

lingua business

Shh...Be quiet! I'm Working

By Paul Gibson



For years companies have hired a number of consultants outside the company to measure worker productivity. That trend may soon begin to change if they learn the secret to worker productivity.

The way to improve worker productivity in any kind of business is simple. The solution is almost scary because it seems so simple to implement, yet so effective. The answer is called "quiet time."

Quiet time is a period of time where workers are allowed to concentrate on their work, without distractions, interruptions, etc. This is reminiscent of study periods at school or church, where silence is a must.

But workers are not school children, and going to church can hardly be compared to working. So what exactly is "quiet time" for a business?

According to an article entitled *E-mail is Making You Stupid* published at entrepreneur.com, companies including in IBM, Intel, U.S. Cellular and Deloitte & Touche regulate the time of some employees by:

- Placing time limits on e-mail use, and even forbidding e-mail on specific days.
- Adopting *no-technology* days, where employees clean their work space and tidy up their paperwork.
- Establish programs and processes that encourage *face-to-face* contact.

The original idea came out in a study by Harvard Business school where a team of engineers were monitored for months. They established a type of technology quarantine for four hours during the day, where engineers were left alone, far away from receiving, phone calls, email messages, etc. The results were astounding...

Questions

- 1- Do you believe your department, your project or your work would increase productivity by using "quiet time"?
- 2- How would you implement such a plan?
- 3 - Is this even realistic? If not, how would you propose to increase productivity in your department?