



Time management is good business

Time is on my side, yes it is," by The Rolling Stones has always been a favorite lyric of mine. I feel that we have the ability to have time on our side by managing time better. This will result in better business and more personal growth. Specific methodology will vary from doctor to doctor but similar processes will apply to all. Time management is a very personal matter.

When one does not control their time well and lives in the "fast lane," one is more at risk for hypertension, heart disease, stroke, alcoholism, drug dependency, depression, anxiety, fatigue, appetite swings and an inability to relax. Therefore, the goal is to spend one's time more effectively. By establishing realistic, value-based goals, one can better manage time. One can assign priorities to their goals. Some goals can be immediately addressed, delegated, tabled or cast off. Special actions and steps can be formalized in order to attain them. It is important to realize and accept that action doesn't always mean productivity or success.

Time tracking is a valuable tool. Carefully documenting how one performs their duties will yield useful information. Do you typically accomplish or not accomplish tasks? What could you change to be more effective and efficient? I am most productive in the morning. It is my style to multi-task and get much done in a small amount of undistracted morning time.

Personally, my physical well-being has a direct bearing on my emotional and mental health. Working out regularly is essential for me. I also prepare myself mentally. For me, harder tasks require more introspection. Frequent breaks are also helpful to me. My mind works better in "spurts and sprints." Trying to keep my wasted time to a minimum is also important. I can do this consciously or unconsciously.

Good time management is being able to say no and/or maybe. Making commitments without thinking them through has put excessive strain on my well being. We always have a choice; often we don't take advantage of it. When confronted with situations that could be a potential time glut, I either respond yes, no, or I need more time to decide. Additional information and

thought have often resulted in far better solutions for all involved.

If you ultimately decide to give your time to somebody else, you must follow through. People who make empty promises are not trustworthy. Most of us don't have any additional time to accomplish more tasks. If this is the case, you must substitute, change or eliminate another task or behavior. This is not easy for most of us to do. We tend to live in our comfort zones and change doesn't always come easily. For me, watching less television has proved beneficial in gaining time.

Time management for my staff comes in the form of meetings. I attempt to make all the meetings meaningful and never waste my staff's time. Who knows what goes on more than one's staff? Often I'll ask for assignments in preparation for our meeting. Any request made will be undertaken by myself and thoroughly explained as to the how and why. I have an agenda prepared for each meeting. If bad talk develops in a meeting, it is quickly addressed in a positive manner. Most issues have more than two sides, and my staff has always been invaluable in delineating a deeper understanding. Complex problems are best addressed as a team. Staff has a fixed salary and consultants are often pricey, so it is prudent to use staff whenever possible.

Mistakes occur and are acceptable when one is attempting to improve behavior. Trying not to repeat mistakes, paying attention to detail, asking questions and seeking advice helps reduce mistakes. Patterns of behavior that frequently result in problems need to be changed. Doing the same thing and expecting different results is insanity. Don't be afraid to make mistakes, take chances or change your behavior patterns.

By organizing goals, tracking time, taking care of one's well being, reducing wasted time and clutter, organizing staff activities, minimizing mistakes, dealing effectively with stress and fear, being flexible and preparing for anything, time can truly be on your side. ■

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