

*SPECIAL REPORT*

# 10 Ways To Beat Work At Home Stress



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### About Tim Sales

After 11 years with the US Navy Underwater Bomb Squad Team, I answered an ad in the Washington Post that would change my life forever. This ad led me to the first and only Network Marketing Company I ever joined — and after just two years of working the business part-time I was making \$60,000 per month.

Five years later my income reached \$150,000 per month with 2,000+ new distributors joining my team each and every month. My distributor organization eventually grew to 56,000 people in 26 countries.



I decided to retire from active network marketing nearly ten years ago, but I still continue to receive a substantial passive income from my business. This ability to build passive income is one of the hallmarks of network marketing. Few opportunities can offer that and perhaps this is one of the reasons why you're reading this special report.

Out of my passion for teaching and training others to achieve success in MLM, I've created several sets of tools and programs to help you find prospects, invite them to learn about your opportunity, present that opportunity to them and ultimately train your new distributors to do the same.

These tools and programs are used by millions all over the world. My hope is that you will use these tools yourself. I am certain they can help you achieve your MLM goals and build a huge business – even if you're starting out part-time.

## 10 Ways To Beat Work-At-Home Stress

### Introduction

Working from home is sort of like Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities* – it can be the best of times, and it can be the worst of times. At the best of times, working from home while building your network marketing business is empowering, liberating, exciting and profitable. At the worst of times, working at home is anxiety-ridden, stifling, and stressful. Notice a common denominator?

It's the stress. Stress can – quite literally – kill you. Stress during the best of times and stress during the worst of times is still stress. Knowing how to recognize and be proactive in dealing with stress is an important part of a successful career path for any professional networker.

That's why this report was prepared – to address some of the greatest sources of stress for networkers who work from their home, and to share with you what you can do to alleviate, and learn from, your stress.

Whether you're anxious because you're struggling to establish yourself in your business, or you're stressed because you're so much in demand you're being pulled in too many directions, you'll find many tips in this report to make your life less stressful. After all, it's impossible to enjoy success – or your path to success – if you're constantly strung out, wringing your hands, and suffering from stress-related exhaustion or illness.

Take a deep breath, relax, and read through this material. Wherever you are in your business and professional life, you can make some adjustments to make your life better and to minimize stress.

### Section 1: Sources of Stress

When you work from home, stress is everywhere. It's in your success as you become more in demand, it's in your lack of success as you try to figure out how to make a go of your business. When you're stressed out, you become less effective as your energy is sapped away from your goals and diverted to fighting fires. If you could minimize these stressors, you'd be better able to focus on your long-term business goals.

There are many stress points that home-based networkers face:

1. You're stressed because you don't set priorities.
2. You're stressed because you don't manage your time efficiently.
3. You're stressed because a lot of what you do is outside your control.
4. You're stressed because you can't say no.
5. You're stressed because you don't set boundaries for your family.
6. You're stressed because you get sucked into the TV/e-mail/blog-reading trap.
7. You're stressed because you don't delegate.
8. You're stressed because you don't take care of yourself or your health.
9. You're stressed because you don't have a support system.

If you were to rate yourself on each point, you'd likely score higher on some than others. You may be a great delegator, but you're not so good at setting boundaries. Each of us has our own strengths and weaknesses, based on our experience and personality. Even if you answer "yes" to only one of these stress points, you may suffer from more anxiety than someone who has answered "yes" to numerous stressors. Each of us responds differently to outside pressures and stress.

Let's take a look at each one of these in greater detail, to see where some of your personal stress points are. We'll also take a look at how you can make adjustments and get on the road to increased productivity and a more enjoyable work life. The first stop? Taking a look at your priorities.

## Section 2: Set Priorities

If the basics of reading and writing are learning your ABCs, the basics of work-at-home success are setting your priorities. If you don't have a set of priorities by which to guide your business, your day, and your week, you are at the mercy of circumstance. Happenstance is for people who play the lottery; not for entrepreneurs.



You sit down at the computer to begin work on your to-do list, and the emails start coming in. Instead of having a way to rate the importance and urgency of each request and item on your list, you just respond to whatever is front and center – which is usually whatever email or phone call has come in most recently.

Then the end of the day comes, and you still have as many items on your to-do list as you started with. The stress starts to mount as your business goals recede farther and farther into the distance.

So what's the solution? Setting priorities. When you have a list of goals and priorities, you have a map for your future.

Set one or two business objectives each month and a main goal for the year. Obviously, your main goals when working your network marketing business are going to be gaining new product customers and recruiting new distributors to your team. These 2 activities: product sales and recruiting – should be your main goals every month. Set a reasonable and obtainable goal for both of these and plan to focus your time on tasks related to achieving them.

Here's a great process for breaking down a large objective into daily, weekly, and monthly priorities:

- Start with your yearly objective.
- Ask yourself, what would have to happen this month to achieve this objective?
- What would have to happen this week?
- What would have to happen today?

Once you have defined what needs to happen each day, week, month, and quarter, put those items on your calendar and to-do list with a big star next to them. Now you know what has to be completed every day before you start answering phone calls or emails.

No matter what the rest of the day brings, you know you have completed the things that will most move your business forward.

To learn more about setting and reaching goals, make sure check out Tim Sales' "Non-Fluff Goal Training" CD. <http://www.firstclassmlmtools.com/Non-Fluff-Goal-Training-CD--P23.aspx>

This small routine will help reduce your stress because you'll no longer lie in bed, wondering what the heck you accomplished that day. Instead, you will have taken concrete steps towards achieving your most important goals.

Now that you have your priorities set for each day, week, month, and quarter, how will you know if all that work will fit into your schedule? Let's take a look at how you can manage those fleeting 24 hours we all have to work within.



## Section 3: Manage Time Effectively

Setting your priorities and sticking to them is a great step towards reducing your stress, but it won't help much if you don't have time to finish all the other menial tasks that are involved in running an at-home network marketing business. Items like paperwork, filing, ordering ink for your printer, putting product information together, assembling training packs, and a million other little things that pile up over time still need to be done.

Let's look at five methods to help you keep better track of where your time goes, and keep on top of your schedule:

### Write everything down



Famous productivity expert David Allen, author of *Get It Done*, recommends getting your to-dos out of your brain and onto paper. This method really does work! When you're feeling overwhelmed, one of the greatest ways to de-stress is to sit down and write out everything you have to do that's got your head spinning. Whether those are big projects, little five-minute tasks, or anything, put it all on paper. When you see your thoughts on paper, you can then begin sorting and prioritizing (see Section 2 above).

### Keep track of how long a task takes you

It's a common psychological trick we play on ourselves - we overestimate how long it takes to complete unpleasant tasks, and we underestimate how long we spend on pleasant items. Get real by writing down the actual time it takes you to do things like file papers, log receipts, and any other tedious task. Then you have a concrete estimate the next time you think, "Oh, that's going to take all day!"

### Minimize interruptions

Turn off your email alert noise, put your phone ringer on mute, and clear your desktop before you jump into a task that requires concentration. Fewer interruptions and

distractions allow you to get in that concentrating “sweet spot” where you're humming along and working at a pleasant clip. That means you'll get your work done faster and be less stressed. Constant interruptions ultimately result in needing to re-prioritize your day, over and over and over again. You can see how the stress you feel just keeps escalating without minimizing the interruptions each day.

### **Break down large projects**

Big projects can be overwhelming. When faced with a large project, break it up into tasks you can complete in one sitting, preferably in under 20 minutes. That way, instead of looking for a free afternoon to tackle the project all at once (which you'll never get!), you just need to squeeze in 20 minutes here and there until the project is completed.

### **Take advantage of “lost” time**

Our days are full of five minute breaks between activities. We call these breaks “dead” time. You may be sitting in car-line at your child's school, or in line at the pharmacy, or even waiting for a pot of water to boil. There you are, simply waiting for something to happen. Keep a notebook with a running list of tasks that can be completed in 5 minutes or less. Schedule an appointment, call a friend to set up a lunch date, clean out your voice mail – anything that you know you need to do but don't get around to doing.

Now when you have “dead” time, glance down at your notebook with the list of 5 minute tasks and start at the top. Work your way down the list every time you find yourself with a few free minutes. You'll be amazed at how much you accomplish when you do this!

The power of time management can have you thinking you can do it all now! However, there are still things beyond your control. Yes, you can do a lot, but you can't do it all. Life sometimes gets in the way, even of the most on-task entrepreneur. Let's take a look now at how to recover from situations beyond your control.

## Section 4: Get Back in Control

If you think back over the most stressful times in your life – illness for yourself or a family member, loss of a job, a death in the family – there's a common thread through all of these stressful times: Lack of control.

Because home-based entrepreneurs see themselves as pioneers, we pride ourselves on our take-charge attitudes and get-it-done approach to life. Therefore, not being in charge of what's happening can cause a great deal of anxiety. You want to fix things, now. When you can't fix things, or don't know how to fix things, you might become very stressed and even freak out a bit.

When faced with a situation where you're not in control, here are three ways you can maintain an even keel, despite the foul weather:

### Find something you CAN control

When the world is spinning away from you, it can feel like there's nothing you can control. Not true! In any situation, there's SOMETHING you can control. Let's say your most promising prospect announces they're having financial difficulties. You may think you are at the whim of their financial ups-and-downs, but you can start regaining a feeling of control by searching out other prospects to replace this financially strapped prospect if they decide they can't get started in business with you right now. You are NOT helpless, and the sooner you find something to control, the sooner you'll feel less anxious about the future.



### Focus on the moment

Stress comes when we stop focusing on the here and now and start ruminating over the horrible things we wish hadn't happened yesterday, or about the horrible things we fear will happen tomorrow. If we ground ourselves in the present moment, we find we're still alive, still functioning, and still able to make decisions. Once we lose sight of that fact, though, the stress seeps in. When your thoughts start spinning out of control,

gently reel them back in. Take a few deep breaths, remind yourself that you are okay, right now, and then find something productive to do in this moment to protect against what you fear.

This may be difficult for some people to do because they honestly don't believe they can control their thoughts. It's true that when our mind is spinning out of control, thoughts do seem to just keep popping into your head. One method health professionals use to quiet discomforted patients is with visualization and repeating positive phrases. This actually does help to quiet the mind so you can gain control, once again, of your thought processes. Once you have quieted your mind, you can choose to focus on the here and now and take back control.

### **Remind yourself of your expertise and experience**

Stress also comes when we are afraid we can't handle the horrific scenarios we've created for ourselves when we doubt our competence. If our prospect says no, then what? If the economy tanks further, then what? If our company crashes, then what? If we knew we'd be okay in the future because we have the expertise to handle these situations, the stress about the future would be a thing of the past.

One tip to combat that stress is to remind yourself of all the tough circumstances you've already navigated through successfully. Think about situations you went through in the past and how you handled them. While past success is no guarantee of future performance, as they say in the stock market, it still is a pretty good indication of how things will turn out.

## Section 5: Just Say No

Sometimes the toughest thing to say is no. Whether it's a question from a team member, some gossip from someone in your Upline, or a prospect who keeps sucking up your time without making a decision to move forward. When you work for yourself – especially in the early days – you're not always sure where that next check is coming from. And even when the customer roster is full this month, you can't be positive the same will be true next month or the month after, so you tend to take every call and request that comes your way. This often leaves you less time to focus on prospecting and customer gathering activities.

The problem is, this causes stress and burnout – and if you're not being productive and getting results, all the wasted time can cause spouses and families to get a tad angry! You're exchanging one stress point (finances) for another (overwork and family pressure). There is a solution, although you're not going to like it. Set a limit and stick to it.

Decide how many team members you'll speak with each day. Decide how many hours a week you will devote to training. Determine how many phone calls you'll make to that prospect who just can't make up his mind...and stick to it. That's it – no more.

As your networking business gets larger and your schedule gets busier, one of the best ways to keep your work commitments at a tolerable level is to make a commitment to your family. You can start with committing to attending every softball game, every



Scout meeting, and every recital. You can promise dinner certain evenings, or read a book chapter some nights to your children. This will make you accountable to your own scheduled work day. You may feel a momentary pang of regret or anxiety when you tell a team member "no" or "wait." However, it will soon fade when you realize how much less stressed you are on a day-to-day basis, and how much happier your home life is!

When you've set boundaries on your time, you have now become the boss of your time. But does your family know this? There you are sitting at your desk in your home office, available to everyone – kids, spouse, neighbors, friends – at a moments notice.

You wanted to work at home so you COULD be available to your family, but what are the limits? We'll explore the dichotomy of working at home in order to enjoy the flexibility and availability to the ones you love, and working at home in order to create a successful business which requires focused time away from distractions.

## Section 6: Set Boundaries for Family

One of your favorite parts of working from home might be that you don't have an office outside your house to go to. Yet the same thing might be one of the most stressful parts of working from home too!

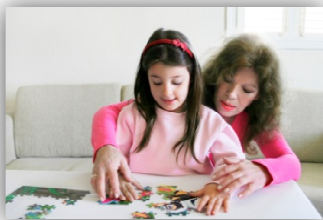
While it's great to work in your shorts, taking a break when you need to, and being able to fix a favorite snack, working from home can be very stressful when your family doesn't realize that you are not available during working hours. When your family wants you to stop working to deliver forgotten items, wait for the cable man, or let the kids play games on your laptop, it can seem a little disrespectful.

However, with proper training, your family will happily (most of the time) adhere to your work rules, if you follow these suggestions:

### **Make the rules concrete**

Set specific guidelines. These can be simple to understand guidelines like "You may not come in my office when the door is closed" which even the youngest children can understand. You can set a more specific schedule for older children such as "I am not available between 10-2, Monday through Friday." The more specific your rules, the more readily everyone will abide by them.

### **Reward them for compliance**



Bribery works! In extreme cases, you might readily agree to play a despised board game, take the gang for ice cream, or let someone else control the TV remote in exchange for an hour of uninterrupted work time. Don't be afraid to reward your family for a job well done. If you have a specific project that you need to get done, remind your family of the rules, and let them know that you appreciate their understanding by giving them something to look forward to. Help them be a success, too!

### **Refuse to break the code**

No means no, not maybe. If you give in to whining or pleading, you're only training your kids (or spouse) to whine and plead. Not a good thing. Before you give in, ask yourself what you're training your family to believe about your ability to set limits. Then act accordingly. Teaching children to respect the rules, your rules, is a lesson for life.

### **Hold up your side of the bargain**

If you tell the kids you'll be off the computer at 5 PM, then you'd better be off by 5:01. Pushing out the timeline or going back on your agreement is no good. This only sets the stage for an argument. The next time you insist on a specific rule regarding your office time, you will have much less leverage as you try to defend your position. Your word is your bond – keep it.

### **Be available when you're off the clock**

If you want your family to respect your work time and space, then you need to respect family time. No checking the BlackBerry at the dinner table. No taking business calls in the middle of Junior's school play. No sneaking off to your computer to send a few emails when the rest of the family is gathered around the TV. When you're "away" from the office, make sure you're really away. You set the rules – you need to follow them, too.



## Section 7: Ward Off the Time Vampires

“Time vampires” are those seemingly harmless pastimes that end up sucking the life and time right out of your day. You sit down to read a few posts in an online forum, and before you know it an hour of time that could have been spent making prospecting calls has been lost.

Not only will these black holes of time cause you stress because you're wasting time, you will also be kicking yourself in the rear end because you'll be filled with regrets. You'll be wondering how you could have been so stupid to sit at the computer, reading about urban legends for the past three hours instead of doing something productive.

Here are some suggestions for avoiding the time vampires:



### Set a timer

If you want to take a quick 10-minute break in the midst of your prospecting calls to see what's going on at ESPN.com, that's fine. Grab the kitchen timer, set it for 10 minutes, and wait at the Yankees until the timer goes off. Then say goodbye to Derek Jeter and get back to work. The same goes for Facebook and Twitter. Go ahead and check in, but set your timer. It's amazing how fast a half hour will go by when you're enjoying yourself.

### Schedule down time

Let's say you have to go in to have your gall bladder removed. Would you rather be operated on by the emergency room doctor who's been on the clock for 32 hours straight, or by the one who just returned from a nice, 30-minute lunch in the doctors' lounge? Schedule down-time for yourself so you can have a little non-work fun in your day. It'll refresh you for the tasks ahead. When you don't allow time for a little escape now and then, you'll end up crashing and burning sometime later into an unhealthy lapse of work. Since working your business every day is extremely important, it's essential that you take small breaks here and there to recharge and avoid burnout.

### **Multi-Task**

Most of the time, it's most efficient to focus on one thing at a time while you're trying to be productive. But some tasks are just born for multitasking. Listen to training CD's or conference calls while on the treadmill. Check your email while at your daughter's gym class. Instead of sitting on your behind on the phone with your sister, go for a walk while you chat. Layer activities the way you try to layer profits in your business.

### **Write down what you do**

It's been said that you can't improve what you don't measure. If you really want to reduce the number of times you check email during the day, or the amount of time you spend on social media sites, write it down. A simple notation in your calendar is all it takes, then each day try to beat your best. While you may have some backsliding moments, over time you'll notice a positive trajectory when you can clearly see the time you've wasted.

Even after you've reined in all your time wasters, there may be more you can do to streamline your schedule. Perhaps there are things you shouldn't be doing at all? Let's take a look at the ways you need to let go and start delegating tasks.

## Section 8: Delegate

Jack Welch didn't empty the trash cans at GE. Steve Jobs doesn't answer all of Apple's emails. And I bet Meg Whitman never wrote a single piece of code for eBay. Instead, these high-flying execs knew that in order to take their companies to the top, they needed to delegate and outsource.

Put simply, if you try to do it all yourself, your head is going to explode. Why not accept that fact upfront and consistently focus on the parts of your business where you bring the greatest value?

Though delegating will save you tons of stress in the long term, in the short term it can be a little anxiety-producing. Here are some tips if you're just starting down the delegation path:



### **Choose time limited tasks**

The best jobs to start delegating are those that have a concrete beginning and end. It's much easier to ask someone to put training packs together than it is to ask them to "improve your inventory program." Start with tasks that you could easily create a checklist for and that have a start-to-finish quality.

### **Set measurable goals**

Define what "completion" looks like for you, and share that picture with the person to which you've chosen to delegate the task. For example, say "When you're done, all the training packs should have Form A, Form B, and Form C in this order." The more specific you are in the end result you desire, the more likely it is that your helper will do a satisfactory job.

### **Focus on the outcome, not on the process**

One of the biggest mistakes business owners make when they delegate is they micromanage the process. Every step of the way, they're looking over the helper's shoulder, making sure everything is done "right." This is going to cause multiple

problems and is just so WRONG. Worry less about HOW the work is getting done and focus on the end result. You're not saving time if you're managing every step of the process. Remember, you're trying to make less work for yourself, not more. Trust your judgment – you chose someone you could depend on, so now depend on them.

### **Focus on “good enough” not “perfection”**

This is a tough one for work-at-home entrepreneurs, who tend to be of the “If you want something done right, you've got to do it yourself,” school of thought. To save yourself time and stress, you've got to let go of that expectation. Some jobs don't need to be done perfectly – it's fine if it's just done at all!

### **Evaluate the efforts and fine tune as necessary**

There's always room for improvement – on both sides! Ask your helper where you could have done a more effective job of managing the process, and be open to suggestions. Then if you see some ways to make the process more effective, suggest them in a constructive manner. Make sure your review of the process is OUTCOME related, not PROCESS related. You're worried about the bottom line here!

Now that you've gotten over the fact that you can't do it all and are delegating some tasks, you've got a few minutes to breathe deep and take a look at yourself. Have you been eating right and exercising? Are you sleeping well? Do you take any time at all for yourself? Perhaps you never thought you had the time to take care of yourself. Maybe you never thought it was important to take care of yourself.

That's all going to change. You have a lot to lose if you don't take care of YOU first and foremost. Let's explore the reasons why and the ways you can start on a path to better overall health and fitness.

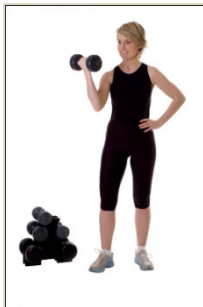
## Section 9: Take Care of You

Your business can be operating like a well-oiled machine, but if you're not taking care of yourself, you're going to be stressed out. It's ironic that when things are going really well, we typically end up spending MORE hours working because we're just having so much fun and we're seeing all the fantastic benefits of hard work.

To be a healthy person, you need to be a well-rounded person. Here are a handful of tips to make sure your business isn't taking over your life at the expense of your health and well-being:

### Get a hobby

You will probably laugh at this, thinking you don't have time for a hobby. But the truth is, you don't have time NOT to have a hobby! Whether it's knitting, canoeing, genealogy, cooking, or playing golf, you need something that will provide balance to your life. There will be days when the business side of things isn't going so well, and you will need an escape. Get a hobby before you're forced to find one.



### Get physical

You've heard it before and you'll hear it again - regular exercise reduces anxiety, combats obesity, and makes you a nicer person to be around. If you are sitting on your rear in front of the computer most of the day, you have to find some way to move your body on a regular basis. It can be as simple as a 15 minute walk first thing in the morning, or as intense as a 2 hour gym workout. Just choose one and do it.

### Get some rest

It's very easy to find yourself staying up way too late, finishing one last work project or answering one more email. On an occasional basis, this is no big deal. But burn the midnight oil night after night after night, and you're frying yourself. Not only does sleep

deprivation make you anxious, edgy and unable think clearly, it also makes it harder for you to work at peak efficiency. Set a bedtime, and stick to it.

### **Connect**

Connecting with those around you is critical to minimizing your stress. Show your family and friends how important they are to you NOW by giving them their rightful share of your time. The bonus? It will calm your anxiety when you know you're investing time where it's going to matter most throughout your lifetime.

Okay, now that you've scheduled your work day, delegated some of your work load, and are taking time out to take care of your health, you are feeling a need to share your thoughts with people you respect. You need someone, or a group of people, to connect with. Here's where the reward is at the end of each day – camaraderie, respect, and even love. Let's look at some of your options when you want to connect with the world outside of your home office.

## Section 10: Create a Support System

Support systems are a “safe spot” where you can let it all hang out and not worry about being judged, criticized, or taken advantage of. Just by their very existence, supportive friends and mentors help us deal with the stress in our lives.

If you're not lucky enough to have that kind of relationship right now, don't worry. There are places that offer support for you from people who know your struggles and want to relish in your successes. Here are a few suggestions of where you might go to find what you need to prop you up when you need it:

### Online forums

Find an online discussion forum or message board for work-at-home entrepreneurs. There are literally hundreds to choose from! While these groups often refer business to each other, their biggest benefit, in my opinion, is the support they provide. It's impossible to feel left on your own when there are so many people on these forums to cheer you on.

### A coach or mentor or your upline



Finding a coach, mentor or successful Upline member who is several steps ahead of you on the journey to business success can be one of the best moves you ever make. Though their main goal is to provide business guidance, the good ones are also a great source of support and motivation. They know the ups and downs of the work-at-home entrepreneur, and can tell you if what you're experiencing is just normal growing pains, or something else. Best of all, they can help you devise a plan to deal with the stress you're feeling.

### **Family**

Don't overlook your family as a source of support. If you tell your spouse or loved one you just need a non-judgmental ear to hear you work through some issues out loud, you'll likely find that he or she is more than willing to listen. Give your family a chance to learn as you learn. You didn't know what to expect when you started down this venture, and neither did they. Include them in your learning curve. Then you'll have a family that feels a part of your process and will be more than willing to support you.

### **Real face-to-face friends**

When you work from home, you can get locked to your desk and find that most of your closest friends live inside your computer or on the phone! That's just fine, as these relationships are fulfilling, supportive, and "real" all on their own. But there's also something to be said for meeting a friend for a cup of coffee and some real live conversation. We need interpersonal interaction of the face-to-face kind, with the give-and-take conversation patterns that we humans are familiar with. The start-and-stop, ebb-and-flow, of our thoughts and opinions in a real live conversation. Don't limit your contact with the world to Facebook, Twitter, and email. Connect with your "real-world" friends regularly.



## Conclusion

Stress is a fact of life, particularly for work-at-home entrepreneurs who, because we're sometimes blazing new and unfamiliar territory, tend to shoulder more burden than others.

We like to be in control, we like to be productive, and we like to do things on our own. While these are all admirable qualities, when taken to the extreme, they can end up costing us in terms of sleepless nights, stress-ridden days, and lost efficiency.

Hopefully after reading this report, you see that while stress may be unavoidable, there are things you can do to help mitigate its detrimental effects. Stress is unavoidable in the work-at-home life - but it doesn't have to overwhelm you.

Use these tips and suggestions to make your home-based business the best it can possibly be!