Workplace

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A passionate organizer of people and initiatives, Erica Smigielski brings over twenty years of experience in project leadership to financial software and SaaS companies who want to launch their next big idea. She leads large-scale, complex projects like product launches and company mergers and acquisitions as well as focused efforts to bring structure and process to fast-track businesses. Erica holds certifications as a Stanford Advanced Project Manager as well as a Certified Group Facilitator, making her a master orchestrator of strategic planning, as well as a skillful communicator who can expertly navigate complex group dynamics.