

## **Time Management**

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Be prepared to make drastic changes. Be creative to find and introduce different ways of doing things.

Manage your emails and phone calls - don't let them manage you. Ideally check at planned times, and avoid continuous notification of incoming emails.

The busier you are the more selective you need to be about when to be available to receive phone calls. Try to minimize the time that you are available to take unplanned phone calls.

Challenge your own tendency to say 'yes' without scrutinizing the request - start asking and probing what's involved - find out what the real expectations and needs are.

Really think about how you currently spend your time. If you don't know, keep a time log for a few days to find out. Knowing exactly what's wrong is the first step to improving it.

Challenge anything that could be wasting time and effort, particularly habitual tasks, meetings and reports where responsibility is inherited or handed down from above.

Review your activities in terms of your own personal short-term and long-term life and career goals, and prioritize your activities accordingly.

Plan preparation and creative thinking time in your diary for the long-term jobs, because they need it. The short-term urgent tasks will always use up all your time unless you plan to spend it otherwise.

Use a diary, and an activity planner to schedule when to do things, and time-slots for things you know will need doing or responding to.

You must also plan time slots for unplanned activities - you may not know exactly what you'll need to do, but if you plan the time to do it, then other important things will not get pushed out of the way when the demand arises.

Use the 'urgent-important' system of assessing activities and deciding priorities.

When you're faced with a pile of things to do, go through them quickly and make a list of what needs doing and when. After this handle each piece of paper only once. Do not under any circumstances pick up a job, do a bit of it, then put it back on the pile.

Do not start lots of jobs at the same time - even if you can handle different tasks at the same time it's not the most efficient way of dealing with them, so don't kid yourself that this sort of multi-tasking is good - it's not.

Be firm and diplomatic in dealing with time allocated for meetings, paperwork, telephone, and visitors, etc. When you keep your time log you will see how much time is wasted. Take control. Provided you explain why you are managing your time in this way, people will generally understand and respect you for it.

Keep a clean desk and well-organized systems, but don't be obsessive about it.

Delegate as much as possible to others. If you have one, give 25% of your responsibility to your successor.

You don't need to be a manager to delegate. Just asking nicely is sometimes all that's required to turn one of your difficult tasks into an easy one for somebody else better able to do it.

If you can't stop interruptions when you need a quiet space for planned concentration time-slots, then find somewhere else in the building to work, and if necessary work and at home or another site, and fight for the right to do this - it's important for you and the organization that you be able to work uninterrupted when you need to.

Set up an acceptable template for the regular weekly or monthly reports you write, so you only need to slot in the updated figures and narrative, each time.

If you can, get a good assistant, secretary or pa.

Sharpen up your decision-making.

Always probe deadlines to establish the true situation - people asking you to do things will often say 'now' when 'later today' would be perfectly acceptable. Appeal to the other person's own sense of time management: it's impossible for anyone to do a good job without the opportunity to plan and prioritize.

Break big tasks down into stages and plan time-slots for them.

Source: [www.business.balls.com](http://www.business.balls.com)