

NEWS RELEASE

Multi Tasker Syndrome – better to prevent than cure

Dramatic dip in employee productivity due to growing number of media

London, August 7, 2007 – In many companies people are communicating all day long. To reach employees, many employers use a broad range of (new) media, such as email, intranet, phone, blogs, websites, instant messaging (IM), web conferencing, sticky notes, internal memo's, text messages, newsletters and corporate magazines. But is this effective? No, says software company Netpresenter. More and more employees are suffering from MTS, or Multi Tasker Syndrome, which has a dramatic impact on the productivity of these employees.

"MTS is becoming a serious issue. Employees are expected to be available 24/7, and immediately respond to emails, IM messages and the like. But this sometimes has a catastrophic impact on their productivity," says Frank Hoen, CEO of Netpresenter. "By thoroughly reviewing the communication strategy and making some small adjustments, companies can benefit tremendously. When a fulltime employee can focus on work an hour more each day, he can get a month and a half of work done more each year. And an hour a day is certainly not unrealistic when you know the average employee nowadays spends 12.5 to 25 percent of his time on email. And then I have not even taken other media into account yet."*

"The concept of multi-tasking is good. You want to get more done in a shorter amount of time. But the reality is different. Because of all these different media, employees cannot pay full attention to anything. Whereas that is when you are most productive," continues Hoen. "We should not forget that all these new technologies offer unique opportunities. For example, we have never been able to communicate this swiftly before. However, it is vital companies realise not all messages need to be communicated immediately. If employees keep getting interrupted while working on tasks that require concentration, productivity goes down rapidly."

To help companies prevent MTS and increase employee productivity, Netpresenter offers 10 'golden tips':

1. **Be selective when it comes to the 'always on' mentality.** Many companies require their staff to be reachable at all times, at least during working hours. This in order to speed up communication. However, when employees keep being interrupted while working on tasks that demand concentration, the 'always-on' mentality is counterproductive. Therefore, encourage employees to be selective

- when it comes to new media. For example by checking email only after finishing a task, or by not giving into the Blackberry stress of continually checking whether the light on top is flashing (to indicate new mail). Especially when it comes to knowledge tasks, such as writing and programming, it sometimes can be necessary to plan in time to finish the job undisturbed, for example at home, behind closed doors or with a 'do not disturb' sign on the desk. And of course by turning all communication media off for a little while;
2. **Do not interrupt the working process.** Use a method of internal communication that does not interrupt the working process. Especially with tasks that require concentration, it takes at least 20 minutes for an employee to get 'back in' the task. A good solution would be to use the time employees are not working for internal communication. For example by communicating through screens in canteens, near coffee and soda machines and in printer area's, or by using a screensaver with internal news;
 3. **Bring only the essence of the news.** Internal news usually is too elaborate, distracting employees from their work for too long a time. Usually a message can be limited to a few brief lines. Employees that would like additional information about the subject, can best be redirected to a more elaborate article on the internet or intranet, or to someone that can tell them more about it;
 4. **Limit the target audience.** Limit the amount of people you send a certain message to. Most employees receive much more information than they need. Take for example the notorious 'to all' emails. Although a lot of information is not relevant for the recipient, all information must be scanned or read. More focused communication can result in significant time savings.
 5. **Market or employees – who first?** Companies are sometimes bound by legislation to announce figures or news on acquisitions and mergers to the market first. This type of news however, always has a significant impact on the employees. Staff should not hear this type of news from someone outside the company, before they are informed by the management. Staff that is informed in time, will feel more appreciated and part of the company. The best solution is to ensure major corporate news is communicated to the market and the employees at the same time. It is vital in this to choose a medium that actually brings the news to the employee. A type of medium that requires the employee to act, such as the intranet, is not suitable in these cases, as with these media employees can still overlook the news;
 6. **Limited number of media types.** Focus on a limited number of media types to communicate with your staff. Otherwise employees can have the feeling they are flooded by news from all directions;
 7. **The most effective medium.** Research what medium works best with what kind of messages. Sometimes the most effective medium differs per type of employee. For example, a salesman who is always on the road will be easier to reach via email or phone, whereas a factory worker will be easier to reach via large screens in the factory halls;
 8. **Urgent and non-urgent news.** Distinguish between important, urgent news, and fun, non-urgent news. Non-urgent news for example does not have to be

communicated via a pressing medium, but can also be published in the corporate monthly magazine;

9. Use of media. Set up some rules for using certain media, such as email and IM. This allows for more effective usage of these media. An example is to only use IM to send information that someone has requested. Another is one of the biggest productivity killers, sending 'reply to all' emails in response to corporate wide emails;

10. Have a close look at email usage. Have a close look at how email is used by your employees. Many employees do not know how to effectively use this medium, even though it is the most used medium within companies nowadays. Training can teach employees not to use their inbox as a to-do list and not to copy too many people to their mails.

For more information on Netpresenter, please visit the website:
<http://www.netpresenter.com/news-press-releases.html>

About Netpresenter

Netpresenter is a leading provider of innovative communication software that improves knowledge distribution, internal communication and safety within organisations. Products include digital signage technology, screensaver message systems, multimedia newsfeed servers and emergency alert systems.

Today, more than one million employees use Netpresenter solutions, at organizations such as Sony, Nokia, Jaguar, Schiphol Amsterdam Airport, Volkswagen, Ford, Pratt & Whitney, Unilever, US Navy, and police and government agencies worldwide.

The company is headquartered in The Netherlands with offices in the UK, Germany and the US. In addition, Netpresenter has an extensive network of VARs, resellers and distributors worldwide.

More information can be found on the website: www.netpresenter.com

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