



Management Assistance Program

TIME MANAGEMENT FOR MAXIMUM EFFECTIVENESS IN THE WORKPLACE:

Understanding How Time Perspectives Influence Workplace Decisions and Behaviors

GOALS:

To help employees and managers:

- establish more effective time management skills and habits
- increase their perception of time passages and time value
- develop time management discipline and overcome personal time biases
- communicate their time constraints and resources in more assertive and balanced ways

OVERVIEW:

Each of us make major decisions and react to important situations based on our perceptions of time and its value to us. If an organization can educate its staff regarding the importance of time as a resource and help them to value their time through discipline and effective time communication, the pragmatic use of time will be better saved and spent. One of the most difficult obstacles to creativity and innovation within the workplace are individual biases regarding time. Some focus more on the past, "things aren't the way they used to be" others are stalled by a present fear, "we need to react now regardless of the consequences" or a future commitment, "we can deal with that at a later time". The key to effective project planning and organizational performance is using information from the past, present, and future in a blended perspective. The hallmarks of quality time management include:

- The ability to set reasonable time expectations and conservation strategies
- The knowledge of personal time perception strengths and weaknesses
- The sensitivity to time constraints and ability to evaluate current goals based on them
- The respect for our own time and valuing the time of others

OBJECTIVES:

1. Break patterns of time waste and procrastination.

Bad habits are incredibly hard to break and require complete dedication and concentration on a regular basis. Replacing old habits with new more effective ones is one of the best ways of assuring success. Here are some time saving strategies:

- Prioritization – Creating effective lists by knowing task importance
- Comprehensive Vision – Understanding each task in relation to overall goals
- Focused Concentration– Attending to the most important items first
- Project Oriented Tasks – Breaking goals into manageable and meaningful projects
- Clarification – Communicating goals and objectives for yourself and others
- Delegation - Motivating others to participate in well defined missions
- Reorganization – Adjusting schedules to meet emerging new goals and directives
- Combination– Collapsing smaller tasks and using shortcuts to gain larger returns
- Sequenced Approach – Ordering tasks to gain momentum and efficiency

2. Gain control over the perceptions of time.

While no one can control time or even truly manage it, we can all manage how we use time. This begins with a solid perception of the dynamics of time. Many individuals have false perceptions of time because they:

- Perceive time as an inexhaustible resource:
 - Have a poor perception of how quickly time moves
 - Have convinced themselves that time is all relative
 - Have never been held accountable for their use of time
 - Have problems with boundaries and constraints

- Believe that their quality or quantity of their output is more important than expediency
- Perceive of themselves as an inexhaustible resource:
 - Take on more tasks than time will allow
 - Think they are faster or more efficient than they really are
 - See their time as more important than others who can wait
 - Work beyond their capacity to endure fatigue
 - Believe they have other resources at their disposal
- Perceive of other's time as an inexhaustible resource
 - Undervalue other people's time
 - Overvalue other people's time
 - Punish others by wasting their time
 - Unmindful of other people's time
- Perceive time emotionally
 - Wish that they could re-live events
 - Wish that they could go back in time
 - Nostalgic for the good 'ole days
 - Unable or unwilling to adjust to a faster/slower pace
 - Overly conscious of time (spend more time analyzing it than utilizing it)
 - Surprised or disappointed by time
 - Use time as an excuse or weapon
 - Procrastinate

3. Use time as a limited resource with exhaustible limits.

- Provide time guidelines and expectations for the workplace
- Provide tools, techniques and strategies to conserve time and better spend it
- Expect clear workplace goals and objectives based on tasks and time frames
- Map out time sequenced use of time in job performance evaluations and eliminate unnecessary task and repetitive overlap
- Direct use of time on priority basis with most important tasks completed first

Management Resources

- Determine use of discretionary time periods based on job flow and work demands
- Evaluate personal time perceptions in relationship to time use behaviors
- Encourage workplace communication regarding time allotment and time demands
- Normalize workplace negotiations regarding time priorities and expectations
- Hold all employees accountable to their use of their own and other's time expenditures

4. Create time sensitivity

- Establish realistic expectations
- Be honest when communicating time constraints
- Re-commit to new time frames when necessary
- Re-assess time resources
- Start and end meetings on time and keep them as brief as possible
- Challenge time excuses
- Review time usage and task sequencing
- Evaluate workloads, responsibilities, commitments and job demands
- Prepare time contingency plans for unexpected delays

SUMMARY: Tips for Time Management

- Manage time expenditure expectations of others and yourself.
- Avoid living too much in the past, present or future.
- Understand how others perceive their time and yours.
- Learn to set boundaries which define the limits of your resources.
- Maintain respect while communicating personal and professional values.
- Use time negotiating dialogue to communicate time constraints and goals.
- Develop shortcuts and corner cutting techniques to maximize time usage.
- Eliminate procrastination by eliminating its root causes.
- Strengthen planning skills and utilize your task list as a reference point.
- Break the patterns of time waste through rewards and incentives.