How to increase the effectiveness of your training

A tool kit of suggestions for trainers and speakers

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1 Purpose, planning and preparation

1.1 Invest time in planning

Successful training involves about 20% of your time in preparation and 80% of your time actually training. Don't short-change the planning portion or you may spend a lot of time teaching the wrong things or the right things in the wrong way.

1.2 Training program objectives

There should be at least three basic objectives when designing and delivering a training program. First, you will want the participants to enjoy the experience and feel that the session was worth their time, money and effort. You will also want them to increase their knowledge in the areas discussed in the program. And finally, you will want them to be able to apply the ideas to their job or life so that they can improve results and benefit from positive change.

Your traditional evaluation form should tell you whether you have accomplished the first objective – positive feedback on content, food, facilities, handout materials, and instructor knowledge and competence. And you will be able to tell by body language, participation and participant demeanor whether they are really enjoying the experience.

Their actual increase in knowledge is a little more difficult to measure without an actual test. But you could expand the evaluation form to include three things they learned from the session that they did not know before. Or ask them to estimate their increase in learning. Or include group work where you can observe and hear what they are saying as they interact with the material and other participants. Asking a few open ended questions to the whole group as to what they have learned during the day that will help them when they leave might also indicate their increase in knowledge.

I prefer to record their individual problems on a flipchart (You can do this at the start of the training session when you limit attendance) and near the end of the session, ask which ideas discussed during the day would help them solve these problems. If the individual who had the problem can't think of anything suggested during the program that could solve it, the group could offer suggestions as well.

Determining whether they actually make changes to their work or life after they leave is difficult without a follow-up session a few months later. You could have a meeting with them or get feedback from their supervisors or peers or actual reports on accomplishments in sales, productivity or whatever. You could also send them away with a brief form to assess the changes during a specific time period. But ideally you should build in a follow-up session as part of the program as well as contact their supervisors to discuss any improvements that they have noticed after the training.

If the participants in your program are eager for more training from you, that's a sure sign that what you're doing is working.

1.3 Applying research to training

Richard Mayer, an educational psychologist at the *University of California*, Santa Barbara has shown that optimal learning takes place when visuals and verbal materials are presented together simultaneously. It generates more accurate and enduring recall as well as improves problem solving. Other senses such as sound and touch increase it even more. The sum of the senses is greater than their parts.

Learning is improved when more senses are involved. Neural connections are formed when we learn, and here's a list of what builds neural connections found in a series on education appearing in the November 1, 2009 issue of the Toronto Star: Learning by doing; physical involvement; using more than one sense during the learning process; being emotionally calm & open to learning; building on information already there; having a positive connection with the instructor and knowing *why* you're learning. All these should be considered before designing the program.

1.4 Bridging the gap from research to application

Researching learning and how the brain processes information is fine. But it's important that we take advantage of these findings during our training sessions. I've prepared a summary sheet below of 18 facts gleaned from research along with what I suggest might be an application for each fact.

Brain research	**Application to learning**
Learning is enhanced by a variety of stimuli.	Use a variety of teaching strategies – lectures, PowerPoint, demonstrations, exercises.
Emotions can be crucial to the storage and recall of information.	Build an environment that promotes positive attitudes, joy, fun and laughter.
The brain tends to associate information, facts and events.	Don't rely solely on rote learning; explain the context of the information. Use real life examples and experiences.
Learning is enhanced by challenge, but inhibited by threat.	Challenge students but don't threaten them or cause undue stress.
Each brain is unique. And its structure is changed by learning.	Use a variety of teaching methods – visual, auditory, and kinesthetic.
A person's physical and emotional well-being is closely linked to the ability to think and learn effectively.	Offer a relaxed but focused atmosphere in the classroom.
The brain is capable of creating new connections (neurons) throughout life.	Encourage life-long learning.
There is no such thing as left-brained and right-brained people.	Don't categorize students.
Young people are wired differently and are adept at switching rapidly and they think knowledge is infinite.	Encourage the use of the internet and digital text books and explain how and where to get information.
There is a link between stress and impaired ability to solve problems.	Avoid case studies or problem solving exercises at the start of the workshop.
There are early birds and night owls. Teenagers are not as mentally alert in the early morning.	Start classes later in the morning for teens. Their prime time is closer to 10:30 am.
During sleep there is a replenishment of cells needed for a healthy immune system and it is believed that long-term memories are formed at this time.	Encourage students of all ages to get plenty of sleep.
Four nights without sufficient deep sleep affects performance, judgment and memory.	Don't prepare in the wee hours of the morning. Never sacrifice sleep in order to prepare for a program.
Physical exercise sends more blood to the brain and with more blood comes more oxygen.	Build in physical activity where possible.
The brain is incapable of multitasking. When trying to do two things at once, performance suffers.	Ban cell phone use and other electronic devices except for note-taking purposes.
Learning is sacrificed when too much information is given too quickly.	Deliver information in brief modules of 10 to 20 minutes. Allow time for new materials to sink in.
There is a "nap zone" around 3 pm when most people become sleepy.	Avoid transferring new or complex skills in the late afternoon.
Emotionally charged events persist much longer in our memories and are recalled with greater accuracy than neutral memories.	Tell stories and use dramatic examples to illustrate information being transferred.

1.5 Create an atmosphere for learning

When your workshop is held in a hotel, you can't paint the walls or install new light fixtures; but you can make the room more interesting and more conducive to learning.

How about a "wall of inspiration" where you tack up cards bearing inspirational quotes or quick tips related to your topic? Or how about colorful posters on the theme of your workshop or meeting? You could have a "Parking Lot" board on one wall complete with sticky notes so participants can post questions during breaks.

A table display of books or products related to your topic by might add interest as well as value to a workshop. You could jazz up the classroom tables with printed placemats bearing student notes or supplementary information. You might include colorful giveaways such as notepads, squiggly pens, booklets, mints and multicolored folders.

Background music before the meeting starts – at breaks and immediately after the workshop – might add to the mood. On occasion I have had Jim Croce's "Time in a Bottle" playing in the background as participants arrived for my time management workshops. Keep the volume low.

Even taping the flip chart sheets to the walls as they are used instead of burying them out of sight would provide an opportunity for the participants to review the material, as well as break the boredom of bare walls.

Use your imagination. Anything you can do to spruce up the room will add interest will make your training sessions more memorable and give the learning process a boost.

1.6 Success is in the little things

I don't lug my heavy laptop along to every speaking engagement. I bought a small, inexpensive netbook that I use exclusively for presentations – free from any exposure to Internet viruses, cookies, and annoying pop-ups. I load the PowerPoint presentations on the netbook as well as on a flash memory stick in case the client insists on controlling the PowerPoint from their centralized computer or need a copy for their website or participants. Any notes are also loaded on both the netbook and a flash drive.

I print a set of PowerPoint hand-outs, 6 per page, black & white, and number the slides so I can quickly jump to whatever slide I need – or to the last slide – by simply pressing the netbook key that corresponds to the slide's number followed by "Enter." On some slides I also make the odd reminder to myself of anything I want to mention while that slide is being displayed.

There is no excuse for running overtime, and I not only bring along a travel clock with large clock face, I also mark the stopping time on a post-it note and stick it to the clock in case I forget in the heat of the moment.

Other items I bring with me include a sample introduction in large readable font (even though I may have sent one to them earlier, and an item bearing my contact information that can be issued to everyone in the audience – such as a stress dot on a color chart, a card reminding them of the keys to getting organized and so on. Depending on the circumstances, I have also included a back-up LCD projector and a folded sheet of white broadcloth to serve as an emergency screen.

Based on experience you will be able to develop a checklist of items to bring with you to a speaking engagement or workshop. If the session flops, you know it is not because of something overlooked such as a spare LCD bulb, write-pad or auxiliary speakers.

If you organize your own workshops**,** create a checklist for everything you need to do, such as print notes, make up name badges, certificates, evaluation sheets, and so on. To create such a checklist, I first put myself in the shoes of the participants and visualize what they might be thinking as they walk into the seminar room. Where do I hang my coat? Where do I sit? Is there coffee? And so on. That reminds me to make up signs, arrange for the coffee and muffins, arrange name cards at tables, and so on. Then I visualize the instructor (myself) walking into the room and facilitating the workshop. Where's the projector? Is there a flip chart, will the session be recorded, where's the book table etc. and jot down the necessary actions and items accordingly. After each session I edit that checklist if necessary, adding anything that had been overlooked.

1.7 Develop a personalized checklist

When you are delivering a workshop or other training session, you want to focus on doing a great job with the material, not duplicating notes or searching for an extension cord. Success is frequently in the details. Below is one of the checklists I have developed for my *Making Time Work for You* public workshops. Yours would be different; but it might give you an idea of how many things need to be attended to before the session even starts.

1.7.1 Workshop checklist

In advance:

- ❑ PowerPoint slides
- ❑ Printing of handouts
- ❑ Make up certificates
- ❑ Reminder email to participants
- ❑ Summarize survey sheets on slide
- ❑ Order lunch from Andy's
- ❑ Pick up milk, cream, juice, muffins, cookies, fresh fruit, soft drinks, water
- ❑ Make up sign for door
- ❑ PowerPoint & notes on flash drive

For distribution to attendees:

- ❑ Tent cards & name tags
- ❑ Certificates
- ❑ Seminar notes
- ❑ Procrastinate Less workbook
- ❑ Second book
- ❑ Sample forms from Personal Organizer
- ❑ Vinyl Planners
- ❑ Personal Organization Self-analysis Quizzes
- ❑ Getting Organized Action Plans
- ❑ Stress dots on color charts
- ❑ Business cards
- ❑ Time Problem Survey sheets
- ❑ Evaluation forms
- ❑ Pens
- ❑ "Extrapolation Technique" sheets
- ❑ Organizing electronic files tip sheets
- ❑ Getting rid of your email backlog sheets
- ❑ Product folders
- ❑ Promo flyers

Also needed at workshop:

- ❑ Sign for door
- ❑ Registration List
- ❑ LCD projector & extension cord
- ❑ Wacom Art tablet, pen & cable
- ❑ Netbook
- ❑ MTWFY DVD
- ❑ Personal Organizer
- ❑ Planner
- ❑ FF system, Read folder, To Do pad, telephone prop
- ❑ Telephone ringer (Other Line)
- ❑ Android, pocket recorder, cell phone,
- ❑ Completed Time Problem surveys & objectives
- ❑ Products for display
- ❑ Telephone & Voice Mail Log
- ❑ Telephone Log booklet
- ❑ Telephone Directory
- ❑ Continental breakfast items

1.8 Schedule training during peak learning times

When scheduling training, take into consideration that everyone's internal clock is not set the same and the ideal learning time will vary depending on the group. Generally, teenagers are night owls and don't get sleepy until after the rest of us. Needless to say they do not operate on all cylinders early in the day and 10 a.m. might be a reasonable starting time for them. Senior citizens are the opposite, being early risers and earlier start times would be more effective in most cases. According to researchers, our ability to think clearly and react quickly is at its lowest point between 3 a.m. and 6 a.m. but I doubt there's much training going on during those hours.

Larks (morning people) are at a full head of steam by mid-morning and probably produce their most creative work before noon. But don't expect them to be fully awake for an evening session. And never expect them to be creative at that time. "Owls," on the other hand are usually most alert around 6 pm, and frequently do their best work in the evening.

According to John Medina, in his book *Brain Rules* (2008), it's not a case of being one or the other. Most people are in between a lark and an owl and you could be anywhere on the continuum. Only about 10 percent of us are larks, 20 percent are night owls, and the rest are somewhere in between.

There is a core period, somewhere in the middle of the day, where all groups are operating on all cylinders. So unless you know how everyone's biological clock is calibrated, it is probably best to schedule brainstorming sessions or case studies half way through the day. Oh, but avoid the "nap zone" somewhere around 3 pm. According to Medina, that's when the brain wants to take a nap, and doesn't really care what the owner is planning to get done at that time. That could be break time. In fact, taking regular breaks throughout the day can reduce stress and increase their energy level. European experiments have shown that short 3-minute breaks every hour help rejuvenate people more than two 15-minute breaks.

1.9 What day is best?

At least one study has shown that Tuesday is the most productive day of the week. Mondays are the least productive days. You might consider scheduling your workshops on Tuesdays if you view training as one of the top priorities.

1.10 Take a lesson from business meetings

One of the suggestions that I used to make to executives who experienced problems at their meetings was to write up a brief set of meeting guidelines. These guidelines would be based on things that were happening at their meetings, such as "Don't carry on side conversations," or "Don't monopolize the time," or "If in doubt, ask," and so on. There was nothing special about having meeting guidelines. What made it more effective, is having them printed on the backs of the tent cards (large place cards) that controlled the seating arrangement.

When participants read them just before or during the meeting, it was fresh in their minds, and there was a greater likelihood of them complying.

A variation of this idea can be applied to training programs. Attitude has an impact on how much participants really hear, remember and apply.

You could remind participants of this by printing the suggestions on the back of the tent cards – or as a separate sheet of paper or as the first page of their notes. Here are the ones that I used for business meetings. Change them so they are applicable to your workshops or develop completely new ones of your own.

- Speak up. Don't save comments for the walk out the door.
- Don't monopolize the time. Give everyone a chance to speak.
- Respect other people's ideas. When disagreeing, be positive and constructive.
- If something is unclear, ask. It may be unclear to others as well.
- Don't carry on side conversations. Maintain an active interest in the meeting.
- Ask yourself, how can I be better prepared for the next meeting?

2 Designing the training program

2.1 Break your material into modules

Robert Pike is a professional trainer and fellow member of the *National Speakers Association*. I honed my training skills by listening to him and reading his materials. He claims that adults can listen with *understanding* for 90 minutes. (*Professional Speaker magazine,* March, 2006). But they can only listen with *retention* for 20 minutes, and according to Bob, we need to involve them every 8 minutes. So the maximum content chunk is theoretically 20 minutes. After 20 minutes, people start dumping the content. They don't retain it. The reason we need to involve them every 8 minutes, is that the average high school graduate in the U.S. has watched 19,000 hours of television by graduation and has only been in class 14,000 hours. Commercial television never goes more than 8 minutes without a break. If you want to know more about Bob Pike's training programs for trainers, visit his website at http://www.bobpikegroup.com.

2.2 Provide valuable material in student notes.

The hand-out material should be interesting enough that the students would want to read the notes as well as hear what you have to say. A few fill-in-the-blank sections are good for getting involvement, but don't overdo it. I have attended some training sessions where I thought I was back in kindergarten class. The handouts should provide some space to take notes without having to write in the margin. Graphics are okay, but don't make the notes look too crowded. I prefer white space to graphics. It is important that students take notes since it aids learning and recall and actually helps transfer the information into long-term memory. Copies of the PowerPoint slides are not enough.

2.3 Watch for those urban legends

If you quote statistics in the student notes or from the platform, make sure they are true first. I used to refer to a study that Charles J. Givens included in his book *Super Self* (Simon & Schuster, 1993). It relates a study of business school graduates who had been out of school for ten years. When asked how they were progressing toward their goals, it was found that an overwhelming 83 percent had set no goals. They were working hard and staying busy but had no specific future plans. Another 14 percent had goals, but their goals were mental, not written. However, this 14 percent was earning on the average three times the income of those who had no goals at all. Only 3 percent of the entire graduate group had written goals. The 3 percent was earning a whopping ten times what those with no goals were earning. Have you heard of the study? What a great example to give to your students to prove the advantage of setting goals! Problem is it's not true. It's what they call an urban legend. The existence of the "Yale" study was debunked in 1997 in *Fast Company* magazine. They could find no reference to the Yale study in any academic or popular magazine database. Graduates and university administration had never heard of such a study.

Recent research by the *Cancer Research UK Health Behavior Research Centre* found it takes an average of 66 days to form a habit. It could take as long as 254 days! Did Maxwell Maltz ever really say it took 21 days to form a habit? I read his book several times from cover to cover and couldn't find it. But since everybody "quoted" it, I assumed Maltz must have said it in one of his speeches. But based on my experience, it never made sense. It depends on many factors, including how often you perform the replacement behavior, and how ingrained the behavior is that you're trying to replace. Well I dug around a little. Check out the blog at http://www.spring.org.uk/2009/09/how-long-to-form-a-habit.php. It makes a lot more sense.

You might want to check out stories like those mentioned above before quoting them in your training sessions. Many such hoaxes are revealed at www.snopes.com

2.4 Record your sources

Now there's scientific evidence that you need to make a note of the source of your information. Nicole Anderson, a researcher at Baycrest's Kunin-Lunenfeld Applied Research Unit claims that you remember the information, but easily forget where you learned it. So whenever you extract information from a book, report or other source, always record the source information immediately so you will be able to include it in any notes or presentations.

2.5 Avoid information overload

One of the biggest mistakes made by trainers is trying to cover too much information in a training session. It's not necessary to tell them everything you know in one workshop. You're not doing them a favor. The neural systems in the brain that control attention and store information as memory get tired quickly. They need to rest every three to five minutes. Telling stories, getting involvement, showing visuals all help; but they won't replace shorter teaching spans, more frequent breaks and less material.

We sometimes think that starting early, working through lunch and extending the workshop until 5 PM will ensure that they get their money's worth; but it only succeeds in overloading their brains. It's akin to students staying up all night to study for exams. The practice has been linked to lower grades and impaired reasoning and reduced memory.

Try designing training programs so modules do not exceed 20 minutes and get involvement every eight minutes as mentioned previously. Have more frequent breaks – even if they are only brief stand-up breaks, and take time at the end of the training program to reinforce the learning and get feedback on what they intend to do differently when they return to their homes or jobs.

2.6 Don't ignore the basics

Don't feel that everything you teach has to be new and revolutionary. Knowing something does not necessarily mean that they are doing it. And people love to have confirmation that what they are already doing is right. In addition, a new twist to an old idea can be valuable to the participants,

Keep in mind that the job of the facilitator or trainer is not to make simple concepts appear complicated or to disguise old ideas as something new, but rather to simplify complicated concepts and ideas so that everyone can grasp their significance and put them into practice.

I suggest that an ideal mix might be 20% new ideas and 80% basic ideas that have been around for a long time and which most people already know but seldom practice.

Change is difficult. Overwhelm people with too many new and innovative suggestions and little change will result. And the value of training is determined by what they do after they leave the session.

2.7 Training an aging population

When we design and facilitate workshops, we must keep in mind the age of the participants. Just as supermarkets are lowering shelves and making shopping baskets wheelchair-friendly and banks are hiring gerontologists for financial planning services, so we must make our workshops elder-friendly. This might involve larger lettering on PowerPoint slides, increased font size for notes, and avoiding both green and blue colors in pie-charts and diagrams. We must also remember to deliver the information in smaller chunks, be more repetitive, and take into consideration that the older we become, the more easily we are distracted. And may I suggest that more frequent washroom breaks might also be in order.

Older people are not always portrayed favorably in movies or sitcoms or among the younger crowd. In one study reported in the April, 2010 issue of *Scientific American Mind,* 65 percent of psychology students agreed that "older people are lonely and isolated." And 64 percent of medical students agreed that major depression is more prevalent among the elderly,

Research doesn't back up these opinions. In fact, older adults are actually happier than younger people, at least in the research reported to date. And population-based surveys reveal that rates of depression are highest in those between 25 and 45. The happiest group overall is men aged 65 and older.

In one study of 28,000 Americans, a third of the 88-year-olds reported being "very happy" and the happiest individuals surveyed were the oldest.

Older people are more likely to recall positive than negative information, so that should also help. And cognitive abilities do not fade dramatically with age. Older people do experience some memory loss and forgetfulness; but serious illness of the brain aside, intelligence and verbal abilities are not much different than they were decades earlier.

2.8 Keep up with the times

Times have changed. But in many cases, the learning environment hasn't. Many instructors still dole out the notes during class time, deliver long lectures, and keep the students' eyes and brains occupied with endless PowerPoint slides.

Learning is enhanced when students are actively involved in offering their own explanations and interpretations of the workshop materials rather than just passively absorbing what course leaders have to say. To quote Nobel laureate Herbert Simon, "Learning results from what the student does and thinks, and only from what the student does and thinks."

Most of the workshop materials should be issued well in advance of the session so the students have time to evaluate it, highlight areas of particular value to them, and come prepared to question, discuss and request more information on those areas. Most of the lectures should be replaced by discussions focused on the students' interests and needs. The instructors should spend less time disseminating information and more time helping the students see how they can adapt and apply the information to their own situations.

Where lectures are necessary, some of them could take the form of brief videos, articles or news items that prompt discussion. Take-away materials could be included on USB flash-drives. Additional information could be uploaded to a website for post-course reading. And an online discussion forum might be included for those students motivated enough to continue learning more in those areas discussed.

A 2013 study published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science USA* showed that frequent interactions keep attention from wandering. But attention spans in the digital age have been reduced drastically. So it is no longer effective to limit your workshops to one-way lectures, long videos, handouts and PowerPoint slides.

Training should be all about the student, not the workshop leader.

3 It's not who you know but how much you know about those you know

3.1 Do your homework before the training starts

In corporate workshops, it's not unusual to have people in the group who are not the least bit interested in being there. In fact you may have to deal with three types of people.

Learners: They want to be there and get as much as they can from the session. They are a joy to teach.

Vacationers: They want to have as much fun and free time as possible. ("Oh boy, another day off!")

Prisoners: They resent being there. (They were sent by their supervisors and they resent having to take the time away from their jobs). They are usually the ones who need it the most.

You can't dismiss everyone except the learners. But learning can be fun for everyone, and with humor, interactive exercises, and practical suggestions that can help make life a little easier, you can win over those who see themselves as prisoners. You just have to be aware in advance of the profile of the people in your workshop and their motivation for being there. You can get some of this with a preprogram questionnaire and a one on one conversation with the workshop sponsor or supervisors. I also get the participants' needs and expectations from a time problem survey sheet that I have everyone fill out in advance. I will refer to this later. It can be anonymous so people feel free to say whatever they like in terms of their objectives in being there.

The pre-program questionnaire that I use if the session is sponsored by a corporate client is shown below. It can be modified when used with the supervisors of in-company workshops.

3.2 Pre-program questionnaire

Organization:

Program date and time:

Location: (Please provide address and/or map):

Presenter:

To insure that the presentation is as meaningful as possible to your group, please reply to those questions that are relevant:

1. Purpose or theme of the meeting

   ____

2. Approximate number of participants:__________
3. Will spouses/partners be attending?__________
4. Profile of group (type of job, level in organization, education, experience, age, sex

   ____

   ____

   ____

5. What particular areas do you want stressed? Any specific time problems these people are experiencing?

   ____

   ____

   ____

6. Is this presentation part of a larger program? ______________________
   If so please list other speakers and topics; or attach complete program.

   ____

   ____

   ____

7. What activity, function, or speech immediately precedes and follows the time management presentation?

   ____

   ____

8. What would you like the participants to be able to do as a result of this session?

   ____

   ____

9. Please tell us about your organization (services, major activities, etc. (enclose literature and annual report)

____

____

____

10. Who should we contact for further information?

____

3.3 Get input from the participants themselves whenever possible

Getting individuals involved *before* the actual training generates more interest, lends credibility to the training and assures that you deliver information and strategies relevant to their needs. Develop a checklist or a survey sheet to identify their problems, and ask for their objectives in taking the program.

If you were presenting a time management workshop for twenty people or more, it would be difficult to make the rounds asking everyone for their input; but you could still have a profile of the people in the room, the major problems they have in common and their individual objectives for the session. This can be done *in advance* by having them fill out a form or questionnaire similar to the *Time Problem Survey* sheet shown below. I use this for most of my training sessions, whether it's a seminar sponsored by a company for their employees or a public workshop sponsored by my own company.

The survey form asks them to rate their time problems on a scale of 0 (no problem) to 5 (a serious problem.) By "problem," I mean it consumes a lot of time or generates anxiety or stress. The problems I list on the form are those that have been mentioned many times by participants in previous time management workshops over the years. You would change the problems to those generally experienced in the area for which the training is taking place. I allow the responses to be anonymous so everyone feels free to be completely honest in their comments.

When I receive these forms back from the participants, I determine the top ten time problems identified by the group, include them on a PowerPoint slide, and discuss them during the training session. I also summarize the individual's objectives in taking the program, write them on flip chart pages and paste them on the wall for all to see. That way, everyone knows I am aware of his or her problems and am interested in helping them achieve their objectives.

3.4 Time Problem Survey

Check the box that most accurately describes your position.

Professional		**Staff**	**Other (specify)**	
Manager		Administrator		
Supervisor		Administrative Asst.		

Please rate the following items from 0 (no problem) to 5 (serious problem) as they affect you personally.

	TIME PROBLEM	Rating 0 to 5		TIME PROBLEM	Rating 0 to 5
1	Interruptions by others		17	Trouble getting started in mornings	
2	Interruptions by telephone		18	Business travel	
3	Rush jobs, unrealistic deadlines, crises		19	Paperwork – sorting and reviewing	
4	Lack of privacy, no "Quiet Hour"		20	Commuting time	
5	Inability to say "No"		21	Poor communications	
6	Fatigue, stress		22	Forgetfulness, absentmindedness	
7	Procrastination		23	Upward delegation	
8	E-mail		24	Poor office layout, working conditions	
9	Waiting for people, idle time		25	Poor listening habits	
10	Time spent in meetings		26	Self-interruptions, lack of concentration	
11	Searching for material, shuffling papers		27	Failure to delegate effectively	
12	Lack of goals, insufficient planning		28	Reading magazines, books, etc.	
13	Lack of time-saving equipment		29	Life balance	
14	Perfectionism		30	*Other,* *specify*	
15	Slow decision-making		31	*Other,* *specify*	
16	Worry, anger		32	*Other,* *specify*	
				TOTAL	

Briefly describe your objective in taking this training:

____

Name (optional)____________________ Please e-mail to _____________________ by _______ (Date)

3.5 Introduce yourself before you're introduced

In addition to having a good idea of the people in your session and their needs and expectations, meet as many of your workshop participants in person as well. You can do this just before the session starts. Arrive at least one hour early and have all the set-up details such as PowerPoint, handouts, sound system, displays etc. looked after before the participants arrive so you can focus on the people. The main objective is not to remember their names (although that would be nice if it happens) but to meet as many attendees as possible and feel comfortable with them (and vice versa). You can also get an idea of their main purpose in being there, what they expect to get out of the session, and a few of their personal on-the-job challenges.

For example if your topic is organizing or time management it would be helpful to know that most people have a problem with procrastination or email. If you are sponsoring the workshop, you could discover all this in advance through a pre-program questionnaire. But if you are booked through an agency or by a large corporation, this is frequently impossible. And nothing settles the butterflies more than having met and talked with some of the audience members in advance. You are now talking to friends, not strangers, and you might want to incorporate some of the recently acquired information into your presentation.

I have always felt more comfortable and at ease and found the participants to be more receptive if I have met many or all of them in advance.

Meeting and talking with the participants is too late to be of use in designing the program – although it does allow you to make impromptu adjustments. But if you get permission to phone a few of the participants in advance, the information gleaned would be helpful.

4 Getting off to a good start

4.1 The cell phone dilemma

For those of you who conduct workshops or deliver time management speeches, you will have to contend with the problem of cell phones or smartphones beckoning their owners. There are several ways you could handle this. The most frequently used one of course is to simply ask everyone to turn off their cell phones before you start. But here are a couple of more creative and fun ways to do it.

One speaker distributes a brightly colored sheet of paper along with the notes. She then tells everyone to take out the red sheet of paper and crumple it up into a tight ball. This gets them involved. Then she tells them, "Now if anyone's cell phone goes off, throw this at them." It always makes them laugh, but it also reminds them to turn off their phones or put them on vibrate.

Another method is to ask the audience to please shut off their cell phones unless it is their birthday. Then say, "So everyone please remember that if a phone rings we should all join in the birthday wishes and start singing." The speaker who suggested this approach claims that twice he has actually started the song, and everyone laughed. Training sessions should be fun, not boring.

4.2 Should we be focusing on their learning styles?

Books and websites claim that students learn best when teaching styles are matched to their learning styles. It's a popular view because it doesn't indicate that students are better or worse learners; that they can all learn equally well given the right teaching style. So naturally, trainers tend to follow suit when teaching adults.

An item in the March/April, 2010 issue of *Scientific American Mind* mentioned studies showing that students' learning styles are difficult to reliably identify, largely because they often differ greatly across different situations. A child, for example, might display one style in art class and a different one when trying to learn math.

Most investigations have failed to show that matching teaching styles to learning styles actually works. It does not improve student grades in most cases. Instead, setting high expectations for students and providing them with motivation and skills to attain them – usually yield better results than other strategies, regardless of students' learning styles.

The article concluded that to the extent that the "matching" approach encourages educators to teach to students' intellectual strengths rather than their weaknesses, it may actually backfire in the long run since students need to learn to compensate for their shortcomings, not avoid them.

4.3 Grab their attention

Memory expert and professional speaker, the late Bill Clennan, HoF, used to say that in order for your audience to pay attention, they need to know within the first six seconds what's in it for them. And you have to keep them engaged, since the average person loses focus every six to ten seconds.

The most important part of a speech or workshop is the first 30 seconds. If you can grab their interest right at the start, whether you do so by asking a question, quoting an interesting statistic, telling a relevant story or getting their involvement in an ice-breaking activity, it will get you off to a good start. My most frequently used method for larger groups was to role play or demonstrate how disorganization can impact their lives in a business setting. You can view a clip of this at https://www.taylorintime.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=488&Itemid=100153. To transfer time management skills successfully you must get involvement and make the material come alive for your clients.

4.4 Effective learning

When it comes to learning, it has been shown that the more senses that are involved, the better you learn – regardless of your so-called style. For instance everyone learns better when they're moving. Motion engages more parts of the brain. So does emotion. Showing, telling, doing, storytelling, visuals, sounds, smells all aid in the learning process. There were studies done where they separated subjects in a room into three groups. The first group got information through one sense only – example, hearing. The second group was limited to another sense, say sight. And the final group was exposed to both sight and sound. This third group always did better. They had more accurate recall, and their problem-solving skills improved. The combination of senses was always greater than the sum of their parts.

4.5 Be prompt returning from breaks

When you break for coffee at your workshops, don't say "Be back at 10:15" because everyone's watch may have a different time. Say "Let's be back in 15 minutes", or whatever. A countdown timer on a PowerPoint slide would help. And remember, the class resumes when you start talking at the appointed time, not when everybody returns.

4.6 Show & tell as a training tool

Whenever explaining how to do something, wherever possible actually do the job while you are doing the explaining. The reason for showing instead of just telling is that frequently a step may be missed because you are so familiar with the job or process that you take it for granted. What is obvious or routine for you may not be so obvious to the learner.

"Show and tell" takes more time and effort to prepare; but it not only improves the learning process, it adds interest, commands attention, and breaks the monotony of an hour or more of training.

For example, if you are presenting a course in time management and personal organization, and you can't bring your office to the seminar room, bring your class to your office. One of the barriers to learning for any student is not being able to make the leap from visualization to implementation. What better way of visualizing how ideas work than to actually see them in action.

4.7 Don't let your knowledge interfere with results

The value of training is in the results, not in the experience. You may be in top form, delivering your ideas seamlessly with humor and conviction; but unless the clients change their behavior as a result, the session is fruitless.

How do you motivate someone to actually apply the ideas presented? How can you help them survive the "cooling off" period immediately following the session?

The short answer, in my opinion, is to satisfy the equation Motivation = Desire X Expectancy. Motivation is the product of the strength of their desire to change their current situation and the strength of their belief that what you are suggesting will actually work for them.

Most learners already have a strong desire or they wouldn't be investing their time and money in your session. You can reinforce it by helping them to visualize the benefits of change. But the challenging part of motivation is helping them to *convince themselves* that what you are suggesting will actually work.

This could include demonstrations, visuals, testimonials, case studies and personal examples. But the most important factor is being able to relate to their situation, understand their struggles, and be willing to adapt, change or even discard your favorite strategies in order to come up with something that makes sense to them.

Don't overwhelm your students with information. Initially, focus on a few key areas of knowledge. Give examples, explain benefits, provide how-tos, and offer ongoing assistance and encouragement. Be clear in your instructions, get feedback for understanding, empathize with the learner, and understand the theories of motivation.

Don't let your knowledge stand in the way of their motivation to act.

4.8 Don't overwhelm your students with options

Providing too many suggestions may result in little or no change being made. Research indicates that too much information may lead to workplace paralysis. In one study at *Duke University*, researchers showed that shoppers offered free samples of 24 jam flavors were less likely to buy any at all, compared to those who sampled only six flavors. Similarly, when given a list of 50 ways to improve time management skills, I found that students tended to do even fewer things than those offered only a few things to do.

But there is a problem is being able to suggest only those things that would be most appropriate for the students. It depends on their situation. That's why I give them a list of 50 workable ideas, ask them to check off those that look most promising, and then ask them to select three of the best ideas and record them on an Action Sheet. They then could focus on three actions only, rather than be overwhelmed by 50. Once those three are implemented, they can choose another three to work on and so on. If they did this three times, they would implement the 20% of the suggestions that represented 80% of the value to them.

5 The most important factor in learning is student involvement

5.1 You don't have to be an expert in a topic to teach it.

The best way to *transfer* skills or information on time management or on *any* discipline for that matter is to get *i*nvolvement on the part of the students. "Telling" is not that efficient. "Showing: or "demonstrating" is better. But *involvement* is best. There is an old Confucius saying that goes like this:

> "What I hear, I forget
> What I see, I remember
> What I do, I understand."

Mel Silberman, author of *Active Training,* (*1998*) modified this a bit, and his version, which more accurately describes the learning process, goes like this:

> "What I hear, I forget.
> What I see and hear, I remember somewhat.
> What I see, hear, question, and discuss with others, I begin to understand.
> What I see, hear, question, discuss and do, I learn.
> And after all this, when I teach, I master learning."

I like the idea of adding the teaching component. I don't think I actually mastered time management until I had taught it for several years. Similarly, I learned more about management during the eight years I taught business subjects at a college than I had ever learned prior to that in both school and business combined. So don't be afraid to teach something you have not yet mastered.

5.2 Getting involvement through questions.

A good way to get involvement in a workshop or school classroom is to ask questions. But when you do, don't rush ahead with new material if there is no immediate response. Wait about 7 seconds before proceeding. You could call this the 7-second rule. The average person needs 7 seconds to think about something, formulate an answer, and muster up enough courage to respond. (*Cool Down* by Steve Prentice, Wiley, 2007.) Yet in training programs and on-on-one interactions, we rarely wait that long when asking a question. Silence is a scary concept. So we are quick to rush in with verbiage to end the silence. Next time, allow more time for people to formulate questions. Participation will increase.

Although a good way to determine a student's needs or whether they understand a concept is simply by questioning, listening and observing, there is a right and a wrong way to ask questions.

The tendency is to ask, "Are there any questions?" or "Does anyone have a question?" That doesn't really encourage questions. In fact, some may interpret it, "Were you too stupid to understand what I just told you?" or "Does anyone want to reveal their ignorance to the group by asking a question?"

By asking "What questions do you have?" we are *assuming* they have questions because it's the normal thing. They don't feel intimidated or reluctant to ask questions. This is particularly important when you are training one on one.

5.3 Ice breakers are fun

Nothing gets people in the mood for learning more than laughter and participation. Here's an ice breaker that should produce both. I refer to it as "Does your right foot know what your right hand is doing?" Try it yourself if it's new to you.

While seated at your desk, lift your right foot off the floor and make clockwise circles with it. Now keep doing this while drawing the number "6" in the air with your right hand. Your foot will change direction.

Challenge your students to make their foot continue in the clockwise position while drawing the number "6." I've yet to see anyone able to do it.

Make your own point with the exercise in order to relate to the topic you are discussing. It could be "Accept the fact that some things are impossible to change so spend your time and energy where you can make a difference." Or "Just because we want something to happen doesn't mean it will." Be creative. And have fun.

5.4 Group involvement

People love to participate. And involvement is a great learning tool. Always be on the lookout for ways of involving the workshop participants in the material that you are teaching. For instance, you might ask the group to call out their biggest time management problems while a volunteer jots them on a flip chart. After each problem is voiced you might ask for a show of hands from those who are experiencing the same problem and have the volunteer put an "X" beside the major ones. Then you can form groups of 3 or 4 people and assign an equal number of problems to each group for discussion, being careful to distribute the major problems equally among the groups.

Allow enough time for them to brainstorm solutions to each problem (providing that deadline in advance) and have one person from each group report on their recommendations as you call out each problem in turn. Have a volunteer jot down the solutions to the problems on a flip chart, using a separate sheet for each problem. After all the groups have provided input on a particular problem, be sure to add other suggestions of your own that they may have missed. (It might be wise to word it, "Other groups have also suggested that you could…" so as not to give the impression that your added suggestions are the 'right' answers.)

Taping the flip chart sheets to the wall in the training room will allow people to write down those suggestions that they feel would help them gain control of their time. By leaving them there throughout the workshop they need not feel rushed or in a panic to make notes at the time.

I think it's important to allow time near the end of the workshop for everyone to share an idea or two that they have decided to implement as a result of the workshop.

5.5 Don't assume ownership of other people's problems.

Invariably, whether students admit it or not, many good suggestions fall on deaf ears. People instinctively relate the idea to their own work environment and quickly conclude that it won't work. That's unfortunate because a simple tweak here or there might modify the suggestion so that it *will* work, and with positive results.

To avoid a premature dismissal of ideas, conclude each suggestion by asking, "Why might this idea not work for you in your particular situation?" When they tell you why, acknowledge the reason and immediately ask, "What could you do to make it work? – or is there something you could do instead that would solve the problem?"

The focus should be on the problems they are experiencing, not the suggestions. By getting the students to focus on their own problems by introducing ideas that they could modify or brainstorm, you are encouraging them to take ownership in arriving at a workable solution.

6 The use of stories in training

6.1 Stories are modern day parables

Roger Shank, a cognitive scientist, says that humans are not set up to understand logic; but are set up to understand stories. Facts are readily available on the Internet as well as in your workshops. What matters, according to Daniel Pink, author of *A Whole New Mind*, is the ability to place these facts in context and to deliver them with emotional impact.

Facts and suggestions, no matter how logical or practical they may be, are frequently ignored or forgotten. But include these same facts in a true story or example, enriched with emotion and people can immediately relate, remember, and frequently put into practice. Stories are essential to the learning process.

Here are two scenarios where you might introduce stories to illustrate a point. The first one deals with the importance of a positive attitude or motivation in putting time management suggestions into practice. The second one is a personal story that suggests one way of forming good habits and breaking bad ones.

6.2 Attitude is important in making time management ideas work

Some people feel that they have no control over their lives. They believe that their lives are completely controlled by external events. Those people will likely gain little if anything from attending time management seminars or reading books on the subject.

Not because their lives are controlled by others, but because they *think* they are.

Attitude is an important consideration when attempting to improve a person's skills in any area.

The most important part of any training program is not the bevy of ideas or techniques presented to the participants. It is the portion that convinces the individuals that they do, in fact, have choices. That they can control certain aspects of their job and life, and that they are the ones responsible for initiating that control. If people are convinced that time management training won't help them, it won't. It's a self-fulfilling prophecy. Great ideas can be within their grasp, but they won't even reach for them because they're convinced that they won't do a bit of good. Here's a story that illustrates this fact.

"There was an experiment conducted long ago that involved a large pike swimming around in a tank surrounded by minnows which he gobbled up as he became hungry. Then a glass partition was introduced, separating the pike from his food. Every time he'd grab for a minnow, he'd only succeed in banging his snout against a glass wall.

Soon he came to realize that going after the fish was futile, and he stopped trying. Then the glass partition was removed, and the minnows were allowed to swim about in the tank as before. The pike knew better than to try to eat them, however, and slowly starved to death in the midst of all that food."

The pike's reality was in his mind, but it prevented him from taking advantage of all that food. Similarly many people have an incorrect view of reality and it results in failure to take advantage of opportunities that may be obvious to others. If they believe they have no control over their lives, they're right.

Feeding time management techniques to someone who won't use them is futile. You must first show by example how they *do* have a degree of control over their lives. The ideas, techniques and systems are secondary. Another "story" about change is included in the next section.

6.2.1 The one-day-at-a-time technique

Have you broken your New Year's resolutions yet? One study found that 70% of us have broken our New Year's resolutions by the end of January. New Year's resolutions, like goals, are easy to set, but harder to accomplish. In a typical year in the U.S., 17,300,000 smokers quit, at least for a day, but only 1,300,000 of these quit for at least a year.

To accomplish any resolution or goal you must be committed to change. You must want to achieve that goal so much that you will muster enough self-discipline to persist, in spite of the temptation to slip back into comfortable ways. You need the motivation to succeed. To be motivated you must believe you can do it. You must believe in yourself.

Motivation is the product of the strength of your desire to achieve something, and the strength of your expectancy that it will be accomplished. If you don't think you can do something, you're right. But if you really want something and you know you can achieve it, you will.

If you make up your mind to walk or jog every morning or give up desserts or lose five pounds by the end of the month or listen more attentively without interrupting, you can do it. You can do it a day at a time. To give up desserts or coffee or anything else that you enjoy is just too overwhelming if it requires a lifetime of self-denial. But if you tell yourself that you are just going to do it for a day, it's suddenly easy. Anyone can give up smoking for one day, or jog one morning or skip the bedtime snack one evening.

The next day is a new commitment to make the change that day as well. The following day becomes a new commitment. And eventually the habit is broken. Habits are broken or formed one day at a time. Goals are achieved one day at a time. It takes desire and belief and commitment to get through that one day, but it's a lot easier than giving up something forever.

"One of my sons, who had tried unsuccessfully to quit smoking many times finally embarked on the one-day-at-a-time technique. Each morning he would tell himself that he was not going to smoke that day. He would repeat the same affirmation the next day and the next. If you asked him if he had given up smoking he would reply, "No. It's too difficult to give up smoking. But I'm not smoking today." It was years before he would admit that he had actually given up smoking and even then he was quick to add that there were no guarantees for the future. He was still working on it one day at a time. But success breeds success. And as his lungs cleared, his taste buds sharpened and his health improved, his motivation increased even more."
Try it – one day at a time.

7 Educational toys for adults

7.1 Fun and games

Case studies get involvement, as do taking quizzes, working with checklists, listening to interesting stories or solving problems in brainstorming groups. But nothing captures the interest of learners more than being involved in an activity that uses real props or games. People love to play – and they will do so willingly even if it involves learning. Most of the illustrations in this chapter relate to time management training; but you can either adapt some of them or seek out other activities in your particular area of focus.

7.2 A practical demonstration of prioritizing

When explaining practice of prioritizing and the 80/20 Rule, I sometimes make the point by tossing one-dollar bills and twenty-dollar bills on the floor. (I use phony "Dollar Store" money or Monopoly money; but if you're wealthy, the real thing has an even greater impact.) Then I tell a couple of volunteers to pick up all they can in 5 seconds, picking up only one bill at a time. Most people zero in on the twenties. But they don't actually do that in their own jobs or personal lives when it comes to the important projects & tasks. For maximum impact you should have 20% of the bills represent 80% of the actual value. You can use all denominations, not just ones and twenties. In fact, it's more fun if you do have a variety of denominations.

7.3 Illustrating the inefficiency in multitasking

You can have your students do a simple exercise to illustrate the inefficiency of jumping frequently from one task to another as opposed to completing each task in turn. Ask them to print the sentence MULTITASKING IS A WASTE OF TIME on a sheet of paper; But after writing each letter, enter a number such as M 1 U 2 L 3 T 4, and so on. Time the process. Then tell them to print the entire sentence all at once, leaving spaces between the letters

M U L T I T A S K I N G   I S   A   W A S T E   O F   T I M E

and then write the numbers from 1 to 26 in the spaces between the letters. Time this as well and compare the times. You will find it's much faster to complete the two jobs in turn than to switch back and forth between letters and numbers. This same inefficiency, perhaps to a lesser degree, applies to other tasks as well.

7.4 Illustrating multitasking to groups

When communicating this fact about the inefficiency of multitasking and its cost, you can demonstrate the impact of multitasking on productivity by actually timing how long it takes when completing simple tasks uninterrupted vs. jumping from task to task.

In workshops you can add a little competition to make things more interesting. Break the class into groups or teams of 4 or 5 people. Than assign them 4 or 5 tasks to work on. Each team member starts with a different task. At a predetermined time, let's say when 3 minutes has elapsed; have them rotate jobs, each team member taking over the person's job on her right. After another three minutes, have them change again and so on. They keep changing until all the jobs are completed. Meanwhile you have one member of each team act as an official timer, keeping track of how long it takes to complete each task, and the total time needed to complete *all* the tasks. Whichever team finishes all the tasks first can be declared the winner.

Now have the teams repeat the experiment, but this time they are to assign one person to each task and work on it until it is finished. The time is again recorded for each task and for the total time required to complete all tasks.

Here again, a winner can be declared. But what you are really interested in is the difference in the amount of time it took to do the tasks the first time, individually and collectively, compared to the second time. You will find that each task and the total time for all tasks took longer the first time – when people were interrupting themselves to move to the next task. There is a mental switching time required in addition to the physical move to a new work station. The difference in times is the measure of multitasking inefficiency.

Sample tasks that work well are as follows:

1. Moving marbles from one bowl to another using a teaspoon.
2. Separating M&Ms or beads and lining them up in rows according to color or alternating colors.
3. Arranging matchsticks to spell out words such as “HELLO”
4. Cutting out various shapes that have been drawn on card stock and stacking them in separate piles.

If time permits, more complex, real-life tasks are even better, such as

1. Sewing a button on a piece of cloth using specific number of stitches.
2. Looking up a word in a dictionary and copying the first definition into a log book.
3. Opening a set number of email messages one at a time, scrolling to the bottom of the screen and closing it.
4. Doing a mathematical calculation using a calculator and recording the answers.

7.5 The power of a thought

Thinking affects every aspect of your being. Your thoughts can have an impact on your mental health, personal happiness, work efficiency and satisfaction, level of success and physical health. And it can definitely influence the impact of stress in your life. In fact it’s not the stressful situations, but your mental reaction to them, that causes the damage. Here is an exercise that you can use to demonstrate the power of thinking. It can be used in time management or stress management workshops or anything that requires a positive attitude.

Take a piece of thread or twine about 8 inches long, and tie a large washer or other small, heavy object to one end so as to form a pendulum. Now take a blank sheet of paper with a large black dot in the center and place it on the table or desk. Holding the end of the thread between your thumb and forefinger, suspend the pendulum so the washer is just above the black dot. Rest your elbow on the table and steady the washer with your other hand until it is motionless. Now, concentrate hard on the weight and force it to start swinging in a clockwise direction *using only your mind*. Keep your hand steady. Focus only on the washer. Visualize it swinging in a clockwise direction around the black dot, faster and faster, in an ever-widening circle. Mentally push it, but keep your hand still. It will slowly start to swing, almost imperceptibly at first, and then picking up speed, as you will it to move.

While it is swinging smoothly, with your hand kept motionless, attempt to stop it with your mind and force it to swing in the *opposite direction*. Concentrate hard. Think only about having it swing in the opposite direction. It will falter, move erratically, and then start to swing counterclockwise. The power of a thought!

No, it is not witchcraft nor any kind of supernatural power. It is simply your mind forcing your hand to move against its will, ever so slightly, so as to be undetected. Your hand is doing the moving, not your mind. But your mind is influencing your hand. This little exercise illustrates that your mind has a powerful influence over what you do. Call it the power of the mind, if you will. It is not hard to believe that positive thinking reaps positive results in our life. While worry and negative thinking becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. People, who think they will fail, usually do. The opposite result is obtained with positive thinking.

So if you think that stress will devastate you, you're right; it will. But if you adopt a positive attitude and apply the techniques and ideas from workshops and books, chances are you will escape unscathed. As this exercise illustrates, the hand may be quicker than the eye, but the mind controls both.

7.6 Getting involvement with stress dots

One way of getting involvement is a workshop is to issue a stress dot, or biodot as it's called, which is composed of a temperature-sensitive chemical that changes color as the temperature changes – like the old mood rings that used to be popular.

They peel the self-adhesive stress dot from the color chart and stick it to the underside of the wrist, directly below the heel of the hand. Within a few seconds they will see a color change. Compare the color with those on the color chart. A grass-green color indicates peak performance. If the dot remains black, the person is under stress. If it changes to blue, she or he is extremely relaxed. The color chart has several stages between these two extremes – for instance, if it is a grey color, the person is up-tight, but not extremely stressed. A detailed description of the stress dot and how it works is available at our website where the stress dots are sold. The blacker the dot, the less chance the person has of handling stressful situations well. This is just one stress test, and I usually use about three other methods as well. Not surprisingly, some people fail all four tests.

The great thing about this test is that people find it fun to do, and invariably joke about the results, which in itself relieves tension. I usually have my contact information printed on the back side of the color charts. It becomes a business card that they don't throw away since the stress dot can be used over and over again. You can purchase stress dots online at several companies. We even have them listed in our website shopping basket at taylorintime.com.

7.7 A time management classic

A long but effective illustration of prioritizing is one using "rocks & marbles" in a jar. This illustration is interesting since it could lead to conflicting interpretations.

A huge beaker or jug is filled with rocks. But it's not really full because quite a few marbles can be poured in as well and they slide into the gaps. Although finally appearing full, beads can still be poured into the jug. They fill in all the nooks and crannies. And even then, there is room for fine sand or water.

The most frequent conclusion drawn by students is that no matter how full your day may seem, there is always room for a little more. This is a dangerous conclusion. It's dangerous because it's partly true. You can always read while waiting in line, listen to an iPod while preparing meals or gulp your lunch while reading a book. You can get up a little earlier; go to bed a little later or work a little faster. There's always a way to cram a few more activities into an already crowded day.

Unfortunately, that's how many people interpret time management. They think of it as a series of tips on how to get more things done in a day. The above illustration seems to vividly illustrate this belief.

But this is not the conclusion you would draw from the illustration if you were to approach it in a different way. Instead of starting with the larger items, pour the sand in the jug first. Then add the beads, followed by the marbles and finally the larger rocks. You will find that there is not enough room for all the rocks.

Now if the rocks represent the important things in life such as family, friends, exercise and relaxation, you would conclude that if you want to get the important things done, you had better do them first. This is more in keeping with the real meaning of time management.

Too often people engage in time wasting activities (sand) and trivial tasks (beads) and leave the more important tasks (marbles) and the real life priorities (rocks) until later. Consequently, many of them never get done and people leave this life never having experienced many of the things they craved the most.

An interesting fact is that, although working on the unimportant things first usually precludes adequate time for priorities, if you start with priorities, there seems to be adequate time for the more trivial tasks as well.

The large beaker or jug represents the time you have at your disposable each day. The rocks are life priorities – those things such as time with the family, spiritual growth, health maintenance, self-renewal – things that reflect your values and life purpose. They also include your business priorities – those tasks or activities that directly influence the achievement of your goals. In a work situation, for example, if one of your goals were to sell 50 widgets by the end of the day, time spent making calls to prospects would be a priority.

The marbles are the important tasks – those jobs that indirectly influence your goals, such as developing a database, writing a telemarketing script or taking a course in selling skills.

The beads are the trivial items – those tasks that do nothing to further your goals, such as certain administrative tasks, filing, reviewing e-mail, responding to crises, commuting to work, reading magazine articles and so on. Although they may be trivial, most of them are still necessary.

The sand particles or water are the timewasters – those activities that consume time but are not necessary. Many of them are simply non-productive habits such as procrastination, perfectionism, worry and self-interruptions. Timewasters include shuffling papers, searching for things, absentmindedness, idle time, daydreaming or working on tasks that serve no useful purpose.

8 The training is not over until you see the results

8.1 Quantifying your training results

For some, but not all, topics it is possible to estimate the actual time saved, and therefore calculate the annual savings. If a person spends an hour each day handling email, for instance, and after your suggestions are implemented, spends only 30 minutes each day, it's easy to calculate the savings. The same goes for handling mail, working the telephone, and other segments of the job. In fact, there's a website that calculates the savings. It's actually for email, but you could use it for anything. Go to http://www.steverrobbins.com/email-overload/ and enter the amount of time spent on email or any other activity, the average salary of the people involved, the number of employees, and the hours worked per week, and it will calculate the annual cost of that activity.

8.2 Evaluation & feedback

Most trainers distribute evaluation sheets immediately following the workshop or seminar to obtain feedback from the participants. A sample form follows. But just as departing employees tend to be overly nice when asked to do exit interviews, so do seminar participants immediately following the session. You might get more accurate feedback a month or more after the training session – once they have had time to revisit the information and implement some of the suggestions. The problem is that most people would never get around to returning the form.

I have used both methods simultaneously – getting immediate feedback as well as sending a different form home with them to be filled out and returned in about 4 weeks. I found that offering some incentive, such as a free report or checklist, increased the return rate. It allowed me to find out which ideas they liked and which ideas actually worked for them. Then I could adjust my presentation to clarify procedures and develop further suggestions for implementation.

HAROLD TAYLOR
TIME CONSULTANTS INC.

Workshop Evaluation

	Poor				Excellent
THE TOPIC					
Was the topic relevant to your needs?	1	2	3	4	5
THE CONTENT					
Did the content deal with the topic adequately?	1	2	3	4	5
Did the use of examples enhance the content?	1	2	3	4	5
Will you be able to apply the content of the presentation to your organization?	1	2	3	4	5
THE PRESENTATION					
Was the speaker able to maintain your level of interest in the topic?	1	2	3	4	5
Was there enough opportunity for participation in the seminar?	1	2	3	4	5
How was the speaker's knowledge of the topic?	1	2	3	4	5
THE MATERIALS					
How would you rate the hand-out materials?	1	2	3	4	5
GENERAL					
How would you rate the session overall?	1	2	3	4	5
What is one idea from this session you will put into practice?					

Please indicate any suggestions you may have for improving this session. ____________________

Please recommend an associate who would benefit from this seminar:
Name: ____________________ Organization: ____________________ Email: ____________________

Our success in promoting workshops is dependant upon the experience of past participants.
Please share your opinion of today's session:

May we quote you in our promotional material? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Name: ____________________________________ Position:

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8.3 Help your students apply the ideas

A key purpose of a workshop evaluation form is to determine what participants are doing differently as a result of the training. Knowledge without application is itself a waste of time. An on-the-spot evaluation sheet will not fulfill that purpose. I have already referred to a form that I asked people to return long after the training. Based on the feedback from these forms, and the type of ideas that didn't seem to work for them, I was able to develop my "behavioral ideas vs. mechanical ideas" theory, allowing me to provide additional help in implementing the ideas.

Briefly, behavioral ideas are those requiring a behavioral change, or habits to be formed, before they will work, while mechanical ideas are simply changes that will work immediately. They are explained more fully in the Addendum.

In most of my sessions I now give out a summary of the ideas included in the workshop, ask them to check off those ideas they would be willing to implement, boil them down to three ideas, commit to implementing these and reporting back to me with the results. In the addendum is the actual handout I use for my time management workshops, sometimes modified for different groups.

8.4 Organize your training files

Keep organized records of all your training sessions, including a copy of the student notes, PowerPoint slides, handouts, client correspondence and invoices – everything related to that session. If you are a freelance trainer and you're booked again by the same organization a year or more later you will want to know what material you covered, what you charged, what comments were made on the evaluation sheets, and so on. Some trainers even record what they wear that day.

I have an electronic folder titled "In-House Training," which is broken down into "Current Clients" and "Past Clients." There is a third folder called "Inquiries." When an inquiry converts to a client, I make up a new folder bearing the client's name, and date of the event. Everything relating to that training session, including all correspondence before, during, and after, goes into that folder, which is kept under "Current Clients" until the session and follow-up have been completed. Then the folder is moved to the "Past Clients" section.

Information from the "Past Clients" section has proven to be a good source of information for my press kit, – such things as a list of past clients, testimonials, and presentation topics. It also provided a record of fees paid, hours of training, results attested to – things I needed when applying for my CSP (Certified Speaking Professional) designation.

Keeping good records (organized, complete, and accessible) provides workshop content and other information that can be used for articles, promotion, or future training programs.

8.5 Heed your own advice

My advice to all trainers is to periodically take your own training course or read your own course material or book. Put yourself in the shoes of your client or workshop participant and honestly assess whether you are following your own advice. Most of us know what we should be doing and we preach it to others; but frequently don't practice what we preach. I'm sure we all know our priorities; but sometimes we don't live them.

9 Life is the greatest trainer of all

9.1 My RTH factors

Many people in business have what I refer to as RTH factors. People have certain things that they regret having done or not done, things that they are thankful that they did when they did, and hopes for the future. Paying attention to a person's RTH factors (Regrets, Thanks and Hopes) can sometimes help you immensely in your own career or business. That's why entrepreneurs and others are frequently asked questions such as, "If you had it all to do over again, what would you do differently?" Here is a brief list of my RTH factors as they apply to my speaking and training business.

9.1.1 Regrets:

That I didn't accumulate some start-up money before launching my first business. It could have taken at least three years off the start-up stage.

That I didn't go with first-class promotional materials right from the start. It's hard to project success with a hand-made brochure.

That I didn't start earlier to promote the programs I offer as opposed to continuing to promote myself. It would have been easier to get my clients to accept other workshop leaders in my place.

That it took me eight years to build up my self-confidence enough to quit my job and go full-time in my business.

That I didn't outsource more jobs and spend less time in areas that were not my area of expertise.

That I wasn't aggressive enough to ask for testimonials and referrals even when I didn't charge for my services.

That I under-rated the value of my services and under-valued the cost of my time.

That I initially took on assignments that were beyond my area of expertise simply because they paid well.

That I spent too many hours per day on the company as a result of perfectionism and the bad habit of trying to do everything myself.

That I was too proud to ask my peers for help.

That I talked more than I listened.

That I didn't send thank you notes to every client and follow-up with them on a regular basis.

9.1.2 Thanks:

That I specialized early in my speaking career.

That I wrote a book early in my career and went with a publishing company as opposed to self-publishing for greater credibility.

That I didn't skimp when sending a promotion package to a prospect enquiring about a program.

That I had specific goals to aim for each year.

That I was willing to take risks by trying new things.

For having started with low cost and free seminars to the business community.

That I developed products early in my speaking career.

That I sold products at the back of the room at my seminars and keynotes.

That I spent more money on educational and self-development books than I did on food and clothes.

That I never stop thanking God for all that he has provided.

9.1.3 Hopes:

That I never use age as an excuse for not starting something new.

That I never forget where I came from or the people who helped me along the way.

That the future will always be more appealing than the past.

That I never stop learning.

That I never run out of ideas before I run out of life.

10 Quick tips for trainers

10.1 Summary of suggestions for getting the most from your training sessions.

Demonstrations, examples, stories, and illustrations all help to clarify theories, principles and strategies and allow clients to visualize and remember so they're able to put what they have heard into practice. The more visual the strategy, the more memorable the illustration, the more convincing the suggestion, the more personal the application, the greater the payoff for them, the more likely the clients will take action following the training session.

1. Arrive early to review and change set up, check microphone, visual aids etc. Talk to a few people, discover their expectations. You should be the first to arrive and the last to leave.
2. For public workshops, set up fewer chairs than registrants; but keep additional ones handy. This is more important with large groups. It is more impressive to have to add more chairs then to stare at empty ones.
3. Don't cover too much information in one session. One of the biggest mistakes is trying to tell them everything you know in one workshop. You're not doing them a favor. A good guideline is to deliver half the material that you prepared.
4. Have a display of useful materials and references on a table at the back of the room. If you have products for sale, so much the better.

5. If you are organizing the workshop, be sure to cover "housekeeping" items at the start and review your plan for the day. People like to know what to expect.
6. Recognize that people now use electronic devices for note-taking; but ask attendees to turn off or mute cell phones during the session.
7. Use techniques that appeal to all styles of learning – visual, auditory, and kinesthetic.
8. Remember that every one may not have learning as their prime motive in being there. Design your program accordingly. Generally trainers have to deal with three types of people: *learners, vacationers* and *prisoners*.
9. People remember pictures better than words, and reality better than pictures. Use "show & tell" wherever possible.
10. Design training programs so modules do not exceed 20 minutes and get involvement every eight minutes.
11. You can get involvement through questions. Ask open-ended questions that have no right or wrong answers.
12. Don't give out copies of your PowerPoint slides in advance. They only serve as a distraction and people tend to read ahead instead of focusing on the current topic.
13. Assume they will have questions. Ask "What questions do you have?" Not "Does anyone have a question? The latter might *discourage* questions.
14. Wait at least 7 seconds after asking a question before proceeding with new material. People need that much time to understand your question, formulate a reply, and get up the courage to speak.
15. If possible, get involvement *before* the program starts by using a preprogram quiz, survey or "objectives" form.
16. Do your homework. Know who is in your class, their working environment, corporate culture etc. Tailor the material to the group.
17. Make sure you are addressing the underlying problems and not the symptoms.
18. Join associations and special interest groups that match your specialty. For example if you talk to entrepreneurs, join their trade association and if you talk to managers join their professional association etc. Similarly, if you speak to specific disciplines, such as marketing, advertising, manufacturing, join their professional associations as well.
19. Don't mimic other speakers' style or material. Find out what everybody else is doing and do something different.
20. In general, you should under-promise and over-deliver. Always exceed expectations.
21. When you present statistics and other data, give credit and sources when possible.
22. Make sure participants leave with something bearing your contact information. Include it on something that they are likely to keep.

23. Keep records of all presentations, complete with copies of student notes and hand-out materials, PowerPoint presentation and any survey results.
24. Make up a checklist for your public workshops or on-site programs to make sure that you don't forget anything.
25. Start on time and end on time. Adhere to the time limits. Finishing early is more acceptable than going late.
26. Never let the group think that you are rushing through material or skipping anything.
27. Ask for testimonials on the evaluation form, and permission to use them in your promotion.
28. Always have a "plan B" in case technology fails or you are unable to use your normal set-up.
29. Don't overwhelm participants with new ideas. About 80% of the material should be basic information that most people know, but not all practice.
30. Don't focus on delivering information, but on changing their lives for the better. Make it easier for them to implement the ideas after they leave the training room.
31. Don't make announcements during lunch. Wait until it's over. People don't like having their conversations interrupted. Lunch hour is networking time and should be respected.
32. If you have copious notes or handouts, put them on a flash drive. Keep the amount of paper to a minimum.
33. Don't ask questions of the audience when the answer is not obvious; it risks embarrassing them in front of their peers.
34. Take time at the end of the training program to reinforce the learning, asking for feedback on what they intend to do differently when they return to their jobs.
35. Your role as a trainer is not to show people how successful and brilliant you are, but rather how successful and brilliant *they* can be.
36. Talk in terms of we or us, not I or me. It makes us seem more approachable and friendly as opposed to self-centered and egotistical.
37. Don't try to be indispensable or superior by holding back relevant data, sources or resources.
38. Say what others want and need to hear, not what you want to say. It's about them, not you.
39. Never assume. Don't read anything into a participant's silence.
40. Focus on helping the participants relate the suggested strategies and information to their own situation and environment.
41. If you're being paid to speak, never promote your book or products from the platform.
42. Humor is good. But don't tell jokes or recite long personal stories that are unrelated to the content of the session.
43. If you use PowerPoint, beware of including too much copy or making the font too small.
44. Don't hide behind a podium. Use a wireless microphone if needed, and get close to the audience while maintaining eye contact.
45. Don't be afraid to use hand gestures. They add interest.

46. Make sure any student notes contain useful information, and avoid fill-in the blank workbooks. Unless it's a kindergarten class.
47. Never embarrass anyone who comes in late or leaves the room during the session.
48. Never read what's on a PowerPoint slide. Say it in your own words.
49. Always handle Q&A before making your closing remarks.
50. Record as many of your presentations as possible and review them, along with the evaluation sheets so that you may continue to improve.

11 Addendum

11.1 A time management checklist

Here are 50 time-tested ways of improving your personal productivity discussed in the workshop or extracted from my *Making Time Work for You* book and articles. Check those ideas that make sense to you, and yet are not currently being practiced.

___ 1. Put your personal and organizational goals in writing.

___ 2. Every week do something that brings you closer to your annual goals.

___ 3. Schedule *appointments with yourself* to complete priority work.

___ 4. Schedule more time for tasks than you think it will take.

___ 5. Set priorities according to importance, not urgency.

___ 6. Make notes while you are talking on the telephone.

___ 7. Use a *Delegation Record* or *Assignment Record* to keep track of your assignments to others or those assigned to you.

___ 8. Develop the *do it now* habit. Don't procrastinate.

___ 9. Have meetings start on time, end on time and have a timed agenda.

___ 10. Take advantage of commute time, travel time and waiting time to get things done.

___ 11. Toss out as much correspondence and paperwork as possible.

___ 12. Don't write when a telephone call will do.

___ 13. Make minor decisions quickly.

___ 14. Set deadlines on all tasks you delegate.

___ 15. Be time conscious rather than a perfectionist. Let the amount of time spent on a task be proportionate to the value of the outcome.

___ 16. Hold meetings only when absolutely necessary, and *keep them brief*.

___ 17. Keep telephone conversations brief; discuss the business up front.

___ 18. Write brief letters, reports and e-mail. Encourage brevity in others.

___ 19. When a crisis occurs, immediately determine how to stop a recurrence.

___ 20. Say "no" more often. Have as much respect for your own time as you have for other people's time.

___ 21. Don't keep shuffling papers; handle each item only once whenever possible. Do it, scrap it, file it, delegate it or schedule a time to do it later.

___ 22. Use a follow-up file to hold paperwork relating to scheduled tasks.

___ 23. Use a *Participant's Action Sheet* at meetings to record notes and make them run effectively.

___ 24. Take advantage of timesaving technology such as voice activated software, back-up in the clouds, bibme.org, and Active Words.

___ 25. Don't allow upward delegation. Ask for solutions, not problems.

___ 26. Start earlier in the morning. Utilize your *prime time* for priorities.

___ 27. Don't keep magazines. Tear out or photocopy relevant articles.

___ 28. Plan as far in advance as feasible.

___ 29. Record the whole year's schedule of meetings, events etc. into your planner.

___ 30. Always carry a small scratch pad, pocket recorder or PDA to record notes and capture ideas.

___ 31. Use the same planner for home and office. Schedule time for family events as well as work.

___ 32. Be in control of your own life; don't let others' lack of planning become your crisis.

___ 33. Have set times each day to review your e-mail. Assign a time limit.

___ 34. Always take a few minutes after each meeting to evaluate how it went.

___ 35. If someone calls for an appointment, try to settle the matter right then on the telephone.

___ 36. When leaving a message for someone to call you back, indicate a convenient time to call.

___ 37. If the person you're calling is not in, try to get the information you need from someone else.

___ 38. Record the time you must leave the office when traveling to a distant meeting.

___ 39. If items dropped in your in-basket distract you, move the basket from your desk.

___ 40. When away on a business trip, have someone else sort and dispense with most of your mail.

___ 41. To reduce interruptions during the day, hold brief stand-up meetings with your staff or co-workers each morning.

___ 42. When filing paperwork, record a *throw out* date on it to make subsequent purging easier.

___ 43. Schedule specific amounts of time to review and dispense with your mail and voice mail.

___ 44. Hold brief breakfast meetings when most people are mentally alert and have a full day to take action.

___ 45. Capture ideas when listening to audio recordings by dictating into a pocket recorder.

___ 46. Use checklists for recurring events such as meetings and business trips.

___ 47. Spend time each week on *time investments* – those activities that will help you free up more time.

___ 48. When putting something in your follow-up file, make a corresponding note in your planner that tells you it's there.

___ 49. Recognize you can't do everything. Work on the 20% of the activities that produce 80% of your results.

___ 50. Manage stress by putting life in perspective, and not taking yourself too seriously.

___ Total ideas checked

11.2 Action plan

In order to get started, choose three ideas that make sense to you, and that you would be willing to start practicing. Record them on the following *Action Sheet*, select a starting date, and go to it! Remember to persist for 4 weeks to allow time for a habit to develop in the event that the ideas are *behavioral* in nature. Once they are working successfully, choose three more and work on those.

11.3 Three of the most useful ideas:

1. ______________________________

2. ______________________________

3. ______________________________

11.4 How to implement the ideas

The ideas listed on the time management checklist are either mechanical ideas or behavioral ideas. Mechanical ideas are those that can be put into practice immediately without the necessity of a behavioral change. In other words, you don't have to form a new habit in order to make them work for you. For example, changing the location of your telephone from your desk to the credenza behind you is a mechanical idea. When the phone rings you have to turn around to pick it up, which means you'll be facing the wall, with your back to the doorway. Since you will avoid eye contact, most people won't try to talk to you while you're on the phone. This idea will work immediately, since you don't have to form the habit of turning around – you *have* to turn around in order to pick up the phone.

Behavioral ideas are those that require a behavioral change in order to make them work. You have to form a new habit. This could take weeks of persistence. For example, if you are currently in the habit of talking on the phone without making notes, a behavioral idea that could save time would be to start recording all calls in a systematic way. This ensures that nothing is forgotten, reduces follow-up calls, increases concentration and so on. But you have to form the new habit before you can reap the rewards of the idea. Mechanical ideas are plentiful, and since they require no behavior change, any number of them could be put into practice simultaneously. Although the time saved by each idea may be minimal, collectively they add up to hours. Behavioral ideas, on the other hand, would be overwhelming if you introduced more than one or two at a time. They take several weeks before they become habitual. But the payback, in terms of time saved, is usually much greater than the same number of mechanical ideas.

Since small successes are motivational I suggest you start with a series of mechanical ideas. Clean up your work area, get rid of superfluous material, move your in basket off your desk, make up a follow-up file, arrange your materials so they're close at hand. Then choose a behavioral idea that would eliminate a time waster that you're experiencing. For example, if papers tend to accumulate on your desk and you waste time shuffling papers, build the habit of scheduling paperwork in the follow-up file for later action. If you are forever interrupting yourself and others as questions pop into your mind, start using a *Delegation Record* or *Communications Record to* accumulate those questions. If you're putting off important tasks because you don't have time, break the tasks into smaller chunks and schedule them in your planner to work on at specific times. Each time a behavioral idea has been fully mastered, pick another one and work on it until it, too, has been incorporated into your daily routine.

11.5 Making time work for you

Once you are successful in implementing a dozen or more of the ideas introduced at this time management session, you will have freed up some time. Use this time to work on some of the time investments explained earlier. For example, train someone else to take over one of your tasks, learn a new timesaving software program or spend an hour every Friday afternoon planning the next week. Continually re-investing the additional time that you have freed up will result in increased effectiveness in turn. This process is referred to as making time work for you.

11.6 Implement a new idea each week

It's important to continue to implement timesaving techniques in the weeks and years ahead. You can subscribe to a monthly electronic newsletter that offers further suggestions on time management. If you apply only one idea each week, your personal productivity will increase immensely during the course of a year.

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13 About the author

Harold Taylor, CSP, CEO of Harold Taylor Time Consultants Ltd., was a teaching master at Humber College of Applied Arts & Technology in Toronto, Canada for eight years before launching his own business. He has now been speaking, writing and conducting training programs on the topic of effective time management for over 30 years. He has written 18 books, including a Canadian bestseller, *Making Time Work for You.* He has developed over 50 time management products, including the popular *Taylor Planner*, which has sold in 38 countries around the world. He has had over 300 articles accepted for publication.

A past director of the *National Association of Professional Organizers,* Harold Taylor received their *Founder's Award* in 1999 for outstanding contributions to the organizing profession. He received the CSP (Certified Speaking Professional) designation in 1987 from the *National Speakers Association*. In 1998 the *Canadian Association of Professional Speakers* inducted him into the Canadian Speaking Hall of Fame. And in 2001, he received the first *Founder's Award* from the *Professional Organizers in Canada*. The award has been named in his honor.

In 2014, Harold formed an Internet training company, mindsontime.com, to conduct mastermind programs, teleseminars and webinars on time management, organizing and leadership – with a focus on the application of recent research findings to increase personal productivity and well-being.

Since 1981, when he incorporated the original time management company, he has personally presented over 2000 workshops, speeches and keynotes on the topic of time and life management.