TIME MANAGEMENT

DESCRIPTION

A set of principles and guidelines to get a better understanding on what you want to or should do with **YOUR TIME**. In particular, how to use your time to engage your followers.

PURPOSE

To 'enforce' the habit of:
a. Choosing what you want to spend your most valuable resource on - **YOUR TIME**
b. Focusing on the important or 'right things'
c. Dealing with urgent matters ruthlessly and then moving onto important things
d. Making time for yourself to think, plan and reflect

DETAILED GUIDELINES

- Leaders have to be 'seen' to inspire their followers to move towards the chosen vision. They have to invest **TIME**, both personal and corporate time. As the leader you have to be a **VIP – Visible, Involved and Pro-active**. You have to see and be seen, talk and listen. However, you have to back up your walk and talk with ACTION. The people 'who push the buttons and use the tools' look at how much TIME and money you spend on safety and what ACTION you take to fix safety issues. Leaders have to use part of their personal TIME to meet with their employees and recognize performance. This goes way beyond merely signing achievement certificates and making a guest appearance at the annual award function. Or worse: only setting foot on the plant to visit an accident scene or the injured in hospital. That kind of crisis management does the culture more harm than good. You have to manage on your feet and not on your seat.

- **'Time management' is actually a misnomer** as the time you have is not a flexible resource. You can **not** buy more time! You have a finite amount of 24 hours per day. But what you *do* have is the *power to decide* how you are going to use these fixed hours. How much time are you going to allocate to what and when? You make the choices and set the priorities and tempo.

- It follows, therefore, that the habit of 'time management' is closely linked to virtually all other activities or things you do, but specifically setting **priorities**, achieving **results** and also being **effective**.

- 'Time management' is selecting the **'right things'** to work on. The criteria of selecting the right things vary, but in principle the leader should select and prioritize those things that will have the biggest **impact** on achieving the vision. It is in essence a process of focusing effort and resources and maintaining that **focus**. Those things that will achieve **results** in the shortest time with the least effort should be given priority in allocating the available resources like time, money, material, people, etc. These are normally the **important or mission-critical** items that will add measurable value to the 'bottom line = end result'.

- There is always a conflict between the **urgent** and the **important** things. Urgent matters are mostly things requiring a **reactive** response, while important things require deliberate **action** from the leader. The urgent has a short time horizon while the important is normally a long-term investment of the resources. The secret is to achieve the right balance by **dealing with the urgent matters swiftly and ruthlessly** (do it and get done with it - don't waste time on the urgent) and not letting the urgent determine your priorities! The bulk of one's time should be spent on progressing important matters that will yield the desired result (long term).

- We will inevitably have to say **NO** to some things. The trick is to say **NO** to the 'right things' = urgent but **not** important. It is much wiser and fairer to say no to a person than say yes and not meet that commitment. At least that way the other party has the option of pursuing an alternative

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course or negotiating the relative importance. One sure-fire way of making the selection is asking the question: "What would the consequences be if I simply said **NO**?"

- The successful leaders are ultimately those who are most **determined and resilient** in defending their important priorities. They furthermore possess the **tenacity** to overcome the obstacles and deal with setbacks and failure in a constructive manner. They are driven by their vision and keep 'the end' in mind.

- 'Time management' has to become a **habit** for it to be effective. Not only setting the priorities of the overall efforts, but also one's **daily to-do list**, the personal habit of differentiating the important from the urgent and planning one's day accordingly. It should become second nature, done automatically on 'auto pilot'. A major factor here is <u>completing things</u> and moving on - to more important matters quickly as well as how swiftly one deals with interruptions. (See Steven Covey's - The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People). Going back and picking up what you have not finished first time round is a big time waster.

- One of the worst sins of 'time management' is **wasting your time** by having to do things over. 'If you haven't got the time to do it right, when will you find the time to do it over?' The paradox is that we somehow always make the time to correct mistakes, investigate safety incidents, attend to customer complaints, redo work because we did not listen or did not instruct well enough, find our way with a map after having got lost in the first place and a thousand other examples, just because we initially didn't make the time!

- A further sin is <u>not</u> knowing **when to stop**. Often we try and keep on improving without realizing that the time invested is totally out of proportion with the improvement effected. To take something from excellent to perfect requires an enormous amount of effort and time and does often <u>not</u> lead to meaningful refinement or improvement. Strike a balance and know when to STOP! Learn when the job is done or the moment has passed - 10 more minutes won't make a difference. Especially, when talking, watch out for repetition and wordiness. Quit talking and learn to cut other babblers short. Get to the point and get done with it.

- The **'sidetrack syndrome'** also consumes large amounts of your time. Beware of these self-interruptions! If something is not on your to-do-list, then don't do it right away. Make a note to tackle it at an appropriate time and stick to your schedule. It helps if you plan a routine time in your daily schedule, preferably not in the morning when you are fresh and should do important things, to attend to 'administrative' activities.

- **Procrastination** is another killer. This start-stop mode eats up your time and leads to no result. The best advice, if faced with a daunting task, is to <u>start</u>! Often taking 10 % of the task duration to outline and quantify what is involved and needs to be done gets you out of the procrastination rut.

- There are many things you can't control and **being kept waiting** by others is one of them. So, provide for this likelihood when going to see someone, even if it is by appointment. Take along reading material and your lap top. Use the opportunity to slow down, to review a task list, project plan, goals & objectives and in general 'sharpen the saw'. That way you turn your waiting time into productive time.

- There are many other **time wasters** you need to watch out for and many of them are closely linked to people's emotions or negative energy. Revenge, hate, jealousy, hostility, fear, panic, concern, self-pity, insecurity, false pride, disappointment and baggage from the past all consume lots of energy, <u>many hours</u> and lead nowhere!

- Another principle worth noting is the fact that if we have a **deadline or time limit** set, we somehow seem to manage to complete the task or rise to the challenge within that constraint. We treat time then like any other finite resource like money or material, adjust our pace accordingly and cut out all non-mission-critical activities. If there is no time for any frills or fancies we cut right to the core. If time is limited we tend to plan better how to use our time and screw up the tempo to achieve the end result.

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- Because time is such a precious commodity, make sure you **don't waste other people's time** by keeping them waiting or any of the other time wasters mentioned above. Wasting other's time is most disrespectful!

- One most critical aspect is making **thinking time**. Most people in a leadership position or any position of authority need to make decisions, give direction, provide a vision, look for opportunities and all that takes time. So make sure you plan time for just that - undisturbed, quiet time with yourself to think!

- The most effective way to 'make' more time for the important things is to take control over your **discretionary time** i.e. the time you have control over. This is both the 'white space' in your diary as well as the time you allow other people to demand from you. There is often little you can do about the time your superiors want from you and sometimes also the time the organization claims from you. If the latter is to attend meetings, then you can challenge that (see "When not to have a meeting"). To make more time learn to **delegate or outsource** work which can be done by others. Two useful techniques are:

    - "Completed staff work"
    - "The Monkey philosophy"

METHOD / TECHNIQUE / TOOL

This is a list of tips and tricks to create more discretionary time for yourself – time you us to decide what to spend time on; quality time you invest into making more time available for you in the future.

TIPS TO MANAGE YOURSELF & MAKE TIME
* Put a price your own time in monetary terms (Rand / hour) .
* Identify time consuming, routine tasks. Invest time to delegate - teach once off, but big payoff off .
* Plan or estimate how long tasks should take and work to that deadline or limit.
* Identify the 5 largest time wasters and set targets to reduce by 50 % . Raise awareness and call STOP!
* Set time limits on meetings / face to face interactions and adhere to them ruthlessly - get up and go!
* Preplan your telephone calls. Know what you want to say & achieve and stick to your agenda.
* Say **NO**! Stick to your schedule and don't get sidetracked. Not on your list, then don't do it.
* Start, do it right first time and finish what you started.
* Create white space in your daily planner to allow for own thinking time and 'breakdowns'.
* Expand your time out of the office (leave, training course, ect.) by adding a blank day or two before and after. Keep it clear to catch up on important things.
* Plan your daily V I P time and make sure you talk to and are seen by people.