

TIME MANAGEMENT

INTRODUCTION

Time Management is the process of planning and exercising conscious control of time spent on specific activities, especially to increase effectiveness, efficiency, and productivity. It involves a juggling act of various demands upon a person relating to work, social life, family, hobbies, personal interests and commitments with the finiteness of time. Using time effectively gives the person "choice" on spending/managing activities at their own time and expediency.[1] Time management may be aided by a range of skills, tools, and techniques used to manage time when accomplishing specific tasks, projects, and goals complying with a due date. Initially, time management referred to just business or work activities, but eventually the term broadened to include personal activities as well.

A time management system is a designed combination of processes, tools, techniques, and methods. Time management is usually a necessity in any project development as it determines the project completion time and scope. It is also important to understand that both technical and structural differences in time management exist due to variations in cultural concepts of time.

The major themes arising from the literature on time management include the following:

- Creating an environment conducive to effectiveness
- Setting of priorities
- The related process of reduction of time spent on non-priorities
- Implementation of goals

Benefits of Time Management

The ability to manage your time effectively is important. Good time management leads to improved efficiency and productivity, less stress, and more success in life. Here are some benefits of managing time effectively:

1. Stress relief

Making and following a task schedule reduces anxiety. As you check off items on your “to do” list, you can see that you are making tangible progress. This helps you avoid feeling stressed out with worry about whether you’re getting things done.

2. More time

Good time management gives you extra time to spend in your daily life. People who can time manage effectively enjoy having more time to spend on hobbies or other personal pursuits.

3. More opportunities

Managing time well leads to more opportunities and less time wasted on trivial activities. Good time management skills are key qualities that employers look for. The ability to prioritize and schedule work is extremely desirable for any organization.

4. Ability to realize goals

Individuals who practice good time management are able to better achieve goals and objectives, and to do so in a shorter length of time.

For Effective Time Management

After considering the benefits of time management, let's look at some ways to manage time effectively:

1. Set goals correctly

Set goals that are achievable and measurable. Use the SMART method when setting goals. In essence, make sure the goals you set are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Timely.

2. Prioritize wisely

Prioritize tasks based on importance and urgency. For example, look at your daily tasks and determine which are:

- ✍ Important and urgent: Do these tasks right away.
- ✍ Important but not urgent: Decide when to do these tasks.

- ✍ Urgent but not important: Delegate these tasks if possible.
- ✍ Not urgent and not important: Set these aside to do later.

3. Set a time limit to complete a task

Setting time constraints for completing tasks helps you be more focused and efficient. Making the small extra effort to decide on how much time you need to allot for each task can also help you recognize potential problems before they arise. That way you can make plans for dealing with them.

4. Take a break between tasks

When doing a lot of tasks without a break, it is harder to stay focused and motivated. Allow some downtime between tasks to clear your head and refresh yourself. Consider grabbing a brief nap, going for a short walk, or meditating.

5. Organize yourself

Utilize your calendar for more long-term time management. Write down the deadlines for projects, or for tasks that are part of completing the overall project. Think about which days might be best to dedicate to specific tasks. For example, you might need to plan a meeting to discuss cash flow on a day when you know the company CFO is available.

6. Remove non-essential tasks/activities

It is important to remove excess activities or tasks. Determine what is significant and what deserves your time. Removing non-essential tasks/activities frees up more of your time to be spent on genuinely important things.

7. Plan ahead

Make sure you start every day with a clear idea of what you need to do – what needs to get done **THAT DAY**. Consider making it a habit to, at the end of each workday, going ahead and writing out your “to do” list for the next workday. That way you can hit the ground running the next morning.

Implications of Poor Time Management

Let's also consider the consequences of poor time management.

1. Poor workflow

The inability to plan ahead and stick to goals means poor efficiency. For example, if there are several important tasks to complete, an effective plan would be to complete related tasks together or sequentially.

2. Wasted time

Poor time management results in wasted time. For example, by talking to friends on social media while doing an assignment, you are distracting yourself and wasting time.

3. Loss of control

By not knowing what the next task is, you suffer from loss of control of your life. That can contribute to higher stress levels and anxiety.

4. Poor quality of work

Poor time management typically makes the quality of your work suffer. For example, having to rush to complete tasks at the last minute usually compromises quality.

5. Poor reputation

If clients or your employer cannot rely on you to complete tasks in a timely manner, their expectations and perceptions of you are adversely affected.

Highly Effective Time Management Skills

Time management is a skill that takes time to develop and is different for each person. You just need to find what works best for you. Here are 10 ways that you can use to improve time management skills and increase productivity:

1. Delegate Tasks

It is common for all of us to take more tasks than our desired potential. This can often result in stress and burnout. Delegation is not running away from your responsibilities but is an important function of management. Learn the art of delegating work to your subordinates as per their skills and abilities and get more achieved.

2. Prioritize Work

Before the start of the day, make a list of tasks that need your immediate attention. Unimportant tasks can consume much of your precious time. Some urgent tasks need to be completed on that day only while other unimportant tasks could be carried forward to next day. In short, prioritize your important tasks to focus on those that are more important.

3. Schedule Tasks

Carry a planner or notebook with you and list all the tasks that come to your mind. Make a simple 'To Do' list before the start of the day, prioritize the tasks and focus on the essentials. Make sure that these tasks are attainable too. To better manage your time management skills, you may think of making 3 lists: work, home and personal.

4. Set up Deadlines

When you have a task at hand, set a realistic deadline and stick to it. Try to set a deadline few days before the task so that you can complete all those tasks that may get in the way. Challenge yourself and meet the deadline; reward yourself for meeting a difficult challenge.

5. Overcome Procrastination

Procrastination is one of the things that badly affect productivity. It can result in wasting essential time and energy. It could be a major problem in both your career and your personal life. Avoid procrastination at all cost. Learn from this step-by-step guide and stop procrastinating

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6. Deal with Stress Wisely

Stress often occurs when we accept more work than our ability. The result is that our body starts feeling tired which can affect our productivity.

7. Avoid Multitasking

Most of us feel that multitasking is an efficient way of getting things done but, the truth is that we do better when we focus and concentrate on one thing. Multitasking hampers productivity and should be avoided to improve time management techniques. Make use of to-do lists and deadlines to help you stay focus! This way you can do better at what you're doing.

8. Start Early

Most of the successful men and women have one thing in common — they start their day early as it gives them time to sit, think and plan their day. Here's the reason: This is Why Productive People Always Wake Up So Early. When you get up early, you are more calm, creative and clear-headed. As the day progresses, your energy levels starts going down which affects your productivity and you may not perform as well.

9. Take Regular Breaks

Whenever you find yourself feeling tired and stressed, take a break for 10 to 15 minutes. Too much stress can take a toll on your body and affect your productivity. And even better, schedule your break times. It helps you to relax and gets back to work with energy again later. Take a walk, listen to some music or do some quick stretches. The best idea is to take off from work and spend time with your friends and family.

10. Learn to Say No

Politely refuse to accept additional tasks if you think that you're already overloaded with work. Take a look at your 'to do' list before agreeing to take on extra work.

Conclusion

Time management is a very important skill to be learned and to be mastered in order to have a better lifestyle. By managing well time, you will no longer suffer from stress and your works/tasks will be done on time and with great quality. Good time management allows you to accomplish more in a shorter period of time, which leads to more free time, which lets you take advantage of learning opportunities, lowers your stress, and helps you focus, which leads to more career success. Each benefit of time management improves another aspect of your life.

