

How to keep up business productivity when the time clock shifts



Time is a factor in every aspect of your business productivity. While your primary focus is to have a daily schedule for getting things done, you're also tracking time changes for events and connections to others in different time zones.

However, when the time clock changes, you either gain or lose an hour of business productivity thanks to the introduction of Daylight Saving Time. In March, it seems like a gift of an extra hour of work time as your new routine sets in. Then, comes November, and there's time stealing back an hour of productivity from you.

Originally, time was set as Standard Time. This was done to aid early weather forecasting and set railroad schedules. By

dividing the globe into evenly spaced meridians time zones, all time within a geographic region is the same.

Daylight Saving Time was introduced during World War I as a means of saving energy. By advancing the clock one hour, one hour of artificial light was saved and one hour of working daylight was gained.

This remains the official seasonal time adjustment, even though saving energy is no longer a primary factor. The idea of extra sunlight is still advantageous to many businesses and lifestyle activities.

The Problem You Have with Time

While you might think a dip in business productivity can be written off to changes back and forth between Daylight Saving Time and Standard Time, the actual problem comes from your internal time clock.

You have different internalized time systems, but the primary one is your Circadian 24-hour rhythmic clock running your body and brain's ability to be productive.

When an external time clock changes, your internal time clock is disrupted and it in turn, affects your business productivity.

Your Circadian Time Clock

Circadian time runs on a 24-hour biological cycle with approximately 7 to 8 hours allocated to sleep. One of its key functions is to regulate the relationship between light exposure and sleep.

Morning light triggers the increased production of the hormone cortisol for alertness and mental and physical functioning. As daylight naturally decreases, so does cortisol. In response, the hormone melatonin increases to initiate sleep and declines as morning approaches.

Artificial light and the abrupt change to Daylight Saving Time delay melatonin production and sleep onset. When switching back to Standard Time, the circadian time is disrupted again by an hour of less sleep. Melatonin and cortisol production must recalibrate to help you readjust to a new sleep and waking pattern.

Forgive the pun, but none on this happens like clockwork. Some will adjust rather quickly and others may take days to weeks until they are back to feeling normal and being productive.

How to stay productive when the time clock shifts?

One of the oddities that trick the brain is looking at a timer and trying to reconcile what it says with what the light or

darkness from what your external environment suggests.

When traveling through different time zones, there's an expectation that the exposure to the amount of light or darkness will vary considerably. Mentally and physically the body will be out-of-synch and feeling alert or sleepy at the wrong time.

However, a shift in the seasonal time clock is only one hour of a change in time. Even that one hour is enough to throw off your ability to be productive because it has disrupted your internal Circadian clock of how you sleep.

Here are several things you can do to minimize the effect on your sleep during a seasonal time change.

Returning to Standard Time – set clocks back an hour; gain an hour of sleep

1. The week before, begin going to bed a little bit later each night until you've set your bedtime ahead an hour.
 - If your normal bedtime is 10 pm, it now becomes 11 pm.
 - 11 pm becomes the new Standard Time of 10 pm
2. At the same time, reset your alarm clock to get up a little bit later each day
 - If your normal wake up time is 7am, it now becomes 8 am
 - 8 am becomes the new Standard Time of 7 am
3. Temporary supplements that have been recommended to

increase relaxation and promote sleep include Melatonin, GABA, Magnesium, and Valerian. Always consult with your healthcare professional if using any of these supplements is right for you.

4. Increase daylight exposure time or use simulated sunlight lamps to compensate for shorter daylight in some areas.
5. Avoid late in the day caffeine, alcohol and use of blue light emitting devices
6. Schedule exercise earlier in the day, not later in the day
7. Mood changes and depression (especially for women) occur more often
8. The advantage of an extra hour of sleep is disputed
9. Night owls and early birds are more at home in this time zone

Returning to Daylight Saving Time – set clocks ahead an hour; lose an hour of sleep

1. The week before, begin going to bed a little bit earlier each night until you've set your bedtime an hour later.
 - If your normal bedtime is 10 pm, it now becomes 9 pm.
 - 9 pm becomes the new Daylight Saving Time of 10 pm
2. At the same time, reset your alarm clock to get up a little bit earlier each day
 - If your normal wake up time is 7 am, it now becomes 6 am
 - 6 am becomes the new Daylight Saving Time of 7 am
3. Temporary supplements that have been recommended to increase relaxation and promote sleep include Melatonin, GABA, Magnesium, and Valerian. Always consult with your healthcare professional if using any of these

supplements is right for you.

4. Avoid late in the day caffeine, alcohol and use of blue light emitting devices
5. Schedule exercise for later in the morning
6. Scheduling additional nap time is recommended
7. There may be morning irritation, crabbiness, and need for more coffee
8. The loss of an hour of sleep overall is considered more detrimental

Most people find it very stressful and disorienting to abruptly shift when there is a seasonal time change. By adjusting your bedtime time over a period of a week's time, sleep disruption will be less disconcerting because your internal clock will have time to readjust. And, the new time will match your usual clock time for going to bed or waking up.

What does this mean for your business productivity?

Consistent, good sleep means your brain is able to be productive when you need it the most in your business. Brains cells get to be repaired, rejuvenated and re-energized. New neuron connections are made. Toxins, debris, and dead cells are cleared. And, information is able to be organized and processed into short term and long term memory.

However, according to Dr. Daniel Amen, brain imaging expert, neuroscientist and psychiatrist,

"... a lack of sleep is associated with lower overall blood flow to the brain, which can compromise

brain function, will power and mood.”

So, no matter what time it is, making sure you get your consistent 7-8 hours of sleep is key to maintaining your business productivity.

Have you noticed if changing from Daylight Saving Time to Standard Time, or vice versa influences how productive you are in your business?

Resources

<http://www.brainmdhealth.com/blog/dont-let-daylight-savings-steal-your-brain-healthy-sleep-4-simple-tips-to-help-you-spring-forward/>

<http://www.newsy.com/videos/daylight-saving-time-shown-to-cause-increase-in-depression/>

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/evolutionary-psychiatry/201611/your-brain-daylight-savings>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Standard_time

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