

TIME MANAGEMENT

A Time Management System

Many people believe that they do not need to practice time management - that they are already "efficient." We often think that "doing lots of stuff" is our goal. But efficiency and effectiveness are not necessarily the same thing.

- Efficiency suggests that performance is proportionate to how much you can do in a given amount of time, that all tasks are generally of equal importance.
- Effectiveness suggests that performance is the achievement of goals and objectives.

$$\text{Efficiency} = \text{Productivity/Time}$$

$$\text{Effectiveness} = \text{Goal Achievement/Time}$$

Efficiency is quantity oriented while effectiveness is quality oriented. Efficiency does not encourage creativity, interpersonal relationship building, and thinking because these items are not readily measured by productivity.

I. Sharpening Your Awareness of Time

A. Consider time as money and invest it wisely.

B. Set A, B, C priorities and follow them through.

A - Greatest importance: Things requiring immediate action and that contribute directly to achieving your goals.

B - Medium importance: Things on which action can be deferred; they contribute but are not essential.

C - Least importance: Things which may not require action at all; they contribute little or nothing to achieving your goals.

C. Divide time and tasks into manageable parts and conquer each part in turn.

A's should be acted upon promptly

B's may be deferred or even discarded

C's should be promptly forgotten.

D. Ask and answer the question: "What is the best use of my time now?"

II. Setting Time Priorities That Stick

A. Assigning priorities based on value/time ratios

1. Realize that 80% of the value is usually in 20% of the time.
2. Analyze the economics of spending another hour on a particular item.
3. Start with the most profitable parts of the large projects.
4. Cut off non-productive parts of the large projects.

B. Arranging Schedules Around High Priority Tasks

1. Do first things first.
2. Give yourself enough time to concentrate on the high priority items.
3. Select the best time of the day for the type of work required.
4. Schedule appointments, where necessary, but always reserve at least one hour a day of uncommitted time.

C. Focusing on Objectives

1. Keep in mind your long-term goals even while doing the smallest tasks.
2. Keep a list of specific items to be done today.
3. Lose a few battles in order to win a war.
4. Get something done every five minutes.

III. Getting High Value Tasks Done Fast

A. Allocating Time Daily to Planning Time

1. Plan your work and work your plan.
2. Have a time budget and record how you actually spend your time compared to budget.
3. Find one technique each day which you can use to help you gain time.
4. Examine old habits for possible elimination or streamlining.

B. Using the Time Law for Better Time Use

1. The Time Law: "There is always enough time for the important things."
2. Strive to make your long-term goals vivid enough to guide your daily actions.
3. Examine actual time usage looking for time spent on trivial activities which could be avoided in the future.
4. Count all time as "on" and live twenty-four hours every day.

C. Squeezing Short Tasks Into Otherwise Wasted Moments

1. Give up forever all waiting time.
2. Keep handy a group of short tasks which can be done in between other activities.
3. Have in mind some question to explore in spare moments.
4. Recognize the value of time spent truly relaxing.

D. Finding New Ways to Delegate

1. Use your secretary to save you time.
2. Require complete work from your subordinates
3. Search for opportunities to "de-skill" tasks.
4. Avoid tendencies to "do it yourself"

E. Seeing Unavoidable Commitments as Opportunities

1. Less critical items provide safe opportunities to experiment.
2. Try increasing your work pace from time to time.
3. You can learn much about your management of time by observing how you handle routine activities.
4. Put the added meaning of self-improvement into doing the necessary tasks.

IV. Getting the Most Necessary tasks done

A. Keeping in Top of Paperwork

1. Handle each piece of paper only once.
2. Consider reports and paperwork as primarily for your benefit in achieving your priorities.
3. Use "keep the ball in the other person's court" as a way of keeping the paper moving meaningfully.
4. Ask yourself "If I were not to do this now, what would I do instead?", then decide based on the value to you of the two possibilities.

B. Preparing for Effective Meetings

1. Ask yourself, "Is a meeting really necessary?"
2. Clearly identify your purpose and objectives for the meeting.
3. State as one of the meeting objectives to reach the meeting purpose in the least time.
4. Always have a written agenda prepared and distributed in advance to give attendees time to prepare.

C. Using Meetings to Advantage

1. Relate all comments to the agenda and make sure that all agenda topics are covered at the meeting.
2. Give up some details to simplify the task of getting the significant items covered.
3. Expect something useful to come out of each meeting.
4. Print minutes indicating decisions and next steps for follow-up

D. Keeping Telephone and Personal Visits in Perspective

1. Quickly get to the purpose of the call.
2. Recognize that others may be taking your time so that they can relax.

3. When you have finished the original purpose recognize your need to return to the high priority tasks.
4. Try to arrange personal visits so that you have flexibility in terminating the discussion.

E. Handling Crises for Long-term Benefits

1. Recognize the value of occasional corrective action to save hours of perfectionist time wasting.
2. Observe the shortcuts used in handling the crisis for ideas on revising general routines for greater efficiencies.
3. Look for opportunities to accomplish long-term goals which have been waiting for an acceptable time.
4. A little advance planning can often eliminate a short-term crisis.

F. Anticipating and Handling Interruptions

1. Recognize that inevitably some of your time will be spent on activities outside of your control.
2. Once you have started to handle an interruption, use the basic principles of time management to minimize its duration.
3. Handle interruptions in a group whenever possible.
4. Avoid feeling guilty with the Time Law Corollary: "You always do what at the time you consider the most important thing."

G. Finding Channels of Easy Return to Priority

1. Concentrate on areas where you have control of your time.
2. Make a brief note to yourself of the next priority step before you service an interruption.
3. Always keep a reminder of the top priority tasks before you.
4. Concentrate on only one thing at a time.

V. Insuring A Successful Time Management Program

A. Dealing with Tendencies to Procrastinate

1. Do it now.
2. Try to find something very specific on the general task that you could do now.
3. Raise the value to you of having the task.
4. Set Deadlines with yourself and others.

B. Developing the Management Team's Support For Valuing Time

1. Ask others "What can I do to help you make better use of your time?"
2. Within your own area of responsibility, seek out efforts to modify controllable situations to save others' time.
3. When others take actions which help or hinder your efforts to make good use of time, share your thoughts with them in a constructive manner.
4. Do time feasibility studies before undertaking major time commitment.

D. Improving Time Utilization of Others in Your Organization

1. Adopt the ABC priority system as standard practice.
2. Periodically review each person's C's for possible elimination of unnecessary work.
3. Establish a project of spreading the word about better time management.

Five Time Planning Suggestions

1. Schedule Fixed Blocks of Time First

Start with class time or work time or any major block of time that is determined in advance. Then schedule essential daily activities like sleeping and eating. Be realistic about the time you need for these functions.

2. Include Time for Errands and Chores.

Don't ignore these necessary activities - they take time: Grocery shopping, paying bills, doing laundry, etc. These can destroy a tight schedule. Plan for them.

3. Schedule Time for Fun

Fun is important. Recreation deserves a place in your priorities both for physical and mental health.

4. Set Realistic Goals

Don't set yourself up for failure by scheduling too much work in too little time. Be realistic about what you can accomplish. On the other hand remember the importance of challenge.

5. Allow Flexibility in your schedule

Recognize that the unexpected can and will happen. Plan for the unexpected by giving yourself time for travel, for standing in line, etc. And remember that you have not failed as a time manager if you have to change your schedule. You fail when you ignore the schedule, not when you use it as a tool.