

The quick wins that work for me

Bosola Ajenifija on how she manages to successfully juggle her career as a media strategist and a creative entrepreneur

“By day, I’m a social media strategist at ESI Media. By night, I am a creative entrepreneur co-running streetwear jewellery and apparel brand STÖÖKI, and a virtual reality art project, called Where We Be.

My two work lives mutually support each other. At ESI, I work on projects for lots of great brands and am always learning. As an entrepreneur, I engage with a multitude of creatives, which then helps me produce stronger creative campaigns in my day job.

The key to making it work is understanding where your quick wins and long-term wins are. Having small things hang over you blocks your creative flow and inhibits your ability to move projects along.

Don’t pressure yourself to make things happen straight away either, as it’s little steps that get big projects done. And use small pockets of time wisely: I access both my ESI and STÖÖKI emails on my phones so I can action things even if I’m not at my desk — whether that’s because I’m on my way to a meeting or queuing for a drink in the canteen.

I’m at my most productive when I feel comfortable, so I always dress down and wear trainers. Listening to music helps me concentrate and I get into a good rhythm with UK hip hop or R&B.

I’ll use 15 minutes of my lunch break to work on my side projects — checking through urgent emails and making calls. Often I need a response quickly, so if I have someone’s number I’ll WhatsApp instead of emailing as it’s more efficient. I also make time to get some fresh air, by taking a walk and recharging my energy levels.

Out of the office, I structure some of my time around my other ventures. On Mondays it’s a Skype meeting with my STÖÖKI partners — we prep before the call and agree an agenda so that we maintain focus. On Tuesdays I meet with collaborators, then on Wednesdays I work through my to-do list.

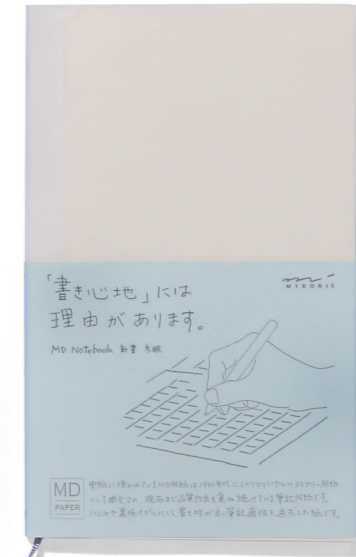
That doesn’t mean I don’t get time to relax. I try to switch off my devices at 9.30pm and plan at least two evenings a week where I don’t work to spend time with family and friends. And, I don’t burn the candle at both ends.

I pay attention to my body to figure out when I might need to reprioritise — it’s all dependent on my energy flow. Having a strong



support network really helps. I have a large community of people I can call on and my husband is emotionally supportive — there’s an emotional element in working on different things at once.

Being efficient during the day means I can sometimes benefit from an hour off in between jobs. Finishing at 4pm would give me the chance to try something new. I’ve always wanted to do a contemporary dance class at Danceworks — not only would it keep me fit, but as a form of creative expression, it would help with my creativity, too.”



Assess what actually has to be done



Nikki Armytage-Foy is a leadership coach and founder of international coaching business Electric Woman

How busy people like Bosola can be even more productive...

1 Get small tasks done in the morning

Having things hanging over you — emails which require a quick response — can be very distracting and inhibit productivity. Block out half an hour of “efficiency time” first thing and whizz through them.

2 Set yourself a goal

It can be easy to get distracted when you need to write briefs or presentations.

Set yourself a goal, for example, one page written in half an hour. Once it’s filled you can go back and edit. You’ll be surprised how much of it is usable — and it beats staring at a blank screen.

3 Prioritise two tasks

Sometimes our schedules are such that we have to keep going. My advice is to stop and assess what actually has to be done. Limit it to two or three things, and once they’re complete, be strict and just stop.



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To learn more about working smarter, not harder, head to RedBull.co.uk/Productivity