

## SUPERCOMPETENT KEY 1: ACTIVITY

Activity demonstrates value and reflects importance.

*SuperCompetent* people have an acute sense of direction, in which the nature of their Activity reflects priority. They're particularly aware of one thing that escapes most of their colleagues: that being busy and being productive are two very different things.

You can be busy all day long, running from one brushfire to another, and not accomplish anything productive at all. True Activity involves knowing your goals intimately, keeping them constantly in mind, and working toward them in an efficient way that wastes a minimum of energy and time.

*SuperCompetent* people aren't hidebound by the old ways of doing things, either; if there's a possibility of doing something more efficiently, they suggest or implement it. They make every effort to avoid getting mired in the trap of *Schlimmbesserung*, in which new processes and technologies intended to make work easier end up making you work longer and harder than before.

Here are a few ways to help you fine-tune your workday in the Key of Activity, keeping things humming along like a well-oiled productivity machine.

1. **Know exactly why you work hard and what you're trying to achieve.** You can't be very productive if you don't know what you're working for. Plan out your goals and dreams, and work toward achieving them. Learn what makes you tick, own your destiny, and keep focused on your mission.
2. **Know what to do, when to do it, and why.** Take initiative and do what needs to be done *when* it needs to be done. Don't just work on projects in the order they come across your desk; learn to structure your time and processes effectively, or others will out-compete you.
3. **Create systems to perform tasks more efficiently, so you can leave the office on time.** Too often, we're gulled into working harder than we should by stuff that was supposed to make our lives easier. Step forward and create or suggest more efficient ways of doing things, so that you can take back your time.
4. **Regularly rest and recharge your batteries, so that you can be productive and creative when you return to work.** For heaven's sake, you're not a robot. Take a break when you need to! As long as you don't become a slacker, taking time off can be one of the healthiest, most productive things you can do.



5. **Do the day's most profitable and valuable tasks first.** Instead of taking care of piddling brushfire issues, learn to delegate. Put the most important tasks at the top of your list, and work through them first – *then* do all the rest, if you have time. It's not a sin to let unimportant tasks go.

At the end of the day, all that matters is results – and results are measured by productivity. That means you need to be very sure that your time is not only accounted for, but has real value.

Productivity, in its most meaningful sense, is all about reaching high-value goals in every area of your life, often in the shortest amount of time (but not always, such as spending time with loved ones). Nobody cares how many things you crossed off your list. Nobody cares how busy you were last week if key projects are falling through the cracks.

Only results matter, so strive to get the most value out of every day. Grab your dreams and get going!

© 2010 Laura Stack. Laura Stack is a personal productivity expert, author, and professional speaker whose mission is to build high-performance productivity cultures in organizations by creating Maximum Results in Minimum Time®. She is the president of The Productivity Pro®, Inc., a time management training firm specializing in productivity improvement in high-stress organizations and the 2011-2012 President of the National Speakers Association. Since 1992, Laura has presented keynotes and seminars on improving output, lowering stress, and saving time in today's workplaces. She is the bestselling author of four books: *SUPERCOMPETENT*; *The Exhaustion Cure*; *Find More Time*; and *Leave the Office Earlier*. Laura has been a spokesperson for Microsoft, 3M, Xerox, and Office Depot. She is the creator of The Productivity Pro® planner by Day-Timer and has been featured on the CBS Early Show, CNN, and the *New York Times*. Her clients include Starbucks, Cisco Systems, Wal-Mart, and Bank of America. To have Laura speak at your next event, call 303-471-7401 or visit [www.TheProductivityPro.com](http://www.TheProductivityPro.com) to sign up for her free monthly productivity newsletter.