

Defeating  
*the* Demons  
*of* Distraction

*111 Ways To Increase Work/Life  
Performance and Decrease Stress*

by Geraldine Markel, Ph.D.

# Introduction

In this 24/7 world, the lines between work and life are blurred and distractions interrupt and interfere with performance. Labeled as demons, there are eight types of distraction that negatively affect attention, memory, organization, executive functioning, and critical thinking.

The eight demons of distraction include technology overload, interruption by others, over scheduling and inappropriate multitasking, noisy or messy space, stress, fatigue, illness or medication, and unruly mind.

Although a few distractions may be easily managed, constant distractions can lead to feeling overwhelmed, irritable, and ineffective. Better management of distractions, however, spurs greater productivity, creativity, and profitability while lessening stress.

You can become more mindful of the distractions that interfere with productivity. You can break old unproductive habits and learn new productive ones, and you can avoid, reduce, and lessen the effects of distractions within your work and entire life.

This booklet provides an arsenal of tips, tools, and techniques to decrease distraction and increase task completion, speed, and accuracy. At the same time, as you decrease the distractions, you decrease unnecessary stress.

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# Defeat the Technology Demon

- 1** Watch for the *Technology Demon* since it is on the prowl all day and all night. It invites you to get lost in its mazes by working or playing long after it is appropriate or useful.
- 2** Use your *technology time* wisely. That means working first according to a work schedule you create and playing later during specific times you allocate. Play time includes “free play” with the Internet, games, or Instant Messaging.
- 3** Make telephone calls or write text messages at certain times of the day, based on what makes the most sense for your life. You will be more focused and productive this way.
- 4** Expect occasional crashes and breakdowns. Having a list of technical resources and a file for manuals and guides can ease these events.
- 5** Minimize down time and cost associated with technology challenges. You can do this by completing the manufacturer’s registration forms immediately following purchase and recording the model and serial numbers on manuals.
- 6** Maintain and manage computer files and e-mail on a weekly or monthly basis. Maintenance means deleting outdated emails, filing saved messages into folders, and archiving necessary information on a disc or memory stick. Excess information is a distraction and time waster.
- 7** Back up all data from computer, mobile phone or hand held scheduler on a memory stick or disc. This avoids spending hours reconstructing a data base and eliminates the frustration and stress related to the loss of important data.
- 8** Follow information security guidelines. Use and occasionally change passwords to protect your privacy and prevent identify theft. This makes it more difficult for someone to hack into your computer files in spite of the ever increasing types of possible security breaches.
- 9** Attach your contact information to each piece of physical equipment you own in case of loss. Include

# 10 Tips to Promote YOUR Business with this Booklet!

*(It can even be customized for you.)*

- ❶ Send this booklet to your clients at year's end, thanking them for their business.
- ❷ Use this booklet as a "thank you" for a sales appointment.
- ❸ Mail this booklet to your prospect list to stay in touch with them.
- ❹ Offer this booklet free with any purchase during a specific time, with a certain purchase amount, or when opening a new account.
- ❺ Distribute this booklet to prospects at a trade show.
- ❻ Give this booklet as an incentive for completing a questionnaire or survey.
- ❼ Include this booklet in a mailing of your invoices, as a thank you.
- ❽ Package this booklet with a product you sell, as a "value added."
- ❾ Deliver a copy of this booklet to the hands of the first "x" number of people who enter a drawing or come to your store.
- ❿ Provide copies of this booklet to people and organizations that can refer business to you.

***What are you waiting for?***

**Geraldine Markel, Ph.D.** is an educational psychologist who is the co-author of five books applying behavioral research to learning and performance and a member of the National Speakers Association. At the University of Michigan, Geri served as faculty in the School of Education and seminar leader of the Instructional Design Workshop at the Executive Education Center, School of Business, University of Michigan.

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