

Managerial Time Management

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Abstract

A large number of business and personal coaches – instructors increasingly promote and teach the problems of time management as a fundamental “tool” for raising productivity and output in the work. Managing the time management in practice means to make changes, all with a view to discover new possibilities in work as well as in life.

A particular dimension in this work is dedicated precisely to time management of managers. The role of why care about time, efficiency and effectiveness in work, improvement, priorities about distinguishing what things are more important and which are more urgent, are treated in a special manner. In continuation of this work, the following question is also posed about giving a stronger impetus and giving an impulse for utilizing time as well as possible and about how to make the most of it and to be more productive. That is an elated matter for all the people participating in the process of work starting from the lowest level employees to the highest managerial levels, that is, the care about time management is of essential significance in this work.

Keywords: Management; Values; Priorities

Why Care about Time Management

Not only to managers, but also to all of us, the arguable issues, regarding how to manage time and how to use it maximally in order to achieve the objectives and priorities we have set for ourselves are of utmost importance. Should we begin with the fact that our time is the most valuable asset in our lives, and then the question of how to manage and plan it is inevitable. Whether we are going to use our time and how we shall do that, principally depends on our willingness and capability to organize it.

Why should we care about time management? A simple answer to this essential question is that in case we do not manage our own time (i.e. we do not take the control of what we do with our own time), the following ensues [1]:

- We shall be inefficient - the work we do will last longer than necessary, we shall be making more mistakes, we shall lose things and objects, we shall not be able to meet the deadlines, our office will be in a state of chaos.
- We shall be ineffective - the difference between effectiveness and ineffectiveness is that the former refers to inputs and the latter concerns the results. Managers, as well as all others are paid to deliver results, i.e. for their achievements, and (moreover) with respect to the increase of value for the employers. If we are inefficient, there is a very slight possibility for us to be effective - whilst effectiveness consists of augmenting success and managing changes.
- We shall not advance at our working posts - because we shall be spending time on activities which do not enable us to comply with, or Which protect us in the worst possible manner (for example, the expiry of deadlines).
- We have a good chance of becoming expendable, especially through large reorganizations when “redundancy” is a euphemism for laying off the bad workers.
- Our subordinates (should we have any) will not be able to carry out their work properly because we do not provide them with leadership or guidance when needed, and our priorities will be unpredictable.

- Our supervisor will start treating us as someone who squanders time: you are disorganized, you make mistakes, lose things, you cannot reply to questions asked, your work is poorly represented.

And so it goes: a vicious circle of incompetence, inadequacy, inefficiency and ineffectiveness.

At the end of the day, it cannot be repeated, not one second can be reused. We can only hope that the next day will enable us to learn our lessons and apply them. The situation is even worse when you bear in mind the fact that you have limited time at your disposal. Certainly, nobody knows in advance how much time he/she has left (this might be good), but, undoubtedly, time is limited for everybody. Therefore we ought to use our time in the best way possible.

Increasing Values

Every task in any enterprise is a combination of four roles:

Maintenance

Care that at the end of each day the situation will not be worse than it was at the beginning.

Preventing crisis

To create such an environment with a minimum of surprises, i.e. to predict future “crises”, in order to prevent or minimize consequences whenever they may happen.

Improving success

A better realization of current tasks (of increased standard and quality), faster, i.e. in a shorter term, or cheaper (by using fewer

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Received March 16, 2016; Accepted April 15, 2016; Published April 21, 2016

Citation: Ademi N (2016) Managerial Time Management. J Account Mark 5: 171. doi:10.4172/2168-9601.1000171

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resources like people, financial means, space, etc.).

Managing changes

Introducing new ideas about achieving better results in the enterprise.

If increasing values within an enterprise is intended, this means that less time will be dedicated to maintaining and preventing the crisis, because these activities (although very important) do not increase the value, they simply provide that this “value” stay the same, i.e. to carry out tasks at the current level of quality. In other words, maintaining and preventing crisis belong to the domain of efficiency, rather than effectiveness. It is worth pointing out that the idea of value added refers to all the employees in an enterprise and not only to the managers. For instance, the TQM technique (Total quality management) contains principles that everyone ought to dedicate a certain portion of his/her time to the reflection of how he/she could better do his/her work - in other words, how he/she can increase value.

What needs to be done, before dedicating oneself to the everyday arguable issues regarding time management, is to make a statement regarding the mission and the role which emphasizes the contribution to the value added, those being: improvement, development, maximizing, optimizing. At the same time, this statement helps when choosing the priorities when you manage your time and it helps when choosing meaningful key tasks, which also help in making the decision about what to do and what not to do and it helps the communication with all the employees, regarding how to understand the sense of the objective.

How Managers Should Manage Their Time

One of the most important tasks of managers, in the newly created circumstances, is to “learn how to manage their time”. Managers’ time is much more important than that of other employees, it remains a rare resource, and therefore the proverb “time is money” applies to them. Time is the only factor whose offer is inflexible. However big the demand for time is, it does not increase. The only thing we can do with time is to learn how to manage it better. How important this is in fact, and particularly to managers, is better pointed out by Tom Peters who, in this regard, suggest that today there are two types of managers. One of them is “quick”, who timely reacts to changes and adapts to the conditions of the environment, whilst others are “dead”, and whom time and changes have passed by [2].

Owing to the significance of correct use of time, managers must

learn how to manage their own time. This can be achieved in several ways [3]: by preparing the daily results that are to be achieved;

- a) by making a list of the tasks that are to be carried out as well as to group the tasks into three categories “A”, “B”, “C”;
- b) by determining priority tasks within the group;
- c) by ousting the tasks from group “C”;
- d) by delegating tasks;
- e) by working in one place at the same time only;
- f) by improving one’s communication with the colleagues.

Managers’ time can also be rationalized in such a way as to eliminate

either all unnecessary interruptions in the work process or to minimize them as much as possible, in order to give information and assist the subordinates.

Analyzing the questions that the subordinates ask their supervising manager, it is recommendable for them to be regrouped taking into consideration who could answer a part of them, in order to reach a total of 20% of those questions which are necessary to be addressed to the manager. All the other questions can be answered by the subordinates themselves or they can obtain their answers from their colleagues at work. That also increases the interaction among the subordinates and the role of managers and the significance of their time is strictly defined [4].

An attack on the managers’ working time is also made by the unforeseen “meetings” and the cheerful office show-offs, exaggerated telephone conversations and “accidental visits” [5].

In certain situations, a manager has to withstand even those persons who obviously take up their precious time due to the so-called “higher causes of the enterprise”, whoever they happen to be, either associates or clients, who are to be accepted with all their shortcomings, because, for example, they are very significant purchasers to the enterprise.

The entire available time of managers can be grouped into three basic categories, those being: priorities, time responsibilities and activities which take up time (time stealers). In Table 1 it is highlighted which activities comprise a manager’s job [6].

The managerial activities belonging to the category of priorities have to be carried out by managers themselves, and a part of the time responsibilities can be delegated, while it is necessary to eliminate completely the “time stealers”.

Activities which take up time (time stealers)	Time responsibilities	Priorities
Delays	Travelling	Setting objectives
Forgotten things	Reading	Planning
Searching for the forgotten things	Visitors	Delegating
Turning over paper	Boss	Training
Perfectionism	Correspondence	Self-development
Indecisiveness	Everyday travelling to the workplace	Creativity
Delegating upwards	Making telephone calls	Organizing
Free time	Work interruption	Family life
Interrupting oneself		
Inability to say “No”		
Care		
Disobedience		

Table 1: Activities comprising a manager’s life.

Thus, for example, managers, but also associates can get rid of the unwanted visitors in one of the following ways:

- By closing the door of their office, because a closed door is a sign that one needs to be left alone to work peacefully.
- If there is a glass screen in your office, draw on canvas on it, otherwise, there will always be someone to come around.
- Lavish offices with a lot of armchairs, which are comfortable and opulent, will be attractive to many so as to “drop by”, therefore you need to insist on throwing them out or at least they should not be too comfortable.
- If there is a coffee or tea machine in your office, it will always.

“Cause” many people to come around for tea or coffee, therefore you need to get rid of such machines as soon as possible.

However, in spite of the great importance lent lately to the rational management of available time of managers, according to two British researches, managers have spent on average 66%, that is 80% of their time on oral communication. Whereas, according to the journal for researching 160 British middle and top managers, as conducted by Rosemary Stewarts, they have spent 47% of their time on communication with the powerful (chiefly, with persons outside the company), 41% with the insider people within their department and they spent only 12% of their time communicating with their superiors.

Comparing the text in this point with the text that treated the management styles, one gets the impression that they are in collision in a certain way. Even though at first glance it seems that this assertion is true, still it has to be said that all those recommendations which refer to the time rationalization and management of managers, may not be so rigidly understood, but rather flexibly, which means that managers themselves need to assess and evaluate the situation, about when and how to act. As it goes for everything else in the company, here as well a real measure can be found among the offered extremes.

Setting priorities

Setting priorities is the most important part of management. We know that we do not always have same tasks according to importance, urgency and weight. Some are more important, others are more urgent, etc.

Sometimes we tend to dedicate a lot of time to unimportant things and vice versa, to attempt to do very important things in a small amount

of time. A difference should be made between what is important and what is urgent. Sometimes certain urgent things can have much higher priority than those which are not important. Sometimes we are aware of the fact that we dedicate far too much time to things which are very urgent, and those are actually unimportant. Therefore it needs to be emphasized that urgent matters do not necessarily mean that they are the most important ones and we ought to make a difference between these two things.

When making a decision, the following need to be taken into account:

- Important and urgent are things which need to be done and their completion shall be a large benefit. They are to be immediately carried out and enough time should be dedicated to their completion.
- Urgent and little important are other matters that are to be finished very quickly, but they do not require much time.
- Important but not urgent are things to which we ought to dedicate the largest portion of our time.
- Little important and not urgent are things that need not be done. They are things that sometimes make one waste time and need not be done (Table 2).

Delegation and its advantage

Delegating is one of the better opportunities for saving and utilizing time more productively as well as for expanding values. In practice, all managers principally support the idea of delegating. Delegating may be understood as entrusting others with responsibility and their authorization (naturally of one’s associates), who from that point on become responsible for their achievements to their superiors. What is being delegated is basically the right to decide, so that delegating is not only transferring duties onto others.

However, delegating is a complex job. It may just happen that you would like to delegate everything to your subordinates, except for those assignments which your subordinates are not capable of carrying out.

However, you “disappear” at that point. If someone has been tasked with carrying out certain activities, that does not necessarily mean transfer of the entire responsibility. Superiors are always responsible for the delegated responsibility to their subordinates. Therefore it is emphasized not to delegate responsibility, but rather the work.

	Urgent	Not urgent
Important	Do It Immediately	Planning What To Do
	-Request from the supervisor	-Planning
	-Tasks with running deadlines	-Preparation
	-Meetings	-Testing
	-Reports	-Building
	-Urgent personnel necessities	-Development
	-A suddenly emerging problem	
Unimportant	Reject and Explain	Resist and Interrupt
	-Trivial requests by some other	-Computer games
	ad hoc interruptions	-Internet chatting
	-Misunderstandings	-Gossiping
	-Remarks	-Internet surfing
		-Smoking breaks
		-Reading irrelevant material
		-Social communication

Table 2: Setting priorities.

It is difficult to entrust others with work. Delegating might be the most difficult and most significant task that managers have to carry out. Entrusting other persons with some of your tasks must be checked and at the same time the manner of carrying out of the task is to be checked as well.

Nevertheless, they should not be “interrupted” while they work, thus wasting your own and their time. People should be trusted, and they should be also directed and observed to a responsible degree.

Delegating has its own advantages, those being [7]:

- Liberation from the routine and less critical (essential) tasks
- Allowing more free time for important assignments - planning, organization, motivation and control.
- Extending one’s managing ability
- Reduction of the decision delay - even when responsibility is transferred immediately before the action itself.
- Allowing decision - making where the event occurs and where information is most complete.
- Enabling persons to make decisions, achieving goals and undertaking responsibilities.

Delegating does not only facilitate the carrying out of work but it also helps associates to develop their capabilities and to gain self-confidence in carrying out complex tasks.

“Time Stealers”

In order for managers to manage time well it is not only enough to organize themselves and their working time, as well as minimize the unnecessary interruptions in the work by their colleagues, but they also need to free themselves from the “time consumers” or the “time stealers”.

Numerous managers spend much of their time unnecessarily on overly lengthy and needless meetings; unexpected and unannounced “visitors”; long telephone conversations and the like. All these are called “time consumers” or “time stealers”.

The most important “stealers” of managers’ time are “unnecessary meetings”, “business trips”, “accidental and unannounced visitors”, and “the exaggerated insistence on perfectionism”.

Bearing in mind that “unnecessary meetings” are one of the major “time stealers” managers need to learn how to hold their meetings so as to eliminate those time wasters or to reduce them to the extent necessary. The organization of meetings is very important in large companies where there are a great many managers, as well as numerous meetings. The rules regarding organization of meetings may be of great help.

“Business trips” are also one of the great time consumers. It would not be good to reach a conclusion that business trips are needless. On the contrary, only the “unnecessary business trips” are and that is being prejudged, and those trips are “consumers” of time of managers.

In the third place, as “time stealers” on all levels of management are the “accidental,” “unannounced visitors”. These “time stealers” are not easy to dispose of, partly owing to good manners, education and breeding, and partly due to the company’s interest, which invariably requires from the managers to behave in accordance with the company’s good culture and the expected standards.

Exaggerated “insistence on perfectionism”, although in the fourth place as a “time stealer” on all levels of management, is a dangerous disease from which some managers suffer. The insistence on perfectionism, as desirable as it may seem, is basically counter-productive. An additional benefit, if it may at all be, is that increased expenses cannot be compensated, especially time losses.

Apart from these “stealers” of managers’ time, there are also other “stealers” such as “long telephone conversations”, “cheerful office chatting”, etc.

Conclusion

The fast pace of living nowadays leaves less time for an increasing number of private and business commitments. In terms of business organizations, this is bad both for employees and for companies, because inefficient time management leads to worse business results. Therefore, good time management is a significant element for effective and sustainable development. Good organization, urgency, timely planning, setting priorities and effective transfer are the ways to decrease the stressful situations as well. Contemporary working posts of managers have a quick pace of events; they are full of numerous deadlines for carrying out work duties, a large number of meetings, working hours and enormous pressure.

Hence derives the paradigm that time is the most precious resource. Time is irreplaceable and it cannot be preserved. It can only be replaced by activities of lesser value with those of larger value. All activities require time. Time for managers is very important as a unique factor the offer of which is inflexible. In practice, time management means making changes, with a view to discovering new possibilities in work and also in life. This means to be efficient, effective, promoted at work, a chance for becoming indispensable, etc. Managing managers’ time determines the coherent framework for a manager to carry out his/her long-term responsibilities more effectively in order to meet the managerial challenges.

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