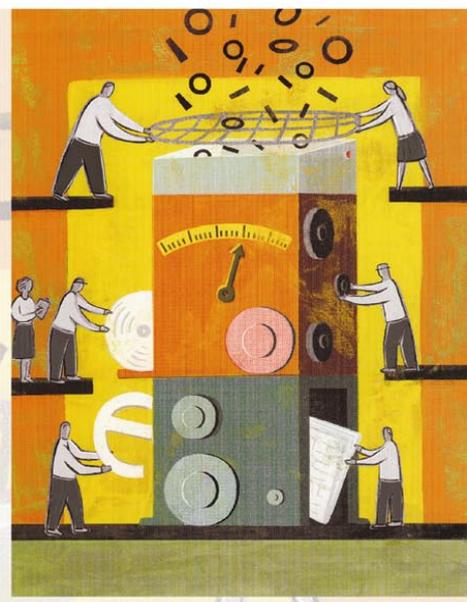


SOFT SKILLS FOR PUBLIC MANAGERS

Handbook on  
Time Management Skills



A photograph of a modern, multi-story white building with a grid-like window pattern. The building is surrounded by lush greenery, including trees and flowering bushes. A paved walkway leads towards the building. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds. The text 'CENTRE FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE' is visible on the building's facade.

## CENTRE FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE

### Handbook on Time Management Skills for Public Managers

#### **About CGG**

The Centre for Good Governance (CGG) was established by the Government of Andhra Pradesh (GoAP) in October 2001 to help it achieve the goal of 'Transforming Governance'. CGG supports the design and implementation of GoAP's Governance Reform Programme. CGG undertakes action research, renders professional advice to, and conducts Change Management and Management Development Programmes for Government Departments and public agencies to help them implement their reform agenda successfully.

#### **Acknowledgements**

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The team worked under the overall supervision of Dr. P. K. Mohanty, IAS, Director General & Executive Director, CGG.

# Handbook on Time Management Skills



## **Purpose of this Handbook**

The Handbooks Soft Skills developed by Centre for Good Governance are intended primarily for personnel in public administration. They offer an overview of some of the principal skills that are essential for effective performance.

They draw heavily upon existing literature and current practices in public and private organizations around the world and include numerous references and links to useful web resources.

They are not comprehensive 'guides' or 'how to' booklets. Rather, they incorporate the perspectives of experts in the specific domains whose knowledge, insights, advice and experiences prove handy in honing skills essential for strengthening the capacity for effectiveness of public service at all levels of government.

This handbook, *Time Management Skills*, focuses on how the personnel in the public administration can develop approaches and strategies that will enable them to effectively deal with time management problems in a variety of contexts.



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## 1 Introduction

### Understanding Time Management

“We all have time to either spend or waste and it is our decision what to do with it. But once passed, it is gone forever.”

- Bruce Lee (“Zen in the Martial Arts” by Joe Hyams)

Every individual on earth has the same amount of time - 60 seconds in a minute; 60 minutes in an hour; 1,440 minutes in a day; and 525,600 minutes in a year. While a vast majority of people confesses faltering to come to grips with it, extremely few can claim to have made the most of it. How is it that they have got it all done? It’s because they have managed a way to figure out how to manage their time effectively.

Time Management is more than just managing time. It is about controlling the use of the most valuable - and undervalued - resource. It is managing oneself in relation to time. It is setting priorities and taking charge of the situation and time utilization. It means changing those habits or activities that cause waste of time. It is being willing to adopt habits and methods to make maximum use of time.

With good time management skills one is in control of one’s time, stress and energy levels. One can maintain balance between one’s work and personal life. One finds enough flexibility to respond to surprises or new opportunities. It is not how much time one has, but rather the way one uses it. The bottom line is how well one manages time.

Internationally known authority on time management Dr. Alec Mackenzie in his book *The Time Trap* argues that the very idea of time management is a misnomer because one really cannot manage time in the way other resources can be managed: financial capital, physical capital, human capital, information and time. While each of the first four can be augmented, reduced, transferred or otherwise controlled, Time cannot be manipulated. Dr. Mackenzie contends that when it comes to time, one can only *manage oneself* in relation to it. One cannot control time as one can control other resources – one can only control how one *uses* it. In the world in which we live, time cannot be replaced or re-created. It is therefore not for us to choose whether we spend or save time but to choose only *how* we spend it.

## 2 Misconceptions about Time

There are several misconceptions which we all have about time. They affect everyone including those persons who may be considered quite successful and effective. Here are some of the misconceptions identified by Dr. Mackenzie:

- **Time management is simple - all it requires is common sense.** While it is true that the concept is simple, the self-discipline required to practice effective time management is not easy.
- **Work is best performed under pressure.** Psychological studies show this to be no more than an excuse for procrastination. One does not work well under pressure - only does the best one can under the circumstances. Pressure and challenge must not be confused. Lara's performance when the West Indies Team is in trouble has more to do with application and determination rather than pressure.
- **I use a diary, a to-do list and have a secretary to keep me organized.** One has to keep oneself organized - no one can do it for others. The trouble with the disorganized person is that he hardly has time to listen to his secretary or look at his diary.
- **I do not have the time.** The effective worker or manager often gets more work done in the earlier hours of the morning than most laggards get done in the whole day. He then no longer has to work against tight deadlines and under stress which contributes to heart problems and not unusually the ultimate reduction of time on this earth.
- **Time management might be good for some kinds of work but my job is creative.** Time management is not about routine: it is about self-discipline. Lack of discipline prevents one from being great instead of simply good.
- **Time management takes away the fun and freedom of spontaneity.** Is working under stress, forgetting appointments, making constant excuses and apologies to be fun? Would it not be much more fun if by better organization one had one or two more hours every day to spend with the family, to play games, read a good book, plan for tomorrow and the day and week after or just relax?

### 3 Symptoms of Poor Time Management

Poor time management shows up by way of one or a combination of typical perceptible symptoms. Managers would do well to look for and reflect on whether they are subject to any of those symptoms with a view to take necessary corrective actions.

The following are some of the indicators of poor time management:

- **Constant rushing** (e.g. between meetings or tasks)
- **Frequent delays** (e.g. in attending meetings, meeting deadlines)
- **Low productivity, energy and motivation** (e.g. 'I can't seem to get worked up about anything')
- **Frustration** (e.g. 'Oh, things just don't move ahead')
- **Impatience** (e.g. 'where the hell is that information I've asked him for?')
- **Chronic vacillation between alternatives** (e.g. 'whichever option I choose it is going to put me at a big disadvantage. I don't know which way to jump')
- **Difficulty setting and achieving goals** (e.g. 'I'm not sure what is expected of me')

#### Why do/will I have so little time ?

- |                                |                             |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| • Management by crisis         | • Paperwork                 |
| • Lack of Planning             | • Poor communication        |
| • Incomplete information       | • Poorly organized meetings |
| • Personal disorganization     | • Leaving tasks unfinished  |
| • Attempting too much          | • Inadequate controls       |
| • Inability to Say No          | • Lack of self-discipline   |
| • Responsibility unclear       | • Socializing               |
| • Ineffective delegation       | • Drop-in visitors          |
| • Inadequate staff & resources | • Telephone interruptions   |

## 4 The Eleven Time Thieves

Dr. Donald E. Wetmore (“Time Thieves: The 11 Biggest Time-wasters Revealed”) lists out the eleven ‘inconsiderate troupe’ of eleven thieves that gang up to steal some of the precious time away from productive use of managers.

**1. Poor Planning:** Failure to see the value of planning and getting impatient to get something done are the causes of poor planning. Absence of a plan of action is likely to trigger off a false start, resulting in unproductive time utilization on the critical path of the task being undertaken. Consequently, the managers might not find enough time for completing the task.

**2. Crisis Management:** Most often, crisis management is an offspring of lack of prioritization of tasks. As a result of the inability to distinguish between the urgent, the important and the unnecessary tasks, unimportant tasks are likely to get done first at the cost of important tasks. Consequently, the managers are not likely to find enough time to get around to the important things.

**3. Procrastination:** It is easy to put off tasks if they are not due right away. The trouble is, tasks pile up and can force managers to run into a time crunch later. Procrastination is generally triggered off by the fear of failure / success, perfectionism, wanting to do it all or incorrect priorities. It is a virtue to want to do a good job. But some people become so anxious about getting a job done perfectly that they never complete it. Managers should examine whether their efforts to get the job done perfectly are really improving things or preventing them from getting the job done.

**4. Interruptions:** Interruptions and distractions arise due to lack of planning, poor concentration and lack of control over environment. They are unnecessary thieves of a manager’s time and come in many forms – drop-in visitors, telephones, e-mails unscheduled meetings, poor communications and confused chain of authority etc. Managers should be less willing to automatically give away their time just because they demand it. They should learn to avoid distractions if they are to get work done. They should work in areas where they are less likely to be disturbed and tell people when they are busy and cannot be disturbed.

**5. Not Delegating:** Wanting-to-do-all by oneself is yet another thief that could let the managers lose control. They feel that employees can never do anything as well as they can. They fear that something will go wrong if someone else takes over a job. They lack time for long-range planning because they are bogged down in day-to-day operations.

**6. Unnecessary Meetings:** If a meeting is held without a specific agenda and nothing productive comes out of it, clearly that meeting was unnecessary. Obviously, such meetings are thieves as the time is wasted and things just do not get started.

**7. The “shuffling blues”:** Managers often waste much time because of disorganization. Keeping things that they need in a specific place, eliminating clutter, making sure that they have all the materials or information that they need before starting on the task and following a day-planner or schedule will help keep the ‘shuffling blues’ away at the work place.

**8. Poor Physical Setup:** Not having the things that the managers need frequently within easy reach and having a lot of the things that they seldom require close-by results in wastage of a lot of time, wearing out the carpet, retrieving what they frequently need. And of course, as they pass others they will often pull them aside to steal some of their time.

**9. Poor Networking:** Quality relationships with employees and others can be a substantial time-saver as they open doors for the managers with all kinds of opportunities. Failing to develop a good network base will cause them to waste time creating what they might have had through their network.

**10. Bad Attitude:** Nothing sinks a day more effectively than having a poor attitude. It causes the managers to dwell on the problems and not the solutions and makes it possible to throw the day away. When they are burdening others with their problems and complaints they are forfeiting their valuable time.

**11. Negative People:** Being surrounded by negative people could mean the managers are spending a lot of their time listening to them but getting nothing much or purposeful from them. Obviously, avoiding such people will help the managers to minimize wasted hours and get some of their productive time back.

**How much time do you spend each day on the following time stealers?**

- Watching TV
- Reading Newspapers / Magazines excessively
- Idle chat, gossip and telephonic talk
- Opening and sorting mail
- Returning telephone calls
- Meetings
- Paying bills
- Day-dreaming
- Fretting over personal problems
- Caught in traffic snarls
- Planning how to change things
- Waiting for things to happen
- Taking naps
- Eating snacks between meals
- Drinking
- Smoking
- Shopping
- Wagering money

## 5 Saboteur Time Styles

The other aspect is self-inflicted thieves – ‘saboteur time styles’ that steal time. Based on the typical patterns of behaviour that tend to sabotage people’s attempts at effective time management, Susan Ward (“Are You Sabotaging Your Time Management Efforts”) classifies managers into different personality types and prescribes the following simple exercise, intended to help managers discover their standard behavioural responses to events and provide them with some clues for effective time management.

**The Firemen** - For them, every event is a crisis. They are always seen busy dousing the fires. They find scarcely any time for anything else and do not spare a thought on time-management. Tasks keep piling up around them, while they are seen rushing from fire to fire all day.

**The Over-Committers** – They just cannot say ‘No’ to anybody. They oblige and try to please everybody. All that anyone has to do is just ask, and they will chair another committee, take on another project, or organize yet another community event. Consequently, none of the tasks receives complete attention and remains half-done.

**The Aquarians** - There is such a thing as being too “laid-back” - especially when it starts interfering with their ability to finish tasks or bother to return phone calls. Getting to things that is when they get to them is not time management; it is simple task avoidance.

**The Chatty Kathys** - Born to socialize, they have astounding oral communication skills and cannot resist exercising them at every opportunity. Every interaction becomes a long drawn out conversation - especially if there is an unpleasant task dawning that they would like to put off.

**The Perfectionists** – Exactitude is their watchword, and they feel that no rushed job can be a good job. Finishing tasks to satisfaction is such a problem; they need more time zones, not just more time.

### Price of Time Inefficiency

What is the price of inefficient time management for an organization? That is a crucial question managers should ask and promptly address. Statistics show that a person - on the average - loses at least one hour of productivity each day due to disorganization and inefficiency. Accordingly calculated, the aggregate monetary value of loss caused by inefficient time management by all the employees in an organization amounts to:

- **1 hour X one person's hourly salary = Rs. \_\_\_\_\_**
- **6 days a week X \_\_\_\_\_ Rs. lost today = Rs. lost this week.**
- **48 weeks X Rs lost this week + \_\_\_\_\_ Rs. lost this year.**
- **Number of persons X \_\_\_\_\_ Rs. lost this year = Rs (total) \_\_\_\_\_**

### The Six D's

"When's the last day you didn't have a high-priority phone call, an urgent email or a stressed-out colleague begging for attention?" asks Tom Gegax, founder of Gegax Management Systems and author of the best-seller **"By the Seat of Your Pants: The No-Nonsense Business Management Guide.** "

He says: "Getting pulled off-course is in every leader's job description. That's why enlightened managers must have a strategy for dealing with daily interruptions." Gegax bases his time-management principles on the "Six D's" - **don't do it, delay it, deflect it, delegate it, do it imperfectly and do it.**

"When something pops up, rather than robotically just doing it, I start with the first option," Gegax says. "If that doesn't apply, I move on to the second. I keep cruising down the list until I reach the appropriate action."

For instance, many seemingly urgent tasks disappear if you don't do them or delay them, he says, leaving you more time and energy to focus on the tasks that matter.

And while some contingencies need immediate attention, your involvement isn't always required. Carefully consider whether to deflect the situation to another department or delegate it to a subordinate, Gegax advises.

If you do opt to tackle the problem yourself, Gegax cautions against automatically shifting into “perfectionist mode.”

“A large number of my projects could hardly be described as perfect, yet were successful nevertheless,” he says.

Of course, reserve the final “D” — do it — for the tasks you’ve determined will keep you moving toward your goals.

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(Matt Krumrie - Time Management for Managers)

An easy way to find out how effectively or ineffectively managers spend their time is to use the **Time Inventory Chart**. At the end of each day they should write down the time spent on each of their activities. The total amount of time for all activities should equal the total number of hours they were awake.

**TIME INVENTORY CHART**

Activity	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun	Total
Sleep								
Hours Awake								
Work: Office & Home								
Commuting & Travel								
Eating								
Dressing & Personal Hygiene								
Family & Personal Work								
Education & Self-Improvement								
Community & Professional Activities								
Leisure								

Hours unaccounted for = \_\_\_\_\_

## 6 Monochronic and Polychronic Views of Time

Just as a person's overall personality is made up of and represented by his or her traits, a person's time personality is made up of a series of time styles – monochronic or polychronic. It is expected that a person's awareness of the monochronic/polychronic side of personal time style affects his or her overall approach to time use, perceptions of time pressure and the amounts and order of time spent on tasks. This, in turn, affects his or her personal efficiency.

Monochronic approach to time management is essentially objective and lays emphasis on promptness, speed, brevity and punctuality. It is a very efficient and focused way to manage work and life. Monochronic time managers are those who thrive on detailed planning and organization. They prefer to focus on one task at a time and they follow a schedule from which they don't like to deviate. They tend to get upset by distractions or interruptions and are inclined to put new tasks off until a later date, when they can be worked into the schedule.

Polychronic approach to time management is subjective and lays emphasis on inspiration, imagination, flexibility, intuition and dedication. Trust, bonding, pleasure and quality of life influence more strongly the decisions of a person who 'ticks' in polychronic time. Polychronic time managers prefer to have many projects under way simultaneously, enjoy changing from activity to activity and are unflustered by distractions and interruptions. Unlike their monochronic counterparts, polychronic managers believe they perform well under pressure.

<b>Monochronic Managers</b>	<b>Polychronic Managers</b>
do one thing at a time	do many things at once
concentrate well	are highly distractible and subject to interruptions
take time seriously	consider time commitments and objective to be achieved, if possible
low context, need information	high context, have information
are committed to the job	are committed to the people
adhere religiously to plans	change plans often and easily
are concerned with not disturbing	are more concerned with others closeness than privacy
seldom borrow or lend	borrow and lend easily
emphasize promptness	base promptness on the relationship
are accustomed to short-term relationships	strong tendency to build lifetime relationships

Clearly, monochronic approach is better suited for dealing with routine and predictable tasks, while polychronic approach is better suited in dealing with things such as creating a new concept or resolving an argument. Conflict arises when managers apply a monochronic style to a situation that demands polychronic time, or managers prefer polychronic style while the situation warrants the use of monochronic style.

So how do the managers cope with a healthy need for subjective, polychronic, self-imposed time and at the same time fit in with the monochronic and objective time measures? The only way managers can figure out which method works best in a given situation is based on sound reasoning and acumen.

### How can you get an extra hour out of each day?

Here are some tips to help you squeeze those extra minutes out of your day. Of course, you can adapt these so that they will fit in with your situation.

1. Get up earlier
2. Watch less TV (I mean how many Law & Order spinoffs does one need to watch?)
3. Avoid allowing others to waste your time
4. If you don't have to drive to work, use that time to study or plan. If you do drive to work listen to a motivational tape on the way to work instead of that mindless dj talk.
5. Organize your work; do it systematically.
6. Make creative use of lunchtime.
7. Delegate authority if, possible.
8. Spend less time on unimportant phone calls.
9. Think first, and then do the task.
10. Do what you dream about doing, instead of just dreaming about it.
11. Work hardest when you're the most mentally alert
12. Eliminate activities that make the smallest contributions to your life.
13. Always do the toughest jobs first.
14. Before each major act ask, "Is this really necessary?"
15. Choose interesting and constructive literature for spare time reading.
16. Learn how to sleep. Sleep soundly, then work refreshed.

17. Skip desserts.
18. Stop smoking.
19. Write notes or letters while waiting for others.
20. Always carry an envelope with paper in it and a few stamps.
21. Combine tasks that are done in the same area.
22. Be prompt for all appointments.
23. Lay out your clothes the night before.(I need to remember this myself)
24. Call on specialists to do work that you cannot do efficiently
25. Learn to read more rapidly.
26. Take a nap after dinner. Then take a shower. Begin the evening hours relaxed and refreshed.
27. Avoid interruptions.
28. Avoid making a big production out of tiny tasks.
29. Search out job shortcuts.
30. Know your limitations.
31. Work to your full capacity. I know it's tough to break bad habits. However, it is necessary to make sacrifices so that your business can be successful.

Don't try to implement all of these ideas at once. Implement them one at a time and repeat them until they become a part of your daily routine.

**Source:** [http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=DeAnna\\_Spencer](http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=DeAnna_Spencer)

## 7 The 'Five Time Zone' Concept

To accelerate the ability to manage their time, managers need to strike a proper balance between monochronic and polychronic aspects of time management. The 'Five Time Zone Concept' advocated by Lewis, Justus and Storz, Moni Laui (Switch on Your Mind: Accelerative Learning Strategies at Work.) enables managers to bring about that balance. The five links in the 'Five Time Zone' approach are - vision, plans, personal organisation systems, commitment and energy.

- **Developing Zone 1 - Vision and Goals:** Managers must search for visions, not tasks. These visions are guided by their personal standards and values, and the direction they want to take. Once their visions are crystallized, they need to do some thinking to create goals from their visions and action steps from their goals.

### My vision and goals . . .

- What is most important to me?
- What would I like to do if there were no limitations?
- What things in my life would I like to be different?
- My visions for myself are . . .

- **Developing Zone 2 - Plans:** Having established goals, managers now can move into zone two - plans. A plan is needed to turn visions and goals into action. Writing things down and using some form of planning 'tool' are keys to successful planning. Once they have drawn up the plan, they need to review it. They should plan for high-payoff and low-payoff activities for high and low priorities.
- **Developing Zone 3 – Personal Organization Systems (POS):** Zone three encompasses a manager's personal organisation system. Organising the desk, follow-up, paperwork, physical environment are all part of personal organization system. The personal organization system should focus on –
  - Creating an interesting and relaxing work-space
  - Providing easy access to basic tools and materials
  - Grouping similar tasks together to optimize time

- Devising a good follow-up system that works well
- Enabling efficient handling of each piece of paper
- Ensuring a wider reach of people

My action plan to develop my POS

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

- **Developing Zone 4 – Commitment:** The fourth time zone is the zone of commitment, in which managers correct any tendencies they might have towards procrastination. Procrastination can be overcome by identifying why one is procrastinating, breaking the mental blocks and visualizing the successful completion of a task while in a relaxed state. One way to do this is to identify the real reason for the procrastination - personal, logical, emotional or ethical barrier to action. Once this has surfaced from the subconscious to the conscious, strategies can be brought into play to deal with it.

Reasons why I procrastinate . . .

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

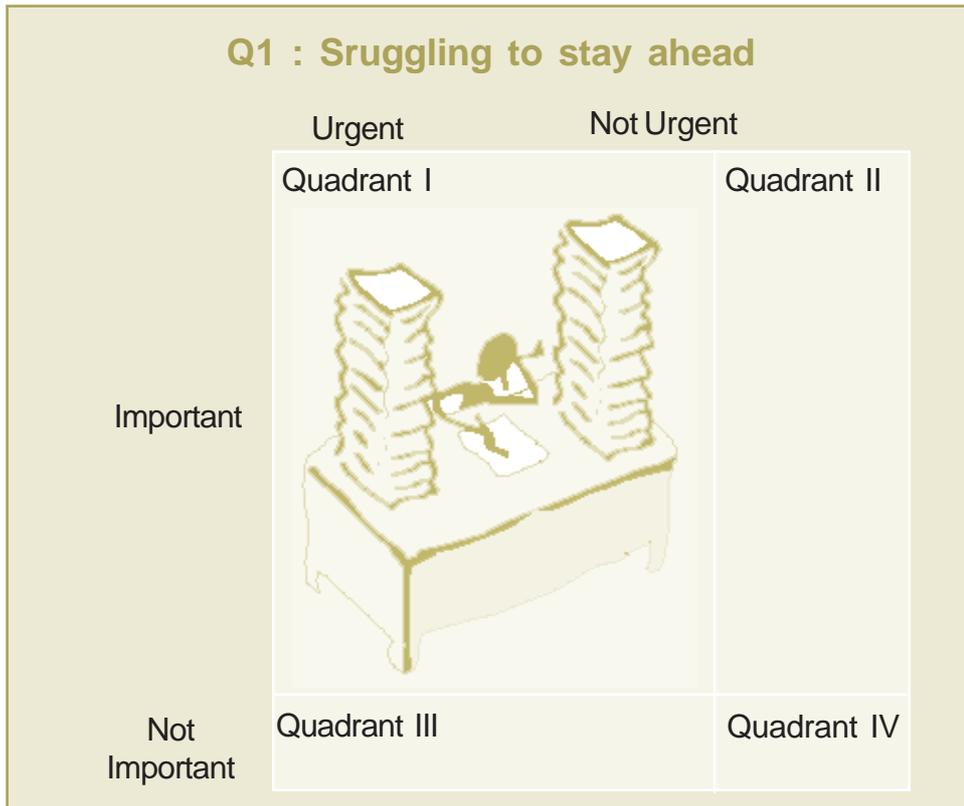
- **Developing Zone 5 – Energy:** The final factor that keeps the chain together is zone five, the energy zone. Managers must check their office surroundings, as the environment they work in can sap or strengthen their energy levels. They must also identify the prime time - the time of day when they are most energetic and alert – they can schedule high-priority, high-payoff tasks or activities for these times.
- Find your prime time
- Internal and external prime time
- Cognitive tasks for the morning
- Complete high-energy tasks in high-energy periods
- Take energy breaks

## 8 Time Management Matrix

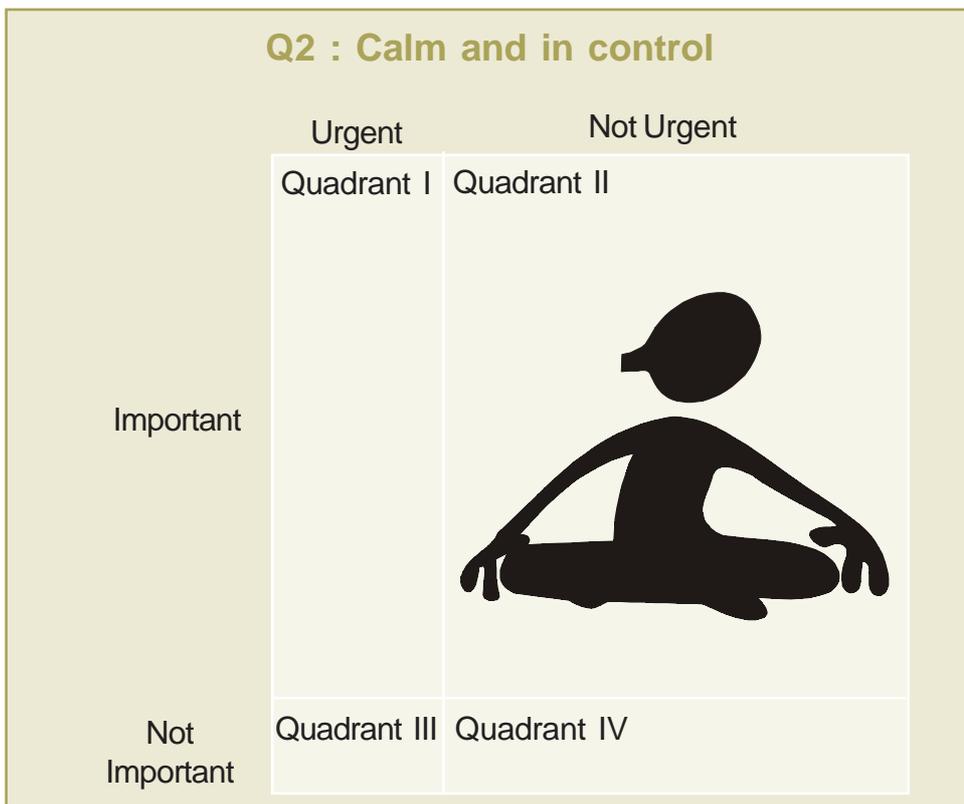
Time management experts like Stephen Covey S R (The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People; Simon & Schuster) have developed a model called a time management matrix. This model enables managers to prioritize their activities and use their time more effectively. With the help of the model, they can evaluate their activities in terms of importance and urgency.

		Time Management matrix	
		Urgent	Not Urgent
Important	Quadrant I	Crises, Projects, accidents, etc.	Quadrant II Planning, exercise, relationships, etc.
	Not Important	Quadrant III Phone calls, visitors, small talk, etc.	Quadrant IV Daydreaming, TV, procrastination, etc.

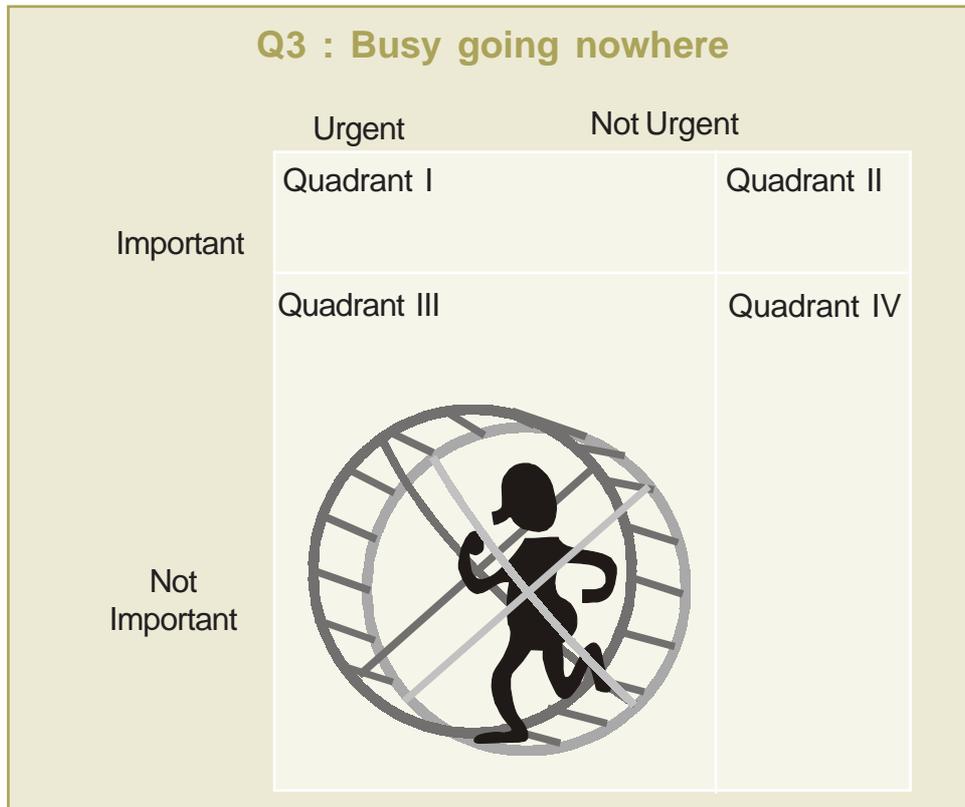
Tasks can be categorized as urgent/ not urgent or as important/ not important as shown below. Each of a manager's activities can be distinguished as one of four types, represented by the four quadrants of the time management matrix. Categorizing a manager's activities in these quadrants helps him identify what is important and avoid unimportant tasks and activities. It also helps him prioritize important tasks and activities.



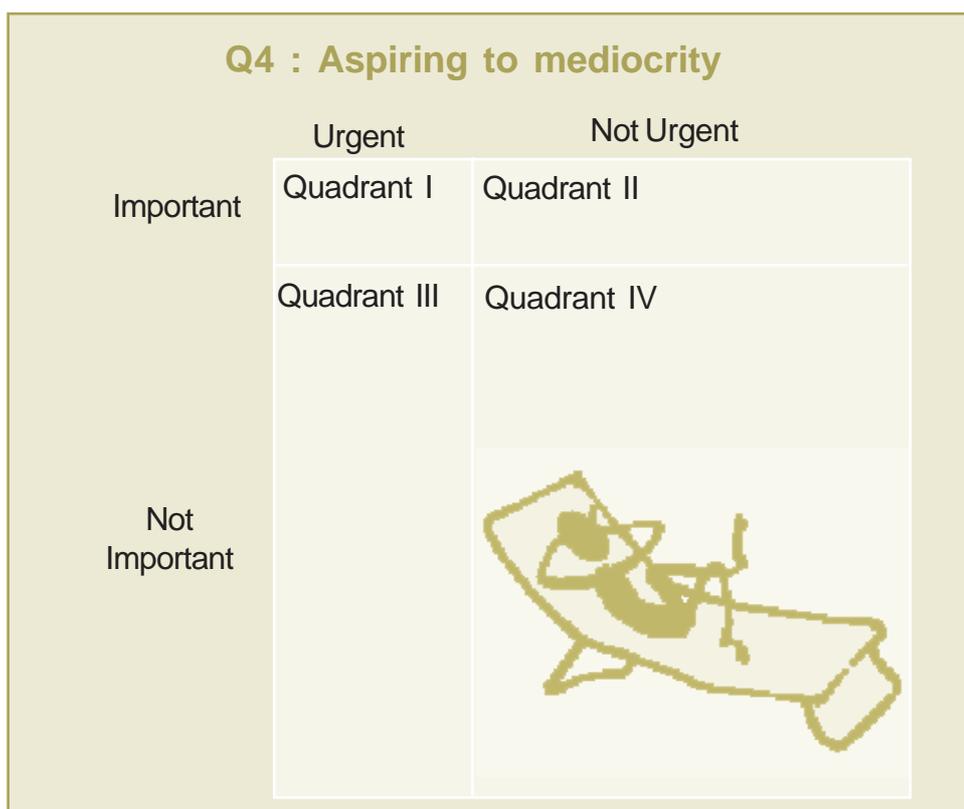
The activities in Quadrant 1 are both important and urgent. These include deadline-driven tasks and important daily chores. The results of operating in this Quadrant are stress, burnout and crisis management



The activities in Quadrant 2 are important but not urgent. These activities are characterized as preparation, planning, crisis prevention, and deadline-avoiding tasks. Operating in this Quadrant will mean a manager having a proper perspective, vision, balance, discipline, control and few crises.



The activities in Quadrant 3 are not important but urgently press upon us and interrupt our more important activities. These include responding to drop-in visitors, phone calls, meetings, and mail that do not increase productivity and effectiveness. Operating in this Quadrant will mean short-term focus, crisis management, worthlessness of goals and plans, feeling of victimization and broken relationships.



The activities in Quadrant 4 are neither important nor urgent. Busywork, time wasters, junk mail, and some phone calls are the type of activities that are a part of this quadrant. Operating in this Quadrant will mean total irresponsibility and over-dependence on others in addition to outcomes in Quadrant 3.

From a study of the Time Management Matrix, the following observations can be made:

1. Activities in Quadrant I and Quadrant II may be equally important. Some activities in Quadrant II may even be more important than activities in Quadrant I, but not necessarily more urgent.
2. Activities in Quadrant I assume critical importance and top priority.
3. Spending most of the time on Activities in Quadrant I results in stress and burnout.
4. Focusing on activities in Quadrant II can reduce the activities in Quadrant I, in the long run.
5. Focusing on activities in Quadrant II will mean avoiding all unimportant activities in Quadrant III and IV.

## 9 Elements of Effective Time Management

Time goes by at the same rate no matter what one does. One can not speed it up or slow it down. Unlike the other resources that one manages, there is no way to control time. The best one can do is take charge of oneself in the framework of time, investing oneself in those things that matter most in one's life.

Effective time management requires reducing the impact of the time stealers and increasing the effectiveness of a manager in getting the things done that need to be done. The following are the important elements that combine to enable a manager eliminate distractions, interruptions and inefficiencies in the work process to make the most of time management.

### A. Evaluating How Time is Used

The first step of effective time management is identifying how a manager is using his time. This can be done by –

**I. Activity Time Log:** The first step to managing time better is to find out how managers are currently spending their time. Keeping a Time Log is a very effective way to do this. Through an Activity Time Log, managers can make a list of the activities or tasks that they spend time on. The very act of measuring is often enough to raise their unconscious habits into their consciousness, where they then have a chance to scrutinize and change them.



1. Using the daily log on the worksheet, record your activities for a 24-hour period.
2. Include the start and end times for each activity.
3. If more space is needed, continue keeping the log on the back or on another sheet of paper.

Activity Category	Total Time
Misc.	
Total Time (should equal 24 hours)	

Pick activity categories that will encompass the entire day. Label those below and add up the total time spent on that particular activity category. Include a miscellaneous category for things that do not fit well into typical categories. Keeping the Activity Log for several days helps managers analyze their time and answer questions like:

- What is the most productive period of time?
- What is the least productive time?
- Did they achieve their goals?
- How could they have done what they were doing more effectively?

Activity logs are valuable tools for scrutinizing the way managers use their time. They can also help managers to track changes in their energy, alertness and effectiveness throughout the day. By examining their activity log, they will be able to discover and obviate time-wasting or low-yield jobs. They will also know the times of day at which they are the most effective, so that they can carry out their most important tasks during those times.

Studies reveal that managers do a miniscule of real work per day – 1.5 hours of actual work per day. The rest of the time is spent socializing, taking coffee breaks, eating, engaging in non-productive communication, shuffling papers and other preventable time-wasters.

### Analyzing The Daily Time Log

After completing your **Daily Time Log**, take a few moments to analyze your results. This analysis will give you a clear picture on how you spend your time and how you can improve.

#### 1. Did you have a plan for each day with clear priorities in writing?

#### 2. Were you doing the right job at the right time?

- What did you do that should not have been done at all?
- Could it have been done more effectively at another time?
- Could it have been delegated? If so, to whom can it be delegated?

#### 3. What could be done in a better way?

- Faster
- More simply
- In less detail
- With better results

#### 4. Concerning interruptions:

- How are you interrupted (phone, visitors, meetings, crises, self, boss, clients)?
- How often are you interrupted?
- For how long have you been interrupted?
- How important were the interruptions?
- How long does it take to recover—to get back on track?
- How many interrupted tasks were left unfinished at the end of the day?

#### 5. Concerning contacts/ communications with others:

- How important is time spent in accordance with your real priorities?
- Who (with the right person) are they?
- How often do you spend with them?
- How long?

#### 6. To what extent did you reach your goals?

Source: Mackenzie, R. Alec. *The Time Trap*, 2nd rev. ed., NY: ANACOM, American Management Association, 1990.

Based on the analysis of Activity Time Log over some period, it is possible for managers to calculate their daily efficiency ratio. Daily efficiency ratio is the amount of time spent by managers on the work divided by the total amount of time they spent in the office.

$$\text{Efficiency Ratio} = (\text{Time Doing "Real Work"}) / (\text{Time Spent "At Work"})$$

Assuming that managers have done only 15 hours of actual productive time in a week (60 hrs), the Daily Efficiency Ratio of a manager is only 25% of the time.

## B. Goal-Setting

Why is goal-setting so important in time management? From the time management perspective, a person's life is a sequence of big and small choices and decisions. It is those choices that a person really manages, not the flow of time. A key difference between successful and unsuccessful managers is the quality and practicality of the goals they set for themselves. Goals state clearly the measurable and specific results to be accomplished by the managers and the timeframe to attain them.

Goal-setting is the wisdom that comes from practical experience that helps managers direct their conscious and subconscious decisions towards success. The process of setting goals helps managers choose where they want to go in personal and professional life. By being aware of precisely what they want to achieve, they know the efforts required for it.

Goals help in monitoring the day to day activities and ensure the activities are progressing in the right direction. There are two types of goals managers can set for themselves – rational goals and directional goals. Rational goals are specific, short-time goals focusing on the questions-

- What do I want to accomplish?
- Why am I doing this task?
- Who are all involved in the task?
- What are the expected outcomes of this task?
- When can this task be expected to be completed?

Directional goals (also known as domain planning) are long-term goals with no predictable outcomes, focusing on the question - What do I want to accomplish? To stay focused, managers should aim and visualize these goals. They should identify possible quarters from where they can pool up the support and required resources needed to put together and accomplish those goals.

### **Time Management Goal Planner**

#### ***Lifetime Goals (long range)***

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

#### ***One-year goals (medium range)***

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

#### ***One-month goals (short range)***

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Pick two top priority goals from each category. Enter them here. These are the goals, you will begin to work on, now.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

The above six top priority goals should occupy a manager's time for one month. Next month, they should make a new list. Some goals will remain top priority while others will drop off. The goals will always be accompanied by a list of specific, easy to accomplish

steps. They should set aside a certain time each day to work on top priority goals. Emphasis should be on results rather than activity.

What makes a good goal? A good goal is one that when followed, offers a reasonably high probability of success in the defined time-frame. Gene Donohue (“Goal Setting Powerful Written Goals in 7 Easy Steps!”) lays down the following 7 goal setting steps for the managers to follow that help in building the road map to good goals.

- **1. Make sure the goal you are working for is something you really want, not just something that sounds good:** When setting goals it is very important for the managers to remember that the goals are compatible with their personal interests and values. Any inherent conflict or incompatibility will cause unwarranted friction and adversely impact accomplishment of the goals.
- **2. A goal cannot contradict any of your other goals:** Non-integrated thinking can also sabotage all the hard work managers put into their goals. Non-integrated thinking can also hamper their everyday thoughts. Managers should continually strive to eliminate contradictory ideas from their thinking.
- **3. Develop goals in the 6 areas of life:** Setting goals in each area of life will ensure a more balanced life as managers begin to examine and change the fundamentals of everyday living. Setting goals in each area of life also helps in eliminating the non-integrated thinking. The six areas of life that need goal-setting include –
  - **Family and Home**
  - **Physical and Health**
  - **Mental and Educational**
  - **Financial and Career**
  - **Spiritual and Ethical**
  - **Social and Cultural**

- **4. Write down your goals:** The difference between a goal and a dream is the written word. Writing down the goals creates the roadmap to success. Although the mere act of writing them down can set the process in motion, it is also extremely important to review the goals frequently. The more focused the managers are on their goals, the more likely they are to accomplish them.
- **5. Write your goal in the positive instead of the negative:** The subconscious mind can not determine right from wrong and it does not judge. It's only function is to carry out its instructions. The more positive instructions one gives it, the more positive results one will get.
- **6. Write your goal out in complete detail.** Writing down goals in details is once again giving the subconscious mind a detailed set of instructions to work on. The more information one gives it, the more clear the final outcome becomes. The more precise the outcome, the more efficient the subconscious mind can become.
- **7. By all means, make sure your goal is high enough:** Keeping in view the time and resources at their disposal, managers should set fairly high but practicable goals. Lower goals are indicators of lower motivational levels on the part of managers. Higher goals are pointers to the zest managers have toward their work.

Apart from the above, traditional goal-setting wisdom teaches that a good goal must be believable, specific and measurable, and have a deadline.

Managers must believe that it is possible for them to achieve the goal or they will not be motivated to try. The goals should also be measurable and specific enough for them to know unambiguously whether they have been completed yet or not. For goals to be meaningful, managers must know the time-frame by when they are to be accomplished.

Reviewing your goals daily is a crucial part of a manager's success and must become part of his/her routine. At the beginning of each day, they must take stock of the list of goals and identify the efforts required on their part, for the day, to accomplish each of the goals by the set deadline. Each night, they should review the goals to ascertain whether the

required work has been done or not. This process will set their subconscious and conscious minds working towards the goal. This will also begin to replace any of the negative self-talk they may indulge in and replace it with positive self-talk.

A manager's time can best be directed by using goals. Without goals, they become easily side-tracked and waste time.

### **C. Defining Priorities**

Prioritizing means “taking conscious control of one's choices and deciding to spend more time on the activities and tasks that are important and valuable, and less time on the ones that are not....” The importance of prioritizing tasks or activities is best driven home by the popular ‘pebbles and jar’ parable.

One day, an expert in time management was speaking to a group of managers. As he stood in front of the group of high-powered over-achievers he said, “Okay, time for a quiz” and he pulled out a one-gallon, wide-mouth mason jar and set it on the table in front of him. He also produced about a dozen fist-sized rocks and carefully placed them, one at a time, into the jar. When the jar was filled to the top and no more rocks would fit inside, he asked, “Is this jar full?” Everyone yelled, “Yes.”

The time management expert replied, “Really?” He reached under the table and pulled out a bucket of gravel. He dumped some gravel in and shook the jar causing pieces of gravel to work themselves down into the spaces between the big rocks. He then asked the group once more, “Is the jar full?”

“Probably not,” one of them answered.

“Good!” he replied. He reached under the table and brought out a bucket of sand. He started dumping the sand in the jar and it went into all of the spaces left between the rocks and the gravel. Once more he asked the question, “Is this jar full?”

“No!” the audience shouted.

Once again he said, “Good.” Then he grabbed a pitcher of water and began to pour it in until the jar was filled to the brim. Then he looked at the spectators and asked, “What is the point of this illustration?”

One eager beaver raised his hand and said, “The point is, no matter how full your schedule is, if you try really hard you can always fit some more things in it!”

“No,” the speaker replied, “that’s not the point. The truth this illustration teaches us is, “If you don’t put the big rocks in first, you’ll never get them in at all.

What are the ‘big rocks’ in your life, time with loved ones, your faith, your education, your dreams, a worthy cause, teaching or mentoring others?

Remember to put these BIG ROCKS in first or you’ll never get them in at all. So, tonight, or in the morning, when you are reflecting on this short story, ask yourself this question, “What are the ‘big rocks’ in my life?” Then, put those in your jar first.

Time management expert Alec Mackenzie in *The Time Trap* narrates an anecdote that underscores the importance of prioritizing activities.

As the story goes, an efficiency consultant by the name of Ivy Lee was meeting with the president of a large steel mill. The president, one Charles Schwab, was interested to find out how he could increase performance. Lee was telling Schwab how he could provide him with advice to better manage the company. Schwab, however, was not interested because he did not want more knowledge. Instead, he wanted to find out how to get more done within available time, and he was willing to pay anything within reason for such advice. Lee said that he could help him increase his efficiency by at least 50% provided he could have about 20 minutes of his time.

After Schwab consented, Lee gave him a blank piece of paper and told him to write down the six most important things he wanted to accomplish tomorrow. Schwab thought about it and completed the task in about three minutes. Then Lee instructed him to order these things from most important to least important. That, too, took very little time. Now

the executive was instructed to keep the list until the following morning, at which time he was asked to look at the first item and to start working on it until it was completed. After that he was told to work on task number two and so on until the end of the day. Lee further advised Schwab not to worry about those tasks that he could not get done, since it didn't matter because they would not have gotten done anyway.

Then Schwab was asked to repeat this process every working day. Lee then told him to try this system as long as he likes. Lee also asked Schwab to have his employees try this system and, if it worked, to send him a check for whatever the idea was worth to him and the company. After several months, Lee received a check for \$25,000 and a letter in which Schwab said that this was one of the most profitable ideas that he had ever been taught. It is further reputed that the consistent application of this strategy helped to turn this small steel mill into Bethlehem Steel.

Managers must realize that they cannot simply do task or activity they take up. Given the constraints of time and resources, they have to be selective and consciously choose to spend time on what is most important to them. They have to keep in mind is that whenever they start an activity or task, they are inevitably ruling out everything else they could have done with that time.

When managers have to choose among several tasks, they can use several prioritization tools. The key ones are summarized below. It can be very helpful at times to break out of their routine way of looking at things and to use a tool that they do not use all of the time.

### **Covey's Quadrants**

Discussed earlier under Time Matrix, Steven Covey describes a high-level prioritization Time Management Grid in his book *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. In this grid, tasks are categorized by four quadrants:

## Time Management Grid



- Quadrant 1 represents things which are both urgent and important - labelled “firefighting”. The activities need to be dealt with immediately, and they are important.
- Quadrant 2 represents things which are important, but not urgent - labelled “Quality Time”. Although the activities here are important, and contribute to achieving the goals and priorities - they do not have to be done right now. As a result, they can be scheduled when they can be given quality thought to them. A good example would be the preparation of an important talk, or mentoring a key individual. Prayer time, family time and personal relaxation/recreation are also part of Quadrant 2.
- Quadrant 3 represents distractions. They must be dealt with right now, but frankly, are not important. For example, when a person answers an unwanted phone call, - he/she has had to interrupt whatever he/she is doing to answer it.
- The final quadrant, Quadrant 4, represents things which are neither urgent nor important. Some meetings could fall into this category – they have been scheduled in advance, but if they achieve nothing, then they have simply wasted time. Other examples could include driving time and low quality relaxation or family time.

### Using the Tool:

Managers must strive to maximize Quadrant 2 time. They should allocate time in the diary to carry out these tasks when they are at their best. Doing so can reduce the amount of time taken up by firefighting quadrant 1 activities, since many quadrant 1 activities could

have been quadrant 2 if they had been done earlier. Managers can also seek to reduce time spent in Quadrant 3 by improving the systems and processes for dealing with distractions, and they can eliminate as much as possible of quadrant 4 activities, by either not spending time on these things, or changing the nature of them to make them more productive. For example, driving can be quadrant 4 if the time is unproductive, but there are a number of ways of making this time more productive by learning new skills, planning and so on.

### Ken Blanchard's Quadrants

Ken Blanchard - the author of the popular book "The One Minute Manager" and "The On-Time, On-Target Manager" – sets out his quadrants a little differently:

- Have to Do, Want to Do
- Have to Do, Don't Want to Do
- Don't Have to Do, Want to Do
- Don't Have to Do, Don't Want to Do

Most of the managers do not have a problem with Quadrants 1 and 4. If It is Quadrant 1, they will willingly do it. If it is Quadrant 4, they never do it. It is Quadrants 2 and 3 where the conflict is likely to arise and most of the managers are likely to be attracted to Quadrant 3, meaning things that do not have to be done get done.

The Blanchard advice for the managers is to take up tasks in the order of Quadrant 2 and Quadrant 1, and spend little or no time on Quadrant 3 items. To use this model, managers have to chart out to-do list and plan accordingly.

### Paired Comparison

The Simple Paired Comparison method uses a simple scoring system for comparing activities. The following example illustrates how this method can be applied:

Here is the list of example tasks or activities to be performed:

1. Call home about dinner plans

2. Fire Venkat
3. Draft budget report
4. Respond to e-mails

Compare the following and put a check mark against the relatively important task of each comparison:

- 1 to 2, 1 to 3, 1 to 4
- 2 to 3, 2 to 4
- 3 to 4

Let's say the result is as follows:

- |                                 |     |
|---------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Call home about dinner plans | XX  |
| 2. Fire Venkat                  | XXX |
| 3. Draft budget report          | X   |
| 4. Respond to e-mails           |     |

So, the order you would do the tasks in would be 2, 1, 3, 4.

### The ABC Method

The ABC method ranks tasks into the following categories:

- 'A' are activities which Absolutely must get done now
- 'B' are those that Better get done soon
- 'C' are those that could wait for now
- 'D' are those that can be Delegated but require follow up

Then it subdivides tasks in these categories into A1, A2, A3, ..., B1, B2, ... and so forth.

A lot of people find this prioritization method helpful.

## The Payoff versus Time Method

With this method, the managers have to weigh each task by the payoff they expect from it versus the time it takes to do it. Tasks that have high payoff and that take little time are the ones they would take up first. Correspondingly, tasks that have low payoff and that take a lot of time are ones they would do last or not do them at all.

Whichever method one uses - whether a particular method listed above, a combination of methods, or one of one's own design – a manager should use it not only to rank the order in which they will do things, but also to defer or eliminate items that are not important or of least priority.

## D. Scheduling Activities

After identifying the activities and prioritizing them, it is time to create a schedule. When scheduling, it is important to plan a weekly schedule as well as a daily schedule. The weekly schedule is important for the overall success of the activities and tasks, but it is the daily planning that will help one to track one's progress and determine whether or not one is on schedule.

Managers should try using significant project milestones in their weekly planning but for daily planning break each milestone down into the necessary components and plan the completion of those components on a daily basis. It is helpful to keep one's schedule in an appointment book or electronic organizer, but for purposes of planning one can use a scheduling grid as follows.



The following points demonstrate why scheduling is so critical to success.

- Scheduling can greatly reduce your stress quotient. Proper scheduling gives one the peace of mind of knowing that one has formulated a feasible plan of action and that one's goals are attainable.
- Scheduling also helps one to be prepared for obstacles because part of the scheduling process is creating a contingency plan for unexpected problems.
- Scheduling serves as a way to evaluate your progress as you work. Planning your daily and weekly activities will clearly illustrate whether or not you are staying on schedule.

### **Tool 1 : Master List**

- **Begin with items from your desktop**
- **Quick reference of ongoing activities**
- **Include due dates**
- **Include personal and professional goals**

### **Tool 1 : Master List**

- **Keep track of delegated work**
- **Establish and set goals**
- **Organize larger projects**
  - **Break down into smaller task**
  - **Daily task lists**
  - **Expect the unexpected**

When scheduling the activities, ideally managers should follow the below procedure:

- Block out times on the schedule for each of the major activities.
- Start with recurring activities that occur at a fixed time
- Then block out time for activities that they want to do on a regular basis
- Allot ample time for each activity, especially high priority activities.
- Take into account when they are most effective. Morning people might schedule more activities early in the day. Night owls might schedule things later.

### Sample Daily Planner

Name:

Day of Week:

Date:

T=Top Priority M=Middle Priority L=Low Priority

Time	Actually Accomplished	Planned Task To Do Today
7:30		
8:00		
8:30		
9:00		
9:30		
10:00		
10:30		
11:00		
11:30		
Noon		
12:30		
1:00		
1:30		
2:00		
2:30		
3:00		
3:30		
4:00		
4:30		
5:00		
5:30		

Work your way down from the top items. Only when they are completed should you work on the middle priority tasks. Only when everything else is done should you work on the low priority items. You will find that it is often acceptable to ignore the low priority items. While scheduling activities, managers need to consider the following points:

## 10 Essential Steps in Using A Planner

Outlined below is a step-by-step approach for using a day planner to manage time effectively.

- 1. Select a Compatible Time Planner:** A day planner is a device that includes a calendar, space to write “to-do” lists, and space to write telephone numbers, addresses, and other/ reference information. It can be a Franklin Planner (simple paper-and-pencil type), Day Timer, a fancy electronic organizer or time management software on a computer. If techno-savvy, a manager can pick an electronic organizer. If not, a manager can choose the paper-and-pencil method.
- 2. Find a Single, Accessible Place to Keep the Planner:** Having selected a planner, managers should cultivate the habit of keeping it in an exclusively designated and easily accessible place at home and workplace. An ideal place to keep the planner could be near the telephone or on the office desk.
- 3. Enter the Basic in the Day Planner:** Managers should consider what vital information might be useful to enter in the Planner – such as insurance policy numbers, computer passwords, telephone numbers, equipment numbers - and arrange the information in alphabetical order.

### Tool 2 : Your Calender

- **Maintain your own calendar**
- **Keep one calendar for everything**
- **Take calendar wherever you go**
- **Know your energy cycle**
- **Plan every day**

- 4. Carry the Planner at All Times:** Carrying the planner at all times means that the managers have all the vital information they need with them all the time. Ideally, the Day Planner should be their integral part and constant companion of managers.

### Tool 2 : Your Calender

- Don't plan every minute
- Prioritize
- Save peak energy periods for yourself
- Schedule time for routine tasks
- Schedule your rewards

- 5. Refer to the Day Planner Regularly:** Managers should make it a habit to refer to the Day Planner thrice a day – at the start of the day to be sure of the things to be done, afternoon to monitor the progress of their activities, and night to take stock of the status of the activities for the day.
- 6. Use the Day Planner as a Calendar for Everything:** Appointments, and activities for the day on personal, family and professional fronts should be listed in the planner. It is advisable that activities relating to family and professions are highlighted using different colours. It is also essential that crucial activities or tasks that need personal attention and close scrutiny are highlighted using different colours to review their progress from time to time.
- 7. Use Day Planner as a 'Brain Dump' to Capture Ideas:** Day Planner also doubles up as a Brain-Dump for managers as they can put down the ideas as they surface in the planner. That way it helps to refer to them and weigh their value and feasibility at the appropriate time.

### Tool 3 : Daily Task List

- List everything you'd like to accomplish
- Assign value using "ABC" system
- Assign numerical value to each item

8. **Conduct a Daily Planning Session:** The goal of this session is to plan the upcoming day's activities and develop a plan of attack and to carry out the same. In addition to listing priorities and reviewing schedules, the planning session is the time to consider exactly how each task will be accomplished. What materials will be needed? What obstacles are likely to be encountered? How can these obstacles be overcome? The planning session will thus provide a mental map that guides them in carrying out the tasks on the list

### Tool 4 : Notes

- Carry paper at all times
- Make notes
- Use full-sized paper
- Date notes
- File in action file folders

9. **Prioritize 'To-Do' List and Action in Accordance with Priorities:** There are many ways to prioritize a "to do" list. One way is to number all of the items on the list in order of decreasing priority. Another way is to classify items into one of three categories: "Essential," "Important," and "Do only if I have extra time." The managers should pick the method that best fits their style, and begin prioritizing their daily "to do" list.

## 10. Generate a List of Long-Term Goals and Break the Long-Term Goals into

**Small, Manageable Chunks:** First, generate a list of all long-term goals. These are broad goals to be accomplished over many months and years. Then, take one goal at a time and break it down into small chunks or sub-goals that might be accomplished on a monthly basis. Assign one sub-goal to each month of the year.

At the beginning of the month, conduct a monthly planning session to decide how to accomplish the sub-goal over the course of the month. Assign various tasks to each week of the month. At the beginning of each week, conduct a weekly planning session to decide how to assign aspects of that week's sub-goal to the daily task lists for the entire week. During each daily planning session, plan the details of the assigned task that will be performed that day.

### Tool 4 : Telephone/ Address Directory

- Carry It
- Maintain one directory
- Transfer business card information
- Include e-mail, fax, home address/phone

### E: Personal Action Plan with a Follow-Up

In order to eliminate the time wasters in the work-process, managers need to act to change them. For them to act and take corrective measures, they need to draw up an action plan.

Below is a personal action plan, including an example, to help you identify and solve your daily time wasters.

Time Waster	Cause	Solution	Date to Start	Date to Check Progress	Follow-up Action taken
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					

Source: Mackenzie, R. Alec. *The Time Trap*, 2nd rev. ed., NY: ANACOM, American Management Association, 1990.

## 10 Getting oriented to manage time

To get ready to manage their time better, managers should answer the following questions:

- What is my time worth? How much do I get paid per hour? If I could save one hour a day, what would this amount to, in the course of one year?
- What is my job? What results are expected of me? Am I meeting a predetermined, definable purpose, or am I just drifting?
- What have I been doing? At the end of a day, am I able to account for my time, or do I say to myself, "Where did the day go? I don't feel I have accomplished anything."
- Have I been doing the right things? Am I involved in work activities that rightfully fall under the responsibility of my subordinates? What are the five most important tasks I have to do?
- How am I spending/ investing my time? What results do I see for the time I spend on each activity? What would happen if some of these things were not done?
- Am I goal-oriented? Am I working toward quantified objectives? Have I established performance standards for myself? For my people?
- Have I done any planning? When I arrive on the job in the morning, do I know what it is I want to accomplish during that particular day? Have I established priorities? Have I determined a hierarchy of importance?
- Have I tried to manage, schedule, control my work and time? Is the job running me or am I running the job? Am I suffering from "brief caseitis," i.e., bringing home more and more of my work ?
- Do I delegate all possible tasks? Am I able to hand over more tasks to my co-workers or staff at work and to my spouse or children at home?
- Does the time I spend on the job affect my lifestyle? Am I enjoying life and having fun, or am I so stressed from the pressures of poor time management on the job that the tension carries over into my everyday life?

## How We Waste Time

- Lack of discipline
- Indecisiveness
- Personal Disorganization
- Procrastination
- Inability to say “NO”
- Poor Delegation Skills
- Day Dreaming
- Worry

## Time Waste - Caused by Others

- Telephone Interruptions
- Drop-In Visitors
- Unscheduled Meetings
- Poor Communications
- Confused chain of Authority

## 11 Overcoming Barriers to Effective Time Management

- a. **Telephone Interruptions:** Delegation of authority and responsibility is an ideal way of controlling telephone interruptions. Also fixing specific time slots for socializing and business will help the managers effectively reduce the telephone interruptions. Implementation of the screening procedures also lessen the burden of unwanted telephone intrusions.

### Time - Saving Tips : Interruptions

- **Close your door**
- **Distinguish between necessary visits and interruptions**
- **Use different techniques**
  - Visit others
  - Arrange appointment
  - Leave your office
  - Establish regular meeting time

- b. **Drop-in Visitors:** Taking time-log of visits and implementing a plan to arrange and screen appointments is an effective way of dealing with drop-in visitors. Managers can also have 'Open Door' and 'Quiet Hour' timings fixed so that they are not distracted when certain of their tasks demand undivided personal attention.
- c. **Meetings:** Setting a clear agenda before will provide the right direction to the meetings and elicit positive outcomes from them. Selecting an appropriate location and assessing the needs of participation, information and coordination are also important prerequisites in conducting meetings. Concise minutes summarizing decisions, assignments and deadlines followed by effective follow-up on decisions make meetings purposeful.

### Time - Saving Tips : Meetings

- Request agenda
- Arrive early
- Notify chair if you will be late
- Avoid routine, emergency, impromptu meetings
- Avoid Monday mornings, Friday afternoons

- d. **Lack of Priorities:** Putting first things first helps managers spend relatively more time on activities that are important. Managers must realize that most of the problems arise due to action without thought. Defining clearly the objectives and priorities and deadlines in the form of a Daily Planner will help managers effectively use their time.
- e. **Personal Disorganization:** Managers must recognize that personal disorganization, indecision, procrastination, insecurity, confusion of priority, and inability to meet deadlines are mostly due to lost documents. Uncluttered desk, orderly filing system and simplified procedures will help the managers make the most of time management. Through a system in place for screening junk mails, minimizing paperwork and emphasis on brevity, managers can overcome their personal disorganization.

### Time - Saving Tips : Managing E-mails

- Know your system's special features
- List serves
- Same time every day
- Use Web services - (examples)
  - IFAP.ed.gov
  - NASFAA Today New

- f. Ineffective Delegation:** Managers must ensure that clear, unambiguous instructions are given to the subordinates. They should establish plans, schedules with details, progress reports, monitoring of deadlines, and emphasize goal-accomplishment methods and procedures. They should measure results rather than activity and track progress of an activity to take timely corrective actions.
- g. Attempting too much:** Managers must set their objectives, priorities, and deadlines daily so that they must plan, start early and always remember Murphy's 2<sup>nd</sup> Law: "Recognize that everything takes longer than you think". They must limit their response to the urgent and important demands. They should learn to say "No" when necessary.
- h. Unclear Communication:** Managers must assess the legitimate needs for information and check for interference, noise or activity in the flow of information. They should also assess potential impact of unclear communication, take preventive steps and minimize organizational levels. If it is difficult to minimize organizational levels, they should facilitate easy flow of information across the organization.
- i. Inadequate, Inaccurate or Delayed Information:** Managers must determine what information is needed for planning, decisions and feedback on results. Then they should ensure its availability, reliability and timeliness.
- j. Indecision/ Procrastination:** Managers must set deadlines on all objectives and priorities, use reminders, have the secretary check on the progress, reward themselves (no coffee until they finish). They should avoid fixing blame; ask what's been learned and how repetition can be avoided.
- k. Confused Authority / Responsibility:** Managers must lay emphasis on accountability for results; through recognition and reward for exercise of initiative; through citation, consideration in performance and salary review, promotion, etc.
- l. Inability to say 'No':** Managers must recognize that inability to say 'No' is a major cause of time wastage. They should understand that saying "Yes" may betray

feelings of insecurity and low self-worth and should resist this urge. They should take time log recording all “Yes” responses that could have been “No” and assess the time wasted. They should learn to say “No”, especially to inappropriate or thoughtless requests. Dr Mackenzie suggests four steps to say NO and it is presented in the BOX on the next page for quick reference.

### **Dr. Mackenzie’s Four Steps to Saying “No.”**

#### **1. Listen**

This lets the requesting person know you’re giving full attention to the request and lets *you* fully understand what is being asked.

#### **2. Say “No” politely but firmly right away**

Don’t build false hopes with wishy-washy answers.

#### **3. Give your reasons, if appropriate**

Your reasons may include your priorities, your schedule, etc. This reinforces your credibility.

#### **4. Offer alternatives, if possible**

Demonstrate your good faith by suggesting other ways to meet the person’s need.

**There are many ways to say “No” after listening to a request that you simply cannot handle.**

#### **Dr. Mackenzie offers a few:**

- “I’m sorry, my other commitments just won’t permit me to take on another project right now.”
- “You know, on New Year’s Day I promised my family I wouldn’t take on anything else this year. I’ve been neglecting them too much.”
- “Thanks for the compliment, but I’m afraid I’ll have to decline. maybe next year.”
- If a request catches you off-guard, don’t say anything until you count to ten first.

- m. Leaving tasks unfinished:** Managers must take time log and assess the impact of leaving tasks unfinished. They should set deadlines on all important tasks to provide incentive to complete them. They should get organized to permit effective control of tasks. They should recognize that sound organization saves time in retrieving information, processing decisions, and maintaining control over projects.
- n. Lack of Self-Discipline:** When a manager switches priorities of his team, he makes self-discipline difficult to practice. S/he should take time log to record frequency, assess cost, discuss with colleagues to seek ways of reducing problem.

**Time-Wasters: Causes & Solutions**

<b>Time Waster</b>	<b>Possible Causes</b>	<b>Solutions</b>
<b>Lack of planning</b>	Failure to see the benefit of planning	Recognize that planning may take time but it saves time and effort in the long run.
<b>Lack of planning</b>	Action-oriented (perhaps <i>not</i> action-oriented otherwise the above point is similar to this)	Emphasize results, not activity.
<b>Lack of planning</b>	Success without	Recognize that success is often in spite of, not because of, methods.
<b>Lack of priorities</b>	Lack of goals and objectives	Write down goals and objectives. Discuss priorities with co-workers and family members.
<b>Over-commitment</b>	Broad interests (Impractical) Confusion in priorities	Learn to say no. Re-assesses your goals and priorities
<b>Over-commitment</b>	Failure to set priorities/Over Ambitious	Develop a personal philosophy regarding time. Relate priorities to a schedule of events
<b>Management by crisis</b>	Lack of planning	Apply the same solutions as for lack of planning.
<b>Management by crisis</b>	Unrealistic time estimates	Allow more time. Allow for interruptions.
<b>Management by crisis</b>	Problem oriented	Be opportunity oriented
<b>Management by crisis</b>	Reluctance of others to break bad news	Encourage fast transmission of information via grapevines as essential for timely corrective action
<b>Telephone</b>	Lack of self-discipline	Screen and group calls. Be brief.
<b>Telephone</b>	Desire to be informed and involved	Stay uninvolved with all but essentials. Manage by exception.
<b>Meetings</b>	Fear of responsibility for decisions.	Make decisions without meetings.
<b>Meetings</b>	Indecision	Make decisions even when some facts are missing.

Time Waster	Possible Causes	Solutions
<b>Meetings</b>	Over-communication	Discourage unnecessary meetings. Convene only those needed.
<b>Meetings</b>	Poor leadership	Use agendas. Stick to the subject. Prepare concise minutes as soon as possible.
<b>Meetings</b>	Indecision	Lack of confidence in the facts. Improve fact finding and validating procedures.
<b>Meetings</b>	Insistence on all the facts; <i>paralysis by analysis</i>	Accept risks as inevitable. Decide without all facts.
<b>Meetings</b>	Fear of consequences of a mistake	Delegate the right to be wrong. Use mistakes as a learning process.
<b>Meetings</b>	Lack of a rational decision-making process.	Get facts, set goals, investigate alternatives and negative consequences, make the decision, then implement it.
<b>Lack of delegation</b>	Fear of subordinates' inadequacy.	Train. Allow mistakes. Replace if necessary.
<b>Lack of delegation</b>	Fear of subordinates' competence	Delegate fully. Give credit. Challenge the potential and reward merit.
<b>Lack of delegation</b>	Work overload on subordinates	Balance the workload. Reorder priorities.
<b>Haste</b>	Impatience with detail	Take time to get it right. Save the time of doing it over.
<b>Haste</b>	Responding to the urgent	Distinguish between the urgent and the important.
<b>Haste</b>	Lack of planning ahead	Take time to plan. It repays itself many times over.
<b>Haste</b>	Attempting too much in too little time.	Attempt less, delegate much more.
<b>Paperwork &amp; reading</b>	Knowledge explosion	Read selectively. Learn speed reading.
<b>Paperwork &amp; reading</b>	"Computeritis"	Manage computer data by exception.
<b>Paperwork &amp; reading</b>	Failure to screen	Delegate reading to subordinates. Ask for summaries.

Time Waster	Possible Causes	Solutions
<b>Routine &amp; trivia</b>	Lack of priorities	Set and concentrate on priority goals. Delegate non-essentials.
<b>Routine &amp; trivia</b>	Over-surveillance of subordinates	Delegate; then give subordinates their right to do it their way. Look to results, not details or methods.
<b>Routine &amp; trivia</b>	Refusal to delegate; feeling of greater security dealing with operating detail	Recognize that without delegation, it is impossible to grow. Forget perfectionism.
<b>Visitors</b>	Enjoyment in socializing	Do it elsewhere. Meet visitors outside work setting. Suggest lunch, if necessary or hold stand up conferences.
<b>Visitors</b>	Inability to say "no."	Screen. Say no. Be unavailable. Modify the open door policy.

Now that you know about these time-wasters, answer the following questions?

1. What time-wasters prevent you from getting your work done on a typical day?
2. What are the activities lately that you found were ritualistic and relatively ineffective?
3. What are the tasks this week that you found could have been delegated?
4. What tasks did you do this week that could have been simplified?
5. What single activity or habit that wastes your time most?

## Conclusion

Now that we have come towards the end of the book we have realized that how our time gets wasted because we never thought of managing time in an effective manner. It is said that time and tide waits for none so our attempts would be to make the best use of time and prevent others from wasting our time too. This chapter winds up all our observations on time management in this book. It summarizes as to what causes us to waste our time and suggests solutions to save time as much as possible. It also offers tips to make the best use of time. As with all the precious resources, time is a scarce resource. The wisdom lies in making the most of it. Horace Mann says:

“Lost, yesterday,  
Somewhere between sunrise and sunset,  
Two golden hours,  
Each set with sixty diamond minutes.  
No reward is offered,  
For they are gone forever”

**Which of the following Time Enhancers have you tried lately?**

- Listen to radio and TV news shows to keep up on the latest news; this should enable you to skim through newspapers and magazines.
- Limit recreational TV watching to one hour a day.
- Limit all casual, idle, or gossip chatter to five minutes.
- Open and sort through mail as soon as it arrives at your desk or home; handle each piece only once.
- Using the “automatic dialing and redial” telephone to speed up making and returning phone recalls.
- Use a timer to help you limit phone calls to less than five minutes.
- Hold as few meetings as possible; use an agenda and stick to it; limit the time to no more than one hour for each meeting.
- Pay each bill on the day it arrives in the mail, keeping the entries in your check-book accurate and up to date.
- Use daydreaming as a form of stress release or relaxation, and limit it to a total of fifteen minutes per day.
- Get professional help for personal problems if you find thinking about them occupies a lot of your free time.
- Use a tape recorder with ear phones to listen to motivational tapes, relaxation tapes, or soft relaxing music when in traffic or on a commuter bus, train, plane, etc.
- Use a daily schedule book or “date minder” to create a log of scheduled activities to help you review your success at managing your time.
- Bring books and mail to read or a tape recorder to listen to when you have appointments where you know you will be waiting for a length of time.
- Eliminate naps and extend your nightly sleep time or increase your daily exercise schedule to increase your energy level.

- Eliminate snacking between meals; eat three balanced meals a day
- Give up smoking (cigarettes, cigars or pipes).
- Give up the need for a “quick one” at your local bar, tavern, or lounge.
- Exchange alcoholic consumption time for exercise or some other time enhancer.
- Go shopping with a list, stick to the list, and leave when you have completed your list.
- Avoid browsing shopping unless it is a planned social, couple, or family shopping activity.
- Find alternative leisure activities that require no betting of legal tender.

Study your answer and take steps necessary to eliminate your time wasters.

### Time Tips

1. Count all your time as time to be used and make every attempt to get satisfaction out of every moment.
2. Find something to enjoy in whatever you do.
3. Try to be an optimist and seek out the good in your life.
4. Find ways to build on your successes.
5. Stop regretting your failures and start learning from your mistakes.
6. Remind yourself, "There is always enough time for the important things." If it is important, you should be able to make time to do it.
7. Continually look at ways of freeing up your time.
8. Examine your old habits and search for ways to change or eliminate them.
9. Try to use waiting time-review notes or do practice problems.
10. Keep paper or a calendar with you to jot down the things you have to do or notes to yourself.
11. Examine and revise your lifetime goals on a monthly basis and be sure to include progress towards those goals on a daily basis.
12. Put up reminders in your home or office about your goals.
13. Always keep those long term goals in mind.
14. Plan your day each morning or the night before and set priorities for yourself.
15. Maintain and develop a list of specific things to be done each day, set your priorities and then get the most important ones done as soon in the early part of the day as you can. Evaluate your progress at the end of the day briefly.
16. Look ahead in your month and try and anticipate what is going to happen so you can better schedule your time.

17. Try rewarding yourself when you get things done as you had planned, especially the important ones.
18. Do first things first.
19. Have confidence in yourself and in your judgement of priorities and stick to them no matter what.
20. When you catch yourself procrastinating-ask yourself, "What am I avoiding?"
21. Start with the most difficult parts of projects, then either the worst is done or you may find you don't have to do all the other small tasks.
22. Catch yourself when you are involved in unproductive projects and stop as soon as you can.
23. Find time to concentrate on high priority items or activities.
24. Concentrate on one thing at a time.
25. Put your efforts in areas that provide long term benefits.
26. Push yourself and be persistent, especially when you know you are doing well.
27. Think on paper when possible-it makes it easier to review and revise.
28. Be sure and set deadlines for yourself whenever possible.
29. Delegate responsibilities whenever possible.
30. Ask for advice when needed.

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Adapted from A. Lakein. *How to Get Control of Your Time and Your Life*

## Appendix

### Time Management Facts and Figures

80% of “crisis management” events are preventable.

One hour of planning will save 10 hours of doing.

Good time managers do not allocate their time to those who “demand” it, but rather to those who “deserve” it.

The most powerful word in our time management vocabulary is “no.”

Delegation is an unlimited method to multiply time for achieving results.

The hardest part about delegation is simply letting go “If you want a job done right, you have to do it yourself.”

**Dr. Donald E. Wetmore -Productivity Institute**

### Time Management Facts and Figures

- Nine out of 10 people daydream in meetings.
- 60% of meeting attendees take notes to appear as if they are listening.
- When someone is asking for our time for a meeting, 80% of the time there is an alternate date and time that will be acceptable.

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### **Time Management Facts and Figures**

- The average person gets one interruption every eight minutes, or approximately seven an hour, or 50-60 per day. The average interruption takes five minutes, totaling about four hours, or 50% of the average workday. 80% of those interruptions are typically rated as “little value” or “no value” creating approximately three hours of wasted time per day.

20% of the average workday is spent on “crucial” and “important” things, while 80% of the average workday is spent on things that have “little value” or “no value.”

In the last 20 years, working time has increased by 15% and leisure time has decreased by 33%.

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### **Time Management Facts and Figures**

A person who works with a “messy” or cluttered desk spends, on average, 1-1/2 hours per day looking for things or being distracted by things, or approximately 7-1/2 hours per workweek. “Out of sight; out of mind.” When it’s in sight, it’s in mind.

- The average worker sends and receives 190 messages per day.
- The average person today receives more information on a daily basis, than the average person received in a lifetime in 1900.
- 70% of business and professional people use a “to do” list on a regular basis to administer their “have to’s.”

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### **Time Management Facts and Figures**

It almost always takes twice as long to complete a task as what we originally thought it would take.

- "A project tends to expand with the time allocated for it." If you give yourself one thing to do, it will take all day. If you give yourself two things to do, you get them both done. If you give yourself a dozen things to do, you may not get 12 done, but you'll get seven or eight completed.

- "If you want to get something done, give it to a busy person."

- The "20/80 Rule" tells us we will typically accomplish 80% of our results through 20% of our effort. The other 20% of additional results comes from about 80% of additional effort.

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### **Time Management Facts and Figures**

- The average reading speed is approximately 200 words per minute. The average working person reads two hours per day. A speed reading course that will improve the reading rate to 400 words per minute will save an hour per day.

- We retain 10% of what we read. We retain 20% of what we hear. We retain 30% of what we see. We retain 50% of what we hear and see. We retain 70% of what we say. We retain 90% of what we do.

- Taking five minutes per day, five days per week to improve one's job will create 1,200 little improvements to a job over a five-year period.

**Dr. Donald E. Wetmore -Productivity Institute**

## Suggested Readings

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