



Work Smarter

Earn More Money in Less Time Using Technology You Already Own

by Kip Gregory

Everybody knows that time is money, but did you ever stop to figure out what that really means to you and your business?

My goal is to help you close the gap, to bring what you earn closer to what you're worth, and in the process putting thousands of dollars of time back into your day, time that you can invest in revenue producing activity or enjoying outside interests, away from the office.

You can accomplish that using nothing more than a tool you rely on every day, and one you can get for free off the Internet. One is Microsoft Word, the other the Google toolbar. Together they give you a powerful ability to manage knowledge and uncover business intelligence quickly and easily.

Build Yourself a Knowledge Journal

Create a knowledge journal in Microsoft Word. You use it to keep information you want to refer to regularly in a single place. Your business plan and office procedures are examples of what goes in it. To start your knowledge journal, open a new document and save it as "My Journal.doc."

Next, decide what to put into the file. The three items suggested above are "must haves." Another possibility: sales ideas. You can either copy and paste information from files already saved on your PC or type in handwritten notes.

After you've created your contents, give each journal entry a title (e.g., Business Plan, Procedures, NEC Notes, Sales Ideas, etc.) and assign that title a "Heading 1" style by clicking on the title and then pressing the Alt + Ctrl (short for Control) + 1 keys simultaneously.

Once you've created titles and formatted them as headings, build a table of contents (TOC). The TOC is the key to making your journal the powerful tool it can be. When Word creates a TOC, each item in it hyperlinks to its related section, which means you can instantly jump anywhere you want in a document by clicking on its section heading within the TOC.

Set Up a Table of Contents

To set up the TOC, place your cursor at the beginning of the file and select Insert from the main menu, then Reference, then Index and Tables (or just Insert then Index and Tables if you're using a version of Word older than 2002). A box will open on your screen; choose the "Table of Contents" tab then press Enter. Instantly a list of your Heading 1 titles will appear, along with the page number

each is on. Clicking on any one of the entries will take you right to the related content.

If you're wondering, "Can I update my table of contents?" the answer is yes. After entering new material in your journal and assigning its title the Heading 1 style, put your cursor within the TOC and press the F9 key. In the small box that appears select "Update Entire Table" and press Enter. Voila, the table will reflect your changes.

Cindy Settina applied the idea to her notes from Royal Alliance's NEC in Las Vegas, so she could share them with her associates back in Pittsburgh. "Now all of us are 'journaling.'"

Hopscotch the Web in Less Time

The Internet can be a great source of knowledge journal content – on target markets, client interests or competitors – and Google (<http://www.google.com>), a terrific site for uncovering that intelligence. Google's easy to use and delivers desired results at lightening speed, which makes it the search engine of choice for many.

To make even more effective use of its capabilities, download and start using the Google toolbar (<http://toolbar.google.com>). The toolbar is a free add-in to Internet Explorer (IE) that lets you access Google's search engine from anywhere on the Web without having to go to Google's home page first to enter your search terms. The toolbar puts many of Google's most powerful resources on a dashboard right inside your IE browser window.

Tools Don't Help Unless You Use Them

Whether it's a knowledge journal, search assistant like Google's toolbar, or proprietary tools like V2A and MAP, the bottom line is tools won't work for you, unless you learn how to work with them. The challenge when you're independent is finding the time to figure them out. Leverage the knowledge and experience of thousands of colleagues to make that trip faster. ■

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Share your best practices with Kip Gregory at Sourcebook@gregory-group.com

