

Chapter 9: Time Management

Overview

This chapter provides some excellent tips for effective time management. While students can learn information to prepare them for the certification exam, emphasize that they can also make some important changes in their life to make it run more smoothly. As you begin, tell students that time management is an ongoing process, not a quick fix.

Lecture Notes

A. Understanding Time

The basic realities of time must be understood in order to manage it.

1. **Characteristics** of time include:
 - Time is democratic
 - Everyone gets 24 hours in a day
 - Time is perishable; it cannot be stored
 - Time cannot be bought
 - Time is a valuable and limited resource
 - How time is used is up to YOU
2. **Efficiency vs. Effectiveness** focuses on performing tasks correctly and quickly vs. focusing on doing the right things at the right time.
3. **Hurrying** is NOT the answer to time management; no one can do it all.

B. Identifying Time Wasters

1. Begin with a **Time Audit**.
 - a. Begin by making a commitment to keep the log and accept the time wasters it identifies.
 - b. Keep a log of how you use your time for at least a week to identify patterns; be sure to include a space to list the goals for each day (prioritized).
 - c. Transfer the information to a weekly chart and categorize the activities in order to identify the percentage of time spent on various types of activities.
 - d. Pinpoint the time wasters.
2. **Time Wasters** are often uncovered in the time audit.
 - a. Misjudging time leads to wasting time waiting for people or things.
 - b. Oversocializing occurs in an extended break or visit.
 - c. Lack of delegation is often due to reluctance for a number of reasons.
 - d. Telephone calls can interrupt work at any time.
 - e. Meetings may not be well-managed and become unproductive.
 - f. Procrastination occurs when there are undesirable tasks to be done.
 - g. Lack of objectives or goals makes it unlikely that very much can be accomplished.

3. **Correct the Problem** based on individual goals; know where time is being wasted each day and make necessary changes.

C. Setting Goals

1. **Establish Clear Goals** that meet five criteria:
 - a. Goals must be as specific as possible.
 - b. If a goal is not measurable, a person cannot know when it has been achieved.
 - c. If goals are not attainable, there is no motivation to work toward them.
 - d. The goal should be realistic in relation to other responsibilities.
 - e. All goals must have a timetable or deadline; some will be short-term, others intermediate, and still others long-term.
2. **Set Personal and Professional Goals** to maintain a balance, and then determine the specific steps necessary to reach them. Goals should be prioritized.
3. The **Pareto Principle** says 20% of time spent on certain tasks will produce 80% of final results, while 80% of time spent on others will produce only 20% of output (80-20 rule).
4. The **Urgency/Importance Grid** is used to prioritize tasks to ensure that energy is spent on the 20% of tasks that produce 80% of results.
 - a. Zone 1 contains tasks that are important and urgent; they require immediate attention.
 - b. Zone 2 shows tasks that are important, but not urgent; necessary but not immediate.
 - c. Zone 3 contains tasks that are urgent, but not important; the necessary evils that must be complete, but mean little to goals.
 - d. Zone 4 includes tasks that are not urgent and not important; minimize or eliminate.

D. Eliminating Time Wasters

1. Control **Telephone Calls** with effective management. *The text presents a variety of techniques that would be an effective class discussion.*
2. Discourage **Drop-in Visitors** or reduce the amount of time they spend in your office. *The text presents a variety of techniques that would be an effective class discussion.*
3. **Handle Each Piece of Paper Once.**
 - a. Dump it if it is unimportant; do not waste time reading each word.
 - b. Defer items until there is more time if they do not need to be handled immediately.
 - c. Delegate tasks that are not a priority for you to complete at this time.

- d. Do it if it is something important that should be done.
4. Ending **Procrastination** takes a huge commitment; you must realize that it is a problem to make any commitment to change.
 - a. You must first identify the causes (which can be many) of your own procrastination.
 - b. Then, you can work to break the habit by making changes that directly tackle the causes.
5. **Facilitate Meetings** so that they do not last too long; training programs in facilitating are available.
 - a. Prepare for the meeting ahead of time by distributing the agenda before the meeting. The agenda should include timeframes for each topic.
 - b. Planning should include everyone involved with the meeting; it may be that various people take on different presentations during the meeting.
 - c. Schedule meetings carefully; they should begin and end on time.
6. **Delegating** is getting things done through others.
 - a. Failure to delegate occurs too often, but it happens for a variety of reasons.
 - Belief that no one can do it as well as yourself
 - Look like the supervisor lacks abilities
 - Doesn't want to let go of a task
 - Insecurity
 - b. Effective supervisors delegate by the results they expect and accept no less. Choose the right person, make objectives clear, provide support, specify deadlines, and provide feedback.

E. Work Smarter

1. **Pareto Principle** (80-20 rule) is an excellent way; use the Urgency/Importance grid to help. *Both of these items were discussed earlier in the chapter.*
2. **Complete One's Own Work**; don't take on others (unless supervisor directs). Accepting someone else's work may make it difficult to give it back.
3. **Check on Yourself** to keep focus on the high priorities. Ask yourself: What is the best way for me to use my time right now?
4. **Use Dead Time Efficiently**; keep a folder handy with things to review when you have an extra minute.
5. **Cluster Tasks** in uninterrupted work time to make the best use of time.
6. **Have a Plan** for every day; use a to-do list to help yourself focus on what needs to be done.

F. Setting Up s Time Management Plan

1. A **Job Analysis** looks analytically at a job. Look at the task list created in the job analysis and translate it into results.

2. **Put Time into Perspective** by comparing time actually spent on tasks to the time that should be spent on them.
 - a. Where is the time being physically spent?
 - b. What are the staffing needs?
 - c. Are there policies and procedures to be set?
3. **Use a Time Planner**, the most important time management tool. A planner is used to write down activities and goals to be completed and commit time to them.
 - a. A weekly schedule identifies the needs and goals for each day in a week.
 - b. The daily schedule organizes each part of the day to assure goals are met.

G. Electronic Tools for Time Management

1. The **Internet** has changed how stakeholders interact.
 - a. E-mail allows users to create, send, and read messages on the computer at their own convenience. It can be a tremendous help when conducting business between locations with time differences.
 - b. Videoconferencing can replace face-to-face meetings while reducing travel and expenses.
 - c. Internet telephony allows users to talk to one another over the Web without utilizing the telephone line.
 - d. File transfers (ftp) allows downloading and uploading of files for quick sharing of information.
 - e. Internet research saves a lot of time and resources and makes a broad range of information accessible.
2. **Telephone Systems** save time with call management systems that allow for better control of calls.
 - a. Incoming calls can be screened and routed by computer.
 - b. Outgoing calls can be monitored and tracked, and some numbers can be dialed automatically.
 - c. Cell phones or pagers provide additional communication methods no matter where an employee is.
 - d. Voice mail saves a lot of time since the message can be retrieved and acted upon after the call was made and without the caller on the line.
3. **Handheld Devices** (PDAs) have become very convenient.
 - a. Electronic schedulers can coordinate the desktop and handheld calendars; for some people they replace paper calendars.
 - b. Contact managers keep information handy, even if you aren't in the office.
 - c. Project management software may be included to keep a project timeline handy.
4. **Personal and Laptop Computers** improve productivity with software options.

- a. PIM software combines the address book, appointment book, alarm clock, to-do list, dialer, and notepad.
- b. Scheduling software can coordinate meetings electronically by coordinating different people's schedules.

Additional Resources for Students

Recommended readings (no texts should be more than two years old):

- Covey, Stephen R. *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. Franklin Covey.
- Hayes, Marion E. *Personal Time Management*. Crisp Publications.
- Robbins, Stephen P. and Mary Coulter. *Management*. Prentice-Hall.
- Rue, Leslie W. and Lloyd Byars. *Supervision: Key Link to Productivity*. Irwin/McGraw-Hill.

Current issues of periodicals or business publications are also an excellent resource. Some of the following periodicals have an accompanying Web site.

| <i>Current Periodical</i> | <i>Web Address</i> |
|---|---|
| <i>IAAP Complete Office Handbook</i> <i>Modern Office Technology</i> <i>OfficePro</i> | http://www.iaap-hq.org/products/handbook.htm |
| <i>The Office</i> | |
| <i>BusinessWeek</i> | http://www.businessweek.com |
| <i>Wall Street Journal</i> | http://www.wallstreetjournal.com |