

Effective Time Management

Effective time management training - Objective and activities How effective are you at using your time?

**Time is the coin of your life.
It is the only coin you have, and only you can determine how it will be
spent.
Be careful lest you let other people spend it for you.
~ Carl Sandburg ~**

Record and analyse what did you do yesterday?

1. Take a piece of paper (diary, planner or spreadsheet).
2. Divide your working day into half hour intervals (include travelling time & breaks).
3. For each half hour interval indicate the activity you were involved in.
Note: If you can easily remember exactly what you were doing for all the intervals you are better at this than me.
4. Highlight in red activities not helpful in meeting your objectives.
5. Highlight in orange marginal activities i.e. travelling, waiting, lunch etc.
6. Highlight in yellow time spent in planning or thinking.
7. Highlight in green activities helpful in meeting your objectives.
8. You can now see at a glance how you use your time.
9. From now on record what you do when you plan it or when it occurs.
10. Review weekly how you spend your time.

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The idea is to make decisions and act on them -- to decide what is important to accomplish, to decide how something can best be accomplished, to find time to work at it and to get it done.

~ Karen Kakascik ~

Use your time effectively.

- 1) **Concentrate on being effective, not on being busy.**
- 2) **Avoid red activities** (time spent which is not helpful in meeting your objectives). Analyse the root cause for each of these and avoid, eliminate or minimise this waste of your time.
- 3) **Don't do the work of others**, unless you chose to do so (e.g. to understand the problems or to show others etc.)
- 4) **Delegate effectively.**
 - a) Chose the task wisely:
 - i) Tasks which others can do. Perhaps better, sooner and cheaper.
 - ii) Routine and administrative.
 - iii) Meetings.
 - iv) Tasks which develop the individual.
 - v) Delegate the complete task where possible, this is much more rewarding to the individual.
 - b) Chose the person.
 - i) Ability.
 - ii) Experience
 - iii) Training requirement.
 - iv) Reliability.
 - c) Communicate effectively.
 - i) Define what is needed.
 - ii) Explain why it is needed.
 - iii) When it is needed by.
 - iv) Identify milestones and progress review dates.
 - d) Ensure understanding and commitment.
 - e) Review progress.
 - f) Train and allow for mistakes.
 - g) Give credit

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5) Meetings

- a) Meetings should produce benefits, and not waste time. They are costly and should only be convened when needed. Ask:
 - i) Why - is the meeting necessary?
 - ii) What - is its purpose?
 - iii) What - benefits are expected?
 - iv) How - would you achieve these without this meeting?
- b) The timing of the meeting should make the best use of peoples time and not distract them from more important tasks.
Note: Just before the end of the day people:
 - i) Have a fresh knowledge of what's happening.
 - ii) Have an incentive to be brief.
 - iii) Can think overnight and return next day to the challenge refreshed.
- c) Events are a useful trigger for meetings, ensuring time is invested in resolving problems.
- d) Only people who are needed should attend.
- e) Use an agenda. A "to do list".
Think about the order, does it make best use of peoples time? Can someone make a contribution and then leave.
- f) Insist people come prepared.
- g) Start on time.
- h) Stick to the subject.
- i) Ensure a note is made of decisions, what will be done by who and when. A white or rolling board can be used to focus attention and ensure everyone understands what has been decided.
These notes form the basis for the minutes of the meeting and agenda for the next (if needed). Circulate these at the end of the meeting or ASAP.

6) **Be decisive.**

Evaluate, assess the risks and decide the next course of action.

7) **Do it now.** Don't procrastinate; break up tasks so they are achievable.

8) **Give realistic promises.**

9) **Learn to say "No".**

Direct people to owner of a problem or explain why you are not dealing with it.

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- 10) **Avoid perfectionism.** Seek a quality solution (fit for purpose) which is cost effective.
- 11) **Avoid clutter.** Act - Bin - Refer - File. Only file if you need the information and it is not readily available elsewhere.
- 12) **Consolidate your time.** Large size bites are best, hourly chunks are ideal.
- 13) **Control interruptions/ distractions.** Find somewhere where you can think and plan.
- 14) **Orange time (marginal time) should be used wisely.** Remember relaxation and breaks are essential but this time could also be used for thinking and planning. The choice is yours.
- 15) **Don't spend endless time reordering "to do lists".** When a task is complete just cross it out.
- 16) **Look at your aims/ responsibilities and identify your key goals (10 max.). Set performance objectives for each key goal e.g.:**
 - a) Quality - right - error free services & goods - fit for purpose.
 - b) Cost - value
 - i) People.
 - ii) Machines, facilities & equipment.
 - iii) Method.
 - iv) Materials.
 - c) Delivery
 - i) When.
 - ii) Speed - fast - time between customer asking and receiving.
 - iii) Dependability - deliver on time.
 - d) Flexibility - ability to adapt - service, product, mix, volume and delivery time.

Effective Time Management

We realise our dilemma goes deeper than shortage of time; it is basically a problem of priorities.

We confess, "We have left undone those things that ought to have done; and we have done those things which we ought not to have done."

~ Charles E. Hummel ~

Plan your time.

The principles being:

1. To concentrate on being effective, not on being busy.
2. To minimise wasted time.
3. The priorities being your key goals and objectives.
4. Plan in bite sized chunks.
5. Break complicated or difficult tasks into achievable elements or steps. The first step could be to investigate.
6. Identify the best time for each activity, for you and others?
7. Leave time free for the unexpected! You can always use it! This may be as much as 50% of your time.
8. Establish routines and patterns of work to improve efficiency.

Using a diary, planner or spreadsheet allocate time to:

1. Activities that you have committed to i.e. appointments, meetings and holidays.
2. The urgent or desperate tasks but ensure you delegate these where appropriate and look for the route cause. Rearrange committed activities if required.
3. Achievable tasks.
4. Thinking and planning. Take time to dream!

Adjust the plan each day, in the light of reality, always remembering your key goals.

Review weekly how you used your time. How effective was it?