

Management of Your Most Precious Resource-Time

It used to be said that man has a finite time on this earth, possibly this is changing to a certain extent with modern advances in medical science. The important thing to realise is that whatever time we have it is important to use it well and manage it wisely.

There is often little correlation between hard work and the level of achievement. Active people do not necessarily get the most done.

Activity=Productivity is a myth. Measure by results rather than activity

Develop a time log of a typical day or week to help you analyse your time usage.

“Procrastination is the thief of time”

The following works for me, I do not know if it will work for you. Trim time wasting e-mails. Attempt to be succinct in all your written documents, you do not have time to write pages of waffle that others will be too busy to read. Use management summaries with major reports. Trim non-essential meetings and use video-conferencing instead of gathering people at a meeting where people have to travel to the meeting venue. An open door policy is fine in theory but can waste a lot of time. Instead let people know your not to be disturbed times and the times when you are available for consultation. Come in early, leave early and use the early morning when no one is about to your advantage. At the beginning of the day divide your to do list into the MUST DOS, SHOULD DOS & COULD DOS, your aim is to complete at least all those on the MUST DO list before you go home.

Excessive work habits are more often a debit than a credit.

Common time wasters

- 1 Trying to take on too many tasks
- 2 Poor planning
- 3 Accepting jobs that should & could be done by others
- 4 Putting jobs off
- 5 Lack of organisation
- 6 Taking on tasks not capable of doing

You need to identify what are the time wasters for you.

Planning your work will save time.

Refuse to do the unimportant.

Set deadlines for yourself and others.

Telephone-Do not be scared to terminate conversations, block calls in your quiet time, pre-plan your call, delegate your calls, do not encourage small talk,

Handling interruptions-Do not encourage them, filter phone calls, tell people you are busy, you be the visitor rather than encouraging people to visit you, limit the time of the visit, work elsewhere, come in early, keep a certain time of the week free, learn to say no, improve delegation.

Paperwork-Do you really need that memo? Does Fred really need a copy?, C.Y.A. & J.I.C. paperwork?, be succinct in everything you write, expect succinct correspondence from others, purge files regularly, write on the original rather than produce a new piece of paper, can correspondence be replaced by a phone call?

Meetings-Do you really need a meeting?, can someone else attend?, do your homework before the meeting, have an agenda, have a time schedule for the meeting, define the objective of the meeting, allocate responsibilities for agreed tasks, leave if not relevant to you, review meeting effectiveness.

Travel-Is travel really necessary?, can you video-conference instead?, must it be you who travels?, plan / combine trips to reduce frequency, verify appointments before you leave, have a checklist, take your lap-top with you and do some work, use the airport lounges,

Reading-Choose what you read, cut down on the reading of newspapers, skim read, read with a purpose, delegate reading and ask for a summary,

Keep a reasonably tidy desk

Take the time you need to do a quality job, saves re-work.

Do it straight away.

Prioritise, do the important first.

Ask yourself "Have I got a better way of spending my time?"

Do not leave e-mail sitting in your in box.

Do not take on too many tasks at once

Group tasks of a similar nature and do them together

Say no

Get feedback on job performance

Collect everything needed for a task before you commence it

Set an example by same day processing of your in basket

Tell your staff "Bring me solutions, not problems"

Remember the Pareto Principle, 20% of activity gives 80% of results, make sure the 20% gets done

Keep one day of the week free

List your common time wasting problems, causes and actions you could take.