

BOOKS

By JIM PAWLAK
Special Contributor

What to Do When There's Too Much to Do

Laura Stack (Berrett-Koehler Publishers, \$15.95)

When there's too much to do, Laura Stack offers a "not-to-do-list" that minimizes time-wasting, productivity-killing tasks and focuses your attention on a "High-Impact Task list," your HIT list. So what shouldn't you do?

Multitask. When you switch focus, it takes time to regain it. Block time for specific tasks; no interruptions allowed.

And don't fall prey to perfectionism. The pursuit of perfection fosters decision-delaying paralysis analysis.

Undervalue your colleagues. They're rowing the same boat, and their strengths can

help you do your job. Your strengths can help them, too. But dealing with colleagues doesn't mean dropping your oar and grabbing theirs. Saying yes all the time guarantees an increase in your workload.

Learn how to say no. Leave the door open instead: "I'm buried right now; check with me in a few days." But don't make empty promises. It's OK to close the door by saying: "I'm buried, too; wish I could help."

Attend useless meetings. Is your presence essential? It is if the topic deals with your HIT list. If you go, get an agenda in advance so you can do your homework. As a meeting ends, there should be assignments and timetables for completion.

Micromanage. When decision-making resides with one person, he or she becomes the bottleneck. Processes slow down. Teams hear the manager say, "I need it now." Then they sit and wait. Then they wonder why the manager constantly puts them through a fire drill.

Now let's look at what goes on the HIT list. It includes your highest-priority tasks and what else you need to be involved with during a day. It deals with what you can reasonably accomplish. If you have numerous meetings, something on your HIT list has to give. HIT is not a TIH (Take It Home) list.

The bottom line: Never confuse activity

with progress.

Pinfluence

Beth Hayden (John Wiley & Sons, \$19.95)

At first blush, Pinterest (pinterest.com) looks like a social media scrapbook where people pin pictures and videos to a viral pinboard and share them. But for a business, it's much more. Think of it as a viral billboard that advertises your brand's personality and your company's values.

Where do you start?

Request an invitation from Pinterest or from a friend or employee. You can send an email to your staff to see who uses Pinterest and would

invite the company to join. This also allows you to ask the employees for input about how they use Pinterest.

As part of the sign-up process, you'll choose between Facebook and Twitter as a Pinterest link to your social media outlet. If you want to link to both, you'll need two Pinterest accounts, which doubles the work. You'll also need an email address. Beth Hayden suggests a dedicated one so you can track Pinterest results.

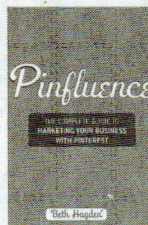
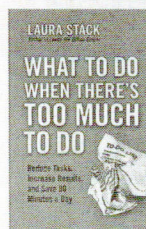
When you fill out your company's Pinterest profile, the "about" field tells the Pinterest world about the firm and topics you'll be pinning about and why users should be interested in your pins.

Construct multiple pinboards — each focusing on a part of your message. Select images and videos for your boards and add an up-to-500-character description. Each board has a unique Web address that you can add to your other social media sites; this helps attract initial followers. Pin consistently to attract more followers. Track the "likes" and repins — the number of times your content has been pinned to other Pinterest users' sites. Repins are a free way to extend the reach of your messages.

Pinterest's bottom line: Every picture tells your story.

Jim Pawlak reviews business books for The Dallas Morning News.

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