Managerial and Leadership Functions

and
Associated Concepts and Practices

Time Management

Robert D. Cecil

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R. D. Cecil and Company
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TIME MANAGEMENT

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TIME MANAGEMENT

If you are like many people, you probably think that you may not have enough time to read this booklet. Whether or not you should read further can depend on your answers to the following questions:

Do you have a big backlog of things to do?
Have you been unable to meet most of your deadlines?
Do you have more than a handful of uncompleted tasks?
Are you working late and/or taking work home?
Do you often feel that you are busy, but not really getting much accomplished?
Can you find an uninterrupted block of time when you need it?
Do you have difficulty saying "no" to people's requests for your time?
Do you often find yourself doing things and making decisions for your subor-
    dinates?
Do your meetings seem to accomplish little?
Do you find yourself constantly "fighting fires?"
Do you tend to over-respond in crisis situations?
Are you experiencing emotional and physical stress on the job?

If your honest answer to most of these questions was "yes," there are good reasons for you to continue reading.

"I just don't have the time to . . ." is a very common statement. Perhaps the statement is true—sometimes. More often than not, however, it is not as true as we might think. We use time and we waste it. And we probably waste more time than we would like to admit. How do we waste time? Why do we waste time? How could our time be put to better use? Where could our time be put to better use? Reading this booklet will help you answer these and other questions for yourself.

Most of the booklet deals with making better use of time in organizations. Part I discusses how and why we waste time. Part II presents guidelines for "managing" and making better use of time.

Before beginning Part I, let us very briefly review several basic concepts concerning time and time management.

Definitions and Basic Concepts

Characteristics of Time

1. Time is a constant. It cannot be altered, advanced, or backed up.
2. Time is a resource, just as much as a person, a machine, a raw material, or money.
3. Like all resources, time is limited but measurable. There are 24 hours (1440 minutes) every day — no more, no less.
4. No one has enough time, yet everyone has all there is.
5. Unlike other resources, time cannot be bought (in the usual sense).
6. We cannot really "manage time."

What Is "Time Management?"

1. Although we cannot actually manage time, we can manage our use of it.

2. Time management, therefore, is . . .

   a. managing our activities with regard to time;
   b. largely a matter of self-management;
   c. also a matter of influencing (if not actually controlling) external factors that affect our use of time.

3. In a management and leadership context, time management is essentially nothing more than performing managerial/leadership or integrative functions well. Or, as some might say, doing the right things—but also doing them right (well).

Figure 1: Wasting Time: Causes, Ways, and Symptoms

Ways time is wasted

Exacerbate situation   Exacerbate situation

A
Underlying Causes

B
Direct Causes

C

D
Symptoms

E

Doing urgent rather than important things

Not knowing what one should be doing, why, or how (regarding the think-work functions in the top half of the model)

Dysfunctional misconceptions
Efficiency = Effectiveness
Activity = Results

Not doing the right things

Not analyzing operations or situations in real depth

Not identifying what can and cannot be controlled (or at least influenced)

Not setting goals and establishing priorities

Not establishing challenging yet realistic performance standards

Little or poor planning

Not establishing effective (time) management practices and policies

Not organizing effectively

Not staffing properly

Not guiding activities effectively

Managing (running) only what can be seen

Doing tasks that someone else should be doing
Failure to delegate
Upward delegation
Inability to say "no"

Interruptions
Literal open door policy

Unproductive meetings
Unnecessary meetings
Poorly organized and/or conducted meetings

Paperwork and written materials
Unproductive reading
Unnecessary paperwork
Mishandled paperwork
Disorganized desk

Ineffective problem solving
Unanticipated problems
Unrecognized problems
Unsolved or poorly solved problems

Poor use of committed (waiting) time

Procrastination

Preoccupation

Others' ineffectiveness and inefficiency on the job

Overcommitted time

Incomplete tasks

Unproductive long hours

Uncontrolled fire fighting

Overresponse to crises

Emotional and physical stress

Doing only what one likes to do or can do well . . . "running things" (primarily the implementation functions in the bottom half of the model—or ancillary responsibilities)

(central wheel diagram with labels:) Tentative, Decisions, Program or Plan, Budget, Set Goals, Establish Policies and Procedures, Plan, Analyze, Evaluate, Finalize Decisions, Think, Initiate Corrective Action, Guide Control Functions, Implement, Organize, Establish Integrative Structure, Evaluate Performance, Guide Activity, Staff, Write Job Descriptions, Measure and Evaluate Results, Coordination, Direction, Train and Develop, Fill Positions and Orient

Underlying Causes   **Direct Causes**   **Ways time is wasted**   **Exacerbate situation**   **Symptoms**

Part 1

Wasting Time: Symptoms, Ways, and Causes

Figure 1 shows the following: the many ways in which time is wasted (Ring C); symptoms or effects (Rings D and E); many "superficial" reasons why time is wasted (Ring B); and the basic, underlying causes (Ring A). Items in Rings A through E are organized from left to right in a sequence of causes and effects. In the discussion below, however, we will move from right to left, beginning our discussion with Rings D and E, the symptoms of wasted (mismanaged) time.

Symptoms of Wasted Time (Ring D)

Although the following symptoms may seem somewhat extreme, they are very common in organizations. They amount to being in a rut <u>and</u> a ratrace. If you answered "yes" to the questions on page 1, these points summarize many of your answers.

Overcommitted Time

Having too much to do is a rut in which many people find themselves. When we become *busy simply being busy*, we (a) cannot concentrate fully on anything, (b) cannot (or will not) take the time to do the really important things, (c) are unable to do very much really well, and (d) leave many tasks incomplete. We usually get in this rut by doing tasks that others should be doing, doing unnecessary and unimportant things, and fighting many little fires. In effect, situations and circumstances are "running us"—we are not "managing them." This is what happens in organizations where managers are "running" rather than "managing" things.

Incompleted Tasks

Especially when our time is over-committed and we are busy being too busy, we tend to jump from one task to another without really completing any. If we ever get around to completing a task, we must waste more time finding where we left off and getting back on the track. Even more of our time gets wasted as unmade decisions, unsolved problems, and other incompleted tasks cause increasingly numerous and time-consuming problems.

Unproductive Long Hours

To accomplish more and keep up with the ratrace, many managers think that all they need to do is put in longer hours. The longer one works, however, the more fatigued one becomes. Fatigue causes mistakes that reduce efficiency and effectiveness. In addition, knowing that one can take more time, one tends to take it, but at a slower pace. Both fatigue and a slower pace contribute to a need to put in even more hours—wasted hours.

Uncontrolled Fire-Fighting

To imagine what uncontrolled fire-fighting might look like, picture brush fires breaking out in a dry field on a windy day. Several big fires (big problems) are raging as they are whipped by the wind (outside factors such as competitors' sales tactics or governmental regulatory controls). The rural fire department (the boss and immediate subordinates) are fighting these fires with antiquated equipment (old-style management and problem-solving practices). They have put out some fires (solved some problems); but several fires that they thought they put out are still smoldering (some causes of certain problems were not really remedied). The sparks from the smoldering ashes are being picked up by the wind and are starting little fires nearby. Even as the fire-fighters are trying to quench the big fires, sparks from these fires are igniting new fires (are contributing to problems that were already close to surfacing). Because of all the smoke (confusion in the office), the firefighters cannot distinguish which are big fires (high priority problems) and which are little fires (low priority problems). More fires are starting or restarting than are being put out. The scene is chaotic—almost futile.

Uncontrolled fire-fighting is symptomatic of an unsystematic approach to management. It eventually occurs when managers . . .

    a. fail to analyze their operations in real depth, looking

    for key elements of operations and major task, individual, social, organizational, or outside factors that should be improved or corrected;

b. fail to recognize and take advantage of opportunities;

c. fail to establish, or lose sight of, goals and priorities;

d. do not plan well or do not stick to their plans;

e. fail to assign responsibilities and delegate authority appropriately;

f. leave important tasks either unbegun or incompleted;

g. fail to anticipate, recognize, or effectively deal with the problems created by "a" through "f";

h. take action without fully thinking things out (often because of the urgency of the situation); and

i. actually create even more problems for themselves.

Without doing the right things (the think-work functions of management), and without recognizing the important things in time to deal with them effectively, situations eventually become urgent. Having too many urgent situations contributes to even more problems, greater confusion, further deterioration of performance and morale, and increasingly greater waste of time.

Over-Response to Crises

Because of the urgency of a crisis, because of the highly emotional state that it can create, and because of the human tendency to take action in these situations without thinking things out fully, many people overreact. More often than not, this makes the crisis worse and usually creates even more time-consuming problems to solve later.

Cycle-Perpetuating Results (Ring E): Emotional and Physical Stress

All the previous phenomena produce tremendous pressure. In turn, pressure produces both emotional and physical stress (confusion, worry, anxiety, tension, and fatigue). If and when an individual eventually arrives at this mental and/or physical state, that state contributes to, and aggravates, most if not all of the causes and effects shown in **Figure 1**. As the entire cycle we are describing perpetuates itself, the situation becomes increasingly worse, the individual wastes more and more time, and he or she eventually "burns out."

Ways Many People Waste Time (Ring C)

Doing Urgent Rather Than Important Things

According to time management experts, most people waste 80% of their time on unimportant tasks and activities. Pareto, one such expert, and father of the "Pareto Principle," said that 80% of worthwhile results comes from 20% of what we do. (In other words, two out of ten tasks produce 80% of significant results.) We must grant that some of the urgent things people do *are* important things. Perhaps these became urgent because, when they first became important, they were not recognized and dealt with effectively. Nevertheless, many of the unimportant things people do are actually urgent things that only seem important because of their urgency. Doing urgent, seemingly important things rather than doing really important things is caused by most if not all of the causes discussed shortly. It is particularly caused by not establishing goals and priorities. It creates many time-consuming problems and reduces managerial effectiveness.

Doing Tasks That Someone Else Should Be Doing

1. **Non-Delegation**

   Too many managers and leaders get bogged down doing low priority, routine, time-consuming tasks that their subordinates should be doing. Examples: A secretary should be screening telephone calls and scheduling appointments. Subordinates should be making routine decisions, solving minor problems, and making out routine reports involving their responsibility areas.

   Many leaders and managers do not delegate responsibility and authority to subordinates because (a) they have not stopped to analyze who should be doing what and why, and/or (b) they lack confidence in subordinates' skills and experience. One paradox here is that subordinates will gain little skill and experience, will win little confidence, and will save their bosses little time unless they are given responsibilities and then learn by doing.

2. **Upward Delegation**

   According to many management specialists, subordinates naturally tend to delegate time-consuming work

upward. This has been called "putting the monkey on the boss's back." Examples: Subordinates often waste their bosses' time by going to them for (a) information that they could get themselves, (b) a decision that they could make themselves, or (c) a solution that they could formulate themselves. They also waste their bosses' time by going to them with sketchy ideas rather than well thought-out proposals.

Upward delegation is really the other side of the "non-delegation" coin. Although it is sometimes caused by subordinates' laziness, it mostly occurs under these conditions: (a) when managers have not transferred initiative to subordinates by explicitly assigning responsibilities and delegating authority, or (b) when leaders have not stuck to their assignment and delegation decisions. Either case can create a sense of risk, feelings of uncertainty and insecurity, and confusion in subordinates. Thus, they tend to go to their bosses instead of "sticking their own necks out."

3. **Inability to Say "No"**

Saying "yes" to people's requests for our time and energy may keep people from thinking less of us. It may also indulge our egos by making us feel knowledgeable and important. Even so, it can overcommit us and dilute our effectiveness. Being able to accomplish more instead of less requires two things: (a) that we recognize what we need to be doing, and do it; and (b) that we recognize what we should not be doing, and say "no" to those things that will waste our time.

Interruptions

Surveys show that the average manager is interrupted every eight minutes during the day. These interruptions are directly caused by unscreened phone calls and by unscheduled visits of callers, subordinates, colleagues, and superiors. Both types of interruptions are indirectly caused by inappropriate or ineffective management practices and policies. Unscheduled visits, for example, are often caused by the "open door policy."

The open door policy originally meant "being accessible to subordinates and others." Many, however, have misinterpreted the term to mean "a physically open door." Leaving one's door open for the sake of improving communication actually encourages unproductive, time-wasting kinds of communication. These include passing the time, griping, socializing, and dealing with trivial matters. More impor-

tant, a physically open door actually multiplies these kinds of interruptions. One might say that "opportunity knocks"—that is, when others have the opportunity to waste time, they knock on your door. Discourteous people will not even bother to knock. Especially when the door is open, they will walk right in and interrupt—regardless of what you may be doing.

Interruptions waste time by interfering with the completion of more important tasks. They also waste time by distracting our attention from what we were doing. Following an interruption, we must take the time to find where we left off or to reestablish our train of thought before we can go on with what we were doing.

Unproductive Meetings

1. **Unnecessary Meetings**

Many time-consuming meetings are unnecessary—especially those that involve disseminating information, but do not really require two-way communication (to clarify the message or to answer questions). Issuing an organizational policy, for example, might simply require a memo. A brief telephone call might suffice when the subject is not complicated and few questions are anticipated.

Meetings are generally necessary when (a) important information needs to be exchanged among participants, and/or (b) some important matter is to be decided that either involves attendees, requires their input, or will affect them.

2. **Poorly Organized and/or Conducted Meetings**

Organizing an effective meeting requires answering these time-honored questions: What? Why? Who? When? Where? How long?

The following are just some of the ways in which time is wasted by poorly organized meetings.

When the reason or agenda is either inappropriate or unclear, time is often wasted in these ways: spinning wheels around a central point; discussing unimportant matters; carrying on idle chit-chat (socializing); and/or dealing with attendees' "personal agendas."

When the time set for the meeting is either inappropriate, inconvenient, or insufficient, time is wasted in these ways: waiting for latecomers; trying to deal with something too late; not having enough time to deal with a situation effectively; and/or getting little done because important participants (perhaps the real decision-makers) could not attend.

When the attendees include the wrong people or not all the right people, time can be wasted in these ways: discussing extraneous personal agendas; getting information that the right people would have brought; and/or not making a decision because the real decision-makers were not present.

When meetings are held in an innappropriate place, or in a place that does not have proper facilities, time is often wasted by frequent interruptions—or by spinning wheels because there are inadequate visual aids for handling details.

When attendees are not given enough advance notice, time is often wasted by spinning wheels or by waiting for information because attendees could not come prepared with useful information, preliminary analyses, and/or well thought-out suggestions.

How effectively a meeting is conducted depends mostly on the leader, who may have organized it and is now responsible for guiding attendees' preparation and participation.

The following are just a few of the ways that time gets wasted because (a) the leader does not know how to conduct a meeting properly, or (b) attendees do not know how to participate properly.

When a leader does not discuss the objectives, the agenda, and the ground rules with participants at the onset of the meeting, time can be wasted in these ways: trying to clear up confusion due to lack of purpose or direction; trying to cover too many topics to cover any adequately; and trying to get things back on track when people inject their personal agendas.

When a leader does not guide the discussion step by step through problem-solving phases (analysis, formulation of alternative solutions, decision making), time tends to be wasted in these ways: trying to resolve the confusion caused by jumping back and forth between the three phases mentioned above; trying to resolve arguments that tend to be generated by not going through each phase one at a time; trying to maintain attendees' attention and elicit their input; and trying to avoid spinning wheels.

Paperwork and Written Materials

1. Unproductive Reading

One study by a well-known business magazine indicated that the average executive spends about 15 hours per week reading approximately 1,000,000 words. (That's about 3 hours per day—or almost one-half day reading 200,000 words!)

Managerial reading material includes letters, memos, reports, books, and articles in business magazines and professional journals. Many managers are easily wasting half of their reading time by doing unnecessary or unproductive reading. This is particularly true if any of the following apply: (a) they are slow, ineffective readers; (b) they read everything in its entirety, rather than skimming it and focusing only on important ideas and information; (c) they do not prioritize all the things that are available for them to read; (d) they have not delegated responsibilities to their secretaries and/or subordinates for screening reading materials and providing brief summaries or abstracts; and/or (e) they have not encouraged subordinates to be brief and to the point when writing memos and reports.

2. Unnecessary Paperwork

"Junk mail" certainly qualifies as time-wasting paperwork. It should be screened by a secretary. Many letters, memos, and reports are undoubtedly necessary, but many are not. We waste time either reading or writing those that are not. Very often a simple phone call would make many letters and memos unnecessary. Reports can be a different matter. Many if not most reports either (a) do not contain the right or really important information, (b) contain much more information than needed, and/or (c) present information in an innappropriate or confusing format. When reading such reports, we waste time looking for the information we want. When writing them, we waste time gathering any unnecessary information they require.

3. **Mishandled Paperwork**

Surveys indicate that 80% of average in-basket contents can be disposed of when first confronted, but only 20% are actually handled expeditiously during the first handling. This leaves 60%, which is usually either returned to the in-basket, piled on the desk, or stuffed in a briefcase. Not only does this waste time by increasing handling time later, but it also results in a piled-up, disorganized, messy desk.

4. **Disorganized Desk**

When paperwork piles up, useful information and important decisions get buried. Disorderliness itself wastes time. One executive whose time was logged spent 2 hours and 19 minutes per day just looking for information in the piles of paperwork on his desk. A disorderly desk also interferes with concentration, because one's attention is easily distracted by varied shapes, colors, and sizes of things on a desk.

Ineffective Problem Solving

By failing to anticipate important problems, by failing to recognize them when they first occur, and by "solving" them ineffectively when they eventually become crises and are recognized, we tend to create even more and larger problems that consume more and more time.

1. **Unanticipated Problem Situations**

Particularly when we do not occasionally (at least annually) analyze our operations in real depth and look for significant trends, we fail to anticipate many potential problems. When these problems eventually occur, they may be too large or complex to be solved effectively and at least cost. Also, as these problems develop, they can begin causing other problems before they themselves are actually recognized. The result can be a multiplicity of time-consuming and costly problems. However, by remembering that "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure," by anticipating problems, by formulating preventive solutions, and by implementing various task- and people-related improvements, we can not only improve operations, but we can also save considerable problem-solving time later. Once an unanticipated problem arises, there are actualy two problems to solve: (a) how to *correct* the symptoms or effects; and (b) how to *prevent* the situation from occurring again.

2. **Unrecognized Problems**

Particularly when managers "run" rather than manage their operations, and do not occasionally analyze them in real depth, they often fail to recognize subtle but important problems. Unrecognized problems have a way of simmering beneath the surface, growing, becoming more complicated, generating even more problems, and eventually becoming crises (urgent as well as important). More numerous and more complicated problems require more time and effort to solve. Much less time would be wasted if subtle but important problems were identified in a timely manner and "nipped in the bud."

3. **Poorly (Unsystematically) "Solved" Problems**

In our culture we are inclined to say, "The problem is _____ ." Usually we are identifying one cause (one causal factor). But, especially in organizations, there are no problem situations having only one cause. There are generally several obvious, superficial causative factors —and there are also underlying, not-so-obvious causative factors. Most if not all organizational problems are caused by an interacting *system* of various task-related, individual, social, organizational, and outside variables. Therefore, solving organizational problems effectively requires formulating and implementing a *system of solutions* (in which there is a solution or plan for either correcting or improving each of the causal or influential factors involved).

When individuals or groups in organizations do not take the time to analyze an important problem situation in real depth, to identify underlying as well as obvious causes, and to formulate a system of solutions or improvements, they can leave important causal factors uncorrected or unimproved. As a result, those factors continue to operate as they did before, eventually causing the same or very similar problems.

Many if not most poorly solved problems are like unrecognized problems. In both cases, the really important, underlying causes are not recognized and dealt with appropriately. In the intermediate to long term, they actually generate more problems and contribute to time-consuming, crisis-oriented "fire-fighting."

Poor Use of Committed Time

When commuting or when waiting for an appointment, for example, we can put our time to much better use than

by worrying, daydreaming, or engaging in idle conversation. These activities only waste time. Our time would be much better spent on (goal-oriented) reading, thinking about important problems, and planning.

Procrastination

Procrastination means "needlessly and irrationally postponing something you know you have to do." People put off doing things for various reasons. Some reasons are good, but most are not so good. There is, for example, good reason to put off doing low priority tasks so that we can get high priority tasks done. This generally saves time in the long run. On the other hand, putting off solving important problems or making important decisions is not so good. It can create problems and waste considerable time later.

Why do people procrastinate? There are actually many reasons, many of which amount to protecting a vulnerable sense of self-esteem.

The *"lazies"* tend to put almost everything off—out of plain laziness.

The *"easy-goers"* tend to do things that they like to do and/or can do well, often putting off doing more important things.

The *"thought-avoiders"* do not like to think things out fully—or to think at all. They find in-depth, analytic thought too tedious, frustrating, and unpleasant.

The *"helter-skelters"* do not have goals, priorities, and plans. They put off doing things because they don't know what to do next.

The *"risk-avoiders"* tend to put off making important decisions, mostly because they fear the possible consequences or risks involved (e.g., an impending change, or a threat to their ego/status).

The *"indecisives"* put off making important decisions, too. They do so, however, because they can't make up their minds what to do. In analyzing their alternatives, for example, they may find that (a) half of their analysis points to "doing" something, while the other half points to "not doing" it, or (b) half of their analysis points to one solution, while the other half points to a different solution.

The *"Pressurizers"* believe that they work better under pressure, and, therefore, procrastinate until they are forced

to act. These people, however, may simply work faster and less effectively, actually wasting time in the long run.

The *"fire-fighters"* are inclined to put off doing the right things (analyzing, setting goals, prioritizing, and planning) because they are so embroiled in fighting all the "fires" that are constantly occurring. (They themselves probably contributed to causing the fires by not performing the thought-oriented management functions at some earlier point in time).

The *"test-avoiders"* are afraid of failing to meet their own high standards—standards that require outstanding performance every time and demandingly test their competence. By waiting until it is too late to do the best possible job, they can explain away a mediocre job by telling themselves that they "didn't have enough time."

The *"self-defeaters"* actually fear doing well. Procrastination guarantees that they will not excell.

The *"rebels"* do not like adhering to someone else's timetable. To them it means being controlled or dominated. Procrastinating is their way of retaining a sense of power and control.

The *"revengers"* use putting things off and making problems to get back at someone or something they don't like (e.g., the boss, the job, or the organization).

The *"hedonists"* or *"myopics"* put off unpleasant tasks to do things that they find more pleasant, satisfying, or important. They choose immediate, short-sighted gratification over things that can be in their better, longer-term self-interest.

The *"masochists"* have low self-esteem and "get their kicks" out of being caught with an uncompleted task. Their "kicks" are being yelled at or abused.

Preoccupation

We often allow ourselves to (a) get too absorbed in everyday matters, and/or (b) concentrate continually on just one activity or facet of operations. When we do, we often fail to (1) "stick our heads above the water," (2) get a perspective on what is actually going on and why, and (3) determine what should be going on. Preoccupation wastes our time by dulling our awareness of problems and opportunities and by reducing our alertness, effectiveness, and productivity.

**Others' Ineffectiveness and
Inefficiency on the Job**

When managers and leaders fail to analyze operations, set and prioritize goals, and plan (for themselves), they waste their own time through personal ineffectiveness and inefficiency. When they fail to encourage and help subordinates to perform the same management functions, they compound ineffectiveness and inefficiency. Examples: Without having prioritized goals and coordinated plans, subordinates may not only channel their efforts in the wrong directions, but they may also find themselves working against each other (especially where their jobs are interdependent and the work flow must be coordinated). Without having challenging but realistic standards of performance, subordinates may tend to perform to lower, more "comfortable" levels. This, in turn, can give them idle time, which they can be tempted to "kill" in various ways: (a) interrupting others' work simply to pass the time, and/or (b) daydreaming or otherwise doing virtually nothing (except lowering productivity and increasing costs). Without having clearly defined responsibilities and authority, they may not only delegate decisions upward, thereby interfering with their bosses' effective use of time, but they may also waste time by becoming involved in territorial disputes. All these problems vastly compound the waste of time.

The situation described above only involved a manager orleaders and his/her immediate subordinates. Think for a moment about the organizational implications. The fact that one manager is not doing the "right things" indicates that his or her superior and colleagues are probably not doing them either. It also indicates that these management and leadership practices are probably not being used throughout the organization. The resulting, mind-boggling amount of ineffectiveness and inefficiency is one of the best cases that can be made for top-down, organization-wide use of participative or team management/leadership practices.

Major Causes of Wasting Time (Ring B)

Dysfunctional Misconceptions

1. **Efficiency vs. Effectiveness Syndrome**

   Largely because of their organization's expectations and inadequate training programs, many managers (a) tend to confuse *efficiency* (doing things right) with *effectiveness* (doing the right things), or (b) tend to be more concerned about efficiency than effectiveness. Such managers may very well do some things right; but they may also be doing some wrong things. If so, they cannot be fully effective as managers. By doing some wrong things, they may be creating as many problems as they are solving.

2. **Activity vs. Results Syndrome**

   Largely for the same reasons as above, many leaders also tend to confuse *activity* (motion) with *results* (accomplishment). These leaders are inclined to lose sight of performance objectives and to concentrate more and more on staying (or looking) busy. Eventually, their "inner objective" may become "to stay busy." If so, they can easily become "workaholics."

Not Doing The Right Things

1. **Not Analyzing Operations, Past Performance, and Problem Situations in Depth**

   Analyzing operations in real depth is a key to effective management—and effective time management. Many managers and leaders , however, do not take the time to analyze their situation fully and determine the following: (a) the key elements of operations (parameters around which effective goals can be written); (b) all the task-related, individual, social, organizational, and outside factors that should be improved in order to solve and prevent time-consuming problems; (c) challenging but realistic standards of performance; (d) key decision-making points; (e) to whom to assign what responsibilities; (f) to whom to delegate how much authority; and many more matters that will affect the efficiency and effectiveness of operations and the future demands on a their time.

2. **Not Identifying Which Factors/Elements and Activities Can and Cannot Be Controlled**

   Too much time gets wasted when managers try to control things that they cannot really control—or even influence. If for example, they have not identified which elements, factors, or activities they cannot control or influence, they may establish goals for themselves and their subordinates that either "point them in the wrong

directions or initiate fruitless activity. In either case, time-consuming performance problems are the result.

3. Not Setting Goals and Establishing Priorities

If point A is where we are now, and if we fail to identify point B (our goal or where we want to be or should be), several time-consuming phenomena tend to occur. First, we cannot plan how to get from A to B in the most effective, efficient, time-saving manner. Second, without a goal there can be no appropriate standard of performance. (A performance standard is one of three parts of a well-written goal). Without having a performance standard, people tend to work less efficiently and effectively than they can, which often causes time-consuming productivity problems. Third, without having a goal, people often behave in a manner that resembles a wind-up toy. They go in one direction one moment, bump into an obstacle, and go off in another direction. Going rather aimlessly in different directions is inefficient, causes performance problems, and wastes time in the long run.

Also, without setting goals, we cannot prioritize our goals (identify which are more important than others). Even if we have set goals, but still fail to prioritize them, we tend to (a) do less important things when we should really be doing more important things, and (b) do urgent things rather than important things. In either case, the really important things often go undone. This causes time-consuming problems and crises later.

4. Not Establishing Challenging (Yet Realistic) Performance Standards

When leaders and managers fail to incorporate challenging but realistic performance standards into performance goals (for themselves and their subordinates), chances are that neither they nor their subordinates will work to their full potential. This will result in wasted time, lower morale and motivation, productivity problems, and higher costs—all of which will eventually require time-consuming corrective problem-solving.

5. Little or Poor Planning

Planning involves charting an orderly, effective, efficient, coordinated sequence of steps for reaching a goal. Without a good plan for getting from point A to point B, people waste time, energy, and other resources. They

also tend to go in different directions, often working against each other instead of with each other. Again, time-consuming coordination and performance problems can easily result.

Planning requires thought and takes time—two reasons why many managers either don't do it or don't do it effectively. But by planning—and planning well—managers can actually "give" themselves more usable time. <u>Studies show that an hour of effective planning can save three to four hours in implementation</u>. It can also help achieve better results and fewer problems.

6. Not Establishing Effective Management and Time Management Practices and Policies

Many if not most "time wasters" in Ring C are also caused by not establishing appropriate practices and policies for various individuals to follow. These practices and policies can apply to secretaries, subordinates, colleagues, superiors, and even outside callers. They can deal with such matters as (a) goal-setting and planning, (b) assigning responsibilities, (c) delegating authority, (d) holding meetings, and (e) handling telephone calls and appointments. Without effective (time) management practices and policies, people tend to waste each other's time as well as their own.

7. Not Organizing Effectively

Organization is indeed a key to success—and to making effective use of time. Organizing jobs and people in one's responsibility area is just as important as organizing one's own work. When leaders do not establish an appropriate organizational structure (by grouping jobs into appropriate units, outlining working relationships between jobs and units, delineating reporting relationships, and establishing effective spans of control), they do not establish the most effective framework for assigning and coordinating tasks.

By not establishing an appropriate framework, many managers are unable to formulate effective job descriptions. (Job descriptions outline technical/functional tasks, assign managerial or supervisory responsibilities, delegate decision-making authority, and outline basic work procedures.) Consequently, subordinates are not always certain what to do or how to behave. This, in turn, results in numerous dysfunctional phenomena: confusion; territorial disputes; power struggles; interpersonal conflicts; uncooperativeness; uncoordinated

activity; and less than fully successful implementation of operational plans. These and related problems waste the time of both subordinates and their superiors.

8. Not Staffing Properly

How effectively and efficiently personnel do their work largely depends on the job-related inputs they possess: skills; skill levels; motivation; attitudes; and behavioral tendencies.

Many managers do not do all the following to assure that their personnel will perform to their potential: (a) identify the inputs necessary to do each job well; (b) hire or select those who have the necessary inputs (or have developable potentials); (c) adequately orient subordinates to their jobs and working environment; and (d) provide training that will develop knowledge, skills, and appropriate attitudes and behavior patterns. As a result, these managers' subordinates can do one or more of the following: make technical/functional mistakes; do their tasks ineffectively and inefficiently); make inappropriate decisions; not do what they should be doing; do what they should not be doing; not work well together; and/or adversely affect others' performance. Each of these problems can directly or indirectly waste the time of both subordinates and their superiors.

9. Not Guiding Activities Effectively

Once the thought-oriented integrative functions have been performed and units have been appropriately organized and staffed, personnel can begin to carry out their assigned responsibilities and to implement operational plans. However, regardless of the effectiveness of plans, and regardless of personnel's skills and motivation, personnel may still need guidance (advice and information) to help them perform as efficiently and effectively as their potentials will allow. Unfortun- ately, many managers fail to (a) monitor progress, (b) give occasional advice, (c) provide additional information, and (d) help subordinates evaluate results and solve problems. The resulting waste of time and effort reduces effectiveness, efficiency, and overall performance or productivity.

10. Managing Only What Can Be Seen

This general tendency among managers is either caused by, or directly related to, the items already mentioned above. The many managers and leaders who are more action-oriented than thought-oriented tend to *manage only those things they can see*: machines, equipment, and material; their own and others' activities; and tangible outputs or results. What they cannot see, and therefore fail to manage, is what is going on in people's minds and hearts. What goes on inside people influences their motivation, activities, and performance.

Managing what cannot be seen requires analyzing operations as a system of interacting, interdependent factors: Task-related factors revolve around the "mechanics of operations" (factors such as job descriptions, mechanical equipment, technical procedures, work flow, and work load). Individuals' characteristics include basic skills, specialized skills, knowledge factors, needs or drives, values, goals, interests, and personality traits. Organizational variables include factors such as organizational structure, internal systems, and managerial or leadership styles. Social factors revolve around social norms (the attitudes and behavior expected by groups). Outside variables include factors such as the attitudes and behavior of families, friends, colleagues, and various educational, financial, and religious institutions.

When people manage only what they can see, they tend only to integrate tasks with tasks. They fail to integrate people with their tasks and people with people. This causes time-consuming motivation, morale, and performance problems—"people problems."

In addition, when pople are managing only what they can see, they are essentially operating in the implementation phase of the integrative process (scheduling, directing, and controlling personnel). When they are managing both what they can and cannot see, they are also operating in the think-work phase of management (analyzing, identifying problems, establishing goals and priorities, planning). It takes operating in both phases to be a truly effective manager or leader. The think-work phase is particularly important. How well managers organize, staff, and guide activity depends on how well they analyzed operations, set goals, and planned.

We can summarize what we have said about Ring B as follows: *Time management is mostly a matter of effective management*. It involves doing the "right things" and doing them well: thinking (analyzing, setting goals, and planning) before taking action (organizing, staffing, and guiding activity). Leaders and managers cause time-consuming problems by (a) not performing all the management functions properly, and (b) not thinking about people as well as the mechanical aspects of operations.

Figure 2: How Managers and Supervisors of a Manufacturing Company Spend Time

	Thinking ahead	Doing work that cannot be delegated	Working with people on the same or higher levels	Working with people on lower levels
President & Group Executives	30%	25%	20%	25%
Division Managers & Services Officers	25%	20%	30%	25%
Department General Managers	25%	15%	20%	40%
Unit Managers & Superintendents	20%	15%	20%	45%
Supervisors	15%	15%	15%	55%

Figure 3: Louis Allen's Research Findings
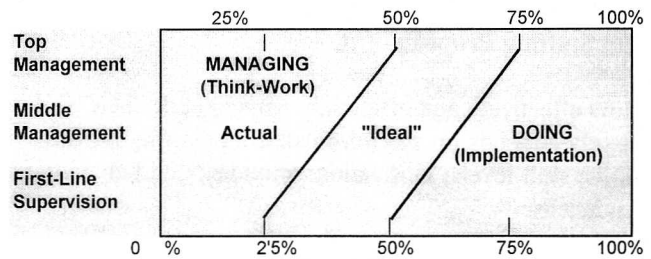
Basic, Underlying Causes (Ring A)

The factors shown in Ring B, which in turn cause effects in Rings C, D, and E, largely reflect (a) being busy trying to be busy (or trying to look busy); (b) doing instead of managing; and (c) putting emphasis on trying to *do things right* rather than on *doing the right things*.

The *right things to do are the basic management functions*: analyzing operations or situations; goal-setting; planning; making major decisions; organizing; staffing; guiding activity; guiding evaluation of results; and identifying and solving important problems.

According to several surveys, however, managers in general do not use much of their time doing the right things.

1. An American Management Association survey showed that most executives spend only 47% of their time performing managerial functions. The rest of their time is spent doing "hands-on work."

2. A survey conducted by the consulting firm, Booz, Allen & Hamilton, generally confirmed the A.M.A. survey. It showed that 25% of managers' time is spent on "less productive work" such as clerical tasks, finding information, traveling, and work scheduling and organizing. The survey also showed other ways in which managers spend their time: 46% on attending meetings; 13% on composing, dictating, editing, and drawing or designing documents; 8% on reading and analyzing documents; and only 29% on doing what they are supposedly being paid to do—"managerial think-work."

3. According to time management expert, Henry Mintzberg, managers in general (a) spend nine minutes or less thinking about 50% of the problems or decisions confronting them, and (b) spend up to an hour thinking about only 10% of the problems or decisions confronting them.

4. A large manufacturing company researched its managers' and supervisors' use of time. The results are shown in **Figure 2**.

5. **Figure 3** illustrates the findings of Louis Allen, a noted authority on time management. In addition to showing the actual percentages of time that managers spend on thought-oriented managerial functions versus more action-oriented operational activities, it also shows the disparity between actual percentages and what Allen considers to be the "ideal."

Even though the different studies yielded slightly different percentages, the conclusions were the same: In general, managers (and leaders) spend too much time **doing** (performing action-oriented operational activities) and not enough time actually **managing** (performing and guiding thought-oriented managerial functions).

We think that there are several very basic, underlying reasons for this. (See Ring A of **Figure 1**.)

Not Knowing What One Should Be Doing, Why, and How To Do It Well

Many managers know relatively little about basic management functions, why they are important, and how to perform them effectively. Thus, they do not always do the right things for the right reasons and do them well. An organization's failure to provide adequate managerial and supervisory training is often a major cause. Another major cause, even when training has been done, can be an organization's failure to encourage the use of what has been learned and to reinforce training through the use of improved organizational systems, policies, and procedures.

Doing Only What One Likes To Do or Can Do Well

For various reasons, giving in-depth analytic thought to goals, plans, decisions, problems, policies, and procedures can be the most difficult, tedious, and frustrating thing that people do. As Henry Ford said, "Thinking is the hardest work there is, which is the probable reason so few engage in it." Thus, many managers and leaders are much more comfortable doing the action-oriented, operational, day-to-day tasks that they are more familiar with, are more interested in, can do more easily, and can do better. Such tasks can also be more satisfying—for two reasons: First, since people can generally do them better, they get better and more satisfying results. Second, because these tasks usually get immediate results, they also get immediate satisfaction from what they do. (The results of thought-oriented tasks may not be known for weeks, months, or even years.)

Influences of Personal Characteristics

In many cases, "doing what one likes to do or can do well" can be attributed to individual attitudes and predispositions. More specifically, relatively high or low levels of various personal traits can contribute to one's wasting time in the following ways:

(Low) Self-confidence
  Doing only what like to do or can do well
  Inability to say "no"

(High) Self-confidence
  Inability to delegate (especially when coupled
   with low confidence in subordinates' abilities)

(Low) Self-assertiveness / dominance
  Inability to say "no"
  Inability to delegate

(Low) Self-control / self-discipline
  Doing only what like to do or can do well
  Poor use of committed time
  Procrastination
  Over-response to crises
  Incompleted tasks

(Low) Goal-orientedness
  Not setting goals and establishing priorities
  Little or poor planning
  Procrastination
  Unproductive meetings
  Poor use of committed time

(High) Active / vigor
  Not doing right things (analyzing, goal-setting,
   planning, establishing effective policies and
   practices)
  Managing only what can be seen
  Unproductive problem-solving (not anticipating,
   recognizing, or effectively solving problems)
  Over-response to crises

(Low) Orderliness
  Not doing right things (analyzing, goal-setting,
   Planning, policy-making)
  Not organizing tasks and people
  Non-delegation (leading to upward delegation)
  Unnecessary paperwork; mishandled paperwork
  Disorganized desk; interruptions

(Low) Orginal thinking
  Not doing right things and/or doing them well
   (analyzing, goal-setting, planning)
  Unproductive problem-solving (not anticipating
   recognizing, or effectively solving problems)

(Low) Responsibility
  Doing only what like to do or can do well
  Incompleted tasks
  Procrastination
  Inefficiency
  Below standard productivity

(Low) Emotional stability
  Over-response to crises
  Emotional and physical stress
  Procrastination

PART II

How to Manage, and Make More Effective Use of, Time

This part has three sections. The first deals with "doing the right things" and planning the establishment of time-saving practices and policies outlined in the subsequent sections. The second section outlines policies and procedures that can be applied by a manager or leader. The third section outlines policies and procedures that can be followed by secretaries, subordinates, colleagues, and superiors.

Stop at Some Point in Time and Think Things Out Fully

First: Analyze your use of time

1. **Log your use of time**

   Using a form/format of your own design, keep track of the following for at least one week:

   a. when you start doing things;
   b. where you do them (own office, conference room, another office);
   c. what you do (the tasks or activities involved);
   d. who initiated each task or activity (the superior, colleague, subordinate, customer, etc.);
   e. subjects or matters involved; and
   f. purposes of the tasks or activities.

2. **Analyze your use of time**

   Based on your time usage log, determine the following:

   a. how much time you spend doing which things— and why;
   b. who is initiating most of your tasks or activities— and why;
   c. what things you are doing that waste time, to what extent you are doing them, and why; and
   d. what things you should be doing, but are not— and why.

3. **Identify what you can do to improve your use of time**

   Take into account (a) through (d) of your analysis above. Also consider the suggestions outlined in the remaining pages of this booklet.

Second: Analyze Your Operations

With your superior and colleagues, and then with your subordinates, do the following:

1. Analyze operations as a system of interrelated factors (task-related, individual, social, organizational, and outside)

2. Identify and prioritize key elements or sspects of operations

3. Identify/anticipate and prioritize important problem areas and opportunities

4. Identify key factors/elements to correct or improve

Third: Formulate and prioritize strategic/long-range goals, plans, budgets, policies, and procedures

First with your superior and colleagues, and then with subordinates, do the following:

1. Formulate and prioritize strategic/long-range goals and objectives [organizational operating goals; unit and individ-ual performance goals; facilities and equipment goals; organizational (structural) goals; human resource goals (including staffing, satisfaction, and development goals); financial goals; administrative goals]

2. Formulate strategic/long-range plans (programs/ projects) [operating plans; facilities and equipment plans; organizational plans (including structural and delegation plans); human resource plans (including staffing and training/ development plans); financial plans; administrative plans]

3. Translate strategic/long-range plans/programs into long-term (program/project) budgets

4. Formulate strategic/long-term policies and procedures (regarding management systems, administration, operating ethics, etc.)

Fourth: Formulate and prioritize short-term goals, plans, budgets, policies and procedures

First with your superior and colleagues, and then with your subordinates, do the following within the context of long-range goals, plans, budgets, policies and procedures:

1. Formulate and prioritize short-term goals (same types as above)

2. Formulate and prioritize short-term plans (same types as above)

3. Translate short-term plans into short-term budgets

4. Formulate policies and procedures (regarding management systems, administration, operating ethics, time management, etc.)

Fifth: Organize your responsibility area

Implement organization and delegation plans:

1. (Re)structure your responsibility area (if necessary)

2. (Re)write job descriptions (including any new responsibilities being assigned)

3. Delegate (apropriate) athority to sbordinates (per participative planning discussions on the subject)

Sixth: Begin implementing other plans

1. Implement operational, facilities, human resources, and financial plans

2. Begin solving unsolved problems in order of established priorities (Schedule group and/or individual problem-solving sessions with superiors, colleagues, and subordinates, dealing effectively with each problem in order of its priority.)

As you read the next two sections, we suggest that you circle the numbers or letters of any items you might wish to begin using, doing, or emphasizing.

Time-Saving
Personal Practices and Policies

At the Beginning (or End) of Each Month and/or Week

1. Review goals and plans (especially short-term ones)

   a. Determine results/progress to date.

   b. Identify what remains/needs to get done (and what to do to get it done)

2. Formulate, write down, and prioritize goals for the month or week

3. Formulate and write down guideline (flexible) plans and schedules for the month or week

   a. Take into account possible contingencies.

   b. Break down large, complex, high priority projects into a logical group and/or sequence of smaller, more manageable sub-projects.

At the Beginning of Each Day

1. Review short-term goals, plans, and priorities for the month or week

2. Identify and prioritize tasks/activities that should be accomplished during the day (based on short-term goals, plans, and priorities)

3. Schedule the day:

   a. Schedule high priority tasks/activities, especially those requiring concentration or deep thought, for your most alert and effective time of day.

   b. Break down big, complex, high priority tasks into smaller, more manageable sub-tasks that can be performed in several chunks of time (i.e., when you might only have had time to do something of less importance).

c. As a general guideline, schedule no more than ten tasks for the day.

d. Schedule time(s) for making, receiving, and returning phone calls.

e. Schedule handling your in-basket paperwork at a specific time (e.g., after the mail generally arrives and your secretary has screened it).

4. Brief your secretary on your schedule for the day (e.g., a, b, c, d, and e above).

Any Specific Task or Activity

A. If you should not be doing it, don't. Either (a) pass it to the superior or colleague whose unit is responsible for the matter involved; (b) assign it to the subordinate whose job description calls for doing it; or (c) tactfully decline the other person's request for you to do it.

B. Determine its importance/urgency and assign it a priority.

C. Do those things that are important, not just those things that you can do well, are most interested in doing, or enjoy doing.

D. In general, tackle the most important tasks first, get them done, and then go on to less important tasks.

E. Allow enough lead time for accomplishing a task well.

F. Don't ignore deadlines. Someone else's effective use of time may depend on completion of your part of a task or project.

G. Especially if a task/project is very large, complex, important, and time-consuming, divide and conquer it. Break it up into smaller sub-tasks or sub-projects that you can get done during uninterrupted blocks of time (e.g., when you might otherwise have time only for shorter, lower priority tasks).

H. Do important tasks during your most productive time of day; do low priority tasks during your least productive time of day.

I. Give any task your total attention. (Ask your secretary to hold calls. Close the door. Clear your desk.)

J. Complete a task the first time—unless it is impossible or inadvisable to do so (e.g., if it must be cut up into smaller tasks).

K. Don't stew about having to do something—just do it.

L. If it is a really important task, do it right, even though you may have to move a deadline forward or put off a lower priority task.

M. Don't be as much of a perfectionist when doing low priority work.

N. If the task or activity involves something you must remember, write it down immediately.

O. If it is a task of a personal rather than job-related nature, you should probably do it on your own personal time. Try not to waste your secretary's or subordinates' time by asking them to take care of it.

Handling Paperwork

A. Have paperwork priorities

Priority 1: Very important; high priority; requires important (perhaps immediate) ACTION, but is not necessarily urgent.

Priority 2: Fairly important, even though it might border on being routine; requires some ACTION, but is not particularly urgent; can be set aside until you have dealt with higher priority matters.

Priority 3: Relatively unimportant and routine; low priority; is more for your INFORMATION than action.

B. Screening/prioritizing paperwork

1. Your secretary's responsibilities

a. Have your secretary at least screen incoming paperwork and give it to you once (possibly twice) a day (e.g., first thing in the morning and/or right after lunch).

b. If your secretary is well-trained and fully oriented to your priorities, work habits, and operations, also have him or her prioritize paperwork before giving it to you.

c. Especially in the case of Priority 3 material, have your secretary highlight or underline important information or ideas.

2. If you do not have a secretary, or if you prefer not to have your secretary prioritize your paperwork, review the contents of your in-basket once (possibly twice) a day, prioritizing each piece in its turn during the first handling.

C. Scheduling prioritized paperwork

After screening prioritized paperwork, schedule doing or taking care of it.

Priority 1: Schedule it into the day's work, taking other priorities into account.

Priority 2: Schedule it into the day's work, but around higher priority tasks to the extent possible. Set it aside (off your desk) until you can get to it.

Priority 3: As you skim the contents when first handling and prioritizing it, you might as well make mental notes of the contents and then immediately file it for future reference, getting it off your desk.

D. Handling paperwork (once it is prioritized)

Priority 1: Work on it once, completing it the first time (unless it must be broken down into sub-tasks).

Priority 2: Once you can get to it (after completing higher priority tasks—or between blocks of time set aside for higher priority tasks), complete it the first time (unless it, too, must be broken down into smaller tasks).

Priority 3: If the material is only for your information, do as indicated in paragraph C above. If it is for your action, complete it the first time (when you get to it). If it requires very routine action, assign it to your secretary or a subordinate (if/as appropriate). [Once your "priority 3 file or drawer" is full, review it and dump all but information that must be kept for future reference. Even these items can occasionally be summarized on several sheets of paper for filing.]

E. Keep paperwork off your desk — except the one thing you are presently working on.

Reports

A. Review existing reports, revising them as appropriate. First, analyze the organizational structure, key decision-making points, people's job descriptions, and job interdependencies. Second, determine (a) who needs what information, from whom, and why; (b) when or how often they need it, and why; and (c) in what format they need it. Third, compare these determinations with existing reports and revise them accordingly.

B. Assign a priority to each report, as you would with other paperwork.

C. If a report involves your overall responsibility area and is important or complex enough, write it or fill it out yourself.

D. If a report involves your area, but is routine and simply requires filling in readily available data, have your secretary or a subordinate do it.

E. If it involves one particular subordinate's responsibility area (and no one else's), assign it to that subordinate.

F. Get together all the necessary data, ideas, or recommendations before you start writing a report.

G. Write reports in a brief, concise, accurate, and clear manner.

H. Guidelines for "Any Specific Task or Activity" apply to reports.

[Guidelines and tips for writing effective reports can be found in the segment of this series entitled "Effective Communication" (Appendix B).]

Memos and Other Paperwork You Initiate

A. If your memo is issuing a new or revised policy, write it in a clear and concise manner. Briefly and

concisely explain the reason for the policy (or change in policy). Anticipate and answer important questions that your readers might have. Invite further questions and tell readers whom to contact for answers.

B. If your memo requests an answer, clearly indicate the date by which you wish to receive the answer.

C. If you are requesting that someone do something, don't beat around the bush. Be direct but tactful. Explain the reason(s) for your request adequately but concisely.

D. If your memo requests action, clearly specify what action should be taken by whom, when, and how.

E. If you are requesting someone to do something, be certain that the task or activity lies within their responsibilities and authority. If it does not, they may not be able to carry out your request.

F. Consider making a simple phone call instead of generating paperwork for yourself and others.

Telephone Calls

A. Establish specific period(s) during your day for placing, receiving, and returning telephone calls (e.g., during times of day when other people tend to be in their offices).

B. Have your secretary screen calls, suggesting that people call back (or that you will call them back) during the time(s) of day you have set aside for making, taking, or returning calls.

C. Be prepared. Before making important calls, outline the matters to be covered and have any necessary information available.

D. When calling someone, identify yourself, minimize amenities, and get right to the point of your call.

E. Make appropriate notes as you confer over the phone.

F. Try to conclude the matter, arrive at a decision, or make arrangements before ending the conversation.

G. Time your calls. Try to complete most of them within three minutes.

H. Don't take calls when someone is meeting with you in your office.

I. Use the telephone to get important information that a letter might take days or weeks to get.

J. Make certain that you and the other person both understand what each said (e.g., facts, assumptions, opinions, commitments, date and time of an appointment, etc.).

Appointments

A. Have your secretary screen visitors and schedule appointments to fit into your day's or week's schedule.

B. Ask subordinates to make appointments—unless there is a real (high priority) emergency.

C. Establish specific time(s) of day for keeping scheduled appointments.

D. Schedule appointments back to back, allowing a few minutes between them.

E. Schedule high priority appointments for your best time of day.

F. Set a reasonable time limit for each appointment, taking into account the subject's priority and complexity.

G. Be prepared. Before an appointment, jot down the points to be covered and get together any necessary information.

H. Close the office or conference room door. Ask your secretary to schedule return telephone calls.

I. Before beginning the discussion, take a few minutes to clarify objectives.

J. Begin and end on time (as scheduled).

Meetings

A. Initially: With your superior and colleagues, and also with your subordinates, take time occasionally to (1) identify or anticipate, categorize, and prioritize problems; and (2) identify and prioritize any important goals to be set, plans to be made, or decisions to be made. Next, prioritize the items in (1) and (2). Then, schedule meetings to deal with these important matters in the order of their assigned priorities.

B. Challenge requests for meetings.

C. Hold meetings when . . .

1. people need to exchange important information or ideas among themselves;
2. a decision must be made that involves or affects two or more people in important, interrelated ways; and/or
3. a telephone call or memo will not suffice.

D. Identify and invite appropriate attendees: those who are directly involved in, could be significantly affected by, or have important input to the situation or decision at hand.

E. Identify those who might need or want to be informed of the results.

F. Don't attend a meeting if you don't qualify in one of the three ways mentioned in D above. If you are interested in the outcome, request a memo or the minutes of the meeting.

G. Unless your superior qualifies, don't invite him or her to a meeting scheduled for you and your subordinates. Don't go to meetings being held by your subordinates with their subordinates.

H. Provide attendees with a guideline agenda ahead of time. Request that they come properly prepared with necessary information, preliminary analyses of the situation, alternative plans or solutions (including plans for their implementation), and tentative recommendations.

I. Schedule a reasonable amount of time, taking into account the priority and complexity of the subject(s) under discussion.

J. Hold meetings in a conference room rather than an office, so that there will be few if any interruptions.

K. Arrange ahead of time for any necessary audio-visual equipment, reports, etc. to be available and ready for use when the meeting convenes.

L. Start a meeting on time. Don't wait for late-comers (or they will tend to come even later the next time).

M. At the very outset of a meeting, take a few minutes to clarify objectives, to formulate a firm agenda, and to review the leader's and participants' responsibilities.

N. Lead/guide the meeting effectively. For problem-solving and decision-making sessions, guide discussion through each phase in its turn: first through exploring and analyzing the situation fully; then through formulating alternative solutions or plans; and finally through decision-making steps (analyzing and comparing alternatives, and choosing/deciding which to implement).

O. Use visual aids such as a whiteboard or flipchart to guide the discussion and help keep track of details.

P. Deal with each task or subject effectively the first time it is handled.

Q. Don't spend $100's worth of time on a $5 subject; but be sure that the $5 subject is not actually worth more.

R. End on time. Let anyone stay who wishes to ask a question or discuss something further, but dismiss the others.

[For detailed guidelines on arranging, leading, and participating in a meeting, refer to the segment of the series entitled "Effective (Team) Think-Work in Organizations."]

Crises

A. Relax a few moments before tackling a crisis situation. Prepare yourself for peak performance.

B. Handle a crisis (or crises) according to priorities; importance is paramount, urgency is secondary.

C. Don't spin your wheels. Think things out fully, exercise your best judgment, and resolve the situation effectively the first time. Then get on with less important and less urgent tasks.

D. Exercise self-control. Be careful not to over-respond and perhaps make things worse.

Reading

A. Identify which books, magazines, and journals you should monitor or read for information and ideas that will help you deal with the important things you have to do.

B. Identify which of these sources you should read yourself and which you might have others read and summarize for you.

C. Subscribe only to essential publications.

D. Read high priority letters, memos, and reports once —carefully—and take appropriate action immediately.

E. If you come across something important to remember, underline it, highlight it, or immediately make a note of it.

F. Read less important material during breaks, travel, or waiting time (unless you have more important things to read during those times).

Committed/Waiting Time

Use this time constructively to, for example, (a) plan, (b) take care of minor or routine matters, (c) read, or (d) listen to a cassette training tape.

Establish Effective (Organizational) Time Management Practices and Policies

Guidelines for Your Secretary

A. Have certain time(s) during the day for your secretary to meet with you to (a) discuss current prob-lems, each's priorities, each's schedules, and each's progress; (b) plan and schedule together; (c) be given assignments; (d) ask and answer questions; and (e) keep each other informed of important things that are happening.

B. Screen mail — especially junk mail.

C. Screen visitors, setting up appointments when possible (based on the week's/day's priorities and schedules).

D. Screen incoming phone calls, arranging (whenever possible) for you to return them during the time(s) of day you have set aside for making and returning calls.

E. Anticipate and notify you of problems.

F. Draft routine letters, memos, or reports for your revision or signature.

G. Develop an efficient office system, including well organized files and a tickler system for staying ahead of and meeting deadlines.

H. Gather and organize information/data from internal and external sources.

I. Maintain an information file, so that he or she can (a) readily answer routine inquiries without having to interrupt you, or (b) provide you with information quickly.

J. Make decisions concerning previously specified, routine matters for which he or she keeps the necessary information.

K. Skim reports, magazine articles, and similar materials, and then provide you with summary briefs or abstracts.

L. Prepare facilities and materials for scheduled meetings.

M. Take dictation (when convenient for both of you).

Guidelines for Your Subordinates

A. Make an appointment to see you—unless the situa-

tion is a real and important emergency.

B. To the extent possible, save up several topics for discussion during a single appointment.

C. Before requesting an appointment, consider whether or not a brief call or a memo would suffice.

D. Ask for advice when they really need it.

E. Come to you (preferably your secretary) for information that they cannot get elsewhere on their own.

F. Give you reports and send you memos that are brief, to the point, clear, and complete (in terms of providing you with information you might need or want).

G. Answer your memos by the time you have indicated in them.

H. Submit to you completed, well thought-out proposals (containing an analysis, possible alternatives, and recommendations)—instead of sketchy ideas.

I. Provide you with summary briefs or abstracts of specified books, reports, or magazine articles that might contain ideas and information of importance to you (and them).

J. Perform those tasks and make those decisions that (a) are specified in their job descriptions, and (b) you may have assigned or delegated to them.

K. Be considerate of other people's time.

L. Utilize the time-saving practices and policies listed in the section above.

Guidelines for Other Management Team Members (Superiors and Colleagues)

Many time management practices and policies will not work effectively if everyone is not playing by the same rules. They work best if everyone (a) is aware of them, (b) applies them, and (c) reinforces and aids others' use of them. Therefore, meet with your superior(s) and colleagues to discuss all of the practices and policies mentioned in the two sections above. Arrive at a consensus regarding those that should be established within your various organizational units (and perhaps throughout the entire organizaion), and them implement them systematically.

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