

# IN THE NEWS

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## **Leave the Office Earlier Day Aims to Cap Workday at Eight Hours** *Annual National Event Challenges Workers to Get Work Done in Less Time*

Highlands Ranch, CO (March 2008) – Monday, June 2<sup>nd</sup> is the fourth annual National Leave the Office Earlier Day. The day’s creator, [Laura Stack, MBA, CSP](#), is a bestselling author and a leading authority on productivity and workplace issues. Her latest book is *The Exhaustion Cure* (Broadway Books, 2008), and she is the creator of The Productivity Pro® planner by Day-Timers®. The annual event, which is officially listed in Chase’s Calendar of Events, is intended to focus workers on improving their personal productivity and asks them to commit to working no more than eight hours on that day.

“The eight-hour workday remains a myth to many working Americans,” says Stack. “But by implementing some simple strategies and tactics, even the most overworked and overstressed people can be more productive and shorten their workday and feel good about it.” Through focused productivity, workers can accomplish the results they need in less time, leave the office earlier, and get home to their lives.

Stack notes the day is not about playing hooky or ditching work sooner. “Leave the Office Earlier Day is an opportunity for people to focus on changing work patterns, adjusting priorities, and to discover how much more productive they can be in an eight-hour workday,” she says.

To prepare workers to only work eight hours on the holiday, Stack has created a free 10-day eCourse to educate people on how to tighten efficiency and get results in less time. Participants can register at <http://www.TheProductivityPro.com/leave.html>. Day-Timers® ([www.daytimer.com](http://www.daytimer.com)) has also donated several prizes for a few lucky participants.

To encourage news writers and editors to alert their audiences to this timely event, Stack has written an article titled, “How to Look Like a Workaholic in a 40-Hour Week” (attached). Please visit the Media Room at [www.TheProductivityPro.com](http://www.TheProductivityPro.com) for articles and tip sheets available for reprint with attribution.

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## How to Look Like a Workaholic in a 40-Hour Workweek

In a perfect world, we would be judged solely on our results, regardless of what others thought about *how* or *when* we got our work done. The good news is that this type of “results only” mentality is catching on. Some companies and managers are beginning to realize that there are better ways to manage performance than by counting hours at the office. Organizations are responding to the changing needs of workers everywhere by offering arrangements such as flex-time and telecommuting.

The bad news is that, like it or not, corporate mentality is what it is. The 40-hour week is not just an expectation; it’s the minimum, especially for salaried professionals. Self-proclaimed workaholics advertise their twelve hour days like a badge of honor and wouldn’t be caught dead leaving the office before 6:30.

Just because it’s the norm doesn’t make it right. Ready to take a stand? You don’t have to defy your boss and coworkers in a dramatic five o’clock showdown. Here are some practical ideas that can help you on your way to regaining control over your time.

**Workaholics don’t get ahead.** There will always be work that needs to be done. There will always be more to be done than there is time to do it. That’s why the classic workaholic will never get ahead. As they work to accomplish more and more, their task list will continue to grow. At the same time, as they become tired, stressed, and overextended, the quality of their work will suffer.

Frankly, the workaholic’s energies would be better spent finding ways to get more out of a forty-hour week than by burning the midnight oil five (or six, or seven) nights a week

**Get noticed in eight hours.** Unfortunately, workaholics exist for a reason. They tend to be well-respected for their efforts and praised for their dedication to their jobs. But that doesn’t mean that you need to smash the 50-hour barrier every week in order to command the recognition and respect that you deserve. This is where productivity comes in. When most people talk about workaholics, the discussion usually revolves around how much *time* they spend working. It is rare to get a clear idea of just how much these people accomplish in a given day.

Anybody can spend a day keeping busy. It takes real commitment to remain actively *productive* during working hours. Just keep in mind that real productivity pays off, big time. You don’t want to be noticed because you log a lot of hours. You want to be noticed for what you accomplish. And if you really are putting forth the effort necessary to milk your 40-hour week for all it’s worth, your stellar results will not go unnoticed.

**The early bird gets...a raw deal.** Let's say you work from eight until four while your boss works from ten until six. Which one of you is going to get noticed? Your ten to six boss can work the same amount of hours but still look like she's putting in extra hours at the end of the day. And if your boss works an extra hour or two, she's walking out of the building while the sun sets—another corporate rock star.

In general, workers tell me that staying late gets noticed and arriving early tends not to be. If you are the type that likes getting to the office first thing in the morning and heading out an hour or two before the crowd, it might take some attention to detail to make sure that you don't end up being penalized for having an early riser's schedule. Just make sure that your coworkers realize that while they are still at home in a bathrobe, you are at your desk, getting a head start on your day.

Handle your correspondence first thing in the morning. Your e-mail time-stamp might be the only way someone realizes that you don't just cut out in the late afternoon because you feel like it. When you leave early, you've earned it. Those that leave the office at six or seven at night will also be sure to notice that you have gotten back to them with an answer to their question before they've even managed to sit down at their desk the following day.

**Get out the door on time.** Make a commitment, even if it is only to yourself. Maybe you have to pick up the kids. Maybe you just have a standing early-evening date with the gym. Whatever it is, a regularly scheduled post-work obligation can do wonders for getting you out of the office at a reasonable hour. Block off the last half-hour of your schedule and don't hesitate to inform your coworkers when it's time for you to be on your way.

**Have coworkers abide by your schedule.** You shouldn't expect others to come and go at the same time you do. Generally, their schedule is their prerogative. You do, however, have the right to make sure that their schedule doesn't interfere with your ability to get work done. Make it clear that you expect to be out the door at a certain time each day, and stick to it. If you need a report in your hands by the end of the day, make sure that everyone knows that you mean the end of *your* day, not theirs.

**Go the extra mile.** Remember, all of this doesn't mean that we should be petty about watching the clock and focus only on making sure we're in the parking lot by 5:03. We've pretty well established that we don't want to make it a habit, but sometimes it is appropriate to put in a long day or week. It shouldn't become your standard mode of operation, but being able to come through in a pinch is a major asset in the business world. Valuing your time is a good thing, but if the demands of the job call for being a little late for dinner every once in a while, it is okay to step up to the plate. Just make sure that it's the exception, not the rule.

## About Laura Stack, MBA, CSP

© 2008 Laura Stack. Laura Stack is a personal productivity expert, author, and professional speaker who helps busy workers Leave the Office Earlier® with Maximum Results in Minimum Time™. She is the president of The Productivity Pro®, Inc., a time management training firm specializing in productivity improvement in high-stress organizations. Since 1992, Laura has presented keynotes and seminars on improving output, lowering stress, and saving time in today's workplaces. She is the bestselling author of the books *Find More Time* (2006) and *Leave the Office Earlier* (2004). Her newest productivity book, *The Exhaustion Cure* (Broadway Books), hits bookstores in May 2008. Laura is a spokesperson for Microsoft, 3M, and Day-Timers®, Inc and has been featured on the CBS Early Show, CNN, and the New York Times. Her clients include Cisco Systems, Sunoco, KPMG, Nationwide, and 3M. To have Laura speak at your next event, call 303-471-7401. Visit [www.TheProductivityPro.com](http://www.TheProductivityPro.com) to sign up for her free monthly productivity newsletter.