

Average worker wastes 2 hours a day

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12 July, 2005

THE ARTICLE

Average worker wastes 2 hours a day

BNE: Time is money and according to a new survey*, workers waste 25 per cent of working time on non-work related matters. That's a lot of company money down the drain. A poll of 10,000 respondents by Salary.com and AOL.com indicates an average of 2.09 hours per day is idled away in offices. This is twice as much as company bosses predicted and amounts to a whopping \$759 billion in the USA. However, corporate bosses are not rattled by these figures. They said one hour a day of time wasting is factored into calculating salaries. Many executives deem time frittered away to be of benefit to a company. Salary.com's Bill Coleman called it "creative waste".

The survey said the top time-wasting activity was using the Internet for personal use – 44.7% of respondents owned up to this. Other big offenders were socializing with co-workers (23.4%), conducting personal business (6.8%) and that most productive of pursuits – spacing out, otherwise known as staring into space (3.9%). Employees indicated the blame for time wasting could not always be pinned on them. The top time-wasting excuse was not having enough work to do (33.2%). Other employee gripes were feeling underpaid (23.4%) and being distracted by co-workers (14.7%). The survey also found that men and women squandered away equal amounts of time.

*<http://www.salary.com/>

WARM-UPS

1. MY TIME: In pairs / groups, talk to each other about how much time you spend each day doing different things. What takes up most of your time at home? What takes up most of your time at work or school? Do you waste a lot of time during each day? Talk about your time management skills.

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

Time / time is money / wasting time / money down the drain / surfing the Internet / socializing / spacing out / not having enough work to do / being underpaid

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

3. WASTE: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word "waste". Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

4. SPACING OUT: In pairs / groups, talk about how often you space out – how often you stare into space. Is your mind blank or active? Describe what happens in each of these situations when you space out:

- At your desk at work / school
- In a meeting
- On the bus or train
- Watching TV at home
- Driving a car
- Being with family or friends
- Alone with your partner
- Other

5. WASTING TIME: According to a Salary.com survey, these are the nine biggest ways in which employees waste time. How guilty are you of these? A Salary.com executive said it was "creative". How could the following be "creative waste"?

	GUILTY?	CREATIVE?
1 Surfing Internet (personal use)		
2 Socializing with co-workers		
3 Conducting personal business		
4 Spacing out		
5 Running errands off-premises		
6 Making personal phone calls		
7 Applying for other jobs		
8 Planning personal events		
9 Arriving late / Leaving early		

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- | | |
|---|-------|
| a. The average worker wastes 25% of his/her working time. | T / F |
| b. Some workers put company money down the drain. | T / F |
| c. Corporate bosses thought workers wasted an hour a day. | T / F |
| d. Many executives think time wasting is beneficial to a company. | T / F |
| e. Drinking tea and coffee is the biggest time waster. | T / F |
| f. Almost 40 % of employees waste time by staring into space. | T / F |
| g. Many employees complain that they do not have enough work to do. | T / F |
| h. Women waste much more time than men. | T / F |

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------|
| a. down the drain | regard |
| b. whopping | carrying out |
| c. rattled | squandered |
| d. deem | gigantic |
| e. frittered away | confessed |
| f. owned up | assigned to |
| g. conducting | up in smoke |
| h. spacing out | grievances |
| i. pinned on | daydreaming |
| j. gripes | perturbed |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| a. a lot of company money | into calculating salaries |
| b. amounts to a whopping | away equal amounts of time |
| c. bosses are not rattled by | on them |
| d. time wasting is factored | up to this |
| e. executives deem time frittered | \$759 billion |
| f. respondents owned | gripes |
| g. spacing | down the drain |
| h. could not always be pinned | away to be of benefit |
| i. employee | out |
| j. men and women squandered | these figures |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words in the column on the right into the correct spaces.

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BNE: Time is money and according to a new survey, workers waste 25 per cent of working time on non-work related _____. That's a lot of company money down the _____. A poll of 10,000 respondents by Salary.com and AOL.com indicates an average of 2.09 hours per day is _____ away in offices. This is twice as much as company bosses predicted and amounts to a _____ \$759 billion in the USA. However, corporate bosses are not _____ by these figures. They said one hour a day of time wasting is _____ into calculating salaries. Many executives deem time frittered away to be of _____ to a company. Salary.com's Bill Coleman called it "_____ waste".

The survey said the _____ time-wasting activity was using the Internet for personal use – 44.7% of respondents owned up to this. Other big _____ were socializing with co-workers (23.4%), _____ personal business (6.8%) and that most productive of pursuits – spacing out, otherwise known as staring into _____ (3.9%). Employees indicated the _____ for time wasting could not always be _____ on them. The top time-wasting excuse was not having enough work to do (33.2%). Other employee _____ were feeling underpaid (23.4%) and being distracted by co-workers (14.7%). The survey also found that men and women _____ away equal amounts of time.

idled
factored
drain
benefit
matters
rattled
creative
whopping
conducting
pinned
squandered
space
gripes
offenders
blame
top

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'creative' and 'waste'.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the gap fill. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT TIME SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about time and how valuable it is.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- matters
- drain
- idled
- whopping
- rattled
- deem
- top
- conducting
- pursuits
- pinned
- gripes
- squandered

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. What was your initial reaction to this headline?
- b. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- c. Could you relate to a lot of what the article described?
- d. Are you a time waster or an effective manager of time?
- e. How important is time?
- f. Are you a highly productive worker / student?
- g. Do you think it's OK to waste time?
- h. Do you also waste 25 per cent of your working / studying day?
- i. Do you think waste can be creative?
- j. How accurate do you think surveys such as this are?

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What did you think about what you read?
- c. How would you describe yourself as a worker?
- d. Do you waste time surfing the Internet?
- e. Do you use company / school time conducting personal business?
- f. Do you space out or daydream a lot?
- g. What do you do when there isn't enough work to do?
- h. What gripes do you have with your company?
- i. Who are the biggest time wasters, men or women?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What question would you like to ask about this topic?
- b. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- c. Was there a question you didn't like?
- d. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- e. What did you like talking about?
- f. Do you want to know how anyone else answered the questions?
- g. Which was the most difficult question?

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SPEAKING

GET STUDYING (ENGLISH):

In pairs / groups, think of ways how you can make better use of your time to study English more.

SITUATION	HOW TO UTILISE TIME TO STUDY ENGLISH MORE
Breakfast	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•••
Going to work / school	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•••
Watching TV	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•••
Walking around town	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•••
Surfing the Internet	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•••
Bedtime	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•••

After you have finished, change partners and tell each other about your ideas. Give each other advice on how to make your ideas better.

Return to your original partner and incorporate the advice you received into making your ideas better.

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

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HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find more information on worker productivity. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

3. CREATIVE WASTE: Look again at the nine ways in which employees waste time (on p.3). Write some recommendations to executives describing how the wasted time could be reduced and working time increased. Show and explain your recommendations to your classmates in your next lesson. Assess them and provide feedback.

4. ONE DAY: Record how you spend your day. Try to note down how much time you spend doing various activities throughout the course of one day. Report your findings to your classmates in your next lesson. Were there any big surprises (shocks)? Could you use your time more productively / wisely?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

a. T b. F c. T d. T e. F f. F g. T h. F

SYNONYM MATCH:

a. down the drain	up in smoke
b. whopping	gigantic
c. rattled	perturbed
d. deem	regard
e. frittered away	squandered
f. owned up	confessed
g. conducting	carrying out
h. spacing out	daydreaming
i. pinned on	assigned to
j. gripes	grievances

PHRASE MATCH:

a. a lot of company money	down the drain
b. amounts to a whopping	\$759 billion
c. bosses are not rattled by	these figures
d. time wasting is factored	into calculating salaries
e. executives deem time frittered	away to be of benefit
f. respondents owned	up to this
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h. could not always be pinned	on them
i. employee	gripes
j. men and women squandered	away equal amounts of time

GAP FILL:

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The survey said the **top** time-wasting activity was using the Internet for personal use – 44.7% of respondents owned up to this. Other big **offenders** were socializing with co-workers (23.4%), **conducting** personal business (6.8%) and that most productive of pursuits – spacing out, otherwise known as staring into **space** (3.9%). Employees indicated the **blame** for time wasting could not always be **pinned** on them. The top time-wasting excuse was not having enough work to do (33.2%). Other employee **gripes** were feeling underpaid (23.4%) and being distracted by co-workers (14.7%). The survey also found that men and women **squandered** away equal amounts of time.