



Time Management

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Managing your time

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When we are work from home or are at work, we all benefit from finding new ways to use our time as efficiently as possible. Setting aside the time to analyse how you work can be an invaluable time-saver, helping you to make your day less stressful and more productive.

Let us look at ways to improve the use of your time and isolate some aspects of your “*time management*” that could be improved and how to set some “*long and short-term goals*” to prioritise your workload.

Time is the most valuable resource we have in our “*business toolbox*”, it is a most precious commodity. Every human being on the earth has the same amount of time; even Bill Gates, Sir Alan Sugar, Oprah Winfrey, Peter Jones and of course **YOU**, all have the same time 24 hours in a day.

Sir David Frost once said, “*I don’t like wasting money, but I hate wasting time*”.

All the above have attained the heights they have and are where they are now, by an obsessive will to use their time wisely and to the full. If you think about it, you are no different to everyone else on the planet. **Why?**

One thing we all have in common is that we all have the same amount of time: -

- **60 seconds in every minute**
- **60 minutes in every hour**
- **24 hours in every day**
- **7 days in every week**

Time cannot be saved or stored. It is not down to how much we have; it is down totally to the way we attempt to use it. Managing time is solely an individual’s decision and is very personal to them.

A survey several years ago by the Institute of Business Advisors concluded that company directors and sole business proprietors wasted 20% of their time at work.

The top 10 timewasters in order of importance were:

1. Telephone interruptions.
2. E-mails bouncing in all the time.
3. People calling in.
4. Lack of planning.
5. Correcting things done by other people.
6. Poor inter departmental exchange of information.
7. Subordinates listening skills.
8. Middle management indecisive decision making.
9. Senior management for ever changing the goal post, costing time realigning.
10. Lack of authority by people when chairing meetings.



So, it is especially important to do something about it NOW. By managing your time more efficiently and effectively, helping to remove the stress that can build up during the day without realising it, you will achieve this.

At the very heart of time management is the *“management of your own time!”* It is more than just managing your time; it is managing your relationship with the time you have available. It is all about setting your priorities by simply taking charge of the situation you are in and time utilisation. It means changing those habits and activities that cause you to waste time. Mostly it is about being able and willing to experiment with different methods and ideas enabling you to find the most productive way to maximise the use of your valuable time.

Have you ever noticed why it is that some people manage to accomplish more in their day than others can possibly manage in a week? After all, you have total control of how you spend your time and what you do with it. So, is it about the time you waste? Could be that some people have greater energy levels than others or it could be that one person is far more capable of managing their time more effectively than other people are able to.

This of course does not mean that one person works harder but rather, the person who accomplishes more in less time has worked out how to work smarter. By planning their days and prioritising their time in a more organised and logical manner, this is achieved.

How can you learn to effectively manage your time to accomplish more?

Look at a few ideas below:

Set goals



Start setting your goals. Goals, that can be realistically accomplished by you! What you must do is always set time limits on them for simple activities. There are a few people who linger over doing their work activities and just waste their time as well as the company's. These people may have

time on their hands that they need to fill.

When you linger over doing things, but you know that you need to get your work accomplished in the shortest amount of time, you will have to learn to practice more self-control and start to set limits on your valuable time. You should do this by setting a reasonable amount of time aside by establishing priorities and by giving individual tasks the time they require. Try not to rush any jobs just to finish them before you go home because this is when you start to make mistakes, on the other hand try not to take too much time either.

Allocate a timeframe for each task to be done.

Delegate your work

Unfortunately, people are very reluctant to ask for any help because they try to do it by themselves which is a way that a lot of people become increasingly stressed. Try not to overload yourself by insisting on doing everything yourself. Your family and work colleagues can make life a lot easier for you if only you would ask them, so please be prepared to share with them. This will then help you to get on with your more important tasks that need to be completed, tasks that you need to complete yourself.

If you are feeling overwhelmed and things seem to be closing in on you, by asking for help and support it will help you remove that stress, tension, and anxiety we mentioned before, this will make you feel less pressured. You need to know how to start looking at prioritising your workload and start to say *NO, (in a nice way)*. When you are finding more time in your busy schedule you will find that you will accomplish more. I've found that when I did delegate to others I have certainly given myself a little bit more of *(me-time)* which has also meant *(thinking-time)* which, in turn meant I could "*work-on-my-business and not-in-my-business.*"

Organise yourself



Use your time wisely. Do not create impossible situations for yourself by attempting to work ridiculously long working hours. In some organisations, working long hours is often equated with working hard. If you leave on time, others may think you are not pulling your weight.

In fact, long hours, decreases efficiency and productivity. Review all your outside obligations; examine each of them realistically as you prepare your diary over the coming week, month,

and year. Your reward will be the ability to control your workload and have a lot more time identifying and focusing on the more important aspects of your work.

Prioritise your work



By defining your priorities your time-management will begin when you start in earnest with your planning. You should use daily, weekly, monthly diaries as well as a *“to do list”*. *I also use a CRM electronic system that is sync-ed into my computer in my study and on my mobile phone. I have mentioned I use an A5 notebook to make notes in that should tell you something about me because by me writing things I don’t forget them “or should not”*. I fill mine with all the things needed to be accomplished during the day, adding to it the things carried over from yesterday that have not been accomplished. In my opinion the *“to do book”* is a most important book and it is an investment of only a few pounds. You fill it with all your reminders, personal activities, family things, phone calls and even shopping bits you do not want to forget. Mine goes with me to each meeting I attend.

Prioritising your tasks

By prioritising your tasks and the work needing to be completed plus passing some of it out to others, you will find it easier to decide in what order it should be done in *“first down to the least”* important item. In other words, what’s important *NOW* and what can go down toward the bottom of the list, try not to let little things get in your way. Never let yourself feel obligated each time someone asks you to do something for them, remember, people will always ask busy people to do more. This should also include charitable organisations, schools, churches and should even include someone in your family asking you to do something that you know you do not have the time for.

List ALL your priorities you have today and make notes of those items that are not of extremely high priority and those which can wait. By using your CRM or your *“to do book”* and writing things on a new page every day, this will give you an instant focus on your activities. As stated earlier, my *“to do book”* goes with me on all my outside meetings including all the networking events and workshops that I attend. My *“LessannoyingCRM”* gives me on my mobile phone a list of all I have to do today and if I want will print it out as well.

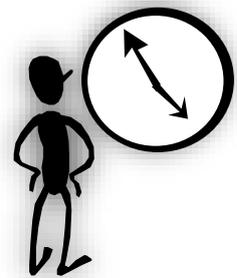
Time wasters

Over the years I have met a lot of time wasters, they can be the bane of your life. So, I would encourage you to keep a good eye open for them. You must avoid distractions that will take your eye off the bigger picture and can easily cloud your lack of focus, discipline, and direction. You need to identify areas of the misuse of your time, time that can and does put you off doing the important things today. We call that procrastination, remember the saying *“procrastination is the thief of time”*. You will need to set times to reply to your telephone call-backs and priorities them. If you think it is going to be a difficult call do it straight away.

When it is done and out of the way, it will free your mind for the rest of the day, it is done and dusted. You need to set times during your day to look at your e-mails; maybe first thing in the morning, after lunch and *last* thing before you finish for the night, this is a routine I have always tried to practice and it works very well indeed.

You will need to set times with your secretary and switchboard of appropriate times you will take your calls during the day; people will get used to this and it will be less stress on you as well. Your reward will be the ability to control your workload by having more time to focus on the most important aspects of your job and again, *“working-on-the-business and not-in-the-business.”*

Avoid the clock watchers, they come to your office last thing in the day and reckon because they have finished their work and are ready to go home you should be as well. All you want to do is to make sure you have completed your work for the day, those sorts of people are time wasters and are very *“Negaholic and a Nuisance”*. The sad part is what they do not understand is that you are trying to *“finish your Work”* and get off home yourself.



Working smarter

Time management is all about using your time more effectively, not necessarily working harder. The quality of your work is far more important than the quantity of it. Do not get overwhelmed by the current crisis or imminent deadlines that are looming up, crisis management leaves no time for routine matters. Remember, if you can't see *“the wood for the trees”* you will be plagued by the lack of concentration and focus which, if not tempered, will start you losing quality over the quantity of the work to be done. Floundering around because of the lack of your concentration will also diminish your quality of work as well. Religiously using the *“to do book”* or your (CRM) will stop emotional blocks that can and do interfere with your eventual *“Success”* including boredom, daydreaming, stress, guilt, anger, and frustration. Unfortunately, they all have the habit of reducing your concentration.

Working Environment



Avoid noisy disruptive atmospheres when you are working, concentrating, or studying. Discipline yourself to turn the ring tone on your mobile to silent mode, tell your switchboard, your number two, and your secretary that you need *“a period of time”* without interruption.

As I said earlier make set times to look at your messages and e-mails. I know it can be exceedingly difficult with appointments and calls coming in, but you do need to set priorities for yourself and be hard with yourself, your colleagues, and staff. Avoid distractions and temptations to put aside the carefully planned schedule in your *“to do book”* or your CRM.

Have you ever thought or realised how uncomfortable it can be to be constantly working at the same desk all the time? It might be an idea to give yourself a choice of work where you feel more comfortable, you may feel your best in some comfortable chairs in an area away from the main office, say in a break-out room, where you could engage more with employees, sharing ideas through brainstorming.

A lot of employees are now working remotely from their own homes which through Covid-19 has proved a great success and saved both the employers and the employees time, money, and gained them a more enriched and happier workforce. This I feel may well be one of the ways forward for a number of people in the years to come!

Work related stress

Stress is a well-used word these days. Doctors and clinicians tend to blame it on a multitude of things. What does stress mean to you? You might view it positively in terms of the challenge to do something well. It could be accurate to call it pressure, which is very satisfying, and you may think makes your work worthwhile. A healthy job is likely to be one where the pressures on employees are appropriate in relation to their abilities and resources, to be the amount of control they have over their work, and to the support they receive from people who matter to them. Health is not merely the absence of disease or infirmity but a positive state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being. The WHO 1986, states that a healthy working environment is one in which there is not only an absence of harmful conditions but an abundance of health-promoting ones as well.

These may include continuous assessment of all the risks to health, the provision of appropriate information and training on health issues and the availability of health promotional support practices and structures.

You should try to avoid stress because it does lead to sickness, which in turn will throw all your planning out of the window. After all your working environment is one in which you will have made health and health promotion a priority and should be part of your working environment. You should try to stay physically fit. Yes, you can schedule good quality time for exercising and do not feel guilty about doing it, knowing that it will be helping you in the long run.

"I for one at 77 years of age still do daily morning exercises and a short walk. I have always tried to keep reasonably fit which I think was the reason I was able to fight off two Heart Attacks, and in 2004 a Quadruple Heart By-pass operation. Then in 2007 being diagnosed with Chronic Myeloid Leukaemia followed by type 2 diabetes. For me exercise is the best-known way of reducing anxiety-producing stress plus by keeping my mind going by writing and mentoring people".

Now you are assuming full responsibility for managing your most valuable commodity, yes, your TIME. This will now lead to you taking further steps towards being a **"Success"** and once again; **"The choice is yours"**.

