

# Are You an Effective Time Manager?

I would like to share with you one of my observations, made while happened to be in the office of CEO of a company. About 45 minutes of my stay with him which was prefixed, no time was available to talk. The reason, he was busy with attending uninterrupted phone calls, mobile his subordinate managers who were coming to him for his decision on each petty matter. Over and above he was constantly involved with his computer.

An important study of top management in large organizations discovered that even the most successful managers were victim of this problem. Most of their time was taken up with demands of others or for purposes, which did not add anything to their effectiveness.

Most of the managers are not able to understand that time once lost is gone forever. NO replacement. No reversal. Time management has become one of the most important organization resources to be utilized effectively. We believe that we are managing our time very productively but when we going to deep, reality come something else, because we lack a reliable time sense.

Time has come to reorganize your working, be ready to get rid of time wasters, learn to say No and set your priorities. Time management is a personal process, which requires a lot commitment, patience, willingness and a lot of efforts from one self. Old habits, die-hard. But Yes! Let us try to start today. Come out of routine, focus on self discipline & feel the difference. You have spare time to do something new.

## A Checklist for you

Here are some questions you should ask and answer-yourself to determine how effectively you are using your time.

1. Do you have too much to do? If you answer “yes”, you are probably a victim of lack of planning.
2. Do you frequently work overtime to catch up? If you think that working overtime regularly will create a good impression, you may be kidding yourself. It often has the opposite effect. You may be looked upon as inefficient! (While it is yet to be seen anyone dying of hard work, contend that people who work overtime regularly are probably inefficient and must necessary be neglecting their families).
3. Are you spending too much time at your desk? In trying to keep up your paper work, you may find that you are neglecting your real management job-managing your department’s affairs.
4. Do you occasionally fail to make sound and timely decisions? In your executive job, you are paid for your judgment. If you do not anticipate, and plan for, future needs for information, your decisions may be delayed and even be faulty.
5. Do you waste time on details or work that belongs to others? If you do you’re probably still doing the work you were doing before you got promoted to your present position.

6. Do you know how you spend your time? Most executives do not know how they spend their time, or how valuable their time is. If you were to list all the activities you do in a typical workday and estimate the amount of time spent on each, you may be surprised to find that 15-20 % of the activities take up 80-85 % of the available time. The question is: Do you spend 80-85% of your time on activities critical to your performance or on inconsequential tasks?

### **Some Other Questions to set you thinking:**

1. Do you know the critical areas on which your performance is evaluated?
2. Do you plan your time-daily, weekly, monthly?
3. Do you establish priorities every day, every week?
4. Do you usually find yourself surrounded by a number of visitors/subordinates in your office?
5. Do you get constant interruptions in your work?
6. Can you locate important papers easily from cabinet /drawers?
7. Do you have an untidy desk?
8. Do you occasionally have to repeat your instructions to your subordinates?
9. Do you finish the job?
10. Do you pride yourself on being able to do three or four jobs at the same time?
11. Do you meet deadlines?
12. Do you have a system for spotting duplications in work you or your subordinates do?
13. Are you willing to give other people's ideas a chance?
14. Do you trust your subordinates?
15. Are you indispensable in your present job?

### **Where Does Your Time Go**

It is useful to think of the following classification of how you use your time during a typical working day.

1. Routine Work: Like collecting information, answering mail, preparing reports, etc. These are the little things of your job, but they can account for a big chunk of time available to you, often as much as 20-30 %.  
RULE- OF-THUMB: Cut the time for routine work to bare minimum (through Delegation) - say 10percent of your total time.
2. Regular Job Duties: Like planning, managing employees, checking progress, etc. This part of your job is important and must take a substantial amount of time.
3. Special Assignments: This is your share of miscellaneous jobs that crop up occasionally, for instance, being member of a special task team or preparing a special report for the boss. As a general rule, restrict your special assignment time to 10-15% otherwise it will cut into your regular time job duties-unless your boss asks you to spend more time on special assignments.

4. **Creative Work:** Like thinking about doing things better, preparing a new layout for your department, or developing a new training programme for your subordinates. Creative work always has a payoff-both for the newcomer and the old-timer. It also makes your work more interesting, and more rewarding. You can save time and improve your personal effectiveness, if you know how much time is spending on each of the above four types of work. The easiest way to this is to keep diary-a running record of what you do-for a week. Next analyze your time record to see how much time you spend for each kind of work. Remember. For effective time utilization, you must know how you actually spend your time.

Plan how you will spend your time-every day, every week, every month.

Live in day-tight compartments.

The more systematic you are, the more effective you will be in the use of your time.

Plan your work; work the plan.

## How to Organize Time

Practically everyone can get more value out of his working day by planning his time according to the following nine-step procedure.

**First Step:** List All the things you do in a typical way. The best way to do this is to keep a record of how you are spending your time for a week, adding to this list any tasks that you do only occasionally.

**Second Step: Estimate the time spend on each activity- the average time under normal circumstances.**

**Third Step:** Classify all the activities according to their importance-

1. Those that is essential for you to do every day.
2. Those that is essential at definite, stated intervals,
3. Those that is essential but come up unexpectedly and take an unpredictable amount of time.
4. Those that is advisable and important if you can find the time to do them.
5. Those that may come up as emergencies.
6. Those that require time in planning and analyzing.

**Fourth Step:** Look for duplications of effort and eliminate them. If you apply work simplification techniques like eliminating backtracking and replacing outmoded, time-consuming methods, you can streamline your working habits.

**Fifth Step:** Study all activities to determine which of them can be wholly or partly delegated to others. You may have many people who are qualified (or who can be trained) to do some of the detailed, repetitive jobs that are taking up so much of your time.

**Sixth Step:** Adjust you estimate of the time it takes to do the various tasks according to your streamlined methods.

**Seventh Step:** Make yourself a realistic timetable. Provide time for essentials first, then for emergencies. Try to leave some unscheduled time which you can devote to important

work that was formerly rushed or neglected, or required you to work overtime. Leave also some time for long-range planning and thinking.

**Eighth Step:** Make alternate plans for any disturbances to your schedule that may result from emergency situations. Take a good second look at those “emergencies”. You may be able to eliminate them completely with better planning.

**Ninth Step:** Set the plan in motion, reviewing it from time to time to make corrections and revisions.

A successful manager organizes his time so that he always operates at peak efficiency. The above nine-step procedure will help you improve your performance no matter what it is that you are managing.

## **ESTABLISHING PRIORITIES:**

Now that you know how you spend your time and how much your time is worth, let us look at the specific activities, which fill your day.

It is established that 15-20% of the activities take up 80-85% of your available time.

What are these A-class activities? List them, and assess if they are the critical areas on which your performance is evaluated.

If they are not the key performance areas of your job, you are spending too much time on relatively unimportant tasks. It's time you established PRIORITIES in your work.

1. Study your job description carefully and list your job responsibilities. Identify the key areas of your job on which your performance will be evaluated. (if necessary, seek clarification of your job responsibilities and key performance areas from your boss). These are the areas for which you should allocate a large proportion of your time.
2. Do that work first which must be done first. Resist the human temptation to do first what you know and enjoy, doing last the unknown and/or the disagreeable.
3. Never do anything yourself which can be delegated to a subordinate. Remember, “management” is the accomplishment of organizational goals through the efforts of others. A manager plans, organizes, motivates, and controls. The subordinates do the work!
4. Stop doing anything which isn't necessary or which should be done by some other office or department.

## **Identifying priorities:**

\*Pick the future as against the past

\*Focus on opportunity rather than on problem.

\*Choose your own direction-rather than climb the bandwagon.

\*Aim high, aim for something that will make a difference, rather than something that will make a difference, rather than something that is “safe” and easy to do.

Most managers set priorities in their work (effectively or ineffectively), but they rarely postpone a task altogether. They like to draw up a nice list of top priorities, and then say that they would try to do “just a little bit” of everything else as well. This would have been OK, except that nothing whatever may get done.

So, why not call a spade a spade, and establish priorities at the same time you are establishing your priorities. This way, you will not have the uneasy feeling that you are

neglecting some of your responsibilities, and will therefore be able to devote your time to the priority areas more effectively.  
It is essential to understand the value of time. Manage time as you manage your money.  
After all time is money!

