



Dear Friend,

## Summertime...In the Office

It's a Friday...in June...and the weather isn't unbearable.

The problem, you ask?

I'm in the office...at my desk...facing the window. Truth be told, I'd much rather be on the other side of the glass.

Can you relate?

We all struggle at times with ways to remain productive during the summer -- that period when the office is more quiet than usual, when the emails are slow, and when the phone's still. It, indeed, can be difficult to keep the energy flowing, but it's not impossible.

So join me for this month's edition of **EA Insights**. Let me share five quick tips to help you make your summer count. In fact, I think I'll be my first reader; I sure could use the inspiration today!

All the best,

*June*

June Melvin Mickens  
Executive Advantage, LLC

## 5 Ways to Make Your Summer More Productive

June Melvin Mickens  
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*It's summer!*

The thought of summer typically produces images of vacation, extended days of sunlight, and the end of school. But, what you may not recognize are the hidden opportunities for increased productivity that also await you in the office now that we've turned the calendar to the month of June.



Ah, the opportunities are there, and they are many! But, here are a few that folks often miss.

**Commuting Wins** -- With so many people taking time off and with the absence of school busses on the road, summertime commuting often is less taxing and quicker than it is at other times during the year. That's a definite win. The emotional benefits are huge. (*You likely get to the office in a better frame of mind than usual. Just ask anyone who's ever been in a post-commute meeting with you!*) Quicker commutes also translate to additional time that can be devoted to something more meaningful than navigating traffic or public transportation.

So, to be more productive this summer, be intentional about capitalizing on seasonal time wins. This is found time that's there for the using. Don't squander it.

**Cancelled Meetings** -- You know that summer has arrived when you begin to receive email notices cancelling meeting after meeting after meeting. And, if you're like most of us, you consider...but only for a split second...whether the cancellation is going to throw a monkey

### In This Issue

[5 Ways to Make Your Summer More Productive](#)

[Quotes](#)

### Quick Links

[EA Home Page](#)

[About Us](#)

[Solutions for Businesses](#)

[Solutions for Professionals](#)

[News](#)

[Contact Us](#)



### "Quotes"

*"A complete and accurately defined list of projects, kept current and reviewed on at least a weekly basis, is a master key to stress-free productivity."*  
~David Allen

*"We wanted to give [them] something constructive to do in the summer. When they are doing something constructive, only good things can happen."*  
~Jerome Antone

*"She's amazing. \*\*\* [She] really developed her skills over the summer. She's been working hard to improve in that area, and it shows."*  
~Lisa Brown

*"A lot of people are still on vacation right now, the summer doldrums have kicked in[.]"*  
~Mark Bryant

*"Anything that causes people to spend more time thinking about what they do will clearly have an impact on productivity."*  
~Anthony Chan

*"I got to spend a summer while in medical school not doing research, hanging out with kids and taking pictures -- something I didn't get to do"*

wrench into some essential to-do item of yours; then, realizing that it's a nonissue, you break into an uncontrollable smile. (*Go ahead. I can see you smiling even now, just thinking about it!*) You see, heavy vacation periods tend to spark a rapid succession of cancelled meetings. After all, why meet when half of the needed people won't be in the room? The real question on the tail end of that cancellation, though, is what *you* will do with the precious gift of time that's just been passed your way.

So, to be more productive this summer, keep a running action-item list at the ready. Then, when your inbox pings with the latest meeting cancellation notice, determine the most productive way to use that half-hour, hour, or larger time reward.

**Quiet(er) Hallways, Phones, and Email** -- People are scarce during the summer. Now, it's true; it can be a problem to need something from someone who's nowhere to be found. (*See [4 Keys to a Worry-Free Vacation](#) for thoughts for how to plan for that situation.*) But, when you think about it, the quieter halls and lower call/email volume actually can be a blessing in disguise. Fewer interruptions allow for *focus* -- something that is far too elusive in the hustle and bustle of the normal fall-through-spring workflow.

So, to be more productive this summer, consider devoting time to planning; or to the project that you've not been able to sink your teeth into previously because of repeated interruptions; or to that professional development you've been wanting, or even needing, to do but never seemed to have the time. You may find that your own, quieter office or cubicle provides a great work space or that the slower office pace allows you to work offsite for a bit, with less of a workplace impact, on that assignment that requires focused attention.

**Slower Pace** -- When the numbers in the office begin to thin, it's easier to notice those who remain. The summer's slower pace presents a perfect chance to nurture relationships. You can get to know people in ways that busier schedules don't allow, have more than a fly-by performance or progress check-in with your supervisor or a staff member, or sit with that mentor whom you greatly admire but seldom see. With summer's easier scheduling and more relaxed speed, you might be able to get someone's attention, talk longer, build relationship, and give or receive feedback in ways that will become extremely difficult when things ramp up again in the fall.

So, to be more productive this summer, check out the online calendar, see when that normally hard-to-reach person is available, and block some time that works for you both. Take advantage of the summer schedule's ability to facilitate relationship-building opportunities, and notice the positive impacts today and into the future.

**Low Energy** -- We all have them. It's those low-energy summer days. These are times when we are, and must be, in the office...but, boy, oh boy...we're just not in the mood for anything taxing.

Though there are bound to be some low-energy days, they needn't also be low-productivity days. Consider these as excellent times to tackle back-burner tasks that have been accumulating on your to-do list. It may be filing, or organizing your cubicle, or cleaning out your inbox, or catching up on emails. Whatever the task, you likely have a million things that have been push aside because of the usual busyness of life. And there, in the background, they stay. Well, it's time to bring them to the foreground.

So, to be more productive this summer, don't feel guilty about, and don't squander away, your low-energy days. Acknowledge them for what they are, and use the time wisely to tackle those necessary, albeit low-importance, tasks. Doing so will help you use today well and also prepare you for tomorrow.

Summer is ripe with hidden productivity benefits. But, they all start with you! So, tell me. What will *you* do to come out of this summer pleased with what you've accomplished?

If you could use some help increasing your productivity, let **Executive Advantage** partner with you. We're here to help you become more fruitful this summer...and at every other time of the year! Take the first step. [Contact us today.](#)



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## About Executive Advantage

At **Executive Advantage**, we are committed to providing results-based business and management consulting, leadership development, and coaching support. We partner with business leaders to build healthy, well-functioning organizations, where goals are met and people thrive. We also partner with individuals to create professional (and personal) lives with clearer direction, improved results, and greater balance.

To learn more about **Executive Advantage**, contact us [online](#) or at (301) 280-5950.

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while  
I was studying."  
~Rebecca Jaffe

"In summer, ... we  
have more people out  
of school,  
more people off work,  
more people  
on vacation  
and visiting."  
~Michelle Jones

"Energy never lies.  
If you work at your  
right rhythm, you will  
be more productive  
trust me."  
~Judith Orloff

"Coming in this  
summer was such a  
great way to prepare  
us for the season. It  
was getting to know  
each other,  
understanding each  
[other], realizing what  
they can do...and  
what they can't....  
Just simple things like  
that have really  
helped so far."  
~Brienne O'Rourke

"When you waste a  
moment, you have  
killed it in a sense,  
squandering an  
irreplaceable  
opportunity. But when  
you use the moment  
properly, filling it with  
purpose and  
productivity, it lives  
on forever."  
~Menachem Mendel  
Schneerson

"I should take a page  
from my lawyer --  
every time I call, he's  
on vacation, four or  
five times a year."  
~August Wilson