

How to get home early, every day!

Need a few extra hours in your day? Here's some advice from our 'plumber from the trenches' Matt Reynolds about prioritising your objectives.

One of the great things about the plumbing trade is that at the end of most days we get to stand back and actually see a toilet installed, the water connected or a new sewer laid. One of the worst things about the plumbing trade is that at the end of most days, we want to stand back and see a toilet installed, the water connected or a new sewer laid! Being able to see the results of a day's sweat is a great motivator, but it can be a misleading indicator if our intention is to more effectively use our time and get home early every day.

squeaky wheels usually get oil. There are certainly times we need to drop everything and run, but there are also times when our own priorities should come first. Plumbers too, need oil.

Many studies have found that people who plan, have goals and write them down, accomplish far more in life than those who don't. With a little thought, a component of success becomes obvious – fill your diary with your priorities or it will invariably get filled by others who have their own proprieties.

things we haven't done as the things I have done. Innovation is saying no to 1,000 things."

Focusing and allowing only our prioritised objectives to drive a sense of urgency and effectiveness into our day ensures we are more productive and produce better results. In a practical sense, it takes us less time to get more done – effective productivity goes up, while the required time goes down – giving you more hours in the day.

Knowing your own objectives, rolling up your sleeves and then getting busy is the most effective way of getting more done in your day. When you link your goals with the work that you do and carry an enthusiastic attitude everywhere you take your tool box, the day ends quicker and you're in the front door a lot earlier. We all have 24 hours in the day – allocation and hustle are the keys.

Sooner or later we have to swing a hammer or pick up a shovel and actually do some work, but it's not the most important component. For any career to be enjoyable and effective you need to check in on your own objectives and see how the plumbing game serves them, so you can best serve the plumbing game.

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Most of us are in the plumbing game because we are natural doers – the type of people who don't mind rolling up our sleeves and getting things done. Neither the dirt nor the smells stand in the way of homes being built or maintained. Here's the problem; it's very easy for us as trade professionals to prioritise the manual work and that visual sense of accomplishment, over setting aside time to improve our long term effectiveness in the trade.

Sometimes this problem can cause a little stress – be it plumber or business owner – we all know what it's like to be stuck in a trench while the urgent jobs fill the inbox and enthusiastic customers dial our number. Customers know that

Smart plumbers value their time and are protective of it, it allows sustained success. They use their objectives as a check list against opportunities that come their way so they don't waste time on low priorities. To remain effective we have to choose quality over quantity and focus on doing a few things well over many things at half pace. No one can say yes to every opportunity and remain effective for a long period of time.

Steve Jobs famously put it this way: "People think focus means saying yes to the thing you've got to focus on. But that's not what it means at all. It means saying no to the hundred other good ideas that there are. You have to pick carefully. I'm actually as proud of the

