

TIME-MANAGEMENT

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Concentrate on results, not on being busy.

Time management is the act or process of exercising conscious control over the amount of time spent on specific activities, especially to increase efficiency or productivity.

Initially, time management referred to just business or work activities, but eventually the term broadened to include personal activities as well. A time management system is a designed combination of processes, tools, techniques, and methods.

The main areas of time management are goal setting, prioritization, managing interruptions, procrastination, scheduling.

To start managing time effectively, you need to set goals. When you know where you're going, you can then figure out what exactly needs to be done, in what order. Without proper goal setting, you'll fritter your time away on a confusion of conflicting priorities. There are five golden rules: 1) set goals that motivates you; 2) set SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, time bound) goals; 3) set goals in writing; 4) make an action plan; 5) stick with it.

Prioritizing what needs to be done is especially important. To work efficiently you need to work on the most important, highest value tasks.

Having a plan and knowing how to prioritize it is one thing. The next issue is knowing what to do to minimize the interruptions you face during your day. There are phone calls, information requests, questions from employees that crop up unexpectedly. Some do need to be dealt with immediately, but others need to be managed. Two excellent tools that discuss how to minimize your interrupted time are the Important Matrix and Managing Interruptions. The Important Matrix helps you look at your task list, and quickly identify the activities you should focus on. The key to controlling interruptions is to know what they are and whether they are necessary, and to plan for them in your daily schedule.

The best way to beat procrastination is to recognize that you do indeed procrastinating. Then you need to figure out why.

Once you know why you procrastinate then you can plan to get out of the habit. Reward yourself for getting jobs done, and remind yourself regularly of the horrible consequences of not doing those boring tasks.

When you know what your goals and priorities are, you then need to know how to go about creating a schedule that keeps you on track, and protects you from stress.

This means understanding the factors that affect the time you have available for work. By creating a robust schedule that reflects your priorities and well as supports your personal goals, you have a winning combination: One that will allow you to control your time and keep your life in balance.

Some tips for productivity improvement:

1) organization. The first step in any productivity improvement plan is to get organized. Think about how to arrange your physical space so that it helps, rather than hurts, your performance. Learning how to be organized is an art, and you need to work on it every day;

2) attitude. The next part of improving productivity is related to your attitude and approach to your work. Self-motivation is very important if you want to maximize your productivity. Learn what motivates you to do your best work – and then create the best environment possible so that you to do so;

3) delegation. Delegating effectively means providing sufficient support and resources so that another person can complete the job well;

4) information integration. Your productivity will also increase when you master how to identify and use information quickly. You must approach information with a critical mind. What do you need to know? What type of information will a particular document provide? Your answers to questions like these will help you determine the level of detail you need from each document. You may simply be able to ignore some items, or quickly skim topics and headings of others.

5) productive systems. Finally, to increase your productivity, improve the way that you and your team work. Improving organizational systems not only helps you accomplish more – it can also help your organization leverage its assets effectively, to achieve its objectives and be more successful.

To be more productive, get organized, have the right attitude, manage information you receive effectively, and actively seek ways to improve your working systems.

Many people spend their days in a frenzy of activity, but achieve very little because they are not concentrating on the right things. This is neatly summed up in the Pareto Principle, or the '80:20 Rule'. This argues that typically 80% of unfocussed effort generates only 20% of results. The remaining 80% of results are achieved with only 20% of the effort.