

# Time Management On-line Training - Part 1

## Recognising Time Management Challenges

This course enables you to understand the processes which will make you more effective whilst minimising the “Thieves of Time” which plague our personal productivity and sense of achievement. It will not only teach “Time Tips” but will introduce you to classic tips and techniques that will enable you to use your time more effectively to achieve both organisational objectives and increase your quality of life.

In this course you will learn how to:

- Set positive objectives
- Identifying your time stealers
- Learn simple tips to overcome common time stealers
- Identify the internal dialogues that inhibits our ability to manage our time

Why did you choose to learn more about Time Management?

- You are probably one of the 41% of the population that come home from work exhausted every night and suffering from stress.
- Or you one of the ‘one in five’ managers that don’t have a clue what they are supposed to be doing from one day to the next.
- Or you feel that work is taking over your life to such an extent that you have to take stock and start managing your time.

Recent studies have shown that the need to regain control in the workplace by better time management is as crucial today as it’s ever been.

*A UK law firm carried out a survey of 1,800 British employers and found that 79% worked more than 60 hours a week - an average of 12 hours a day in a five-day working week. Just six percent, meanwhile, worked between 40 and 50 hours a week, while 15%t worked between 50-60 hours*

*Dr. Glenn Wilson, a psychiatrist at King’s College London University, conducted 80 clinical trials, wherein he monitored workers’ IQs throughout the day. Dr. Wilson saw a 10-point drop in the IQs of trial participants who were distracted with message juggling (the same as losing a whole night's sleep and more than double the 4-point fall seen after smoking marijuana)!!!*

*Hewlett Packard commissioned a survey of 1,100 employees, revealing that the relentless interruptions of phone calls, emails, and text messages they experienced at work cut productivity and left them feeling stressed and fatigued. Among other things, the study revealed the following:*

- *Nearly two out three people check their e-mail messages when they’re out of the office and when on holiday*
- *Half of all workers respond to an e-mail within 60 minutes of receiving it*
- *One out of five workers will separate from a business or social engagement to respond to a message.*

### EXERCISE

#### What do I want to achieve from this course?

As you can see, many of us suffer from not being in control of our time. Let’s look at other reasons for choosing this course and, more importantly, what you hope to achieve from it. Write down in the box below what you wish to achieve from this course. Perhaps you have a general feeling that you are

suffering from stress, although you're not sure why, and you want to find out more about time management; or perhaps there is a specific problem you want to resolve, such as too much work or feeling let down by your current actions. Be selfish, for once, and think about only what **you** need to achieve and why. Think through the reasons and then write them down in the box below on the left. In the right hand section write down WHY you want to achieve the items listed on the right. This will allow you to identify the motivation you need to continue with your quest to become a better time manager.

**Time Tip:** Make your statements positive; rather than stating “*I don't want to be the office pushover anymore*”, say instead “*I wish I could say no more often*” or “*I would like to express my real feelings more often*”.

What do I want to achieve from this course?	Why do I wish to achieve this?

***Outlook Time Tip***

Create a Task in Outlook with the title ‘Time Management Objectives’ and set a reminder for every Monday for the next 4 weeks so that you stay true and consistent to your objectives.

## WHAT CHALLENGES OUR TIME

If we are to improve our time management we need to take a long hard look at what stops us from being effective and what we need to be aware of. The following is a list of classic 'time stealers' - the factors that get in the way of our effective use of time.

Below you will find some of the most frequent reasons for reduced effectiveness in the workplace. Place a tick by the ones which are causing to be the major obstacles to your own time management.

### Action point - Identifying your time stealers

- Interruptions - telephone conversations that go on without focus or control
- Interruptions - personal visitors who feel that they can interrupt you for any reason they wish
- You are easily distracted and side tracked by more enjoyable tasks
- Meetings that are unfocussed and unorganised
- Tasks that you do that should be delegated to others
- Procrastinating and putting off more important tasks
- Indecision - Not knowing what to do in a given time period
- Managing tasks with incomplete information
- Dealing with team members who do not complete their tasks
- Crisis management (fire fighting)
- Unclear communication - both verbal and written. No one knows who's doing what and when
- Inadequate technical knowledge due to lack of training
- Unclear objectives and priorities agreed between colleagues and/or management
- Lack of planning - either short term or long term
- Stress and fatigue
- Trying to do too much yourself
- Inability to say "No" to colleague's requests
- Desk management and personal disorganisation
- Managing e-mails

Once you have ticked the items on the list that refer to you, ask yourself 'How many of these do I have no control over?'. You may surprise yourself with the number of ticked items that you are able to control. When we say control, you may not be able to eliminate all of them instantly but are able to exert some influence over how often and how much time they contribute to your ineffectiveness.

### Make a list of the top three time stealers you most wish to eliminate

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....

## TIME MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES AND TIPS

Prioritising will be covered in more detail in our other Time Management on-line courses but let's start with some tried and tested tips for you to think about when managing your time. We'll concentrate on the ones relating to time management and give you some simple ideas to help you on your way. Most of these will be covered in more detail in the course.

**1. Crisis Management:** We all suffer from crises but are you the fire-fighter or arsonist! We may be great at sorting out crises but do we always get into crisis by not making plans for the future. Remember, for the same crisis; once is unfortunate; twice is a disaster but the third time is incompetence!!!! We haven't learnt from previous mistakes.

**Time Tip:** After every crisis, meet with those involved and ask 'How can we ensure this doesn't happen again'. Set a reminder in your Outlook calendar to ensure you don't forget and follow-up the lessons learnt.

**2. Telephone interruptions:** Still our greatest communication tool and still considered our greatest enemy at times. We feel awkward about closing phone calls because we may feel rude if we do. We also don't ask enough questions when put on the spot by an instant telephone request.

**Time Tip:** Always ask 'When's the deadline for this task to be completed?' on every request to determine how much 'padding' has been added to it. You can end your calls by saying 'OK well I won't take up any more of your valuable time'. You'll be amazed how quickly and politely this ends most calls.

**3. Unclear Objectives and Priorities:** The University of Arkansas carried out research that there was a 25% difference between what managers thought staff should be prioritising and what staff thought were their priorities.

**Outlook Time Tip:** Ensure you have clear and agreed priorities between you and your boss that are reviewed daily or weekly. Ensure you have your key tasks and objectives written as tasks in Outlook so that you can update them when you speak to your boss or your team.

**4. Trying to do too much yourself:** We sometimes feel a failure when we compare what little we've completed compared with our colleagues. We always seem to run out of time before we run out of tasks because we try to do it all without regard to its priority.

**Outlook Time Tip:** Break tasks into timed events so that you are clear how much you'll be able to do in a day or a week. Colour code items in your Outlook Calendar so that you can complete them in a structured and orderly way.

**5. Interruptions - personal:** Drop-In Visitors will always come because of one simple reason. You allow them to. Many people are ambivalent towards this type of interruptions. That very ambivalence encourages the practice until it becomes a major drain on quality time.

**Outlook Time Tip:** Change your behaviour towards interrupters and gently rearrange their interruptions to another time more convenient to you. Your boss will understand if you can show him or her that your priorities will cost them more if left undone due to their interruptions. Create an appointment in your Outlook Calendar for call backs and appointments with reminders for the important ones.

**6. Ineffective Delegation:** Coaching and good delegation are considered the main route to effective leadership - the wisest leaders choose this style of management above all others because it strengthens teams and builds confidence.

**Time Tip:** Ask yourself 'Do I free up more time; have someone in my team who can do this quicker than me; better than me; who will enjoy doing it; or can do it cheaper than me.' If the answer to any of these is yes, then you should delegate more. Creating a delegation in Tasks and then assigning them will allow you to delegate more and track their progress.

**7. Desk management and personal disorganisation:** Are you suffering from Desk Stress where you can't see more than 5% of the material your desk is made of due to unnecessary clutter. Research shows that there is about 36 hours of work on top of the average desk - this alone can be a real productivity stopper.

**Time Tip:** Clear your desk at the end of every day and ensure you have a weekly schedule for organising and de-cluttering your paperwork and filing systems.

**8. Procrastination and indecision:** Procrastination is putting off what you should be doing right now and is truly 'the thief of time'. We run away from what is a priority and effectively waste time. People avoid making decisions for many reasons: the three principle ones are: avoidance, complacency and panic.

**Outlook Time Tip:** Do your worst task at the start of the day. It gets it out of the way and stops you stressing over it. Also break long tasks into smaller segments - breaking your day-long project into 6 one-hour segments will ensure you know how you're doing at the end of every hour. Doing this in Outlook Calendar will enable you to measure your progress during the day.

**9. Inability to Say No:** If you say 'yes I will' when you know you can't you'll be causing other people stress. People rely on your promises and people will accept your promise of delivery rather than an a.s.a.p. if you always meet your deadlines.

**Outlook Time Tip:** Instead of automatically saying 'Yes' to requests say 'How and When' you can deliver, say *how* you will deliver and *when* is realistic for both you and the other person. By having your daily tasks and priorities listed on your Outlook Calendar you can visually refer to your tasks and show the other person your commitments - this will help you to become more assertive and negotiate task completions more effectively.

**10. Meetings:** The average senior manager spends 17 hours per week in meetings, plus 6 hours a week getting ready for them, and even more hours recovering!

**Outlook Time Tip:** Always ensure your meetings have an agreed START and FINISH time. Cost out your meetings to ensure that they are worth having. Plan your meetings using the Meetings planner in Outlook ensuring you have meetings at the optimum time for all attendees.

**11. Managing e-mails:** Are you suffering from e-mailitis: a stressful inability to stop looking at and stressing over your e-mails every 5 minutes.

**Outlook Time Tip:** Here are three tips to make this e-mail relevant to you

- Deal with your email at regular times during the day and not when you see it pop up.
- Disable the pop-up notice on your e-mail so that it doesn't continuously interrupt you
- Create e-mail rules that balance your need for technology with face to face contact. Also develop e-mail guidelines for your team or department.

As you can see there are many ways in which we can start to manage our time more effectively but one of the factors which stops people attempting time management techniques is the thought that 'These factors are out of my control. One way to start is to manage our thoughts and 'self-talk'.

If you do then you may have to manage your internal dialogue to produce a more positive outcome. The following tips will help.

- Don't aim for perfection
- Don't give up at the first hurdle, setback or failure
- Start with the easy stuff first
- Pat yourself on the back regularly when things are going well and you're in control
- Remember, old habits are hard to break
- Give yourself at least 21 days for each major technique to become a habit
- Remind yourself constantly of the positives that will emerge from a more organised you

*"I would love to manage my time better but I don't have the time to do what I need to". This is a phrase uttered by many but perhaps the more accurate phrase should be "I don't **make** the time". Be the master of time - not it's victim – only 10 minutes a day spent on making time for what we need to do (proactive tasks) or saving time (eliminating time wasters or reactive tasks) added up over a year equals ONE WORKING WEEK.*

Make a list of five simple things you can do to start you on your way to managing your time

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3. ....  
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4. ....  
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By doing this you will soon be on the way to becoming a great manager of time.