

METICULOUS TIME MANAGEMENT: A PERSPECTIVE

Mohammad Shouaib

M.A English, AIMS Institute, Peenya, Bengaluru

Abhilash Kaushik

M.A English, AIMS Institute, Peenya, Bengaluru

Abstract: Managing your time without setting priorities is like shooting randomly and calling whatever you hit the target, time management is the process of planning and exercising conscious control over the amount of time spent on specific activities - especially to increase effectiveness, efficiency or productivity. It is a juggling act of various demands of study, social life, employment, family, and 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. It is a meta-activity with the goal to maximize the overall benefit of a set of other activities within the boundary condition of a limited amount of time, as time itself cannot be managed because it is fixed. 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.

Keywords: Skills Of Time Management, Set Goals And To Do Lists.

Introduction: "The two most powerful warriors are patience and time." Tolstoy. It's important that you develop effective strategies for managing your time to balance the conflicting demands of time for study, leisure, earning money and job hunting. Time management skills are valuable in job hunting, but also in many other aspects of life: from revising for examinations to working in a vacation job. Sometimes it may seem that there isn't enough time to do everything that you need to. This can lead to a buildup of stress. When revising for examinations, or during your final year when you have to combine the pressures of intensive study with finding time to apply for jobs good management of your time can be particularly important. Once we have identified ways in which we can improve the management of our time, we can begin to adjust our routines and patterns of behavior to reduce any time-related stress in our lives.

What Skills Are Required For Effective Time Management?

Some of these skills including setting clear goals, breaking your goals down into discreet steps, and reviewing your progress towards your goals are covered in Action Planning. Other skills involved include prioritizing - focusing on urgent and important tasks rather than those that are not important or don't move you towards your goals; organizing your work schedule; list making to remind you of what you need to do when; persevering when things are not working out and avoiding procrastination.

Using Lists:

Keeping A To-Do List: You should have a reminder system to tell you of when you need to do what: don't try to remember everything in your head as this is a recipe for disaster! Carry a pen and paper or organizer wherever you go. At the simplest level your reminder system could simply be to use your diary to write down the things you need to do, including appointments and deadlines. Before interviews, it's fine to write down the questions you wish to ask on a small piece of card or notepad. "To stay on schedule I devised a timetable which I had to stick to. I used an electronic calendar which I programmed to send out emails as reminders to myself and my team. This was a very useful tool and it is one that I have used continuously to manage my time effectively." Kent student.

A daily list of tasks that need to be done is an essential part of action planning. Refer to and update this regularly. Priorities items on the list into important/not important and urgent/non-urgent. Such a list can take a variety of formats but an example is given to the right. Update your list daily, crossing off completed tasks and adding new tasks that need to be done. Urgent or important tasks can be highlighted with an asterisk.

Advantages of Using A To Do List:

- Focuses your mind on important objectives
- You are less likely to forget to do tasks
- Writing a list helps order your thoughts
- It helps show the bigger picture
- You don't need to hold everything in your head.
- It saves time
- It helps you decide on priorities: the most important and the most urgent
- You are less likely to become sidetracked
- You get the reward of ticking off your achievements
- You feel more in control
- You have a record of what you've done
- You always have something to work on

Setting Goals: Set yourself specific and clearly defined goals, and make sure that these are realistic and achievable. To do this, you first need to examine your present situation and assess what goals are important to you and what action you need to take to achieve your target. Have a contingency plan or alternative route to your goal in case you have to change your plans, for example, taking a relevant postgraduate course if you can't get a job.

Prioritizing: Efficiency and effectiveness are not the same. Someone who works hard and is well organized but spends all their time on unimportant tasks may be efficient but not effective. To be effective, you need to decide what tasks are urgent and important and to focus on these. This is called prioritizing. It's important to list the tasks you have and to sort these in order of priority, and then to devote most time to the most important tasks. This avoids the natural tendency to concentrate on the simple, easy tasks and to allow too many interruptions to your work. Differentiate also between urgent and important tasks: an urgent task may not necessarily be important! When job hunting, you won't be able to apply to every employer. You will need to carefully priorities those you wish to apply to, based upon factors such as closing date, location, degree class required, and chances of getting in.

Avoiding Procrastination: In the professional environment people are so easily distracted by 'noise'. Whether its emails, admin or politics, there will always be something that seems so much more important than the actual task. More often than not, people will get caught up with the nice to have activity rather than the critical work which creates more value for the business. Being ruthlessly focused means you have the ability to cancel out this noise and focus on what is important. It's a strength in itself to be able to say something is not critical.

Procrastination is the scourge of action planning. It's important that you manage 'Your fear of doing things' you don't want to do and realize that the fear is often far worse than any possible negative results. Try to take decisions immediately when possible and when you don't need to gather more information pertinent to the decision. The best time to do something is usually NOW. Taking action generates the impetus for further action. Many applications to prestigious employers now need to be made in the first term of your final year and if you procrastinate you'll miss the deadlines.

"Never leave that
till tomorrow
which you can do
today."
Benjamin Franklin

Breaking Down Tasks: Break goals down into their components so that you can accomplish them one step at a time. Write these steps down, and try to be as specific as you can when you do this. Try to complete one task before you go on to the next.

Reward yourself for achieving these goals to maintain your enthusiasm. For example, when you are invited to your first interview, treat yourself to a good meal with friends. Regularly review your progress towards your goals and revise plans as appropriate to take account of unforeseen changes.

Persevering: Inevitably, things will not always run smoothly as you progress towards your goals. When things are not working out, you need to persevere and learn how to take a positive attitude towards frustration and failure. Mistakes are a crucial part of any creative process and each is a lesson leading you towards the right solution. Fear of making or admitting mistakes is a major handicap to taking effective action. It is said that the people who have achieved the most have made the most mistakes! Try to be aware that satisfaction comes as much from pursuing goals as from achieving them.

Work at effective strategies to deal with pressure - these can vary from taking exercise, to relaxation techniques such as Yoga, to simply sharing problems with friends. Being assertive can also help here, for example, politely saying no to the demands of others when you are pushed for time. Sharing tasks and problems with others will spread the burden and will bring a fresh perspective to them.
Organizing your time.

Identify areas of your life where you are wasting time and try to reduce these. A good way to do this is to log everything you do for a week in meticulous detail and then examine your record to see how you use (or misuse!) your time. Develop a regular work routine. Keep your work space tidy so that you can work efficiently - it's hard to do this if things you need to find are buried under a pile of paper! Work to schedule so that you meet deadlines in good time - don't leave everything until the last minute. If you have a difficult essay to write, start by drafting out the structure first- this will break the ice. When applying for jobs keep copies of all the applications you have made and keep a log of the date you applied, result, and a record of all your interviews, plus you were questions asked. This will help you to keep track of your progress and spot areas where you could improve.

Using A Time Log: One useful way to eliminate wasted time is to use a time log. First you need to make up a chart for the next seven days divided into half hour intervals starting at the time you get up and finishing at the time you go to bed. Write down what you did in each half hour of the day for the next seven days. Choose a typical week. At the end of the week examine your time log and ask yourself the following questions:

- Are there any periods that I could use more productively?
- At what time of day do I do my most effective work? Some people are most alert in the morning, whilst others concentrate best during the afternoon or evening. Schedule your most important tasks for these times of day.

A time log can be particularly useful at times of pressure, for example, when revising for examinations or job hunting during your final year. By now you should have been able to identify ways in which you could manage your time more efficiently, and know some techniques to allow you to do this. You might like to look at the section on action planning which identifies other ways of organizing your work so that you achieve your goals.

Revising for Examinations: Have a regular venue for revision such as the library where you are free from distractions. You should after a while become conditioned to starting work immediately in this location. Plan out a revision schedule or timetable so you devote enough time to each subject. Summarize your lecture notes and use diagrams and graphics where appropriate - a picture is worth a thousand words! Use a highlighter pen or underlining to emphasize key facts. For last minute revision, make minimal notes occupying no more than a couple of sides of A4 and record key facts, diagrams and formulae. Use past examination papers when revising to familiarize 'yourself with the sort of questions

that might be asked. When revising, take a few minutes break every so often to clear and refresh your mind and allow some time off for complete relaxation.

References:

1. Babbie, Earl. (1993). *The practice of social research*. 7th ed. Wordsworth Publishing Co. 256- 257.
2. Boyd, H. W., Westfall, R., & Stasch, S. F. (1977). *Marketing research: Text and cases*. 4th ed. Richard D. Irwin, Inc.
3. Bhutia, Diki (2014), HRIRJ Special issue on Human rights, vol 2 Issue 2, ISSN2320-6942.
4. V. Bhavana (2017), HRIRJ Special issue on Human rights, vol5 Issue 1, ISSN2320-6942.
5. Den linger, J. C. (2009). *The Effects of Time Management on College Students' Academic Performance*, Ball State University, Fact Book (students/enrollment).
