

A white plate filled with fresh raspberries sits on a light-colored wooden surface. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent red filter. The raspberries are vibrant red and have a textured, bumpy appearance. The wooden surface shows natural grain patterns.

Productive Insights Presents

# 7 Reasons Time-Boxing Is Essential To Real Productivity

One of the biggest challenges with implementing time boxing is the fact that it means you have to accept that you can't get everything done on your to-do list.

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# 017. 7 Reasons Time-Boxing Is Essential To Real Productivity



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## What is time-boxing?

Time-boxing is the process of going to a calendar and creating separate appointments for each task that you estimate will take 15 minutes or more.



## 7 Reasons why time-boxing is important when it comes to productivity:

1. **It sets realistic time projections for your tasks.** You don't try and cram too many tasks into your day if you're forced to allocate time to each of them.
2. **Because you have to allocate specific time slots for your tasks, you are now restricted to a reasonable amount of tasks as opposed to an overwhelming to-do list that is likely to just paralyse you.** So this means you're more likely to be more selective with the tasks that you assign to yourself. You're more likely to do things that will have the biggest impact for the least effort. This is also known as the 80/20 rule, initially coined by an economist called Vilfredo Pareto. Essentially, the rule states that 80% of your results come from 20% of your efforts. So it makes sense to first work on that 20% of tasks that will yield 80% of your results.
3. **Time-boxing also allows you to allocate the high- energy tasks to the time of the day when you're most productive.** For example, I find tackling tasks that involve a lot of deep thinking to the early part of the day when my mind is fresh and most receptive. I also tend to allocate writing to the early hours of my day for the same reason. Most administrative tasks like responding to emails or cleaning up my workspace are best done towards the evening. I try and schedule my meetings and phone calls to later in the day as well.
4. **Your work in a corporate environment meetings can be the biggest enemy to your productivity. Time-boxing solves this problem beautifully.** By allocating tasks as calendar appointments, people are less likely to book you out in senseless meetings that don't yield results.
5. **Setting aside specific time-slots for tasks tends to hold you more accountable and increases your focus.** When you know you have a finite period of time to complete a certain task, you are more likely to immerse

yourself completely in that task for that finite period.

6. **Time-boxing is a fantastic way to tackle procrastination.** When you have a task that seems really large and overwhelming, it's very easy to keep putting it off. But if you allocate a specified amount of time to that overwhelming task, even if it is for a small portion of the task after which you know you will be taking a break or moving on to something else, you're far less likely to procrastinate.
7. **Time-boxing works beautifully with the Pomodoro technique** which I've covered in some detail in an earlier blog post on [productiveinsights.com](http://productiveinsights.com). Essentially, the Pomodoro technique in 25-minute increments followed by a 3 to 5-minute break.

### **How to get started with time-boxing:**

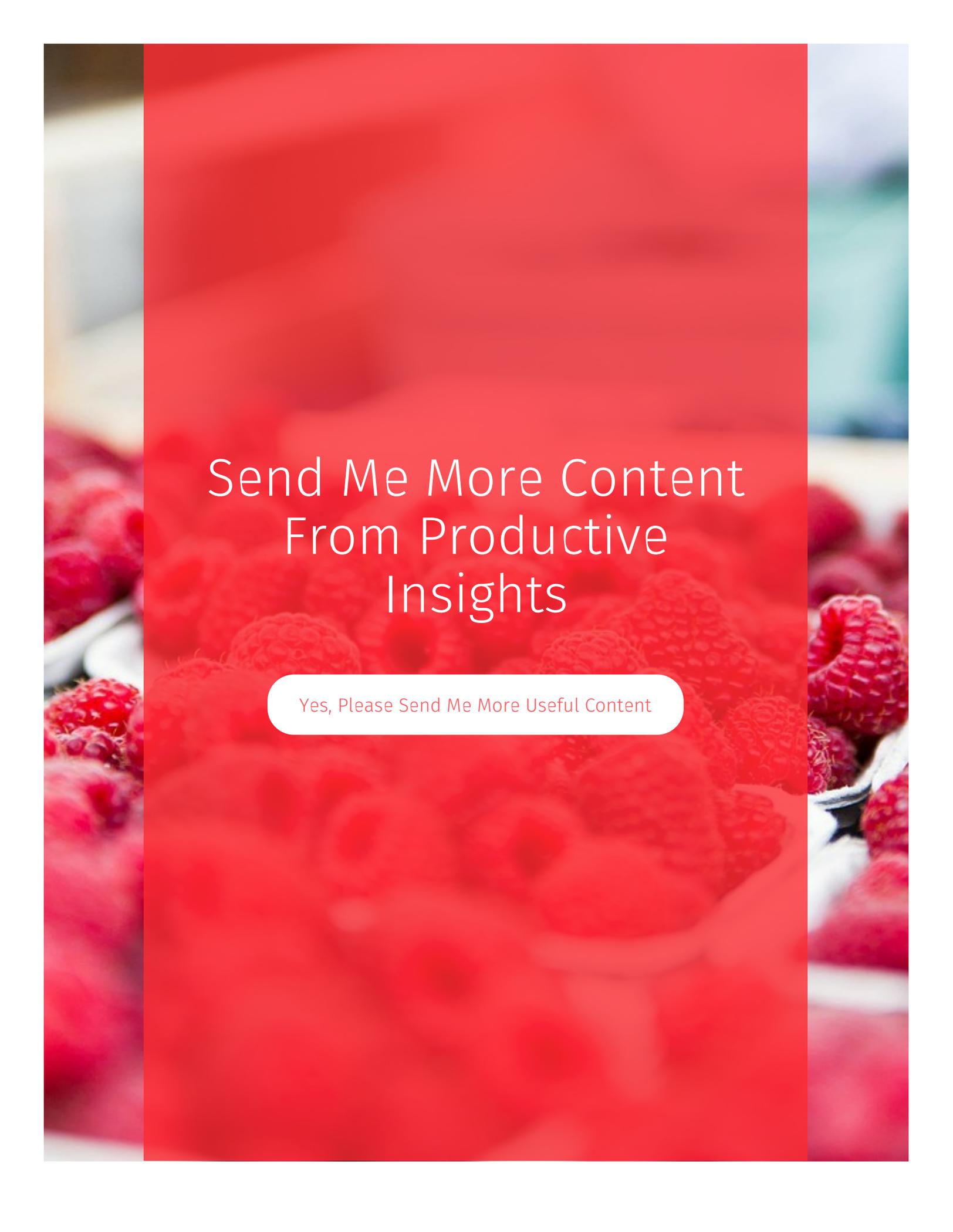
- Go to your task list and select the most important task/s for the day using the 80/20 principle. (It's okay to select just one task. In fact, I think that's preferable because it increases your focus. You can always come back and pick another task to put into your calendar.)
- Create a calendar appointment for the task in your calendar. A great tool to do this is the fantastical app available for the Mac or iPhone. You can also use a [Siri voice command](#) to set up a calendar meeting for your task.

### **Typical challenges with time-boxing:**

One of the biggest challenges with implementing time boxing is the fact that it means you have to accept that you can't get everything done on your to-do list. But I actually think this is a benefit in one of the most powerful aspects of time-boxing. It imposes a certain discipline that is essential to true productivity.

### **Action steps:**

So the action item for today is to go to your to-do list and decide on the task that is going to require the least effort and yield the maximum results as per the Pareto principle. Put this task in your calendar as a calendar appointment. Do everything in your power to complete the task within that time slot. Then go back to your list and use the same Pareto principle to select the next task and so on.

The background of the image is a close-up photograph of fresh raspberries. A semi-transparent red overlay covers the entire image, creating a uniform red background for the text.

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