

Hurry, Hurry, Every Second Counts!

Not just seconds, but time itself!

Carole Spiers



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Carole Spiers FISMA, MIHPE

Hurry, Hurry, Every Second Counts!

Not just seconds, but time itself!



Hurry, Hurry, Every Second Counts! – Not just seconds, but time itself!

1st edition

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Introduction



It is one of the paradoxes of modern management training that for all the attention that is paid to Time Management, there is absolutely nothing you can do to manage time.

Because...

There are always going to be 24 hours in a day; 60 minutes in an hour, and it is the same for everyone – you, your subordinates, your colleagues and your boss. We all have exactly the same amount of it. Time is the only resource that passes that test.

“Time flies”... “I must find time”... “Time passes slowly on Friday afternoons”

Interesting phrases – and completely untrue; since time does none of these things.

Why then are we so interested in time? – It is precisely because it is so beyond our control that we can't “fudge” it or pretend to cheat it.

You may claim that you have “done as well as possible” and no-one can deny it.

You can extend this to the chairman's report:

“Despite adverse economic factors that were unforeseen, the results, taking all relevant factors into consideration, were remarkably good.”

That can mean anything – and frequently does!

But, if you say “This will be finished by 6 o'clock this afternoon” and it isn't, then something has clearly gone wrong.

This is one of the reasons for current levels of interest in Time Management: It provides an external, undistortable criterion for measuring effectiveness – and, what is more, it is the same criterion for everyone.

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A Perspective On Time

Time Management Myths:

1. "Time flies". (Reality: time moves at a fixed rate)
2. You can save time. (Reality: You can save money in a bank and use it when you need it. You can't hoard time in this way).
3. You can make-up time. (Reality: Once Spent, time is irreplaceable).
4. We haven't enough time. (Reality: We have all there is! Time is equally distributed).

Management Illusions

There are a number of illusions of what constitutes good management that lead to poor time management – and, eventually, to poor management in general. Among these are:

1. The illusion of busy-ness. The most active managers get the most done.
2. The illusion of total availability (the 'open door')
3. The illusory need to keep informed of everything
4. The illusion that delayed decisions improve in quality.
5. The illusion that the higher the level, the better the decision.
6. The illusion that the most efficient managers are the most effective.
7. The illusion of hard work. The harder one works, the more one gets done.
8. The illusion of omnipotence. "I'm the only person who can do this right."



"Nothing else, perhaps, distinguishes effective executives as their tender loving care of time."
(Peter Drucker, 'The Effective Executive', Pan Books).

Paradoxes Of Time

1. The Open Door Paradox: By leaving one's door open in hopes of improving communication, managers tend to increase the wrong kind of communication – that of a trivial or socialising nature. This multiplies interruptions and distracts them from more important tasks. The 'Open Door' was originally intended to mean 'accessible', not physically open.
2. The Planning Paradox: Managers often fail to plan because of the time required. They fail to recognise the fundamental principle that effective planning saves time in execution and achieves better results.
3. The 'Tyranny-of-the-Urgent' Paradox. Managers tend to respond to urgent rather than important matters. Thus, long-range priorities are neglected, leading to future crises.
4. The Meeting Paradox. By waiting for late-comers before starting a meeting, managers penalise those who came on time and reward those who came late. So next time, those who were on time will come late and those who were late will come later.
5. The Delegation Paradox. Managers tend not to delegate to inexperienced subordinates due to lack of confidence in them – and yet the quickest way for subordinates to win a manager's confidence is by gaining the experience which only comes through delegated authority.
6. The Cluttered Desk Paradox. Managers leave things on their desks so they won't forget them. Then they either get lost, or, as intended, attract attention every time they are seen, thus providing continual distraction from whatever the manager should be doing.
7. The Long Hours Paradox. The longer hours a manager works, the longer he or she assumes he or she has to complete tasks, and the more fatigued he or she becomes. For both reasons, he or she slows down – necessitating longer hours.
8. The Activity vs. Results Paradox. Managers tend to confuse activity with results – motion with accomplishments. Thus, as they gradually lose sight of their 'real' jobs, they concentrate increasingly on staying busy. First, their objective becomes to stay busy, and then they have become a confirmed workaholic.
9. The Efficiency vs. Effectiveness Paradox. Managers tend to confuse efficiency with effectiveness. They will be more concerned with doing the job right than doing the right job. No matter how efficiently it is done, if it is the wrong job, it will not be effective.

Managing Staff

Staff management is not something that has to be fitted in when all the other work is finished – it needs time allocated to it.

Time does not suddenly appear – it has to be arranged and planned for (Parkinson's Law).



Cultural Expectations

The extent to which managers are aware of the importance of time varies both between individual managers and also with the culture in which he or she works.

Corporate culture can be very influential. In many organisations, it is seen as “macho” to impress upon everyone your corporate importance by constantly asserting that *“I never get away at nights before 7.30pm”* Here, time is being used to assert status.

Stress And Health Problems

Another reason for the current interest in Time Management is that there is now a realisation of the stress and health problems caused by inadequate attention to managing time. A certain sense of urgency may be healthy: constant and growing urgency becomes very stressful.

In itself, pressure is not bad for you; in fact we all need a certain amount of pressure in our lives.

Pressure stimulates us into action, it gives us a buzz and enhances our performance. Athletes record faster race times when running against other competitors in a crowded stadium than they do training on their own.

A small amount of nerves before an important presentation or interview often increases our alertness and helps us to perform better. And when people are given a deadline to solve a problem, they are often at their most creative.

So pressure is clearly part of the human condition and the way we react to our environment. A world without pressure would not really be worth bothering about.

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In fact people who have unchallenging jobs, which under utilise their skills, can suffer from what is known as “rust out”. They become bored and lose all interest in their job but take no action to change it.



Too much pressure however will have the opposite effect. A very demanding job, which continually overstretches the individual and taxes their ability to cope, can lead to problems of “burn out”.



Too little pressure or stimulation and you could easily become apathetic and bored and de-motivated. With the right amount of pressure however, you are challenged but not over stretched. You perform at your peak and you feel good.

However, too much pressure can lead to anxiety and panic and ultimately distress. You can't think clearly; your concentration is poor and you are more likely to make mistakes or be careless even in routine tasks. Either way the long term affects of too much or too little pressure can be hugely damaging often resulting in poor physical and psychological health.

Stress feels very different from pressure. A person can be under a lot of pressure and positively thrive. But if the same person gets to the point where they feel they can't cope anymore then they have entered the stress zone – and there is an actual physiological difference between pressure and stress.

A person experiencing stress has higher levels of stress hormones in their bloodstream than somebody who feels merely challenged. People often dismiss sufferers of stress as wimps, or someone who can't handle pressure.

That's wrong and it's dangerous. An actual physical change occurs if you're stressed; one that can be damaging in the long term. So if you find yourself entering the stress zone you need to take action.



Managing stress effectively requires an understanding of how a range of factors make you more or less vulnerable to stress – your lifestyle, your personality, your sense of control, your coping strategies and your social support.

The optimum way of managing stress is to keep as fit as you can; to adopt a healthy lifestyle as opposed to not taking exercise and falling into inappropriate eating and drinking habits.



Wherever possible, establish a sense of control, rather than accepting situations where you could have influence. Adopt effective coping strategies not ineffective ones. And use your support networks instead of isolating yourself.

What Causes Stress?

It used to be thought that stress was the result of purely external pressures that could be measured in the same way that you might measure the weight of a heavy load on a bridge. However, this fails to explain why individuals who are subject to the same levels of pressure respond in different ways. Some individuals would suffer under this pressure but others cope or even thrive.

So stress is a result of external and internal factors. It is quite literally in the eye of the beholder. What some people see as manageable pressure others see as stress.

In a nutshell stress is “*when you perceive that the demands made upon you exceed your ability to cope*”.



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Not only does the ability to “cope with” external pressures vary from one individual to the next, but it will also vary for that individual depending on other factors that are going on in their life. Someone able to cope now with a certain pressure may not be able to do so in the future. And it works the other way around too. It is *always* possible to do things to increase your resilience to stress.

Fight Or Flight?

Human beings have survived down through the ages due to the body’s ability to leap into action when confronted by danger.

When confronted by a threat, an alarm bell goes off in your brain, triggering a chain reaction to gear you up for instant action. Adrenalin and cortisone hormones flood into your body, kick starting the nervous system.

Your heart pumps faster increasing the flow of blood to the muscles. Your breathing accelerates to take in more oxygen. Muscles tighten, your fists clench. To conserve energy your digestive and immune system slow down. To keep the body cool you start to sweat. You are now ready for physical action.

This served our ancestors well. In their charged up state they could either fight or run away, hence the stress response is also known as “fight or flight”.

As modern human beings we have retained these hormonal and chemical defence mechanisms. Stressful situations trigger our natural instinct to either fight or run away. Unfortunately, in most cases today, these responses are just not appropriate.

Most of us realise this and are able to moderate our behaviour. However the stress chemicals are still surging through our bodies. Our muscles are tense; our heart is pounding and so on. We are all revved up but with nowhere to go. With no outlet we remain in a super charged state resulting in potentially damaging physical and mental strain.

The pressures of modern life are such that we could find ourselves going through the stress response many times each day. Some people get so used to this state that they consider it as normal. They become “stress junkies”.



This situation is not helped by our increasingly sedentary modern life styles. Early humans typically walked between twenty and thirty miles a day. There are many people today who do not walk that far in a month if they can help it. This lack of exercise doesn't give our bodies the chance to work off all that adrenaline, cortisone and tension.

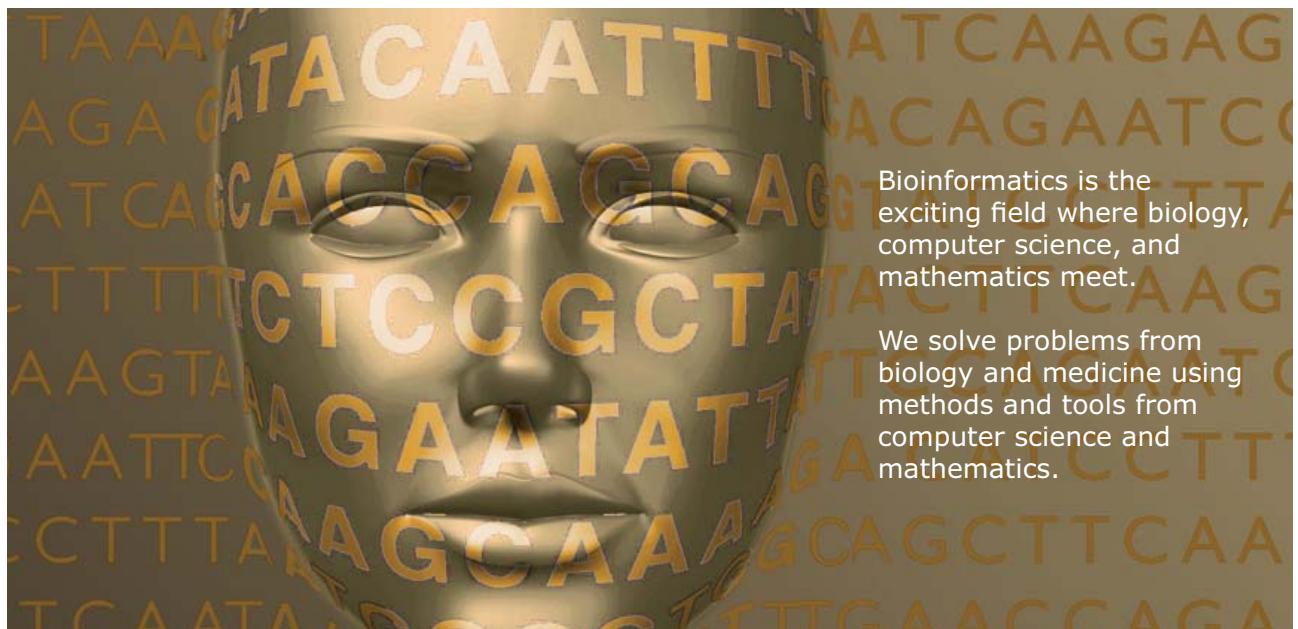


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Stress Triggers

Stress can be triggered off by a whole range of situations, from major events in our lives, such as the death of a loved one to the everyday hassles we encounter in the work place.

As we go through life we encounter a number of significant events, such as starting school, getting a job, buying a house, getting married, starting a family and so on. These life events put us under emotional strain particularly where we have no control, like a death in the family. But even a positive change like getting married or just going on holiday has been shown to raise stress levels and increase anxiety.

Many of us can cope perfectly well with occasional episodes of stress, like life events. However, in the work place we may encounter a series of daily hassles, which trigger stress in us almost continually. The accumulative effect of these triggers can be very damaging to health if they get out of control.

The most common daily hassles that trigger our stress at work include: workload, people, such as the boss, colleagues and customers, meetings, technology, change, the workplace environment and even travel to and from work.

Taking Control

Many of the things that trigger stress are outside our control – awkward customers, crashing computers, traffic jams etc. So the first thing we need to do in order to cope better is take a responsibility for those things we can do something about. It is all very well blaming work, blaming your boss, blaming the late train. That won't actually help you to deal with the problem. Taking control, rather than seeing yourself as the powerless victim, is a hugely important step on the pathway of beating stress.

One way of analysing your personal sources of stress is to keep a stress diary for a couple of weeks. Record all the events you found stressful, and the ways in which you coped with them. Keeping the diary will help you to identify any reoccurring themes that you need to act upon and to begin the process of managing your stress more effectively.

Stress Related Ailments

Doctors have diagnosed all of the following ailments as physical symptoms of stress: hypertension/high blood pressure; heart attacks/strokes; diabetes; depression and other mental illness; ulcers; arthritis; skin disorders; asthma; hay fever/allergies migraine; menstrual difficulties; colds and flu.

So the long term affects of the body being under frequent stress, and bottling up these physical reactions can lead to serious health problems.

Constant exposure to pressure can result in illness, either mental or physical.

The following diseases have been linked to prolonged pressure, to some degree or another.

◆ Coronary Heart Disease

This is the biggest killer in the western world. Studies have found a positive link with competitive, aggressive behaviour and coronary heart disease.

◆ Cancer

There has been considerable research into the relationship between prolonged pressure and cancer, and it does seem that people prone to symptoms of stress, such as anger, fear and feelings of helplessness, are more susceptible to cancer.

◆ Digestive Disorders

Persistent indigestion is indicative that we are experiencing stress. It is estimated that one person in ten will get an ulcer at some time during their life, and every year millions of working days are lost because of them.

◆ Diabetes

Diabetes often follows a physical or emotional upset to the system. Adult onset of diabetes is becoming increasingly common in this country.

It is important for all of us to be aware of how our bodies are responding to the pressure we are experiencing. We need to learn to respect this information, and act upon it, by taking positive action, rather than ignoring the evidence and trying to push ourselves even harder.

Of course all these illnesses can be caused by factors other than stress, so always seek medical advice.

Also, be wary of blaming stress for every ailment you might suffer. Some people are naturally prone to a particular condition such as headaches; but that doesn't mean that every time they get a headache their stress levels must be high. Remember the effects of stress can vary a great deal from one person to another.

The Early Signs And Symptoms Of Stress

Stress affects our relationships with others. Becoming irritable is a very common symptom and over time this can be difficult for other people to put up with. Also, research has shown that people suffering from stress find it harder to recover from illness and are more likely to have accidents.

Sometimes we are not aware just how much stress is building up in our lives. We don't spot the early warning signs, or if we do we are reluctant to accept them. Sometimes we only admit that something is wrong when our stress response has reached severe levels, so it is damaging us both mentally and physically. Prevention is better than cure, so it is important to be able to recognise the early signs and symptoms of stress so you can take action before they turn into serious problems.

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Behavioural Symptoms of Stress Questionnaire

	NEVER	ALWAYS
Constant irritability with people	0	1
Difficulty in making decisions	0	1
Loss of sense of humour	0	1
Suppressed anger	0	1
Difficulty concentrating	0	1
Inability to finish one task before rushing into another	0	1
Feeling the target of other people's animosity	0	1
Feeling unable to cope	0	1
Wanting to cry at the smallest problem	0	1
Lack of interest in doing things after returning home from work.	0	1
Waking up in the morning and feeling tired after an early night	0	1
Constant tiredness	0	1

Physical Symptoms of Stress Questionnaire

	NEVER	ALWAYS
Lack of appetite/craving for food	0	1
Frequent indigestion or heartburn	0	1
Constipation or diarrhoea	0	1
Insomnia	0	1
Tendency to sweat for no good reason	0	1
Nervous twitches, nail biting etc	0	1
Headaches	0	1
Cramps and muscle spasms	0	1
Nausea	0	1
Breathlessness without exertion	0	1
Fainting spells	0	1
Impotency or frigidity	0	1
	2	3
	2	3
	2	3
	2	3
	2	3
	2	3
	2	3
	2	3

Note: It is not the total score in each section that is important but the number of symptoms on which you score 2 or 3.

If in either category (Behavioural or Physical) you are showing more than three symptoms with a score of 2 or 3 it is indicative *potentially* of a stress-related problem.

If you are experiencing more than 5 of the symptoms on a regular basis you may wish to consult your doctor to check if there is an organic problem that needs medical assistance.

The Stress Of A High Work Load

Which of these statements apply to you? Tick as many of the options as you want.

1. When dealing with a high work-load my only option is to work longer hours.
2. When faced with a high work-load I try to put it off for as long as possible
3. I never seem to get on top of my work
4. I always leave the office knowing I have to catch up the next day
5. I take work home regularly

Your answers to the above will determine the amount of control you have over your workload. To make sure it doesn't become a potential stress trigger in the future, try to take on board the advice given in this section.

One of the most common complaints you hear from people suffering from stress at work is that they just have too much to do. There are not enough hours in the day. They can't fit it all in. They don't have enough time to take a holiday, and they have to work at weekends.

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Many people think that a high workload is beyond their control. Long hours are just a way of life these days. Or are they?

In fact there are things you can do to make your workload more manageable. There are also things you could do to work more effectively – to achieve more in the same amount of time.

For example, did you know that typically 80% of our achievements come from just 20% of our efforts? In other words, we spend most of our time on things that don't really matter that much. So, the key is not to work *harder* but to work *smarter*.

There are two different types of overload. **Qualitative overload** is work that is too difficult for someone, often because they lack the appropriate training or coaching. Another cause of qualitative overload is when a person's skills simply do not match the requirements of the job.



Many of us do not like to admit that we cannot cope with something. It might be seen as a weakness or a lack of commitment. So, instead of asking for help, we waste time struggling along the rocky road to nowhere, losing self-esteem, confidence and motivation. If you find yourself spending much longer on a task than expected, stop and ask for help. You may need training or simply guidance on what you are doing.

The other type of work overload is **quantitative**, where we have too much work to do. But this may not be simply down to sheer volume.

We often blindly plunge into our daily tasks with the vain hope that we will be able to get through everything on our “*to-do*” list, no matter how long it takes. But be realistic. There are only so many hours in the day. And no matter how hard we try, it is often impossible to cram in as much as we would like to. Accepting this is the key to working smarter and protecting you from stress.

If it looks like you are not going to be able to fit everything in, be realistic. Look at other ways you could handle it. Maybe you could reschedule some jobs for another day. Maybe you could delegate to someone else. Maybe you could do some task less thoroughly and save some time. Sure there are certain tasks that have to be 100% perfect. But there are others where being a perfectionist is just going to waste your time. And for some tasks it might be worth asking yourself "*What would happen if I just didn't do it? Would it really matter if I didn't do that weekly report? What would be the effect? Would anyone notice? Does anybody actually read it?*"

Face up to the fact that your time is limited. Spend it on the things that are really important – things that are going to benefit your clients; things that are going to win new customers; things that are going to generate results. It is impossible to do everything, so concentrate on the tasks that are really going to make a major difference.

The daily commute to and from the office can also be a major cause of stress. If it is for you, take a few moments one weekend to consider changing your route. Or even your mode of transport. Perhaps look at travelling in at a different time. Many companies now offer flexible working practices. Do you really need to travel in the peak of the rush hour?



Effectiveness And Efficiency

The word “effective” is important here, and needs to be distinguished from the word “efficiency”. Efficiency is about doing things right. Effectiveness is about doing the right things right.

Case Study

A manager in charge of a large operation spread over many sites in a built up area of West London used to plan his movements to make the best use of traffic flow depending on the time of day. He wanted to spend as little time as possible in his car between sites, and as much time as possible on the sites themselves.

Consequently, in the morning rush hour he would plan to visit sites by starting as far to the East as he could in his area and therefore moving against the incoming traffic. In the afternoon, he would drive into London starting from the West, as the traffic was then flowing against him.

Doing this, he spent 30% less of his time in his car. Clearly an “efficiency saving”!

However, although he was using his time as efficiently as possible, he was, in fact, managing his time ineffectively – because he was not responding to the really important problems that were occurring on his various sites. He was visiting the wrong sites.

He became efficient when he started to plan his routes in terms of important things that needed to be tackled.

At a sacrifice of some time efficiency, he became a much more effective manager.

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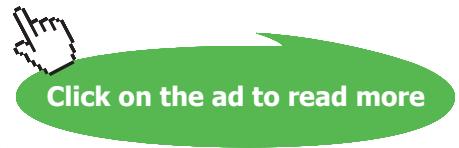
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Types Of Time

For the purposes of Time Management, there are several different ways of describing time:

Controlled Time

If you plan to do something, whether in the area called ‘management’ (eg. supporting a disillusioned employee) or in the area called ‘operating’ (eg. trading) then you can estimate the amount of time you will need to complete the work.

If you manage to complete the work in that time, then you had CONTROL over that time.

Response Time

If you get interrupted during that time, for whatever reason, then you are in RESPONSE time. Of course, there will be occasions when you HAVE to respond – but not every time.

The trouble is that the real length of the interruption is typically far longer than the time you have been called away – you have to recover your chain of thought and concentration; perhaps the person you were working with is no longer available, etc.

Research into Time Management in the UK and North America over the last twenty years has shown that managers are interrupted, on average, every eight minutes.

The trouble with this figure is that there are not many things that managers can do within eight minutes!

One of the purposes of Time Management training is to make people aware of the disruptive nature of RESPONSE time; and to see what can be done to try to improve the ratio of CONTROLLED time to RESPONSE time.

The sum of our controlled time and response time is all the time we have during the day at work.

One way of more effectively managing time is to find ways of getting slight increases of controlled time over response time – which might add up to something like half a day a week. Most people find the idea of having this amount of time extra, during the working week, to do their own things really well, particularly appealing!



However, there are also some fears associated with controlling one's time, along the lines of "I don't want to become an ice-cold manager. I need to be available to my staff and the people who have a legitimate call on my time".

Then there is confusion with the idea of what really constitutes an open door policy.

Also, there is another idea which has flown in from across the Atlantic – MBWA (Management by Walking About – or Wandering around). Both of these are to do with availability. Open door means come to you. MBWA means go to them.

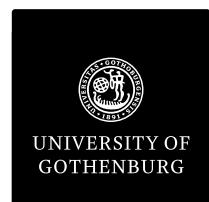
How can we equate the idea of taking control of time with the idea of availability and communication?

Imagine two different ways of viewing a manager's time one morning at work. The manager this morning has decided that he or she needs to write an important report.

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Scenario One: *The manager clears one or two things from his desk and starts working on the report. Half an hour later he is bored and thinks “perhaps I should go and visit ‘them’.” So he wanders to where ‘they’ are, and some of the things that are said are social and some professional. While this is happening, one of them’ says, “I’m having difficulty with something I’m working on and need to talk about it” – and the manager says, “OK” and they settle down to discuss the problem. It takes half an hour to unravel the problem. The manager then returns to the office to continue work on the report, having been out of the office for an hour and a quarter. Ten minutes later, the phone rings – it’s his boss who says “I need to see you sometime today, when would be a good time?” “What about now?” says the manager, and off he goes.*

Scenario Two: *This manager knows that when she writes a report, her concentration threshold soon goes – generally after about half an hour. So she rings up one of her members of staff and explains that she is writing a report, that she is keen to get started, and will nevertheless be down to where they are in about half an hour or so if anybody needs to see her. So she starts and writes for about half an hour (she is not counting minutes). She comes to a sensible part in the report and puts down her pen and goes to see her staff. The discussions are the same as in scenario one – some social, some professional. Then one of her staff says she has a problem and would like to discuss it with her. The manager responds “I’d like to discuss it with you. I’m in the middle of writing a report right now, and I need to do a bit more on it. Could it wait half an hour? Could you find something useful to do for half an hour, and I’ll see you then?” Having got the staff member’s agreement, the manager goes back to her office, writes another section of the report and then meets with the staff member as arranged. After the half-hour that this takes, she returns to the report and after 10 minutes, the phone rings. It’s her boss who says he would like to see her today and when would be convenient? The manager responds “I’m working on the X Report right now, and could do with finishing off what I’m doing. How about 12.00 o’clock?”*

What is the difference between scenario one and scenario two?

Scenario one starts off in controlled time, and then disappears immediately into response, response, response.

In scenario two, the manager spends longer in controlled time.

Limiting your availability is the key to spending longer in controlled time.

Management Priorities: Important vs Urgent

Prioritising: Important v Urgent

The second set of descriptions of time (remember, the first is ‘controlled’ or ‘response’) is the distinction between important tasks and urgent ones.

IMPORTANT ones are those which will either lead to the effective outcome of an important objective, or will slow it down or worsen it, if they are not achieved.

URGENT ones are those which present themselves to be done in a very short time scale.

We live in a state of constant tension between the important and the urgent. The problem is that the important task rarely needs to be done today, or even this week. The urgent task calls for instant action, and their endless demands pressure every hour of every day. And, of course, coping with the urgent reinforces the notion of being busy – which is a deceptive virtue in every organisation.

When assessing work priorities, time should be allocated to tasks in order of their importance, not their urgency.

Choose ten tasks/activities in which you are/should be currently involved and list them. Some may be short term and others may be longer term – however, all of them will require time allocated to them. To assist you in this exercise separate the tasks out in relation to their urgency and importance and place them in the relevant quarter.

**A. Urgent/Important
(The Critical Zone)**

**B. Not Urgent/Important
(The Planning Zone)**

**C. Urgent/Not Important
(The Action Zone)**

**D. Not Urgent/Not Important
(The Ineffective zone)**

As a General Guideline:

- If a task is urgent and important action now.
- If it is urgent and not important action soon but don't spend long on it.
- If it's important but not urgent commit to doing it when you have time to do the task justice.
- If it is neither urgent nor important, consider delegating it, "dropping" it or leaving it until you have some "down time".



The Ineffective Zone: If a task is neither urgent nor important it should only be done if there is nothing else to do. To do tasks in this zone when you have tasks in other quadrants would be an ineffective use of time. It is often in this area that we spend time when we are procrastinating.

The Action Zone: These tasks are urgent, so have to be done quickly. They are however lower down on the importance scale and so are likely to be easy, probably routine and repetitive tasks. If they are kept up-to-date, they will pose little problem. If they are put-off or ignored they build into crises.

The Planning Zone: These tasks are important, but as yet are not urgent. They therefore need to be planned for and a strategy to undertake them has to be worked out.

The Critical Zone: This is where many of us operate most of the time. Tasks have to be done to the highest standards, and finished yesterday. In this zone there is pressure, stress and greater likelihood of error.

How Does Operating In The Different Zones Make You Feel About Work And Being At Work?

The important thing is to learn to think in time terms:

- ◆ Do I have to do that right now?
- ◆ If I do, what else stops?
- ◆ Do I have to do it at all?
- ◆ Could someone else do it?
- ◆ What is the most important thing I am trying to achieve?
- ◆ Is everything being directed towards that?



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Prime Time

Although all jobs are different, in most jobs you tend to find there are particular times of the day when you are most likely to be interrupted.

Prime time is a combination of the time when you are most likely to be able to concentrate free of interruptions AND when you are personally most alert/tuned-in (e.g. early mornings).

Through analysing the peaks and troughs in your day and understanding your personal preferences you will be able to identify where your prime time is in your working day, and that is when you should be scheduling tasks from your Planning Zone.



Personality Traits That Make Time Management Difficult

- ◆ Procrastination
- ◆ ‘Control Freak’
- ◆ Predisposition to fire-fighting
- ◆ Reactive preference
- ◆ Over-Enthusiasm
- ◆ Perfectionism
- ◆ Heroic Tendencies
- ◆ Passive/Non-assertive (won’t say “no”).

“Hurry-Sickness” – The “Stress-Prone” Personality.

There are some people who seem able to sail through life. They cope with whatever life throws at them without getting stressed. We might describe them as being very “laid back” or “chilled out”.



Then there are others who seemed to be constantly under a dark cloud, they get rid of one problem, then wham! Along comes another one. They always seem to be at the point of losing their temper, or getting upset about the slightest little thing.

We tend to describe these people as “highly strung” or “easily wound up”. These different types of people seem to react totally differently to the same situation. Some will become highly stressed, and others will remain calm. That’s because we all have our own threshold, the point at which we cross the line between pressure and stress.

This stress threshold is determined by a number of factors such as our personality, the methods by which we cope with things and our sense of control.

The threshold can also shift depending what is going on in our own life at the time. So being aware of our own personal levels of stress is vital in order to manage it effectively.

The link between personality and the reaction to stress was discovered by two doctors in the 1960s, who found that most of their heart patients shared the same personality traits. From their research the doctors identified two major personality types: Type A and Type B. The majority of their patients who were prone to heart disease were Type A. Typically they were competitive, ambitious, high achievers and task driven. The doctors named this behaviour “Hurry Sickness”.

Type A personalities can be aggressive, critical, and impatient – and will often try to do more than one thing at a time. Under pressure these people can appear to be hostile and often refuse support from others. At work, getting the task done will be paramount and they may not feel the need to explain why. These people will often be in conflict with others. They love a challenge and all that matters is winning.

There are some positive aspects for A Type characters. They are high achievers and full of energy and drive. And they make good leaders in some fields of life – but not necessarily good team players.



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In contrast Type B personalities are “laid back”, calm, friendly and tolerant – and are less likely to become frustrated by things going on around them. Type B people are more likely to reward others with praise and make allowances for peoples’ weak points. At work, type B people can achieve a lot, dealing with tasks calmly and patiently; and they will not set impossible targets for themselves or others. They just “go with the flow”.

Your personality type will effect how you perceive and respond to stress. So which are you?

For each of the statements below, circle the number which indicates how you would behave. For example if you are always on time for appointments you would circle number 4 on the scale. If you are always late you would circle number 0.

Casual about appointments	0 1 2 3 4	Never late
Not competitive or ambitious	0 1 2 3 4	Very competitive ambitious
Good listener	0 1 2 3 4	Constantly interrupts
Never feels rushed	0 1 2 3 4	Always rushed
Waits patiently	0 1 2 3 4	Impatient while waiting
Takes one thing at a time	0 1 2 3 4	Tries to do many things at once
Slow deliberate talker	0 1 2 3 4	Emphatic, fast, forceful speech
Cares about satisfying self	0 1 2 3 4	Needs recognition from others
Slow at doing things	0 1 2 3 4	Fast (eating, walking, talking)
Easy going	0 1 2 3 4	Hard driving (self & others)
Expresses feelings	0 1 2 3 4	Hides feelings
Many other outside interests	0 1 2 3 4	Few outside interests
Casual	0 1 2 3 4	Eager to get things done

There are no strict divisions between these two personality types. Instead, everyone falls somewhere along the line, leaning more towards one or the other.

We can also display a mixture of behaviour depending on where we are. For example, some people might adopt Type A behaviour at work but follow Type B behaviour in their personal life.



”Hurry sickness” can be managed by following a series of steps, such as making time for other people – particularly by listening rather than Talking all the time – by doing things more slowly and not allowing work to dominate your entire life.

Taking Control

Locus Of Control

The term “Locus of control” refers to where we feel the control lies in our lives. Someone with an internal locus of control believes that they have control over what happens to them, through their decisions and actions.

Someone with an external locus of control believes that most of what happens to them is controlled by fate, chance and by other people, and that they can they can have little or no influence on a situation.

Let's take an example of person who has just started on a new project, having replaced somebody who left suddenly. There has been no proper hand over, they are soon struggling to get to grips with the role, and the other team members are not going out of their way to explain exactly what is needed. Below is a brief description as to how two characters have reacted to this situation.

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Character A

"I have been here for more than a week now. Isn't it obvious that I can't cope? They want me to fail. That's it they don't like me. It's just typical of my luck to end up with this horrible lot. Nothing goes right for me. Why won't anyone come over and talk to me?"



Character B

"I don't think they are being deliberately unhelpful, they are probably just busy. Hmm, I am never going to get anywhere at this rate. I have got to make them aware of the problem so we can solve it. I'll explain to them that I am struggling and ask them to clarify what it is I am supposed to be doing."



Character B is displaying an **internal locus of control**. Character B is taking responsibility for changing the situation. In this example, the internal locus of control is clearly the more positive reaction. Character B is able to confront the situation head on and take positive action

Character A on the other hand is displaying an **external locus of control**, thinking that it is up to other people to sort things out. This reaction will not change anything except raise stress levels.

Where is Your Locus of Control?

Use the scale below to determine how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements. If you strongly agree with the statement choose 1. If you strongly disagree with the statement choose 4.

	AGREE	DISAGREE		
	1	2	3	4
Our society is run by a few people with a lot of power and there is not much the ordinary person can do about it.				
Success hinges on being at the right place at the right time	1	2	3	4
There will always be conflict in the world, however hard people work to stop it	1	2	3	4
There is no point in voting, it won't change anything	1	2	3	4
Everything which happens in life is predestined	1	2	3	4
It's a waste of time trying to change people, they will always stay the same	1	2	3	4
Whether I work hard or not, it won't make any difference to how others assess my performance	1	2	3	4
Leaders are born not made	1	2	3	4
Luck and chance play a key role in life	1	2	3	4
Most of what happens in life is controlled by forces that we do not understand and can't control	1	2	3	4

If you have strongly agreed with most of the statements, your answers suggest that you have an external locus of control, which means that you tend to blame *circumstances* for the difficulties you encounter. As a result you may often see yourself as a powerless victim rather than seeking to change what is happening to you. Most of the time an internal locus of control would be of more benefit in dealing with pressure. But even if you tend to have an external locus of control you can develop better ways of dealing with pressurised situations.

If you have strongly disagreed with most of the statements, your answers suggest that you have an internal locus of control, which means that you feel you *can* exert considerable influence on what happens in your life. As a result you tend to have a fairly robust attitude to working under pressure and would probably act to change situations which are potentially stressful. However, if you lean towards the Type A personality you may have difficulty in accepting those situations where there is nothing you can do to change things, during a long travel delay for example.

Exercise 1**Individually...**

- Choose three statements that define and describe the causes/circumstances that make time management difficult for you
- Write these honestly, you will not have to share them with the whole group

In Pairs...

- Take it in turns to consider an item from each of your lists.
- Instructions for listener:
- Ask "Why?" more than once to challenge your partner to get to the root cause.
- Be forthright in asking them what they can do to change themselves or the situation (whichever is most appropriate).

Assertiveness

Many people find it difficult to be assertive – and many of those will have problems with managing time.

Assertiveness can be confused with selfishness or aggressiveness, with putting our own needs before those of others, and pursuing them regardless.

This can be very threatening and upsetting to others – and is NOT Assertiveness!

Compare Assertiveness with other ways of relating to people:

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Inés Aréizaga Esteva (Spain), 25 years old
Education: Chemical Engineer

– You have to be proactive and open-minded as a newcomer and make it clear to your colleagues what you are able to cope. The pharmaceutical field is new to me. But busy as they are, most of my colleagues find the time to teach me, and they also trust me. Even though it was a bit hard at first, I can feel over time that I am beginning to be taken seriously and that my contribution is appreciated.



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Assertiveness

- ◆ Recognising our own needs and asking openly and directly for what we want
- ◆ Recognising and respecting the rights and needs of other people
- ◆ Relating to people in personal and work situations in an open and honest way
- ◆ Feeling responsible for and in control of our own actions
- ◆ Not seeing situations in terms of win/lose but win/win; and being prepared to compromise
- ◆ Being able to resolve difficulties and disputes in a way that feels comfortable and just to those involved.

Aggressiveness

- ◆ Expressing feelings and opinions in a way that punishes, threatens or puts the other person down
- ◆ Disregarding the needs and rights of others
- ◆ Aiming to get our own way no matter what
- ◆ If we “win” and get what we want aggressively, it probably leaves someone else with bad feelings, making it difficult to relate to them in future.

Submissiveness

- ◆ Not standing up for our rights
- ◆ Avoiding responsibility for making choices – leaving others to make decisions for us
- ◆ Not being in control of our lives. Seeing ourselves as victims of unfairness and injustice.



Manipulativeness

- ◆ Unable to ask directly for what we want
- ◆ Trying to get what we want indirectly, by playing games or trying to make people feel guilty.

How Assertive At Work Are You Questionnaire

Please think about and answer the following questions:

- ◆ When a colleague makes an unreasonable request, can you refuse?
- ◆ Can you give your colleagues feedback?
- ◆ Can you accept a compliment about your work?
- ◆ Can you tell your boss if you are dissatisfied at work?
- ◆ Are you able to avoid being exploited by others?
- ◆ Can you speak up at meetings?
- ◆ Can you readily admit your mistakes?
- ◆ Can you make decisions and accept the consequences?
- ◆ When at fault can you apologise?
- ◆ Can you ask for help from others?
- ◆ Are you able to listen to criticism about yourself?
- ◆ When confused, can you ask for clarification?

YES NO YES NO YES NO YES NO YES NO YES NO YES NO



Contributing Assertively At Meetings

Many of us find meetings very stressful. It is often daunting to be in a large group with either your peers, whom you want to have a good impression of you, or with people who are in a position of authority to you, particularly if this includes the boss.

Here are some hints that might make the situation less stressful.

- When making your contribution, keep it short.
- Avoid interrupting others and do not allow others to interrupt you.
- Be aware of your non-verbal messages and keep these as assertive as possible.
- Speak early to establish yourself as an active participant.
- Whenever possible get a reaction to your contributions. Ask members what they think about your ideas, statements etc.
- If new information leads you to change your mind, be honest and open about it, do not apologise.
- Do not let the views of one or two influential members affect your thoughts. Raise your doubts and ask for the views of others.
- Be clear about which issues you want to be assertive about and restrict your contribution to these, rather than taking a stand on every issue.



Assertion Technique – Broken Record

This is a very useful technique when people are putting pressure on you to agree to something, find time for something, or even buy something that you do not want.

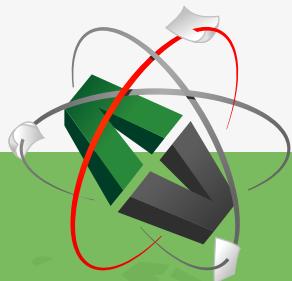
What you are trying to do with ‘Broken Record’ is to be very clear about what it is you want to say without getting angry, uncomfortable, irritated or loud.

It is particularly useful in conflict situations, when saying ‘no’, when asking questions for clarification, when correcting someone who is in a position of authority, when being taken advantage of, when expressing feelings or opinions, especially when the other person is not listening.

What To Do?

You speak as if you were a broken record. You need to be persistent, to stick to the point of what you want to say and just keep on saying it over and over again.

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The Steps

1. Identify your goal and make a clear statement:
 'I can't work this evening.'
 'I can't take on this extra work, I am too busy.'
 'Thank you but I don't want a drink.'
2. Repeat the message without picking up any counter statements which will cloud the issue at hand:
 'I don't think you heard me.' 'I am not able to work this evening.'
 'I don't want a drink.'
 'Let me say it again, I am too busy.'

Assertion Technique – Disarming Anger

This is a useful technique when you are in a highly charged situation and you want to try and reduce the feelings of anger so that you can:

- ◆ feel more comfortable
- ◆ begin to listen
- ◆ begin to start solving the problem

It is particularly useful when someone is telling you off, or is involved in a personal tirade against you. This might be a boss, a friend, a parent, or an authority figure.

What To Do?

1. You recognise the anger you are picking up:
 'Okay. I can see that you are very angry.'
2. Express your desire to solve the problem actively:
 'I want to hear and understand what you have to say.'
 'I really want us to work this out.'
3. Get the angry person to lower their voice and to sit down, using a normal voice and calming approach:
 'Let's sit down and talk about what's going on.'
4. Use active listening to hear all the complaints before moving on to trying to solve the problem:
 'I can see how angry that must have made you feel.'
 'I can see that this must have been upsetting you for a long time.'
5. Whenever appropriate, admit your own part in the problem:
 'Yes, I was being rather careless about that, wasn't I?'

This way of approaching anger assumes you are willing to handle the problem and move beyond active listening to try to resolve the conflict.



Simply placating the other person will only lead to further conflict, especially in the long run.

Assertion Technique – Saying ‘No’

Many people find it very difficult to say ‘no’. Just getting the word out can seem impossible. Most people have a problem saying ‘no’ to the following people: partners, friends, colleagues, the boss, shop assistants, sales assistants, people in authority (e.g. doctor, dentist, bank manager, teacher).

You often need to practise saying ‘no’ in situations when you have said yes out of guilt or fear of mortally offending the other person, or equally so, when you have felt too frightened to say ‘no’. In fact, any time when you have said ‘yes’ and not really meant it.

The following helps you to practise saying ‘NO’:

1. Find a partner who will be willing to give you some feedback on your verbal and non-verbal communications.
2. Role-play situations with your partner, such as refusing a request for a favour from a friend or a work colleague.
3. Try out different ways of saying ‘no’, especially taking into account the feedback your partner has given you.
4. Practise saying ‘no’ in the world, and learning from each experience. It is important not to be discouraged but to pace yourself, and practise in relatively unimportant situations first before tackling the more difficult ones.



Being Proactive

Even if we manage our time superbly, things will change and goal posts will move.

Having a sense of control and choosing how to respond to changes as they happen are major determinants of our success.

- ◆ We CHOOSE to behave either reactively (passive or submissive) or proactively (active) to what life throws at us.
- ◆ Reactive behaviour can be self-fulfilling – By accepting that there is nothing we can do about a situation, we become passive and do nothing.
- ◆ Between most things that happen to you and your response to each of them, there is a degree of freedom.
- ◆ Being pro-active is about CHOOSING how we respond to the people and things around us.

Are You An Actor Or A Reactor?

Life is a constant process of change, and this applies as much to our professional lives as to our biological and psychological ones. You're never exempt from organisational changes that are likely to affect you, and many of these may serve to increase rather than decrease your sensations of pressure.

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Be on the alert for these changes, and try to do something about them before they and their consequences become irrevocable facts. Predict them where you can, and take the initiative in acting.

People who in their professional lives seem always to be at the mercy of circumstances are usually those who wait for things to happen, and then react to them. People who seem more on top of things are usually those who see things coming, and act in good time to guard against them (or benefit from them).

Actors (the term has nothing to do with the stage!) tend not to be caught napping by events. They show:

- ◆ **Power of anticipation.** They identify what is likely to happen, and take steps to avoid it or profit from it or change it to suit their own interests. They tend to be well – informed and in the right place at the right time. Sometimes for this reason they are unfairly described as 'lucky' by their acquaintances.
- ◆ **Decisiveness.** They make up their minds what to do while others are still deliberating. Generally this isn't the same as being impulsive. Impulsive people are those who don't anticipate, and who act hastily when the danger is almost upon them.
- ◆ **Courage.** Acting quickly and decisively often involves an element of perceived risk. They are prepared to take this risk, while others delay around them (and in the long run perhaps incur even greater risk).
- ◆ **Good stress resistance.** Actors are often able to stay with the pressure, and keep a keen eye on how things are turning out, when highly stressed individuals are taking refuge in escape or denial. 'It won't really come to a crisis.' 'Things will sort themselves out.' 'I've just got to get away from it all.'

This doesn't mean that actors are 'better' people than reactors. They may be opportunist self-centred, and even ruthless.

On the other hand reactors may be indecisive and ineffectual, and end up consistently stressed by their inability to control events. Ideal behaviour therefore involves the ability both to act and react, dependent upon the demands of the situation and the legitimate rights of other people and of yourself.

In terms of the four qualities listed above, assess whether you're an actor or a reactor, and how this influences the levels of pressure in your life. If you miss out by being a reactor, assess whether changing your behaviour to that of an actor will lead to more, or less pressure.

If you do want to act rather than react, look ahead, be well informed, and stay with difficult situations instead of trying to escape from them.



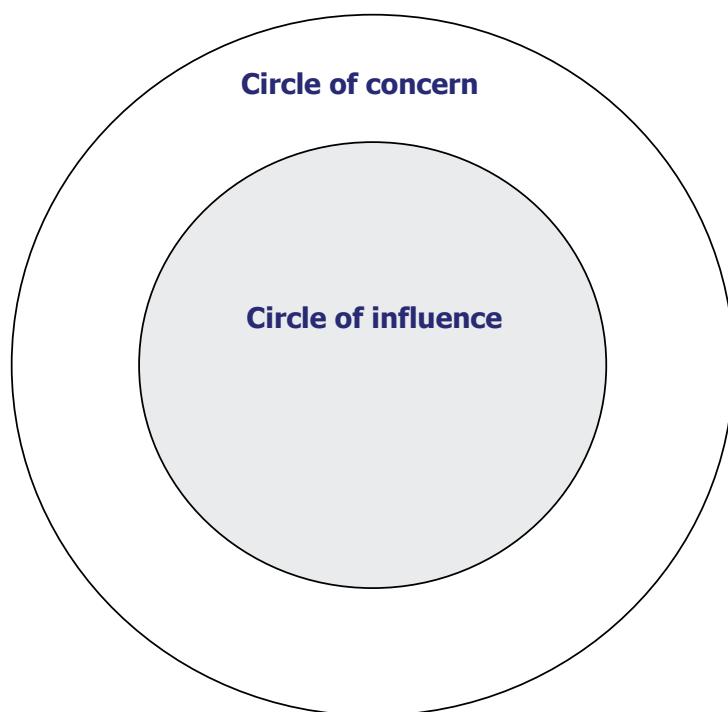
Circles of Influence 2

- ◆ Individually, think about the next twelve months. Mentally answering the questions below may help with your thought-process:
- ◆ What challenges do you face at work in the next twelve months?
- ◆ What are your hopes and expectations of the next twelve months?
- ◆ How might your job/role change in the next twelve months?
- ◆ What is important to you in the next twelve months?

Now write down (at least) six concerns/issues/problems that you associate with the next twelve months.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

Look at your list. Write the concerns/issues/problems that you believe you can influence in the central circle (The Circle of Influence) and those that you have no control over in the outer circle (The Circle of Concern).



Beginning With The End In Mind

- All things are created twice; first mentally, then actually.
- If you know where you want to be, then you can plan the steps to get you there.
- If you have no long term focus, you are likely to become consumed with the reactive element of your job, making time management even more difficult.
- Only by knowing and understanding your objectives are you able to effectively prioritise and deal with changing priorities.
- Unless you know where you are going, you may find yourself somewhere you never expected or wanted to be!



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Top Time Management Tips

- ◆ Set up a simple “to do” list.
- ◆ Plan your day, set yourself targets.
- ◆ Use gaps in the day to catch up with simple tasks.
- ◆ Use time when driving to think.
- ◆ Say up front whether now is a good time or not.
- ◆ Create regular, planned meetings for those who are always requesting unplanned meetings.
- ◆ Determine the need for every meeting you attend.
- ◆ Always start and leave meetings on time.
- ◆ Use a Dictaphone to make notes when out and about.
- ◆ Tackle important tasks during your “prime time”.
- ◆ Try and find a quiet time to think each day.
- ◆ Note how long things take to complete.
- ◆ Learn to say “no”.
- ◆ Ask yourself, “should I be doing this, and should I be doing it now?”
- ◆ Communicate up and down the line regularly.
- ◆ Learn from experience.
- ◆ Change what causes the queries/questions
- ◆ Handle each document once – many people pick up a document and handle it two or three time before actually dealing with it. Next time put an x in the corner every time you read it and ✓ when you action it – you will be amazed!
- ◆ Decide what you want from your day, what is your big goal i.e. to access 50% of all e-mails, prepare and finish a PowerPoint presentation – this will help you prioritize
- ◆ Prioritising – there are a number of ways you can do this – A,B,C or 1,2,3, or colour code for important/urgent etc. Always put a tick through when done its’ very rewarding! – Do look at how many times you end up carrying the same task forward without touching it – you need to ask yourself if you are being realistic with what you are setting yourself each day – max 10 tasks on the to-do list
- ◆ Consider – can any of your tasks be ‘dumped’?
- ◆ Delegate – this is not just about boss/subordinate relationship – delegate upwards and amongst peers
- ◆ Build in cushion time – block off your prime time – don’t do back to back meetings – use voice mail
- ◆ Be realistic when agreeing to tasks – if you need more time ask for it
- ◆ Take time out! – have a lunch break it’s amazing how refreshed and focused you will be after a break – go for a 10 min walk around the circle

- ◆ End of the day tidy up! Always leave desk clear and to-do list written. Its much easier to come into work knowing what's in front of you
- ◆ Control of phone – filter calls/use of voice mail when really busy/set aside time to call clients in a block
- ◆ Taking credit – celebrate success – this motivational technique will energise you to move onto the next task
- ◆ Clear desk policy – “cluttered desk is a sign of a cluttered mind” work on one thing at a time. Only have in front of you what you are going to work on otherwise you will find yourself distracted
- ◆ Vary tasks – link to prime time – don't do something creative in the afternoon if it's not your prime time for energy!
- ◆ Create a reason to leave the office at night – e.g. a hobby – it's too easy to stay longer than we need to and we then become ineffective. We often fit the job into the time we allocate – e.g. if we have 3 hours to clean the house – we will take 3 hours. If we have 6 hours we will take 6 but the quality is usually the same
- ◆ Ask your self is it urgent or important – if it's urgent and important action now. If it is urgent and not important action soon. If it's important but not urgent re-prioritise it. Consider delegating at every opportunity.

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Activity Management

The idea of making oneself unavailable causes discomfort to many people. Many would like to put aside an hour or two three times a week to do important things well, but do not feel they can. However, they are quite prepared to be unavailable at meetings and see this as legitimate unavailability.

In order to assess the priorities in our work, we need to know the answer to the question: “**What am I really here for?**”

When asked this question, managers typically produce a list of things, many of which have to be done by the manager on his or her own – and not done in grabbed fragments of time, but done in reasonable, sensible chunks of time.

After all, who would allow a meeting to be constantly interrupted by telephones, e-mails or people “dropping-in”? The time for meetings is regarded as important and as “uninterruptible”.

So too are there occasions in the work of a manager when he or she needs to be “uninterrupted”. This is not talk of organisational anarchy – merely a suggestion that you try, two or three times a week, to be temporarily unavailable to do important things well.

If you decide that, in the course of the day, you are going to make yourself unavailable to do something well, the next question is, when would be the best time?

Obviously, the time has to fit in with other demands on your time during the day, but you should also think of doing it in terms of your own biology.

Some people are at their best first thing in the morning. They come into the office and launch straight into their most important thing. Other people need to clear away quite a lot of stuff and perhaps warm up and so they prefer the second part of the morning. There are people who feel best late in the afternoon and a few who feel best straight after lunch.

So one of the things to think about in terms of availability is **when is the best time?**

Another is to **programme it in** to the day, either at the very beginning of the day, or, better still, the previous afternoon.

Then it needs to be **communicated**. Often, doing important things on one's own doesn't look very active. So you need to say to people, 'I'd be grateful if you wouldn't disturb me today between 11.00am and 1.00pm, as I'm doing something important which I need to concentrate on.'

There are two issues here:

- One is co-operation between team members to give each other space to work in an uninterrupted way.
- And the second is how to protect oneself from the casual caller in an effective but non-offensive way.

There are as many solutions to these two problems as there are organisations. On the subject of team work and co-operation, it is worth pointing out that a number of organisations have instigated a “quiet hour”, which is the same hour for everyone, let’s say, for instance, 3 to 4 in the afternoon, when, by agreement, people do not hold meetings, call each other or drop in on each other. This means that every day, in a regular way, there is going to be an hour of peace and quiet to do that important task.

Other possibilities for giving yourself planned unavailability include diverting telephones, or if this is not acceptable, answering the phone with something like, “Can I just finish what I’m doing and I’ll call you back in half an hour or so?”

As far as visitors are concerned, it depends to a certain extent on what your office allows. If you have an office with a door, then life is relatively easy. If you work in an open-plan office, then things are more difficult and success depends on the extent to which people can agree to work certain things out between themselves. Simple “Do not disturb” signs can be useful – but, in practice, a notice that says “Do not disturb – available at 11.00am” is better still, since it gives a clear message of when availability will be resumed.

The problems of open plan offices are interesting because, obviously, life is much more exposed. Some organisations use a system of flags. If you are sitting at a desk with a flag on it, it means “I am currently unavailable,” in effect, “my door is shut”.

Such organisations typically devise certain rules for the use of such flags. For example, there is a limit on the number of flags and to how long you may put one up at your desk.

So, in order to make yourself unavailable, there are a number of approaches you can take which will depend on the organisation you are in.

The Important Thing Is To Remember That It Is Legitimate To Be Unavailable Some Of The Time.

Sir Derek Rayner is on record as saying that, for him, what distinguishes a good manager is that he or she *“is someone who can find big chunks of time to do important things well.”*

Handling Interruptions

Here are three things you can try:

1. **Try to see them in their place.** If ‘they’ come to us, then when we feel we have done enough, we have to “kick them out” – and, as good time-managers, we don’t wish to cause offence. If we can see ‘them’ in their office, then when we feel we have done enough, we can say, “I think that’s enough for you to get over this problem for now, let’s make a proper date to talk, at a time that’s convenient for us both.”
2. **Ask staff to bring you their solutions, rather than their problems.** The benefits of asking people not to bring their problems to you when they first occur to them but to bring solutions as well are both short-term and long-term. In the short-term, it means that they have thought the thing through further, and may even have brought it to a point where all they need is your approval for a course of action. In the long-term, it makes people more capable of thinking through their own things and less dependent on their bosses. It is interesting to think why bosses accept so many problems from staff. One of the reasons must surely be that they find it easy to do so – and it appeals to their ego!
3. **Try to keep them standing up.** This advice is not meant to be taken literally – because it is important not to give offence. The advice is though, not to always offer a cup of coffee – and not to move over all of your papers to make room for his or her papers. Also, some people find that if they remove the “visitors’ chair” from the opposite side of the desk and put it in a corner, this gives off an appropriate signal, as if to say “Yes, I really am busy”. And, if all else fails, stand up (it is difficult to sit down and make yourself at home when the person you have called on is standing up).

These may or may not work for you and your organisation. Some of them may seem “gimmicky” and some are clearly not as important as others. What is important is to realise that it is legitimate to be unavailable some of the time. Even people in response and service functions need to take some time out from constantly responding, to think how to improve the job, how to grow it, how to develop it, how to bring it up to date. If you are always available to whoever wants you, the chances are that some of these important, but not urgent, longer term problems do not get tackled properly.

There are many ways to try to maintain ones availability and unavailability. The time we need to be unavailable is probably not as much as people fear. Much can be done in a proper hour taken two to three times a week.

If you can go to meetings, if you can go to training courses, if you can take a day off, then you are able to make yourself unavailable.

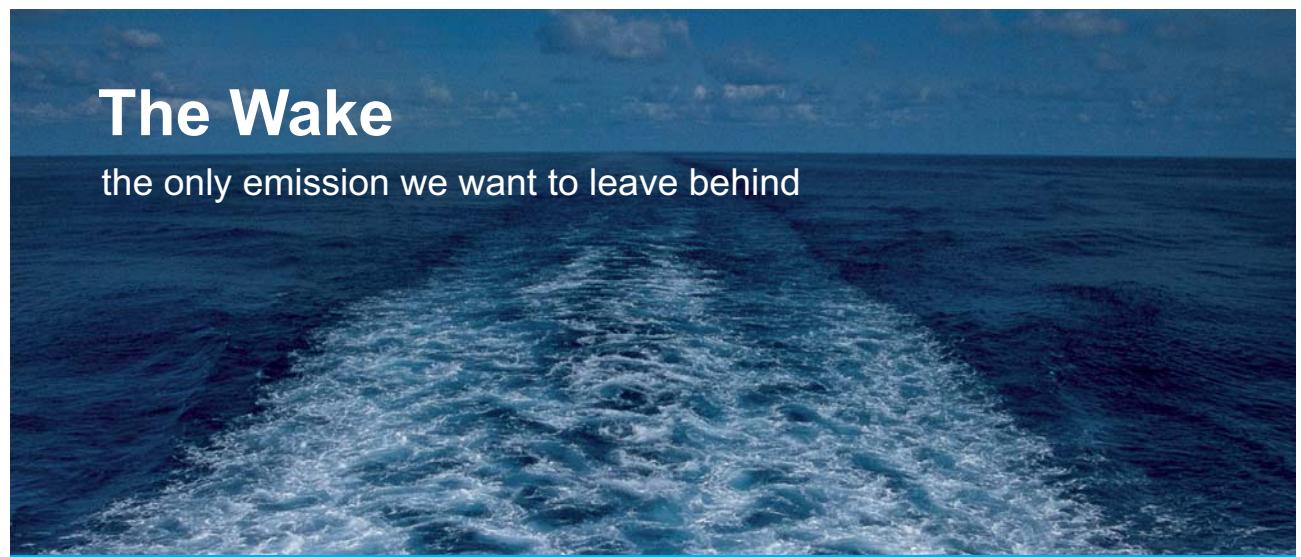
Using a Time Log

How to complete the Time Log

It is a strange fact that most people have only a vague idea of how they use their time and where it goes – until they keep and complete a Time Log such as the one here.

Ideally, you should complete the Time Log for a week, but if this is not possible, a single day will give useful information.

You will need to make several copies of the master. It is unlikely that one day will “fit” on one page.



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It is worth the effort. As a result of keeping a Time Log and then completing the analysis, it is possible to save 5 or even 10 hours a week. It is a good investment.

1. Write down the 3 priorities or objectives you really want to achieve in the day. Try to express them specifically (eg. rather than “See Charlie,” “Get agreement from Charlie on the plan of action on the X project, to be completed by 5th March). You could do this each morning. In practice, many people find it better to do it in the afternoon of the previous day.
2. Start the Time Log immediately you come into work by recording your arrival time.
3. Write down each activity and the time in columns 1 and 2. The other columns can be filled in when you have a chance.
4. Use exact times as this will give you a true picture of the extent to which your work is fragmented. (In terms of getting things done, six lots of ten minutes is not the same as an hour).
5. Try to describe the activity quite precisely. For example, “drafted first version of safety report” is more useful to analyse afterwards than “writing”. Use abbreviations if they help eg. “M” for meetings, “T-in” for incoming telephone calls, “T-out” for outgoing phone calls, “V” for visitors, etc.
6. At your convenience, but at least once a day, complete columns 3, 4 and 5.
Column 3 is easy. Just calculate the time in minutes that it lasted.
Column 4 is used to indicate when and how (or if) you spent your time on high priority work. It will show possibly how you put off difficult (important) things in favour of easy, low priority ones.
Column 5 is for you to use in any way you like. Some of the important issues are: Did you have to do this at all? Did you have to do it then? Did the meeting have to take so long? Could someone else have done it? Did you have to take so long over this? Did you have to do this so quickly?
7. Each day, complete the control boxes for the Objectives achieved. Be honest with yourself about the degree of achievement. This will help you to learn more about your effectiveness.

You are now in a position to formulate a Time Improvement Plan.

(See Handout after Time Log).

Sheet No:	Today's Priority Objectives							
Name:	1.							
Date:	2.							
	3.							
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Achieved</th> <th>Some Progress</th> <th>Little or no progress</th> <th></th> </tr> </thead> </table>				Achieved	Some Progress	Little or no progress		
Achieved	Some Progress	Little or no progress						
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Time of Day</th> <th>Activity</th> <th>Time taken (mins)</th> <th>Priority Activity No.</th> <th>CRITICAL COMMENT <small>e.g. Is this activity necessary? What does it contribute to my objectives?</small></th> </tr> </thead> </table>				Time of Day	Activity	Time taken (mins)	Priority Activity No.	CRITICAL COMMENT <small>e.g. Is this activity necessary? What does it contribute to my objectives?</small>
Time of Day	Activity	Time taken (mins)	Priority Activity No.	CRITICAL COMMENT <small>e.g. Is this activity necessary? What does it contribute to my objectives?</small>				

Time Improvement Plan

Make a plan for your four most important Time Management Problems.

Time improvement area	Action Steps	Begin on	Time saved/ Used for
1.			Hrs=
2.			Hrs=
3.			Hrs=
4.			Hrs=

Identifying Timewasters

Timewasters Worldwide

No matter what country or organisation you are in, with few exceptions, it is now possible to predict what the overall profile of timewasters will be.

The following list of the top 17 timewasters world wide is rank-ordered.



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An advertisement for MITAS. On the left, a woman with blonde hair, wearing a dark blue dress, stands smiling. Behind her is a large, brightly lit offshore oil or gas platform at night, situated in the ocean. The background of the ad is a gradient from light blue to teal.

Month 16

I was a construction supervisor in the North Sea advising and helping foremen solve problems

Real work
International opportunities
Three work placements

It represents the findings of a broad cross-section of time-waster lists compiled from profiles of 300 managers from nine countries, 40 bank presidents, 100 banking middle-managers, 47 American Banking Association Members, 20 hospital administrators, 14 assistant hospital administrators, 50 cardiologists, 14 assistant practitioners, 24 members of the Young Presidents Organisation, 30 military commanders, 125 middle managers of a large food corporation; and 60 first line supervisors.

The figures in brackets represent the average ranking of each timewaster when the lists were merged.

1. Telephone interruptions (2.2)
2. Drop-in visitors (3.5)
3. Ineffective delegation (4.0)
4. Meetings (4.3)
5. Lack of objectives, priorities, planning (5.0)
6. Crisis Management (5.1)
7. Attempting too much at once (7.5)
8. Cluttered desk/personal disorganisation (7.6)
9. Indecision/procrastination (9.1)
10. Inability to say 'No' (9.9)
11. Unclear Communication/Instructions (11.3)
12. Confused responsibility and authority (11.5)
13. Delayed, inaccurate information (11.7)
14. Lack of self-discipline (12.3)
15. Leaving tasks unfinished (13.6)
16. Untrained, inadequate staff (13.8)
17. Socialising (14.7)

Time Wasters Questionnaire

Below is a list of time wasters. Tick those which you feel apply to you and identify the three most important, marking them 1, 2 and 3. Add any further time wasters that are not already on the list.

Time waster	Tick if applies	Importance
Telephone interruptions		
Drop-in visitors		
Ineffective delegation		
Meetings		
Lack of objectives, priorities, planning		
Crisis Management		
Attempting too much at once		
Cluttered desk/personal disorganisation		

Indecision/procrastination
Inability to say ‘No’
Unclear Communication/Instructions
Confused responsibility and authority
Delayed, inaccurate information
Lack of self-discipline
Leaving tasks unfinished
Untrained, inadequate staff
Social networking
Socialising

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

From Problem To Solution

Which are the top 3 Timewasters in your section/department?

What needs to be done about them?

What is stopping you?

(Problem A)

What needs to be done about Problem A?

What is stopping you?

(Problem B)

What needs to be done about problem B?

What is stopping you?

(Problem C)

What needs to be done about problem C?

Repeat the process until you hit a point at which you find a solution to the problem.

Managing Meetings – Time at Meetings

1. What time management problems do you associate with meetings at work?

2. What tactics and techniques would improve the effectiveness of meetings at work?

During a meeting how would you deal with somebody who is:

- Talkative and long-winded?
- Silent or reluctant to take part?
- Always questioning and “nit-picking”?
- Aggressive and domineering?

Tips For Managing Meetings



1. Determine the need for a meeting.
2. Be prepared.
3. Consider a stand-up meeting.
4. Cancel meetings no longer needed.
5. Don't attend every meeting.
6. Handle people who talk too much.
7. Stop side conversations.
8. Involve people who talk too little.
9. Manage people who try to take over.
10. Have no meeting without an agenda.
11. Have someone record.
12. Start and stop on time.
13. Use visuals.

Determine the Need

The first guideline for effective time management in meetings is to be sure that there is actually a need for the meeting. Before you schedule any meeting, ask yourself if it is truly necessary. Instead of holding an unnecessary meeting, deal with the issue on the phone, with a memo, or in an informal conference. To be sure that a meeting is necessary, ask yourself these questions:

- What is the real purpose of the meeting? If there isn't a clear purpose to be achieved, don't call it.
- Is this the right time? Are you ready to lead the meeting? Is all the necessary information available? Is the issue ripe for discussion, or is the meeting premature? Is the general interest level or situation ready for a meeting?
- What will happen if there is no meeting? If there will be no dire consequence of not holding it, don't call a meeting.
- What will be the total cost of the meeting? Knowing what your time is worth and that of your co-workers, calculate the cost of the meeting. Then ask yourself if the meeting justifies the cost that will be incurred.

ICI used to run meetings with a clock on the wall calibrated according to the salaries of the managers in the room, so that the meeting leader could say, “*We have been discussing this issue, and have spent £5,000 and still we are no nearer to a decision!*”

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Be Prepared

When you call a meeting, be sure you are thoroughly prepared. This means having a written list of what you intend to accomplish. Beware of the tendency to write down only points to be discussed; instead, focus on the action you intend to accomplish so that the emphasis is on decisions, not discussions. A written agenda ensures that everyone knows what is to be discussed, and each participant can make the necessary preparation ahead of time. Circulate the agenda to all the people who will attend; it will help keep participants focused and involved. Distribute this agenda 72 hours before the meeting, and designate people to discuss certain key points.

Be prepared. Have all the necessary papers and information with you, so you don't have to table the meeting until the data can be located. Resist interruptions and keep to the prepared agenda. Set a time limit and stick to it. Begin on time; any stragglers will pick up the cue that this is a no-nonsense meeting. When you begin and end on schedule, people respond more seriously and professionally. Arrange to have minutes taken during the meeting and distribute them to everyone who attended (or was scheduled to attend). When a decision is reached, make an action plan and see that it is circulated so that everyone knows what needs to be done and who will do it.

Consider a Stand-Up Meeting

A former Air Force colonel found that meetings, many of which were uncalled for and most of which lasted too long, were taking up an inordinate amount of his time. He promptly solved this problem, at least in part, by adopting a practice used in the Air Force: a stand-up meeting. "We used to have these meetings almost every morning in the service," the colonel said. "I mean, people actually stood up throughout the meeting." Stand-up meetings are usually shorter because people don't like to stand for long periods of time. Comfortably seated, they're more likely to ask irrelevant questions and engage in other activities that tend to prolong meetings. When participants stand, meetings are invariably shorter—and, not uncommonly, more productive.

Don't Attend Every Meeting

If you are not personally needed at a meeting, send someone else. If this is not possible, stay only for the portion of the meeting that directly involves you.

Handling Problem People At Meetings

Finally, we come to the challenge that every meeting goer faces – that is, dealing with problem people at meetings. Whether it's the objector (the person who objects to every new idea) or the rambler (the one who spends ten minutes rehashing an idea) or the whisperer (the talkative socialiser who can't stop chattering in low tones to everyone nearby), there are ways, which we'll discuss, that will help you to control these problem people.

People Who Talk Too Much

People who are compulsive talkers often look for recognition.

One way to give it to them, of course, is to ask them direct questions about which you know they are knowledgeable.

Or you might explain that you'd like to hear more about it at the break. Relay questions to them that are in their sphere of interest.

Explain candidly that you're interested in their opinions, but that you need to hear from others, too.

People Who Get Involved In Side Discussions

Sometimes when you do too good a job of getting group participation, people tend to break off into small discussion groups. This practice is a major time waster, because the group is deviating from the planned course of action. One way to break up side discussions is to call for a break and diplomatically ask the guilty parties to cooperate. Another way is to ask the individuals to share their information with the group, though this tactic does smack of school discipline.

An indirect way to attack the problem is to suggest that the acoustics in the room are not particularly good, and that it's impossible to hear with several people talking at once. Or, you might give in and break the group into smaller units for private discussions. Of course, you can always ignore side-trackers, but this invariably leads to longer, less productive meetings. And remember, the idea is to save time, not squander it.

People Who Talk Too Little

The other side of the coin is people who talk too little. Silence, though at times a virtue, can also be a time killer at meetings. You can encourage conferees to participate in a number of ways: by creating a congenial atmosphere; by using a direct question when it's a safe one; by making sure everyone understands the issues; by going around the room and letting everyone voice an opinion; by prudently encouraging others to participate; and, perhaps most important, by keeping in mind that the reason many people don't participate is that they are afraid of looking foolish.

People Who Usurp The Leader's Power

Explain your role at the outset and, when appropriate, answer a direct question. However, if you want to keep the meeting on track and save everyone's time, you must be direct and forceful and control the meeting yourself. Remember, any meeting that lasts too long is one that is allowed to last too long.

Two Time Management Keys For Absolutely Everything

No Meeting Without An Agenda

A meeting without an agenda is an “invitation to disaster” for everyone present because there is no plan. Agendas offer the advantage of providing a guide, a blueprint, an outline for the meeting. Agendas also offer time frames, specific topics to be covered, objectives, and they ensure that participants come prepared. An agenda can just be a list of points in an email, but there must be something to govern what you will discuss and why.

Start And Stop On Time

When we wait for “everyone to get here” we have rewarded the latecomers and punished the people who arrived on time. Knowing that behaviour rewarded is behaviour repeated, we instead want to start on time. There are many creative ways to do this. Some organizations fine latecomers, some have a “kitty” to collect late fees to be used later for a party, some start their meetings at odd times, such as 9:05 so as to underscore the beginning time. Whatever works for your group is fine. The important thing is to start on time and end on time.



The advertisement features a photograph of two young women with long hair, smiling and peeking out from behind a red door or wall. To the left of the image, there is text and the logo of Sweden Sverige. Below the image, there is a call-to-action button and the logo of Linköping University.

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Delegation: How Well Do You Delegate?

Delegation: How Well Do You Delegate?

Spend a moment considering each statement and choose the number between 1 and 5 which most accurately represents your view.

1 = I never do this → 5 = I practise this approach all of the time

STATEMENT	SCORE
As soon as I receive a task, I evaluate it to see if it can be delegated either in whole or in part.	
I delegate tasks in a timely manner	
Before I decide who to give a task to, I analyse it properly so I know what the task will involve	
I delegate tasks to a wide variety of staff	
I identify areas of concern before delegating a task	
I ensure that proper training is given where needed	
I involve the person I am delegating the task to in agreeing realistic time-scales.	
I have regular check-points when I discuss delegated tasks with the person to check progress	
I give specific feedback on the good points and any learning points	
Even though I know I could do the task quicker, I still think seriously about delegating a task if it will provide a development opportunity	
I believe that effective delegation is an essential method of developing my staff	
I always insist on solutions to problems	
I break a task down into high-level action points before I delegate it	
I explain the benefits for the individual when I delegate a task	
I estimate the number of hours required when I delegate a task	
If a delegated task goes wrong, I look to myself to take responsibility	

List the things you need to do over the next 1–4 weeks and decide which one of these could be delegated to somebody else.

You may not be in a position to delegate at this point, however, the questions/criteria below should help you establish how you might go about delegating in the future.

Once you have identified which task or activity could be delegated decide what would be required to do so and estimate the time you would save.

Assessment

- ◆ What is the task?
- ◆ What is involved?
- ◆ What are the time limits?
- ◆ Who (other than yourself) is best able to carry out the task?
- ◆ Who would benefit and what would those benefits be?
- ◆ How would the task to be monitored?
- ◆ What would be the limits of authority?
- ◆ How would you ensure that necessary information and/or training is provided?
- ◆ How would you be available to provide support, encouragement and feedback?
- ◆ How much time would you save?

Note:

Avoid over-delegating.

Avoid delegating then taking decisions yourself.

Avoid “breathing down the neck” of the person you’ve delegated to.

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$$1 - \exp\left(-\pi\mu \int_{t=0}^{L_1} \tau'(l)^2 c r p\left(-\frac{\tau(l)^{12}}{\tau(l)^2 + \sigma_a^2}, \lambda\right) dl\right)$$

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Dealing with Paperwork

The key to managing paperwork is to handle each piece of paper only once. To do this, decide where each letter or email or other piece of paper belongs. Use what is called the **F-WAD** approach to handling paper.

The F-WAD System

This system requires you to make an immediate decision, as you handle each piece of paper, by employing one of four tactics: **F**ile, **W**astebasket, **A**ction folder, **D**irect it.

- The first tactic is to file. If you need the information for documentation, then file it. If, instead, there is something that you must do with it, then put it in your action folder.
- The second tactic is to use the wastebasket. *Business Week* says that “*Man’s best friend, aside from the dog, is the wastebasket.*” Once you’ve read the information, if you really don’t plan to do anything with it, toss it.
- A third tactic is to keep an action folder. Paperwork in this folder includes letters to be answered, memos to be drafted, and proposals to be studied. The papers that go into your action folder are the only ones you will handle twice: once when they are placed in the action folder, and then when they are acted upon. The point to remember is that what goes into this file needs action, not reshuffling. Use see-through coloured plastic folders for paperwork action folders. In this way, you can see what is in them without opening them, and you can also colour-code your paperwork. Use a simple system, such as yellow for information and red for deadlines. You can also colour-code your highlighting in the same way.
- The fourth and final tactic to employ is to direct it to someone else who needs to know or would like to know the information. Very often paperwork needs to be sent to someone else for their information, sign-off, or general interest.

Other Techniques

In addition to the **F-WAD** System, consider four other ways to reduce the paper avalanche:

- Delegate routine paperwork, whenever possible, to one of your staff or to a colleague who may be more knowledgeable than you are about the issue in question.
- Simply reduce the amount of papers you generate. If you don’t need to write the memo and can handle the matter with a short conversation, eliminate the memo. If you routinely produce a report, but you are not sure how many people read it carefully, or even indifferently, try not writing it. See how many people notice that they haven’t received it. If almost nobody misses it, you can stop producing it. Ask yourself if the message has to be sent, if it has to be in written form, if a record is really needed, and if a copy is necessary.

- Respond to your mail by writing a few words or a sentence at the bottom or in the margin. A quickly penned “Yes” or “No” or “Great idea!” will save a surprising amount of time and eliminate the need for another letter or email.
- And a final suggestion is to question the value of all reading material you receive routinely. If a journal or professional publication doesn’t fulfil a useful function, cancel it. If you miss the material, you can always reinstate the subscription. Chances are you won’t notice that you no longer receive it.

In Short...

- If it doesn't contribute, scrap it
- Only handle paper once
- Do it, Delegate it or Ditch it!
- Prioritise, must, should, when possible
- Avoid clutter, slush pile avoids file!
- Use a dictating machine in the car
- Respond to letter by phone
- Respond to letter by notes in margin
- Have standard responses ready
- Use FAX or e-mail for external mail

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Dealing with E-Mails

Some techniques to control this easy but excessive method of communication are to:

1. Consider an email policy if you are in management. Some companies have adopted a messaging policy that limits the number of e-mails that can be sent or forwarded in a given day. At Computer Associates International, a software company based in suburban New York that employs nearly 10,000 employees worldwide, the email system shuts down for two hours in the morning and two hours in the afternoon to give workers a chance to catch up on 'real work'
2. Decide if an email is really necessary at all, and if it is not, don't send it.
3. Prune distribution lists. Don't "cc" a message to dozens of people. Analyze who needs to know or take action, and e-mail those people only. By coming to grips with the distribution list, you'll increase your credibility as an e-mail sender. The fewer messages you send, the greater attention they will receive.
4. Write e-mails with care, so that others read them. By writing clearly, you increase the likelihood that your messages will be read with attention and you will get the results you want or need from those messages. Don't use all caps, which may make the reader feel you are screaming. Make your emails easy to read, and be sure to use a well thought-out subject line.
5. Respect other people's time when you email them, and use e-mail etiquette. Don't ask for a receipt unless you really need one, because you not only infringe on their time but you may also imply that they don't read their mail. Make your e-mails easy to respond to, such as by providing a simple yes or no check box at the bottom, and whenever possible structure the message so that no reply is required.
6. Use the **FDR-F System for e-mail** you receive. As you read each message, make a decision to do one of four things with that message, **just as you use the F-WAD System for paperwork:**

F: File it. Be sure that you really need to save it and that you are archiving it with an easy-to-locate title.

D: Delete it. If you don't need it for the record, put it in the trash.

R: Reply to it. Send a reply right away.

F: Forward it. If it is important, forward or attach the message to some one who needs to know or would like to know. Again, be highly selective about the e-mail you send to other people.



Tips For Dealing with the Telephone

The Telephone

With the explosion of personal electronic devices taking over our lives, it is important to introduce self-discipline so that we don't just stop what we are doing every time the phone rings or a text message or alert appears.

There are 12 ways to control the effect that the telephone has on your working day:



1. Call at the right time for your purpose.
2. Don't mix business and pleasure.
3. Begin with brevity.
4. Prepare a list of points to cover.
5. Consider having calls answered.
6. Group outgoing calls.
7. Refuse to play phone tag.
8. Leave complete messages.
9. Note people's availability.
10. Consider a quiet hour without calls.
11. Make notes immediately.
12. Learn how to say goodbye.

1. **Call at the right time.** In order to choose the right time for your call, decide the purpose of your call before you place it. If you need just a quick answer or a quick piece of information, call just before lunch or just before the close of business. At these times people are almost always getting ready either to go to lunch or to knock off for the day. In either case, they usually don't want to stay long on the telephone. On the other hand, if the purpose of your call is to build a relationship or to discuss a problem, call in the middle of the morning or the middle of the afternoon, when people tend to be more willing to spend time on the phone.

2. **Don't socialize unnecessarily.** Next, to save phone time, avoid mixing pleasure with business during a phone call. One way to do this is to avoid opening a conversation with an invitation to socialize, such as, "Hello. How have you been?" If you begin with a social greeting, you are indicating that time is not a premium, and you are also inviting the other person to socialize.
3. **Limit call length at the outset.** You can limit a calls length by beginning with brevity. Say "Good Morning, Tom. I have a quick question for you." Similarly, you can receive a call with brevity, letting the other person know cordially that your time is limited. If the purpose of the call will take more time than you can give now, let the person know that you will return the call later to serve him or her better.
4. **List points to cover.** Another trick is to make a list of the points you want to cover, then check them off as you speak. Although this may sound obvious, many people place a call and then begin to search for supporting material. Have your list prepared, and then check off items covered. In this way, you can wrap up the call and finish your list by saying to the other person, "I have just one more quick item on my list."
5. **Decide whether you should be answering your phone at all.** Some managers do not answer incoming calls. An assistant or receptionist has been trained to screen calls and take accurate messages, as well as to place routine calls, such as informing people about a meeting or notifying them about a change in schedules.
It is also a smart use of resources to have an assistant call before you leave the office for an appointment or meeting to confirm the date, time, agenda, and so on. Depending on your job, your responsibilities, and your organization's philosophy, you may choose to screen calls with voice mail at certain times, such as during a quiet hour. (See item 10.) Use your discretion here to decide if that is appropriate.
6. **Group outgoing calls.** Set aside a particular time each day, preferably right before lunch or just before closing time, to make your calls. The people you call won't linger at such times. Another tip is to ask the people you must call regularly to tell you the best times to reach them. Record this information next to their phone numbers so it will be handy. Decide beforehand how long you plan to spend on each phone call and keep an eye on your watch. In a polite way, convey the attitude that your time is limited and you know that theirs is too.
7. **Don't play telephone tag.** Never leave just your name and number. Instead, leave a message indicating why you are calling, if the other person even needs to return the call, and when you may be reached. Very often your answering machine can receive your messages; just be sure to let the other person know that you will be expecting their call on your voice mail. Tell them how, when, where, and why they can reach you. Do everything you can to avoid phone tag. It is a major time waster – and it is also totally unnecessary!
8. **Leave complete messages.** Also be sure to let them know what your expectations are about a call back, where you can be reached, and even if the other person needs to call you at all. Remember, a goal is to reduce the number of calls you make and the number of calls you take.



9. **Note availability, names, shortcuts.** In your phone book or phone computer system, note when the other person is available. Gather this information by asking directly, "What is a good time to reach you? Is there a day when you are not in the office? Is there an assistant or co-worker I can reach instead? How can I avoid the phone tree and reach your line directly?" Note names of assistants or co-workers who should be able to help you, their extensions, and their titles. Record how you can shortcut the telephone tree.

Sometimes simply pressing the * or 1 on the keypad will circumvent a lengthy telephone menu. This in itself can be a great time saver. The important thing is to ask and record that information.



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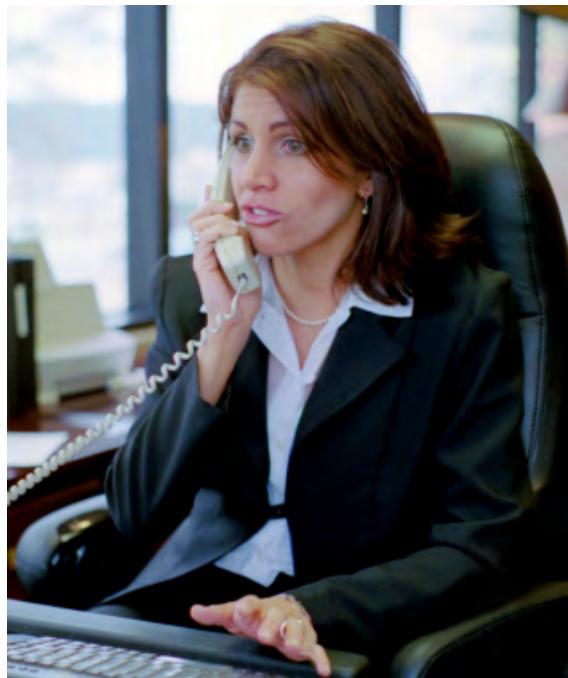
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10. **Try a quiet hour.** If it is appropriate for your position, you may want to have one hour, early in the morning, when you do not take calls. Instead, use this time for your A priorities, for the most important projects that take your full concentration. Many effective time managers have learned that one uninterrupted hour, early in the day, yields the results of several hours, usually fragmented, later in the day.
11. **Make notes immediately.** Make brief but complete notes as soon as you end the call. Don't depend on your memory. Instead, make brief notes in your planner, being sure to note the date and the details of the call. Good documentation about phone calls often proves to be invaluable.
12. **Learn to say goodbye.** And finally, terminate phone calls in a friendly but firm way. Learn to foreshadow endings by saying "Before we hang up, Ann," If the caller is socializing beyond your time limit, say, "Well, I've enjoyed talking to you, John, but I won't take up any more of your time."



Alternative Approaches To Time Management

...Or How Not To Do It!

Complete the following “alternative” (i.e. ineffective) time management strategies

We do what we like to do before...

We do the things that are easiest...

We do things that are scheduled before...

We do things that are urgent before...

We do the interesting before...

We do the things that provide...

We respond on the basis of who...

We tackle small jobs before....

We work on things in order of their...

...Or How Not To Do It!

Suggested answers

We do what we like to do before...*we do what we don't like to do*

We do the things that are easiest...*before the things that are difficult*

We do things that are scheduled before...*before non-scheduled things.*

We do things that are urgent before...*things that are important.*

We do the interesting before...*the uninteresting.*

We do the things that provide...*the most immediate closure/satisfaction.*

We respond on the basis of...*who asked for it.*

We tackle small jobs...*before the large jobs.*

We work on things in order of their...*arrival*

A definition of madness...

Doing the SAME thing, but expecting DIFFERENT results.

What are you going to do differently?

Useful Books

- Stephen Covey, 'Seven Habits of Highly Effective People'.
- Roger Black, 'Getting things done'.
- Peter Drucker, 'The Effective Executive'
- Alan Lakein, 'How to get control of your time and life'.
- Ken Blanchard's 'One Minute Manager Series'.
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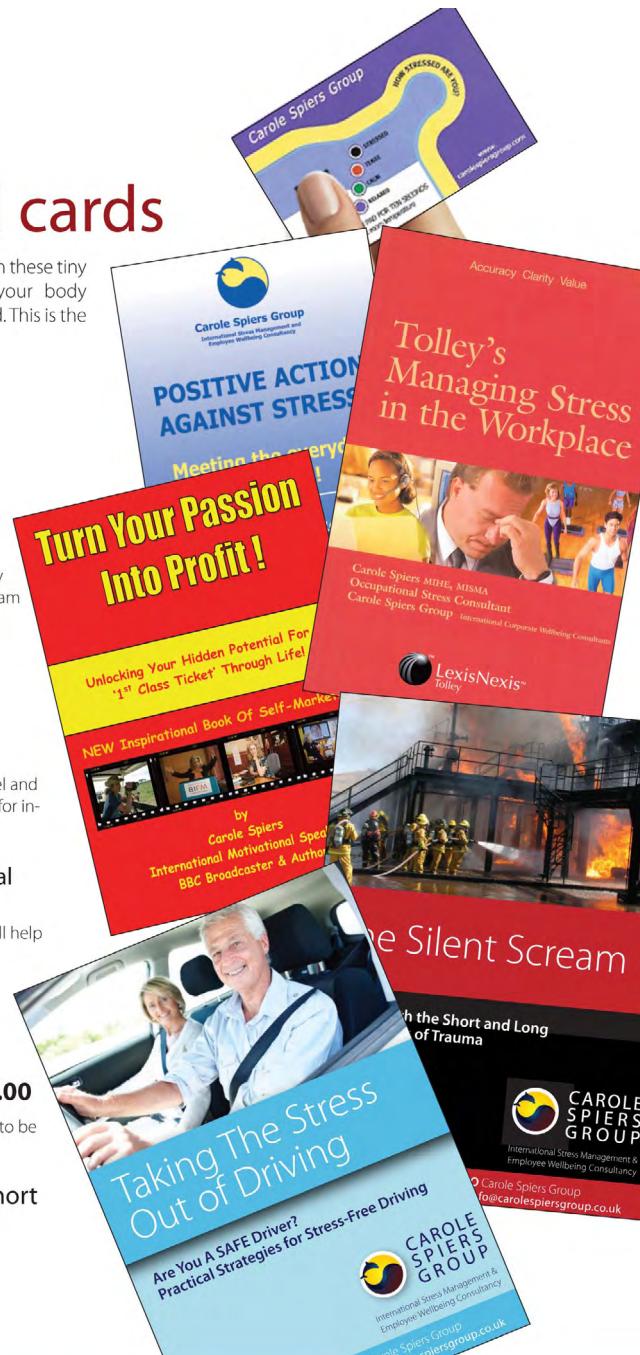
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