Time Management

Delegate Workbook

What is Time Management?

- “I’d really like to go to the gym on Wednesday but I’m afraid I simply haven’t got the time”
- “Yes, I’d love to start that new project but I’ve got a thousand and one things to finish first”
- “I’m sorry to break our date but I really must complete that report for tomorrow morning”
- “Perhaps we could meet two weeks on Tuesday – that’s the first free day I have”

Do the above statements sound familiar? If you find yourself talking like this too often then you really need to make some changes and conquer the clock.

Time Management si about setting clear priorities for yourself and making sure you achieve them. It recognises that time is a limited resource – so we have to make choices. Above all it recognises time is a wasting resource: when it’s gone it’s gone! We need to know how to conquer the clock now.

Three key words can help you achieve better management of yoru time. They are:

- Knowledge
- Choice
- Time

You need to **Know** clearly what you need or want to do
You need to make a **Choice** about which of these to do
You need to arrange a **Time** to act on your choice

Time Management is About Priorities

Priorities Result from Setting Objectives

Setting Objectives is About Planning

Planning is About Control

Being in Control is Being Self-Empowered

Self-Empowered People Manage Their Time

Questions

What are the main points to consider to effectively manage your time?

What techniques do you currently use to effectively manage your time?

Would you consider yourself as being organised?

- **Planning:**
  If you don't have time for planning, you'd better find the time.

- **Priorities:**
  Not everything you do is of equal importance.
  Priorities are not constant, they must e re-evaluated.

- **Procrastination:**
  The anti-Nike – just **don't** do it.

Answer the following question:

List 2 things I would like to change about the way I spend my time at the moment

1

2

In order to complete tasks efficiently and effectively you may have to delegate certain responsibilities, whether at work or at home.

Questions

Give an example, both at work and at home, where you have delegated authority to somebody else for a certain task in order for you to complete something.

Work
Was the task completed on time?

If not, why not?

Home
Was the task completed on time?

If not, why not?

Complete the Following Questionnaire

1. What aspect(s) of your time management do you most want to improve?

2. What do you think causes the above? (think about your personal reasons - why you are the way that you are - as well as the external pressures that have an affect).

3. Wich of these would you like to improve? (indicate **A** for **Very Significant**, and **B** for **Significant**. Mark **X** for any factor that is not significant or relevant to you):

- ☐ day-to-day planning (action lists, prioritising, getting things done).
- ☐ planning projects or complex tasks (and executing them).
- ☐ medium/long-term planning (establishing goals and aims, steps to achieving).
- ☐ managing the balance between work and private/personal/home time.
- ☐ being firm (saying no politely, resisting interruptions, managing workload).
- ☐ delegating (letting go, handing over, allocating tasks and following-up).
- ☐ efficiency of certain processes (finding more efficient ways to do things).
- ☐ decision-making and finishing tasks.
- ☐ prioritising tasks and actions (timings, urgent versus important).
- ☐ communicating (especially dealing with written received communications).
- ☐ working to a deadline (without finishing in a panic).
- ☐ personal time-keeping (keeping an eye on the time and what needs doing).
- ☐ others? ...

Question
What are the barriers to effective time management?
1
2
3
4
5

You may find it difficult to identify your own particular barriers to effective time management, or perhaps there were too many to mention! Look at the following barriers, tick the boxes that apply to you and consider the possible solution.

Barrier	**Tick**	**Solution**
I spend too much time talking to people who won't go away?		Learn to be firm, say "I don't mean to be rude but I must get on with my work"
I get side-tracked easily and lack self-discipline		Make action plans and stick to them. Promise yourself a reward for good timekeeping
My colleagues / friends / kids interrupt me all the time		Tell everyone that you don't want to be disturbed. Have regular 'Quiet' periods that people know about and recognise
I take on too much work		Learn to say "No" politely but firmly. You may benefit from some assertiveness training.
Time runs out! I'm always rushed and late		Really think about what you have to do and how long it will take. Then add 20% extra time to form a time cushion
I get panicky and try to do everything at once		Prioritise. Spend five minutes quietly working out what jobs must be done and what can wait

Working in pairs, draw up a list of tools and techniques that can be employed to assist you in managing your time and your tasks more effectively.

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Now consider the following time management tools:

- Abolish waiting time. If you ever find yourself waiting for a bus, an appointment etc. don't think of it as a waste of time but think of it as a gift of time. Use it constructively. You could use it to relax, to weigh up a decision, to review your daily tasks etc.

- Make a daily checklist and prioritise your tasks

- Make deadlines and write them in your diary

- Combine activities – for instance, discussing a project with a colleague over lunch

- Have a place for everything and keep everything in its place. If something is worth keeping its worth knowing where it is when you need it.

- Make yourself a filing system.

- Handle a piece of paper only once – deal with it the first time you pick it up.

- Always keep a notebook with you. Don't lose an idea because you had nowhere to record it. Think on paper.

- Delegate as much as you can

- Constantly ask yourself "Is this the best use of my time right now?"

Identifying Priorities

No matter who we are we only have 24 hours in a day. Our time is limited but the possible demands on it are infinite. If we are not simply to react to demands, we have to choose how we allocate our time. To do this we have to identify our priorities.

In the space below, note down all the ideas that occur to you in response to the questions. Spend about three minutes on each question. Don't try to put your answers in any order; simply note down your ideas freely as they occur to you.

What I Have To Do Next Week
1
2
3
4
5

What I Want To Do Next Week
1
2
3
4
5

Take each list in turn and pick out the five most important items that you have to do or want to do next week.

When you have done this, look over the ten items you have picked out. Ask yourself which of these items you are going to give most priority to. Think through all the factors, the implications, the pro's and con's of each item and decide which will be your number one choice. Write this against 1 in the space below and then repeat the process or 2, 3, 4 and so on.

Priorities For This Week

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

Now that you've drawn up your list of priorities, you may find it helpful to copy it out and keep it somewhere where you will see it frequently during the next week. Review the list two or three times during the week and strike off items when you've done them. You may find that some items are no longer priorities, that they have resolved themselves or changed. Your list will alter accordingly. What is left undone on the list at the end of the week can be included in the priorities you make for the following week.

At the end of next week, review your list of priorities and answer the following questions.

How aware am I of my priorities?

How much am I choosing / initiating?

Am I proactive or reactive? (Do I make things happen or let things happen to me?)

This method of identifying and prioritising key tasks can be adapted to work life and home life. You can draw up a “Daily Things To Do” list or a “Weekly Things To Do” list. Either way, the more aware you are of your commitments the more in control you will be and the more at ease you will be when questioned or faced with other activities or tasks. In considering your priorities bear in mind the following:

Urgent and Important Matrix

The judgement as to whether activities are urgent, important, both or neither, is crucial for good time management. Most inexperienced people, and people who are not good at time management, nor in managing their environment, tend to spend most of their time in boxes 1 and 3. Poor time managers tend to prioritise tasks (and thereby their time), according to who shouted last and loudest (interestingly, loudness normally correlates to seniority, which discourages most people from questioning and probing the real importance and urgency of tasks received from bosses and senior managers). Any spare time is typically spent in box 4, which comprises only aimless and non-productive activities. Most people spend the least time of all in box 2, which is the most critical area for success, development and proactive self-determination.

	urgent	not urgent
important	**1 - DO NOW** • emergencies, complaints and crisis issues • demands from superiors or customers • planned tasks or project work now due • meetings and appointments • reports and other submissions • staff issues or needs • problem resolution, fire-fighting, fixes Subject to confirming the importance and the urgency of these tasks, do these tasks now. Prioritise according to their relative urgency.	**2 - PLAN TO DO** • planning, preparation, scheduling • research, investigation, designing, testing • networking relationship building • thinking, creating, modelling, designing • systems and process development • anticipation and prevention • developing change, direction, strategy Critical to success: planning, strategic thinking, deciding direction and aims, etc. Plan time-slots and personal space for these tasks.
not important	**3 - REJECT AND EXPLAIN** • trivial requests from others • apparent emergencies • ad-hoc interruptions and distractions • misunderstandings appearing as complaints • pointless routines or activities • accumulated unresolved trivia • boss's whims or tantrums Scrutinise and probe demands. Help originators to re-assess. Wherever possible reject and avoid these tasks sensitively and immediately.	**4 - RESIST AND CEASE** • 'comfort' activities, computer games, net surfing, excessive cigarette breaks • chat, gossip, social communications • daydreaming, doodling, over-long breaks • reading nonsense or irrelevant material • unnecessary adjusting equipment etc. • embellishment and over-production Habitual 'comforters' not true tasks. Non-productive, de-motivational. Minimise or cease altogether. Plan to avoid them.

Weekly Activity Schedule

Use a simple weekly planner to manage and protect your planned activities. You'll manage your time by managing your activities - that means protecting the time slots you plan for your tasks. Time management is mainly dependent on planning activities into time slots and then protecting the activities from interruptions, whether from other people or your own distractions.

Try to plan and defend time-slots for everything that you do. Make lists and work to them. You are at your most efficient the day before you start your annual leave. If you really want to you can be this well-organised every day. You must also plan time slots for unplanned activities - you may not know exactly what you'll need to do, but if you plan the time to do it, then important things will not get pushed out of the way when the demand arises.

Use the test: is this urgent or important? A job may be terribly important, but may not need doing now. Get the genuinely urgent jobs out of the way first, and don't allow yourself to be distracted by the bigger jobs that you can do later

The next page shows an example of a weekly activity schedule. Consider what has been included in the schedule and then compare this to your Top 10 list of jobs for next week. Using the blank weekly schedule enter your Top 10 list along with other routine jobs that will also need to be completed.

	mon	tues	wed	thur	fri
am	1. check emails, post, initial response. 2. review last week reports 3. department meeting 4. agency meeting 5. check emails	1. check emails etc. 2. staff appraisal 1 3. staff matters arising time-slot 4. project time-slot 5. check emails	1. check emails. 2. chase figures for weekly report 3. strategy meeting 4. process review time-slot 5. check emails	1. check emails 2. my appraisal 3. staff appraisal 4. staff appraisal 5. check emails	1. check emails 2. weekly report 3. conference planning 4. unresolved non-urgent issues 5. phone calls 6. check emails
lunch	• with agency	• project team working lunch	• with customer	• with appraisee	• with boss
pm	1. return phone calls 2. emergency situations time-slot 3. reading monthly reports 4. appraisals preparation 5. check emails and initial responses	1. supplier visit 1 2. supplier visit 2 3. major phone calls 4. check emails 5. thinking time-slot for new strategy project	1. customer visit 2. customer visit 3. my appraisal preparation 4. check emails 5. phone calls and correspondence	1. emergencies time-slot 2. systems and process review time-slot 3. weekly report preparation 4. check emails	1. agenda for next week dept meeting 2. plan next week's schedule 3. spare time-slot for staff issues 4. check emails 5. clear up outstanding issues

	mon	tues	wed	thur	fri
am					
lunch	•	•	•	•	•
pm					

Time Management NOW

We hope that you have enjoyed this training session and that you have achieved what you wanted from it. Look back at your personal objectives at the beginning of this book. Has your thinking changes since then? If it has, write down your new ideas about time in the following space.

Now is a good time to review what you have gained, and start applying it !! In the space below, list three things you have learnt about yourself and the way you manage your time as a result of this session.

1

2

3

Now list three things to improve the way you manage your time that you have learns as a result of this session.

1

2

3

Finally …….. consider the following:

Five ways to get the most out of each day

Here are some ways to increase your productivity and go home on time.

Every day we start off with the best of intentions. We have important work to finish, people we want to speak to, and long-term projects we need to start. But by the end of the day we discover we've only accomplished a fraction of what we wanted to do. So we're forced to come in early, stay late, and work at weekends. Yes, we're busy, but hardly productive. Here are five time-saving tips that will help you become more productive at work:

1. **Make an appointment with yourself.** Give yourself uninterrupted blocks of time - 30, 60, or 90 minutes during the day. This will enable you to concentrate and focus your attention on the matter in hand. Close your door, ignore the phone and give yourself time to think and concentrate as you tackle your jobs and projects.

2. **Make the most of your prime time.** We all have a particular time of day when we have lots of energy and enthusiasm and a greater ability to think and concentrate. Work out when you are at your most effective and tackle your most important work then. Try to arrange meetings, appointments and other activities for other times of the day.

3. **Avoid impromptu meetings.** Impromptu meetings are really interruptions, and are huge time-wasters and productivity destroyers. They break your concentration, disturb your train of thought and undermine your momentum. The next time someone comes into your office or sits by your desk and starts to make herself comfortable, say that you're in the middle of a very tricky task or an important project. Then ask if you could get together at a mutually convenient time later in the day or week.

4. **Schedule your telephone calls.** Every time the telephone rings it's an interruption. If you're engrossed in some work it's fine to let the caller leave a message on your voice mail or answering machine. If you decide to answer the phone, explain that you can't talk at that moment, and arrange to set aside a time for a call later using these guidelines:

- Each party should write down the time and date of the call
- Take each other's phone number so you can get in contact if there's a conflict
- Outline the topic of discussion
- Decide who will make the call

5. **Set aside time to meet your staff and colleagues.** In most offices, time is wasted by people getting up from their desks to ask someone else a question. This interrupts both parties. Here are some ideas to help you solve this problem:

- Set aside specific times to meet people
- Have sales and staff meetings later in the week. Most businesses hold their meetings first thing on a Monday morning, which drains people of their energy and enthusiasm. As an alternative, have the meetings on Thursday or Friday
- Give out tomorrow's work on the previous afternoon. This gives people time to organise the following day's workflow and the opportunity to think about what they need to do

Seven ways to manage yourself

Managing yourself isn't easy. But follow these tips to help you achieve your personal goals in life and at work.

1. Use a diary

Procrastination paralyses many people. Getting started is the hardest part of many tasks. You need to understand that there are no easy fixes for this – you just have to exercise some real willpower and get on with it. But you can help yourself by scheduling a task in your diary, and sticking to it as you would an appointment with someone else.

2. Sort out your time

Keeping a diary sounds easy, but using it properly is harder. This means not just writing down records of meetings and appointments, but also notes that remind you to block out time for yourself and time for tasks. You can also record deadlines, a list of phone calls to make and correspondence to send. This ensures that your diary is a powerful tool for prioritising each day and getting things done. Then all you have to do is stick to it.

3. List your life

Your **TO DO** list is your best friend. Whether you use an electronic organiser, a Filofax or just a notebook, list **EVERYTHING** you need to get done. If these tasks involve phone calls, write down the numbers. Then develop a system for prioritising these tasks and take this list with you everywhere you go. This means that idle time need never be wasted because you can spend it doing odd jobs, such as making calls.

4. Organise your filing

If you can't find what you need more or less instantly, it's too well hidden. Organise papers, files and so on so that you know where everything is. It doesn't have to look neat or follow a recognised system. The essential test is that if you had to give someone instructions to find something over the phone, would you be able to tell them exactly where it is?

5. Be ruthless

Wouldn't your life be simpler without people? Just think what you could get done. People interrupt, change deadlines and take up your time, so you need to handle them effectively, or they will steal your time in a multitude of ways. Be ruthless, but nice. Tell them you're too busy. Tell them you can't. Tell them you'll get back to them. Say 'no' to them – nicely.

6. Plan telephone calls

Use the phone as a tool, not an enemy. Make your outgoing calls in blocks. That way, you can plan time to do them and you'll probably keep conversations shorter. Incoming calls don't **HAVE** to be answered. You can let the call go to voicemail or an answering machine – which gives you the option to return the call immediately if it's urgent, or to add the return call to your **TO DO** list if not. You can even say, 'Can I call you back?' Most importantly, it lets you work without the interruption of an uncontrolled phone call.

7. Attend select meetings

Meetings drain your time (and energy) if you're not careful. Only attend meetings you really need to be at, and politely decline others.