

# Time Management ebook - SAMPLE PAGES



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# How to use this ebook

This ebook course is designed to help any manager, or member of staff who is responsible for others, improve their time management skills. However, the skills and tips can apply to anyone in the company who wants to improve their time management skills.

The pack has an ‘Open Learning’ format, which means it is self-instructional. In simple terms that means it’s up to you when and where you study. Everything that you need to know is contained in this folder. Because this pack is self-contained, you can choose a learning pace that suits you.

However, you will see various exercises that require discussion with your line manager, so it is important to work with them to plan in these activities. In fact, research has shown that past delegates gain more success from this ebook course when their line managers are **actively** involved in supporting the learning. Line manager support is discussed in a few pages time.

We also recommend that you complete at least **one section** of the course at a time - that way, the information you are dealing with will make more sense! Each section should take you no more than an hour to complete, so the entire pack should be completed in around 10 hours.

## A Note About Copyright

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“The reasonable man adapts himself to the world; the unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore all progress depends on the unreasonable man.”

**GEORGE BERNARD SHAW**

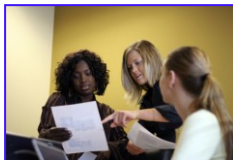
The course contains clear instructions, and symbols have been used to represent the various activities that you should undertake:



An exercise for you to complete



Tips for successful time management



Find something out or undertake an activity



Consult your manager



End of section quiz

# Objectives

By the time that you have completed this course, you should be able to:

- Analyse your present use of time
- Determine problem areas in your time management
- Identify key tasks
- Set objectives for yourselves and others
- Use planning aids effectively
- Delegate effectively
- Deal with time thieves
- Cope with crises and emergencies
- Adapt priorities as appropriate
- Set an Action Plan

**"If you are leaping a ravine, the moment of take-off is a bad time to be considering alternative strategies."**

**JOHN CLEESE**

# Introduction to Time Management



Does this picture remind you of anyone? If so, then this is the self-study workbook for you!

*“Time is money”* - Who said that? Your Chief Executive? Probably at some point. But even as far back as 1745, Benjamin Franklin knew that time was a valuable resource.

The key to improving your time management skills is to accept the fact that **you** are responsible for your own use of time. It is only when you realise this that you are in a position to make things better for yourself.

You may not set your own objectives...you may not set your own priorities...you may have to react to the needs of others on a daily basis. It is still **you** who is responsible for how you react to those needs.

Poor use of time creates problems not only for you, but also for those that you work with: under-performance; job dissatisfaction; work overload and stress - there are probably others you could add to this list.



# SECTION ONE

Where does my  
time go?

*"Failure is, in a sense, the highway to success."*  
**JOHN KEATS**



# Where does my time go?

Time is like money. We can either spend it wisely, or waste it. However, we probably all give more thought to how we spend our money (which is replaceable), than we do to how we spend our time (which is not).



**Time Management, like other management skills, benefits from analysis and planning. To apply time management principles, you must know not only how you use your time, but also which factors prevent you from using it more effectively.**

- Once you have completed this section, you should be able to:
- Analyse your present use of time
- Determine your time management problems
- Identify key tasks



Do you feel that this gives a good picture of how you spend your working week?  
We appreciate that, because of the dynamic nature of a lot of industries, it is difficult to be totally accurate for things that are going to change from week to week. However, this exercise will help you identify areas where your time management skills may be found wanting.

Pull out your time management chart, and answer the following questions as fully as you can. Base your answers on the information recorded in your chart.



### Activity 2

1. Which tasks were completed on time and to the standard required?

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2. Which tasks did not get done?

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3. Why were these tasks not done?

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#### Activity 4


Answer the following questions by placing a  $\checkmark$  for a **yes** answer and a **X** for a **no** answer in the appropriate box. If you're not sure, just leave the box blank!

1. Do you have responsibility for managing your own time?
2. Do you know the key tasks that your job involves?
3. Do you carry out these key tasks on a day-to-day basis?
4. Do you finish one task at a time?
5. Do you classify your tasks in order of importance?
6. Do you plan activities both in the long term and short term?
7. Do you have goals/targets to meet?
8. Do you usually meet them?
9. Do you regularly use any of the following? 
  - Microsoft Outlook
  - Filofax, or equivalent
  - Diary
  - A daily 'to do' list
  - A wall planner
  - Other planning aid
10. Are you able to say **no** to an unreasonable request?
11. Do you delegate when you have an opportunity?
12. Do you try and negotiate a deadline when time is tight?
13. Do you handle difficult or unpleasant tasks sooner, rather than later?
14. Do you place realistic time scales on tasks?
15. Do you leave space in the day for unforeseen problems?
16. Can you handle interruptions to your work quickly & efficiently?

The irritating thing about a list of questions like this is the fact that sometimes there may be no clear-cut answers. There are questions here where you may have wanted to say ‘sometimes’, instead of giving a straightforward ‘yes’ or ‘no’. On the whole though, the more  $\checkmark$  answers you gave, the better you are at managing your time. All is not lost though, as your  $\times$  answers simply highlight areas for improvement.

Answering **yes** to Question 1 is a good start. You have recognised that you do have control over the way in which you spend your time. Answering **no** to Question 1 could erect barriers to successful time management. You certainly can’t control **all** your own time, but there are certain things you can do to ensure you control **some** of it.

So what have you learnt so far? At this point, you should be able to determine some areas where you think that you have time management problems. Try this:



### Activity 5

Take a look at your last four activities; from the information in these, choose four areas of your time management that you would like to improve. Record these below:

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

This activity should act as a reminder and a guide to you when you come to compile your action plan at the end of the course.

Obviously, improving your time management skills will not happen overnight, but you have already taken some very positive steps towards improvement. It will take time to adapt to your new skills and, as a starting point, the next page details three basic principles of time management, which should help.



## The three principles of time management

There are three general principles that you can adopt in order to make better use of your time. Each principle includes a question, which, if answered properly, will give you more control over **what** tasks you do, and **when** and **how** you do them.

### The Principle of Direction

*What do I have to achieve?*

The answer to this question will help you to:

- √ Know your key tasks
- √ Set priorities
- √ Identify RELEVANT activities
- √ Focus all your energy in the right direction

### The Principle of Necessity

*How necessary is this activity?*

Your answer will help you:

- √ Analyse each task you do
- √ Postpone, perhaps eliminate activities which are unimportant
- √ Concentrate on those activities relevant to your direction

### The Principle of Efficiency

*Am I doing this task in the best possible way?*

This will assist you to:

- √ Examine the way you work
- √ Devise new ways of doing things



# Summary Quiz: What First?

These questions are designed as a guide to tell you how you are progressing with the pack. You may want to discuss your answers with your line manager.

1. Explain the meaning of 'priority'.

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2. What is the difference between 'urgent' and 'important'?

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3. Which tasks are classified as 'A' High Priority?

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4. Which tasks are classified as 'B' Medium Priority?

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5. Which tasks are classified as 'C' Low Priority?

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6. What should you do when priorities conflict?

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# Delegation – What’s that?

Delegation is often referred to as an ‘art’. It is most certainly a skill! If your job carries the authority to delegate tasks to others, it’s a practice that you should be following.

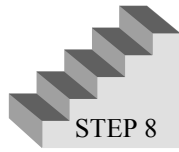


**“If you want to be a truly effective manager you must learn to delegate”** 1992 Huppe F. ‘Delegate: Multiply your Impact’

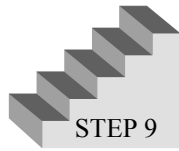
By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Determine how well you delegate at present
- Understand the benefits of delegation
- Understand what to delegate...
- ...and What not to delegate
- Know whom to delegate to...
- ...and How to delegate

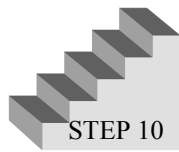
Some people delegate willingly, and are good at it. Others do so with reluctance, and some don’t even do it at all. There are many reasons why people don’t delegate but, before we examine these, we’re going to take a look at how you view delegation.



Identify the resources required



Decide how and when you are going to monitor progress



Identify who else needs to be informed

It is important to remember that delegating a piece of your work to a member of your team means not only delegating the task, but also delegating the authority to carry out that task.



**What you CANNOT delegate is accountability. You are the one who delegated the task and, at the end of the day, you are the one who will be held responsible.**



### Activity 17

Look back to Activity 16, and examine what you wrote. In delegating the task, does it match the ten steps above? If not, write your new delegation task below:

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