

Effective Time Management

**FEAFFA-EARA C&F TRAINING
MODULE**

Objectives

- Provide participants with tips to help them work more effectively in the office
- Identify guidelines for effective time management
- Identify time wasters
- Identify the benefits of time management

Time management

“Effective time management is defined as the development processes and tools that increase productivity and efficiency”

Time management defined

- Time is constant and irreversible
- Time cannot be hired, rented or bought
- Time cannot be substituted
- No one receives more than their share
- Time is inelastic no matter how high the demand
- Time is perishable and not storable

Time management defined

- Time is a valuable resource because it is the limiting factor in achieving anything
- Time is self-management and is related to self discipline
- Once we master time management skills, we will be more organised, efficient and happier

Personal time management skills

- Planning
- Prioritising
- Analysing and evaluating
- Delegating

Time planning skills

- Planning
- Prioritising
- In-tray and desk management
- Analysing and evaluating for quick decision making
- Delegating

Planning defined

“Formulating future courses of action”

- It is important that one plans for any activity that one does.
- Keep a to-do list, ideally in combination with a day planner, and be sure to go into each day with a clear idea of what you need to do.

Prioritising

Going through the activities of the day working through them. There are two ways to do this:

- The ABC method
- The MSC method

The ABC Method

Type A tasks

- Both important and urgent.
- Usually complex, difficult and the most important
- People are urged to start with the A's

The ABC method cont.

Type B tasks

- Either urgent or important, but not both
- Likely to represent the majority of our work and usually take up most of our day

The ABC method cont.

Type C tasks

- Neither important nor urgent
- Low priority
- Can be fitted in your schedule if time allows.
- Easy to do and look good when crossed of a list

The MSC method

This involves:

- Tasks that must be completed
- Tasks that should be completed
- Tasks that could be completed

A typical working day includes a mix of the three. Tune in to your daily cycle and plan your day according to your daily energy levels

In-tray and desk management

In-tray management: arranging your tray in a manner that will help you prioritise your time. You need at least 3 trays:

- Priority tray
- Lower priority tray
- Out tray

Desk management

Desk management allows one to deal with tasks by importance of activity and not by what one places their eyes on.

- Only papers relating to your current job/activity should be on the desk
- Desks should be cleared by the end of each day to avoid clutter

Analysing and evaluating for quick decision making

- Keep an activity log to analyse time wasters and make decisions on how to handle them
- This helps you analyze your time and answer questions like: what is your most productive period of time, what is your least productive time, did you achieve your goals and how could you have done what you were doing more effectively, what can you delegate, are you trying to accomplish too much in one day, how did you handle interruptions.

Delegating

Delegation is a process by which an individual, manager or supervisor transfers part of his/her authority or power to a subordinate but without relinquishing the ultimate responsibility entrusted to him/her by his/her own superior

Delegation cont.

- It involves passing responsibility for completion of work to other people
- The manager who delegates must take responsibility for any outcomes (negative)
- For a person to manage time, they must be able to delegate, so that they do not waste time on things that others can ably handle

Exercise

- Ask participants to prepare a time activity log stating how they will spend a normal working day
- Choose two/three good time logs and share them with the class
- Discuss them at length

Constraints of time: External time wasters

- Meetings
- Telephone interruptions
- Visitors
- Socialising
- Lack of information/looking for information that would already have been made available and tending to re-invent

Time constraints: external time wasters

- Excessive paperwork on your desk making you to start looking for what you need
- Communication breakdowns
- Lack of policies and procedures
- Lack of competent personnel
- Red tape

Time constraints: Internal time wasters

- Procrastination
- Failure to delegate
- Unclear objectives
- Failure to set priorities
- Crisis management
- Failure to plan
- Poor scheduling

Time constraints: Internal time wasters

- Lack of self-discipline
- Attempting to do too much at once
- Lack of relevant skills
- Internet browsing
- Poor delegation
- Failure to say no

Guidelines for time management

1. Time management is a myth: time does not change. There are only 24 hours in a day. All we can, is to manage ourselves with the time we have.
2. Identify personal time wasters and deal with them
3. Create time management goals. Change your behaviour because time cannot change

Guidelines for time management

4. Implement a time management plan:
 - Get started
 - Get into a routine. Use a day planner and follow it faithfully
 - Learn too say no. Saying yes to too many things means another thing will not get done

Guidelines for time management

- Do not commit yourself to unimportant activities no matter how ahead they are
- Divide large tasks into smaller manageable chunks, and learn to delegate
- Do not put unneeded effort into every project. Save perfectionism to the tasks that need it

Guidelines for time management

- Deal with a task once and for all
- Plan your activities. Get into the habit of setting time limits for tasks. E.g., reading and responding to emails can consume the whole day if you allow it. Instead, set a limit of one hour a day for emails and stick to it

Guidelines for time management

5. Identify your personal and work related priorities
 - If you have multiple priorities (personal and professional), select a few of each by order of priority. Trying to work on too many at the same time will increase, rather than lower your stress levels
 - Think about outcomes that are important to you and tackle them by order of importance
 - State exactly what you want to accomplish and by when

Guidelines for time management

6. Apply time management tools

- Day timer
- Software programs e.g. Outlook which lets you schedule events and reminds you of events in advance
- Time log of activities
- Monthly calendar. Highlight important events with a marker to create a visible and colourful reminder

Guidelines for time management

7. Organise your systems

Are you wasting time looking for files?

- Organise a file management system for your computer and physical files
- An organised filing system allows you to quickly locate/track your files

Guidelines for time management

8. Don't waste time waiting
 - Its impossible to avoid waiting for someone or something. Always take something with you to keep busy when you must wait

Guidelines for time management

9. Translate your priorities into concrete goals with component activities
 - Break each goal into component activities and identify steps needed to achieve the goal.
 - Identify requirements and resources you need related to each activity step

Guidelines for time management

10. Identify deadlines for each activity or goal
 - Write activities and deadlines
 - Scheduling activities gives you direction and affirms commitment

Guidelines for time management

11. Identify your own barriers to effective use of time
 - Identify and deal with your time wasters
 - Discovering motivation for resistance to time management will assist you understand your behaviour, e.g. Is the task boring? Do you really want to do it? Do you feel too “controlled” by your calendar?

Guidelines for time management

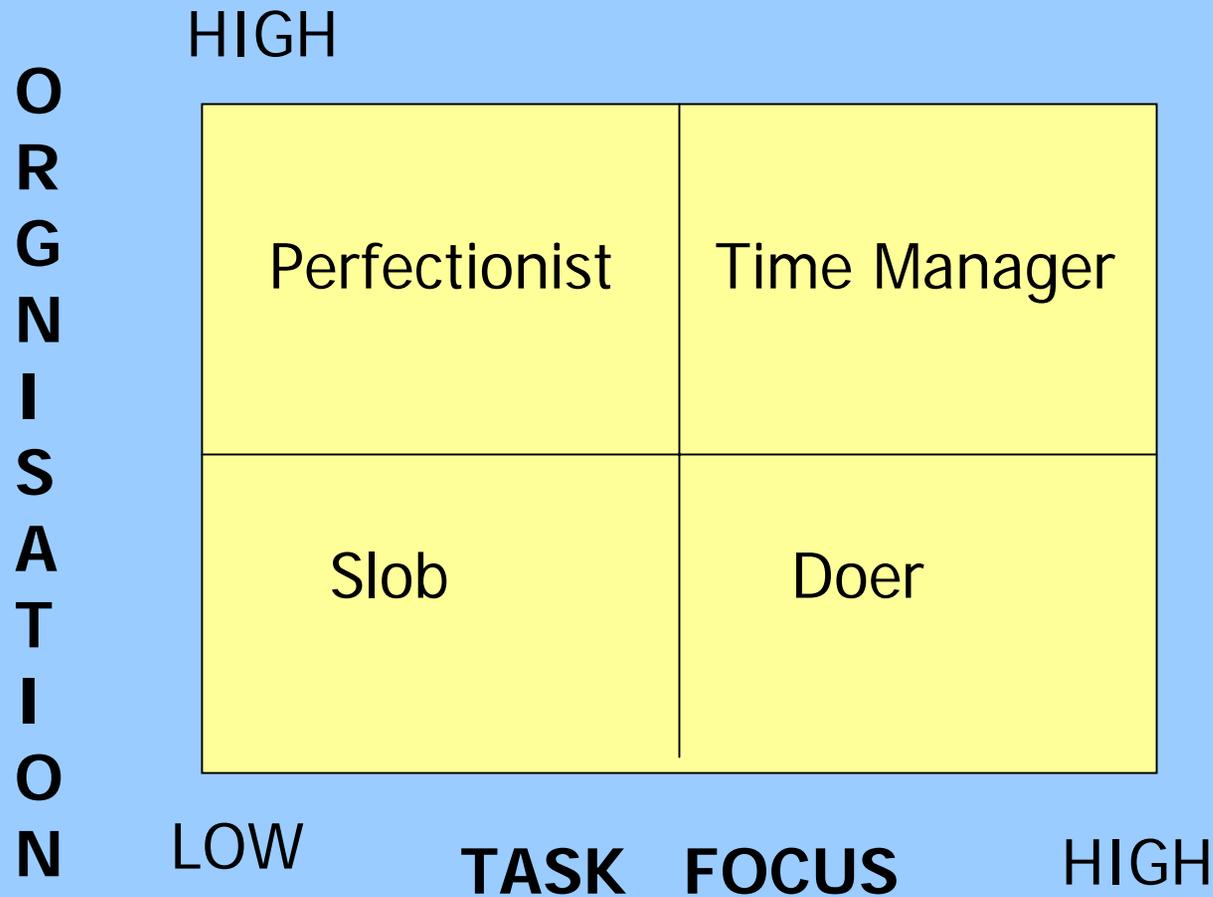
12. Know your best time

- This is the time when you do your best work
- You can discover it by process of experimentation e.g. Winston Churchill used to work best late at night and early morning. He used to stay in bed most of the morning reading papers, dictating letters and seeing people!

Types of time managers

- Perfectionist: spends too much time arranging, but does not focus on the task
- Slob: always in disarray and does not focus on the task
- Doer: focuses on a task, but cannot accomplish it because things are in disarray
- Time manager: focuses on the task at hand and is organised enough to get it accomplished

Types of time managers



Benefits of effective time management

Effective time management will drastically improve the quality of your life:

1. Reduces frustration: overcoming frustration releases the full power of your creativity
2. Makes you gain a sense of achievement and piece of mind: anxiety arises when you are not sure of what you are doing or where you are going

Benefits of effective time management

3. Opens you to more satisfaction: effective time management helps you overcome procrastination and teaches you to prioritise tasks
4. Increases your energy levels: the undone things circulating in your mind cost time and energy loss. Effective time management gets you organised and uncluttered which in turn increases energy levels

Benefits of effective time management

5. You get more quality time: organising the mundane things of life that must be done, e.g. eating, daily routine office work, etc will allow you more time for making progress or enjoying life

Conclusion

“The overall effect of a happier and healthier life will result in many positive consequences in your life”