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Interactive Guide: Essential Tools & Tactics for Effective Time Management in Research Administration

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GOALS OF THIS SESSION:

- Learn what Time Management is
- Learn how to maximize your efficiencies
- Take home some new tools



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Who remembers The Time?
Great 1980's band from
"Purple Rain."

These were their managers



"Time Management"



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Time management is the practice of planning and controlling how much time is spent on specific activities.





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Why is time management important?

Why is it critical in research
administration?





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Common Time Management Challenges for Research Administrators:

- **Managing multiple grants at once** – Different sponsors have different deadlines and reporting requirements.
- **Last-minute funding reallocations** – PIs request changes with short notice, requiring rapid adjustments.
- **Compliance & financial reporting overload** – Strict deadlines for institutional and federal regulations.
- **Too many meetings & interruptions** – Little time left for deep-focus work.
- **Manual tracking of deadlines & approvals** – Paperwork and spreadsheets create inefficiencies.



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Time Management Techniques:

- **Set goals:** Identify specific, measurable goals & create a plan to achieve them
- **Create a schedule:** Schedule time for tasks & activities throughout the day
- **Set reminders:** Set reminders for tasks & deadlines
- **Avoid multitasking:** Avoid trying to do more than one task at a time
- **Block out distractions:** Minimize distractions so you can focus on tasks
- **Prioritize:** Determine which tasks are most important and focus on those first
- **Take breaks:** Schedule time for rest and relaxation



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DISCUSSION!

What's your biggest time management challenge?





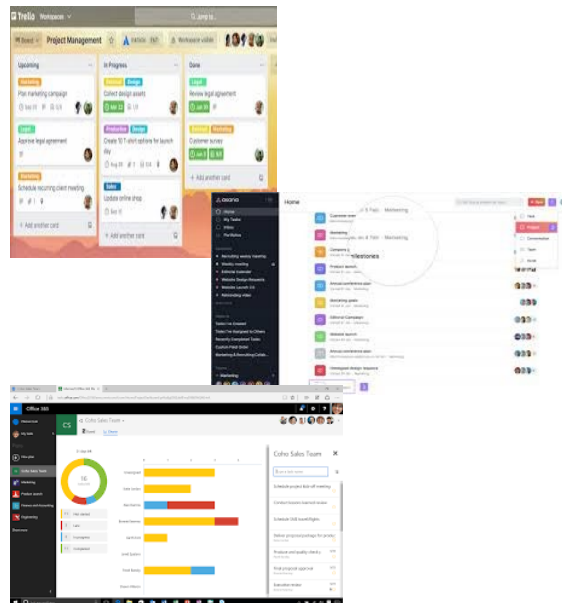
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Task & Project Management Tools

(For tracking grants, deadlines, and priorities)

- **Trello (Free/Paid):** Create a **grant tracking board** with lists for "Pending Applications," "Active Grants," "Upcoming Reports," and "Completed Tasks."
- **Asana (Free/Paid):** Set up **automated reminders for grant deadlines** and track approval workflows.
- **Microsoft Planner (Included in Office 365):** Assign tasks for **budget approvals, reporting, and compliance tracking.**





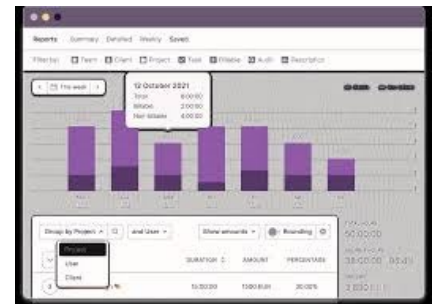
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Time Tracking & Prioritization Tools

(For managing competing deadlines & workload balance)

- **RescueTime (Free/Paid):** Monitors **where your time goes** and identifies time-wasting activities.
- **Toggl Track (Free/Paid):** Helps **track time spent on different grants/projects** for productivity insights.





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Time Tracking & Prioritization Tools

Eisenhower Matrix

(Paper/Digital Tool): Helps categorize tasks into **urgent vs. important** to focus on high-impact work

The Eisenhower Decision Matrix





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Calendar & Scheduling Tools

(For effective deadline tracking & meetings management)

- **Google Calendar/Outlook Calendar:** Block time for deep work, color-code different grants.
- **Calendly (Free/Paid):** Reduce email back-and-forth by letting faculty schedule meetings based on availability.
- **Time Blocking Technique:** Pre-schedule focus time for key fund management tasks.

How to Use: Set recurring calendar reminders for **quarterly grant reports, budget reconciliation, and submission deadlines**. Use **color coding in Outlook/Google Calendar** (e.g., red for compliance deadlines, blue for meetings, green for budget planning). Implement **"No-Meeting Blocks"** to focus on deep work (e.g., Mondays & Thursdays 9 AM–11 AM).



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Consider doing a Time Motion Study

A **time and motion study** is a technique used to analyze and improve efficiency by systematically observing and measuring the time taken for specific tasks and the motions involved in performing them.

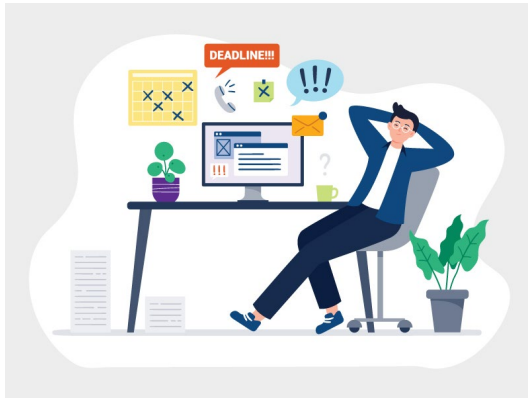




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CASE DISCUSSION TIME!



Scenario 1: Managing multiple overlapping grant deadlines & financial reports. I have 5 grants due for the Feb 5 NIH deadline. My faculty are procrastinators. What to do?



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CASE DISCUSSION TIME!

Scenario 2: I just don't seem to be getting as much done as I want to. I'm starting to work nights & weekends. What can I do?



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CASE DISCUSSION TIME!

Scenario 3: Supervisor is “too busy” to sign off on FFR (because they’re at level 15,000 on Candy Crush.) What to do?



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Creating a Custom Time Optimization Strategy

- **Step 1:** Identify top **three daily priorities** as a fund manager.
- **Step 2:** Select the best **time management method** (Eisenhower Matrix, Time Blocking, etc.).
- **Step 3:** Map out a **weekly fund management schedule** with deadlines & deep-focus work time.
- **Step 4:** Implement **automation tools** to reduce manual work.



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Shifting from Reactive to Proactive Fund Management

Final Strategies for Long-Term Success

- How to transition from **firefighting mode to proactive planning**.
- Best practices for **delegation, automation, and reducing inefficiencies**.

Continuous improvement: How to **review & adjust** time management practices



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Now you're all
time management
experts!





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Questions?





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