

WHY DO YOU DO THAT?

I recently started consulting to a construction firm where part of the project involved a review of their job management efficiencies. In the first meeting, after thirty minutes we freed up three hours per week of administrative time.

Our discussion centred around how one of the employees was double checking emails on the three days she worked each week. I asked a most profound question... "why does she double check the emails?" The only apparent benefit was that when the others were stretched in their work capacity it helped ensure nothing was missed. It turned out that this was rarely needed and could be re-initiated only when required for short time frames. Three hours per week plus the interruptions and conversations that ensued, all from something that wasn't required on a continual basis. We stopped it immediately.

I have had other situations where the time freed up was the equivalent of a full time role. I saved another senior office administrator five hours per week, allowing her the freedom to be at home without working of an evening and being able to gradually refocus on the key responsibilities that the director required of her.

In your organisation, if you don't already, simply ask the "why do you do that?" question. In conjunction with this, quietly observe how others are going about their work. It's amazing what you can learn in a short amount of time and the efficiencies you gain through doing so.

Ray Hodge speaks and consults to businesses and organisations, a notable event being the Department of the Australian Prime Minister and Cabinet. His emphasis is on improving critical efficiencies to dramatically increase key results. He has coached and provided consulting services to leaders and teams for over 25 years.