

# **Managing your time**

## Contents :-

- 1/. Managing Meetings
- 2/. Effective delegation
- 3/. Finding more time
- 4/. Managing Paperwork
- 5/. Problem solving
- 6/. Productive thinking
- 7/. Thinking ahead
- 8/. Managing pressure
- 9/. Communicating effectively

## Managing Meetings

1. Keep the objectives of all meetings clearly in mind
2. Plan meetings carefully - decide who is to be present, circulate the agenda and any relevant information in advance.
3. Ensure that all, and only, the people necessary are present.
4. Agree time limits in advance and start on time. Try to hold the meetings in a room with a clock.
5. Plan the agenda carefully, allocating specific amounts of time to each item. Include time to establish the aims of the meeting, ensure effective discussion, reach conclusions, and agree the actions necessary.
6. Ensure that, when minutes are necessary, these are concise and definite, and include reference as to who is to do what and by when.
7. End meetings on a positive note, summarizing decisions taken and action to be implemented.
8. Remember, as Chairman, to blend the two roles of referee and leader.
9. Analyze your performance as Chairman regularly, and be prepared to solicit feedback so that you can develop your skills.
10. Review regular meetings from time to time. Make sure they are necessary, and that the right people are there.

### Effective Delegation

1. Ruthlessly analyze your abilities, and the limits of your time, so that you can identify what can best be delegated.
2. By delegating, leave yourself free to do the work that only you can do.
3. Re-examine the tasks you find particularly easy - it may be appropriate to delegate these, as well as the tasks you don't want to do.
4. Clearly define the tasks you are delegating and make sure the person who is carrying them out knows exactly what to do.
5. Don't delegate exceptional tasks:
  - a) Vital tasks which only you can do in time to the required standard.
  - b). Those where confidentiality or particular sensitivity are required.
  - c). New or ill-defined tasks that a subordinate may not be able to organize easily.
6. Delegate tasks in line with the skills of your subordinate, and make sure that your subordinate receives the training necessary to do the job.
7. Real delegation requires courage, judgement and faith in others - seek to exercise these qualities whenever you delegate.
8. Maintain a degree of control appropriate to the skills of your subordinate, and check progress to ensure that tasks are being completed.
9. Remember that delegating decision-making tasks also requires delegation of the authority to get the job done.
10. Use the delegation of important tasks to enrich your subordinate's job, improve the performance and raise morale.

### Finding More Time

1. Order your priorities so you don't squander time on unnecessary tasks.
2. Group Jobs to be done by category, such as making telephone calls, reading or writing letters.
3. Examine the parts of your day that appear to be committed - you may find some marginal time that can be used.
4. Find ways to cut down on the time spent on mundane routines.
5. Find ways to use the times when you are physically but not mentally occupied - listening to a tape recorder, or use the time to think.
6. Treat waiting time as an opportunity - to read, write, think or reflect.
7. Choose, if possible, the means of transport that will afford you the best opportunity to use the time productively.
8. Reduce the quality of your attention on things that don't demand it fully, so that you can do something else at the same time. There are many things you can do while you watch television - particularly those tasks that only require part of your concentration.
9. Take advantage of unexpected gaps in your day - time that had originally been allocated to a specific task. Re-allocate it productively.
10. Regard time as something that can be adapted to your needs and objectives.

### **Managing Paperwork**

1. Clear your desk of all paper except the specific job in hand.
2. Make sure your work space is organized so the things you will need are to hand.
3. Aim to handle each piece of paper only once.
4. Discipline yourself to make a decision on every piece of paper that crosses your desk, even if its only a decision to seek advice, or decide when to review it again.
5. Sort paperwork into categories in priority order.
6. Keep a file for paperwork that you can leave alone unless someone asks for it - do this selectively and occasionally.
7. Eliminate unnecessary paperwork, and simplify paperwork whenever possible.
8. Learn to identify quickly the key points in letters and reports.
9. Distinguish between material that should be read carefully, and that which should be skimmed.
10. Develop a clear and concise writing style, and plan carefully the key points of letters and reports before you write.

### **Problem Solving**

1. Define the desired outcome.
2. State the problem clearly - half the solution of a problem is understanding what it is.
3. Explain the problem to someone else or write it down - this will force you to clarify it, and solutions may start to present themselves.
4. Make sure you have gathered all the information necessary.
5. Identify the part of your day at which you are most productive, and allocate some of this time to the problem.
6. Start with the parts of the problem that seem easy or obvious.
7. Identify apparent solutions, and dismiss those that, for whatever reason, are not feasible.
8. If you are sure that you have all the necessary input, and cannot see the solution, make a conscious decision to leave it for a while - your subconscious mind will work on it.
9. Beware of procrastination - often any decision is better than no decision.
10. It is legitimate to decide not to decide - some problems will solve themselves or subsequent events make it clear what course should be taken.

### **Productive Thinking**

1. Identify your most productive period of the day.
2. Concentrate on managing well the hours when you are most productive. Use this time for your most important work.
3. Put into order of priority the opportunities or problems you need to think about creatively.
4. Learn to recognize how your subconscious mind works, so you will be ready for ideas when they surface.
5. Ensure that you have put enough time into analyzing a project and gathering information, so that your subconscious mind can work on it.
6. When you run into a dead end on a project, stop and check that you are not impeded by lack of facts, lack of conviction, lack of a starting point, lack of perspective, or lack of motivation.
7. Write down ideas when they occur, even if it is the middle of the night.
8. Set aside a period each day for mental reflection - by dismissing the trivia of the day your mind is cleared to be creative.
9. Analyze past success and identify the reasons for failures so that you can use the lessons productively.
10. At the end of each day make a list of priorities for the next day so that your subconscious can work on these overnight.

### **Thinking Ahead**

1. Develop a sense of direction by identifying longer term goals and objectives in both personal and business life. Then pursue them energetically but with flexibility.
2. Formulate clear basic policies, and review them regularly. Clear policies save decision making time.
3. Know what your values are - this will dictate how you spend your time.
4. Set the work you are doing in a strategic context.
5. Clarify middle-term goals and objectives. They should be specific and measurable and have deadlines.
6. Plan thoroughly. Time spent planning is seldom wasted - it cuts down on the time need for implementation.
7. Analyze past performance honestly. Identifying the reasons for failure or limited success will preclude the same mistakes being made again.
8. Be receptive to new ideas from which fresh opportunities may arise.
9. Stay flexible over the means for achieving objectives, and be prepared to change objectives if a better opportunity arises.
10. Get the most out of what you have chosen to do. Don't waste time regretting things you have chosen not to make the time for.



### **Managing Pressure**

1. Make the best use of your energy and pay proper attention to your health.
2. Balance work with recreation and set aside a time each day for reflection.
3. Review your values - make sure that you are not putting yourself under unnecessary pressure by confusing your priorities.
4. Express your feelings - discuss with others possible areas of conflict before they become acute.
5. Accept what cannot be changed - have the courage to change what can be changed, and the wisdom to know the difference.
6. Use negative experiences as positive steps to learning.
7. Check your time management skills - don't set yourself unrealistic deadlines, order your priorities, delegate effectively, and approach tasks methodically.
8. Regard symptoms of stress positively, as early warning signals, and do something about them.
9. Face squarely anything that worries you. Often identifying honestly the worst that can happen will help relieve anxieties.
10. Count your blessings, not your afflictions, and live each day as it comes.

### **Communicating Effectively**

1. Develop a clear and concise style of communication - on paper, on the telephone, and in person.
2. Take the time to plan what you want to communicate, and know your objectives.
3. Identify the key issues, order your points logically, and discard irrelevancies
4. Time you telephone calls - try to complete each call in three minutes.
5. Set aside a period of the day for making telephone calls - another for writing letters.
6. In a meeting give the other person your full attention, but avoid small talk and get to the point quickly.
7. Try to meet in the other person's office - then you can decide when to leave.
8. Develop techniques to manage interruptions - set a time limit, remain standing, have a clock in your office. Use them appropriately.
9. Use your secretary or assistant to screen potential interruptions.
10. Beware of welcoming interruptions as an excuse to put off unpleasant chores.