

Tip Sheets for Employees

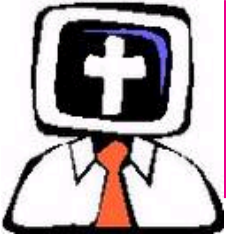
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Mental Overload

Are you getting the mental "Memory Full" message?

In today's world, mental overload is a fact of life. Fortunately, by applying some simple techniques from the computer world, you can avoid some of the costly consequences of a too full brain!

SIGNS OF AN OVERLOAD

A too-full computer can:

- give you error messages
- run slower
- take longer to process information
- crash

A too-full brain can cause you to:

- make mistakes
- forget to do something
- let things slip through the cracks
- become sluggish
- loose creativity
- become unproductive
- procrastinate
- become indecisive
- get stressed out
- experience a total mental break down



GET TECH SUPPORT

The problem of a hard drive that is too full lends itself to a variety of solutions. These same solutions can apply to the problem of a too full mind. Here are some techniques humans can borrow from the computer:

REBOOT

When your computer is running slow sometimes simply restarting or "rebooting" can help. This same technique works well for people. Sometimes the best thing you can do when you feel overloaded is to **take a break**. Go for a walk. Find a quieter or different space to work. If you're experiencing major "brain strain" it may be time for a vacation. Even a day or two can help.

DELETE UNNECESSARY FILES

With a computer you can free up space by sending unnecessary files to the trash. How about all those "junk files" on your mental hard drive? Do you keep reminding yourself to do things that you think you "should do" but don't really **need** or **want** to do? By doing so, you're not only piling guilt onto the overload but all this extraneous "stuff" is taking up valuable mental real estate. Do yourself a favor and delete excess.

CALL THE HELP DESK

When you experience a major computer glitch you can always call the support desk. The same is true with mental overload. **Delegate** whenever you can. Don't manage anyone at work? If you live with anyone over the age of five, you can almost always delegate more at home.

DOWNLOAD

Many "must keep" files that don't need to reside on your hard drive can be downloaded onto a disk. You may not be able to download your mental to-do list onto a disk, but you can achieve the same effect by getting it out of your head and onto paper. The way to keep your mind from getting overloaded in the first place is to immediately download things as they pop up. In other words: *If you think it, ink it.*

RECOVERING FROM A CRASH

At some point in the process you might hit the "overwhelm wall." Seeing how much you have to do can make you want to throw down your pencil in despair. But if you push through this wall and continue writing, ultimately you'll experience the benefits of a well-functioning computer: Faster processing of information, fewer errors, less need to call



the help desk and a greatly diminished risk that your system will crash. But here's where humans have a definite edge on computers; downloading our brain allows us to enjoy additional benefits like less procrastination, greater creativity and the peace of mind knowing that nothing will slip through the cracks.

DEFRAGMENT

The defragmenting function on a computer rearranges files so your programs run faster. Right now the "files" on your download list are a jumbled list of to-dos. You'll want to "defragment" your list by first organizing them into their proper category - for example, work projects vs. home projects. Computer calendar programs are an excellent organizational tool.

RUNNING A SYSTEM CHECK

Next, put things into perspective by prioritizing your list. The simple process of sorting through your list and putting each item into its proper priority "file" can be tremendously freeing. Finally, just as the defragmenting process on a computer checks the drive for errors, taking the time to organize your activities helps ensure that nothing will slip through the cracks!



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