
MAKE TIME YOUR FRIEND

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Time management means investing a little time in making an effort to plan, organize, review, sort etc. It can reap huge rewards. At the heart of good time management is the shift in focus from 'being busy' to 'concentrating on results'. An extremely simple way of creating more time is to get up early. If you get up one hour early for a year, you have effectively created around 10 additional working weeks.

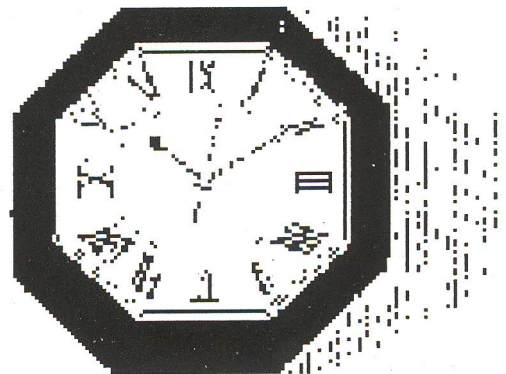
Time as a source cannot be replaced or substituted. Hence 'time' should be used prudently and effectively. In order to have enough time and manage it well, you need to set limits, because no one can fulfill all the demands made on him plus live in full. Limit your availability and limit the time spent on a task. Set sensible limits on how long you will spend on something, and if it takes longer, evaluate whether you really need to finish it, considering what else you have to do.

To concentrate on results, you have to learn to plan, invest in efficiency and success. Planning is the process by which you can work out what you want to achieve, and then think through the who, what, when, where, why and how of achieving that goal in the most effective way possible. By planning you can ensure that you concentrate only on those tasks

that will move you towards your goal in the most effective way possible, without being distracted by unimportant but urgent tasks. When you set your goals, set specific and realistic goals. Don't make your goals too easy – set it for your performance. Keep them manageable. Once you have set it, write them down and then prioritize them.

Managing your time well depend on effectiveness and efficiency. Effectiveness is about *doing the right things*. Efficiency is about *doing things the right way*. Good time management is spending maximum amount of time doing the right things well.

Management time or business time is the time given to company work and related professional affairs. One of the essential factors involved in this



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area is **meetings**. Meetings can be effective ways of sharing information or reaching a decision. They can however be ineffectively run in a way that swallows your time without giving sufficient benefit. Regular meetings are often just a security blanket where the convenor vaguely feels that he has something to communicate without any idea of what exactly he wants to pass on. It is much more effective to hold meetings only when specific trigger events shows them to be necessary. For e.g., a manager may propose a meeting when he projects that resource difficulties may be encountered and a decision needs to be taken on how to handle this. Thus you can ensure that time is invested in the solution of a problem only when it is needed. Agendas should be prepared and strictly adhered to. Using an agenda helps to focus the meeting, stopping it from drifting off-topic. If agendas are circulated in advance, it allows people to be prepared fully for the meeting.

When the meeting is scheduled punctual, brief, relevant and focused. At the end of the meeting, summarize the points discussed and make an **action plan** out of the decisions taken. This ensures that everyone understands what has been decided and who will do what. Meetings conducted diligently can be effective ways of reaching decisions. If not, they can turn out to be just another way of wasting time.

Another important factor is **delegation**. Delegation is giving someone the authority to carry out part of your job for you. It involves passing responsibility for completion of work to other people. Delegation is useful for the following reasons:-

- Once people have learned how to work with you, they can take responsibility for jobs you do not have time to do.
- You can develop people to look after routine tasks that are not cost – effective for you to carry out.

QUALITY is never an accident. It is the result of planning, time management, team work and a commitment to excellence.

- It transfers work to people whose skills in a particular area are better than yours, saving time.
- Transfer of responsibility develops your staff, and can increase their job satisfaction.

The whole idea behind delegating is to give you time to do other more effective things. It is a very powerful way of maximizing your available time. But, beware of delegating tasks that have been delegated to you. If someone has delegated some task to you, they might have felt that you are the right person for that job. Check before delegating such tasks.

Select willing and capable persons to carry out your job. Efficient personnel will be able to carry out the task without any intervention from you. Inexperienced or unreliable people will need close supervision for which you may not have time. It is much more satisfying to delegate a single task than many fragments of one job. If you delegate a complete job to a capable assistant, you are also more likely to receive a more elegant tightly integrated solution. When you delegate a job, explain how it fits into the overall picture of what you are trying to achieve. Ensure that you explain the results that are needed, the importance of the job, the constraints within which it should be carried out and the deadlines for completion.

Once you have delegated, then let your assistant get on with it. Review on the agreed reporting dates, but do not constantly look over shoulders. Give them support and advice, but beware of people who never seem to manage on their own. Monitor their progress, but do not overdo it. Intervene promptly when necessary. If you do have to step in, do so but tread carefully. Never undermine people's confidence by threatening to take back the work or worse to get someone else to take it over. Try to support them, remember you have entrusted the

work because you have confidence in them. Accept only finished work and give credit when the job has been successfully completed. Try to review the work with the person who did it and check whether the objective has been met. They may need further training, or you may learn more about delegation.

Interruptions are incredible time wasters. It is hard to avoid them, but some good techniques are available for limiting their invasion.

Phone calls can be enormously, distracting. When you are in the middle of a long train of thought, telephone calls can completely disrupt these valuable states of mind. Time is spent not only taking the call, but also in taking whatever action is decided, and then in recapturing the mental position before the interruption. When you are doing something of utmost importance, put your phone on divert, leave it off the hook, or have your calls screened. Alternatively, it may be more effective to work in a room without a phone, or work when no one else is around. Improving your phone skills by speaking briefly can also reduce the length of time you need to spend on the phone. Alternatively, transferring communication as far as possible to E-mail can be extremely useful.

Another major source of distraction are **casual visitors/colleagues** who drop into chat. Visitors claim a good deal of your office time. Applying proper techniques to deal with them can help you save time. When you are in sufficiently powerful position, you may find it effective to refuse to accept interruption without an appointment. An intelligent

receptionist or a tactful assistant can exercise effective control over visitors. If properly guided, many of them would go to the person or department most qualified to deal with them.

You can also protect yourself with barriers such as closed doors. Do not smile and look welcoming - you may seem hard and unfriendly - but people have to understand that you are busy. Look briefly at your watch and let them know that you are busy. A publicized time could be set, when you will be available so that people especially colleagues can drop in. It discourages them from dropping in at other times. If you keep yourself occupied always, the public will also see the same value on your time. There are some visitors who may not be amenable to any of the above techniques, in such cases stand up indicating that the visit should be ended.

Some people thrive on crisis management and enjoy the adrenaline buzz of meeting tight deadlines. They do not like to either plan or are lazy to do so. For such people the benefits of time management are meaningless. They spend their days in a frenzy of activity, but achieve very little because they are not concentrating on the right things. By becoming more effective in your use of working time, you can reduce stress by being in more control of what you do, being productive, and secure in your job and also enjoy what you do. This will help to give more quality time to relax and enjoy life outside work. Time management cannot be complete without time audit. Devote five minutes every night to review your day and check whether you have implemented your ideas and also see if it can be improved.