

Quotes – Time

- Deadlines, I love the sound of them as they go whooshing by! Douglas Adams
- Time only seems to matter when it's running out. Peter Strup
- There is time for everything. Thomas Edison
- Time is the coin of your life. It is the only coin you have, and only you can determine how it will be spent. Be careful lest you let other people spend it for you. Carl Sandburg
- You will never find time for anything. If you want time you must make it. Charles Buxton
- Time may be a great healer, but it's a lousy beautician. Unknown
- Time is but the stream I go a-fishing in. Henry David Thoreau
- I've been on a calendar but I have never been on time. Marilyn Monroe
- Tough times never last, but tough people do! Robert Schuller
- A committee is a group that keeps minutes and loses hours. Milton Berle
- Never leave that till tomorrow which you can do to-day. Benjamin Franklin

Five reasons to improve personal effectiveness

1 To be able to *achieve* 'more'

Not, take on 'more', but be able to do more of the things that we need to do.

2 To be more in control

If we manage our time well, we feel more in control of what we have to do and can make better decisions about which work we are going to do and when we are going to do it.

3 To reduce pressure

If we are more organised then we can reduce the pressure on ourselves, improve the clarity of our thinking and decision making and in turn improve our productivity

4 To have more energy

If we manage our time well and do what we need to do, it improves our well being and state of mind which impacts on our physical and emotional states.

5 To feel better about ourselves

A result of managing our time better is we feel we are successful and therefore feel better about ourselves.

Five steps to effective time management

1 Be aware

How do you spend your time each day? We can often have just an impression of how we actually use our time. Keeping a time-log for periods of time will give us an accurate picture.

2 Establish goals

If we establish goals for ourselves at work and at home we then know what we are working towards. Think about both SMART goals and SUPER goals

3 Plan

Once we have set a goal or goals then we need to make a plan of how we are going to reach it. Planning time is one of the things that always gets dropped when we are busy. It is however so important in achieving the right results we should actually be prioritising our planning time. At first this may feel like it is taking up time but in the long run you will reap the rewards.

4 Set priorities

These should be based around what you are actually measured on – the things that in line with the organisations bigger strategic objectives. You should have mutual agreement with your manager as to what these are

5 Develop habits

Lastly, we need to develop positive habits that become a way of working and will help us reach our goals. This means reviewing your current working habits and practises regularly in order to work not just more efficiently, but crucially, more effectively.

Time management quadrant example

Q1 Urgent & Important	Q2 Not Urgent But Important
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genuine crises • Pressing problems • Projects/work driven by deadlines • Fire fighting <p>Consequences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Burnout ○ Stress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning, • Relationship building, • Creative thinking – new opportunities, • Preventing crises, projecting • Professional knowledge <p>Consequences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Vision ○ Perspective ○ Control ○ Balance
Q3 Not Important But Urgent	Q4 Not Important & Not Urgent
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interruptions • Some calls • Some mail • Some reports • Unprepared meetings <p>Consequences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Out of control ○ Short term focus ○ Feel victimised 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irrelevant mail and calls • Trivia • Unproductive activities • Stuff we like to do <p>Consequences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Irresponsibility ○ Dependant on others

Sector 2 is the key

- Planning – long & short range
- Preparation
- Reading/Knowledge
- Professional development
- Devising systems & processes
- Creativity/ designing
- Implementing
- Prevention
- Visioning the future
- Exercise/ recreation/ leisure

Top Tips for Time Stealers – how to manage them!

To manage telephones

- Use voice mail effectively – time, dates, action
- Set aside, talking calls, making calls, free time with colleagues
- Be clear about the purpose of in & out calls
- Consider: is this the best form of communication?
- Be more assertive

To manage emails

- Get training – auto reply, out of office, confirm / decline meetings & appointments, file management
- Make a routine of it
- Be proactive in planning action & avoid being reactive
- Consider: is this the right method of contact?

To manage paperwork

- Use ABC(D) rule: Act on it, Bin it, Consult, Delegate it
- Make filing routine and prompt
- Make a decision and act: don't touch a paper more than 3 times without acting on it in some way
- Use a bring forward system
- Have an everything book (Bring it everywhere!)
- Use a rolling To Do List – at the back of the Everything book
- Use your diary as a management tool not an appointments book
- Reading – make time, don't hoard, and highlight key points & thoughts as you read.

To manage interruptions

- Clarify priorities
- Let people know when you are / are not available
- Stand up, move, be assertive
- Delegate effectively – task, responsibility & sources of support
- Delegate some decision making = responsibility – opportunity to learn
- Assess training needs.

To manage crisis

- Clarify priorities
- Assess urgency/importance of crisis
- Delegate effectively
- Diary in crisis time – review & replan
- Always think – who can help?
- How can you avoid a repeat?

To manage meetings

- Be sure you need to be there – for all or part?
- Ensure you get / give purpose, notice, times, agenda, minutes
- Pre-empt Action Points – diary immediately, check with others in advance if they have theirs done
- Schedule any ‘pre-meeting’ planning time needed
- Have tele-meetings
- Have stand-up meetings
- Be assertive, talk to the Chair, and offer to help.

To manage relationships

- Clarify your own, your managers and your staff’s responsibilities – in general & in delegation
- Focus on the results
- Use the best ‘method’ of communication
- Improve & practice your communication skills
- Address conflicts – or move on yourself!
- Chatter less but talk and listen more
- Make appointments and respect time
- Have more 1-1 meetings with key personnel.

To manage planning, thinking, & creativity time

- See Deal with interruptions
- See Deal with crisis
- See Deal with paperwork
- But seriously ...
- Schedule out planning time - & - crisis time, interruption time, paperwork time, email etc. Be realistic & proactive
- Use your Everything Book, Your diary / To Do List & your Bring Forward system alongside each other
- Embrace technology.

To manage your well being

- Be clear about your personal goals & values
- Recognise stress & do something about it
- Be more assertive

Example Rolling To-Do lists

Time	Monday	To-Do page
08:00		<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Phone Joe○ Check invoice received from BTB○ Reply to letter from NHSVC○ Fix up meeting with Mr Harrison re: application○ Speak to John re article on website○ Phone Peter re Friday night○ Check report deadline○ Fix 1-1 with Joseph
09:00	Morning team meeting	
10:00		
11:00		
12:00	Lunch with Joe	
13:00		
14:00	1-1 with Pamela	
15:00	Prepare notes for management meeting	
16:00	1-1 with Ashley	
17:00		
18:00		

You can use a diary which has a blank page or use a blank book and put in the relevant dates. Every time you gain a task, or someone asks you to do something you can put it into your rolling to-do list, **on the day that you need to do it**, this way you avoid lots of pieces of paper and lists that you carry around with you.

Everything book

This is the book that you take everywhere with you. Meetings, appointments, 1-1's, etc. You also use it for all the notes that you make, ideas that you have. This means that you have everything you need with you at any time.

Bring Forward System

A concertina file or drawer with lateral files, numbered 1 to 31. You then take any particular piece of paper, note, agenda, and letter and place it in the day that you are going to need it. For example, an agenda you may put in the day before the planned meeting so you will have time to prepare for the meeting. Any relevant notes can be kept in the date of a 1-1 so you have all the right things at the right time. **This requires daily management.** If you are not in a position to use this daily and manage the system frequently then this might not be for you. If you are able to do this, the Bring Forward system can be a real winner.

Setting Priorities

To help determine the tasks we must address in the order in which we must address them, we must put them in priority order.

The 1,2,3 Method of Prioritising

Priority 1 “MUST Do”

These are critical items.

What makes them critical?

- Management directive
- Important customer requirement
- Opportunities for advancement/success
- Needed to complete the next stage

Priority 2 “SHOULD Do”

These are important items but they are not essential and do not have critical deadlines

Priority 3 “NICE To Do”

These are items which may be interesting to pursue but if required may be eliminated or postponed

Always remember that priorities change over time. Due to a change in circumstance for example, a priority 3 item could become priority 1 tomorrow, or a priority 1 could become a priority 3. In order for you to effectively use your time you must constantly review your priorities.

How To Analyse Your To-Do List

Your to-do list is your task inventory. Review each item for:

1. *Necessity*

Scrutinise each task to be sure it is necessary. All too often we continue to do things past usefulness (eg monthly reports where information is no longer used)

2. *Appropriateness*

Who should perform the task (i.e. appropriateness to department and/or skill level)? Reassignment of work beneath your skill level helps you and the organisation

3. *Effectiveness*

Is this a task you should be doing now, positioned against your priorities and goals?

4. *Efficiency*

Once satisfied you are doing necessary, appropriate and effective work, ask: "Is there a better way?"
Look for faster methods, better procedures.

Delegation – how to do it effectively

Remember the 5Ws and 1H

WHAT does the task involve?

Be clear about what the task is and the results you expect.

WHY is the task needed?

Why is the task being delegated? Check that it is appropriate to delegate e.g. some decisions shouldn't be

Where does it fit into the bigger picture?

What is the impact of the task?

What is its relative importance?

WHEN does the task need to be completed by?

Give realistic deadlines. Make sure you take into account their current workload and their ability to perform the task.

WHERE is the task to be completed?

e.g at the desk, meetings with others

WHO is responsible?

There are different levels of responsibility that you can give individuals depending on for example their experience, time in the organisation, nature of the task.

HOW is the task to be performed?

Be clear on the approach to the piece of work (if it is up to them to decide how to approach the task, let them know that!)

Be clear what support/training they can get

Be clear with when they can access you for support.

Determine how the task will be monitored and evaluated

Some other tips:

- Make sure the task is AGREED
- Be assertive – don't allow the problem to be delegated back to you.
- Be supportive
- Accept that mistakes will be made and make sure you are monitoring the task enough to ensure that mistakes are minimal
- Make sure the person has understood the task – ask the right question to check for understanding e.g. instead of
 - Do you understand?
 - Ask
 - Please explain to me what you need to do for this task

Assertiveness

10 Tips

Remember it is being assertive not being aggressive

These can be useful when needing to delegate tasks and when being asked to take on more tasks.

1. Basic Assertion

'You promised me that piece of work last week and it is now Tuesday, I need the work before lunch'

2. Empathetic Assertion

'I know you are busy but I need that data by the end of the day'

3. Consequence Assertion

'If you don't do this, . . . '

4. Negotiate and Compromise

Don't say no, try to reach a solution which suits both parties.

Discuss possible solutions to the problem. Listen and put forward ideas.

'How quickly would you be able to complete this?'

'I can complete the task, but not until . . . '

'I can do that piece of work but I also have these 3 pieces of work to complete for you today, can you tell me what your priorities are?'

5. State the solution

Make sure both parties understand and accept the solution

6. Use 'I', not 'You'

Shows taking responsibility

7. Do not over apologise

8. Do not allow for post assertion 'guilt'

9. Use strong positive constructive language

10. Avoid circular debates

Further Resources

Look on our website for DSC Public courses www.dsc.org.uk These may be most relevant:

- Becoming an Assertive Professional
- Moving into Management
- Communicate with Influence
- Confidence at Work
- Practical Project Management

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