



Effective Time management

How can we make our lives productive by better time management?

A few techniques

An E-book by: Malik Mirza, ACA, FCCA, MBA
<http://wisdomfrombooks.com>

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1. Introduction and about the E-book

We all have 24 hours in a day – It does not matter in which part of the world we live, whatever is our gender, whether we are a university graduate or not, we have 24 hours in a day.

The question is: How can we manage our time effectively? Why some people achieve so much in these 24 hours and some people are still struggling?

One of the answers which come to our mind: Successful people manage their time effectively!

Can we manage our time effectively? The answer is: of course!

I completed my chartered accountancy from PricewaterhouseCoopers. While working on audit, accounting and related assignments, a tough required of work, I was able to pass my exams for other three qualifications¹.

Later on, when I was teaching accountancy students, one of the most frequently asked question was: How did you do that?

This E-Book is an attempt to answer the question: How can we all better manage our time and achieve what we want to achieve.

We think of lots of ideas. Every creation in this world was an idea in some body's mind at one point in time. Some one thought about it and took action!

If you enjoy reading this E-book and want to read more on personality development, success, goal setting, motivation and inspiration, feel free to sign up on my website www.wisdomfrombooks.com and provide your feedback.

Best regards

Malik Mirza, ACA, FCCA, MBA

¹ You may know more about me by visiting: <http://wisdomfrombooks.com/about-me/>

1. DAA WAA MAA principle of time management

In one of the seminars, a participant remarked: “Time management is difficult”.

The trainer responded: “Time management is not difficult, it is impossible”

The Participant was shocked and requested the trainer to explain. The trainer said: It is not about managing time. It is about managing one self. The trainer informed participants about the DAA WAA MAA principle of time management. After applying the DAA WAA MAA principle, we can not only expect the better results but we can also use this as a tool for better organization in our life.

DAA stands for **‘Day Arranged in Advance’**

WAA stands for **‘Week Arranged in Advance’**

MAA stands for **‘Month Arranged in Advance’**

How can we arrange our days, weeks and months in advance? Here are a few tips and techniques:

1. **By visualizing and setting priorities in our life:** Every one can do more in less time by prioritizing our work. There are tools and techniques which everyone can use to set priorities. (Read about 7 steps for prioritization in Chapter 4)
2. **We must keep an eye on ‘time wasters’.** What are the key time wasters? Read about the ‘time wasters in Chapter 5)
3. **We can avoid a task, delay it, delegate it, dissect the work or do the work with delight.** There are 5 Ds which we can use for better time management. Read more from Chapter 6)
4. Remember: **Proper Prior Planning Prevents Poor Performance** i.e. 6 P principle (Read more about planning and ABCDE method of time management in Chapter 7)
5. Final thought: We should adopt **LAA principle**.

What does LAA stands for?

It stands for: **Life Arranged in Advance!**

2. The difference between the winners and failures

**“ Those heights achieved by great men reached and kept;
were not obtained by sudden flight;
but they, while their companion slept;
were toiling upward in night”**

Successful people have a **clear future orientation**. They think five, ten and twenty years out into the future. They analyze their choices and behaviors in the present to make sure that they are consistent with the long-term future that they desire.

Before starting on anything, you should always ask yourself, **“What are the potential consequences of doing or not doing this task?”**

The time is going to pass anyway. The only question is how we use our time and where are we going to end up at the end of the weeks and months. And where we end up is largely a matter of the amount of consideration we give to the likely consequences of our actions in the short term.

Dennis Waitley, the motivational speaker, says, **“Failures do what is tension relieving while winners do what is goal achieving.”**

For example, coming in to work earlier, reading regularly in our field of work, taking courses to improve our skills, and focusing on high value tasks in our work will all combine to have an enormous positive impact on our future.

On the other hand, coming in to work at the last moment, reading the newspaper, drinking coffee and socializing with our coworkers may seem fun and enjoyable in the short-term but it inevitably leads to lack of promotion, under achievement and frustration in the long-term.

Another important rule is that our productivity begins to decline after eight or nine hours of work. For this reason, working long hours into the night, although it is sometimes necessary, means that we are usually producing less and less in more and more time. The more tired we get, the worse is our work and the more mistakes we make.

The fact is that we have specific times during the day when we are at our best. We need to identify these times and discipline ourselves to use them on our most important and challenging tasks.

Most people are at their best in the mornings, after a good night's sleep. Some people are better in the afternoons. A few people are most creative and productive in the evenings or late at night.

Action points:

- Let's review our list of tasks, activities and projects regularly.
- Let's ask ourselves: "Which one project or activity, if I did it in an excellent and timely fashion, would have the greatest positive impact on my life?"
- Whatever it is that can help you the most, set it as a goal, make a plan to achieve it and go to work on your plan immediately. Remember the wonderful words of Goethe, "**Just begin and the mind grows heated; continue, and the task will be completed!**"

3. Seven (7) steps for setting priorities

We cannot do everything in 24 hours. We have certain priorities in life. Our family, our hobby, our studies, our professional education or any other aspect of the career development – we have to set priorities in life.

Here are seven steps to set priorities in life:

1. Decide exactly what we want.
2. Write it down.
3. Set a deadline on our goal.
4. List what we must do to achieve our goal.
5. Organize the list into a plan.
6. Take action on our plan immediately.
7. Resolve to do something every day that moves us towards your major goal.

There is a rule called 80/20 rule – It states that 20 percent of our activities product 80 percent of results – it might be that 10 percent of our activities may product 90 percent of results. Take some time and think about it. It seems little odd initially but when we start thinking, things become clear to us. What are a few activities which produce most of the results in our lives?

Three key questions which we can ask ourselves to prioritize our work include:

- What are my **highest value** activities?
- What can I and only I do that, if done well, **will make a real difference.**
- What is the **most valuable use of my time right now?**

4. Time wasters



Just ask someone: Do you have time?

Most common answer: I am too busy. Sorry I don't have time!

As mentioned earlier, everyone has 24 hours in a day. No one has a minute more or a minute less. However, look around: We will find some people achieve much more in same 24 hours. Why is it so? During our daily routine, we also set our priorities to complete XYZ tasks but at the end of the day, we find ourselves still working on our initial 'to do' list, though we had a very busy day!

Why at times we are very busy but we achieve very less? Are we 'wasting' our time without realizing it?

Here are seven big time wasters and a few tips on managing time effectively. Let's see if we are wasting time because of any one of them:

1. Telephone interruptions:

Is it really necessary to take all calls when a phone is ringing? Can we call the person back once we are done with the task on hand? In my view, it happens that once mobile phone rings, we talk and our attention diverts. The task on hand remains there while we enjoy our chat.

2. Inability to say 'No'

We find it really difficult to say NO at times. At times, we don't know how to refuse. However, we have a right to say NO and then suggest alternatives. If we have a list of

agreed upon priorities, we can show it to the person who is asking us to do some thing which demands more time.

3. Lack of self- discipline

Do we have our objectives in writing? Are we following our goals? **If we can set ‘key result areas’ and focus to achieve those areas, our efforts will pay off.** If we try to handle one task only once, we will have more time.

4. Management by crisis

If we don't ‘anticipate’ problems in advance, we will be managing by crisis. This is also called ‘fire fighting’ in management terms. It is said: Expect the unexpected and plan accordingly! If we try to plan for unexpected, we will be in a position to manage crisis fast and effectively. We can ignore the problems which can be ignored or we can delegate issues to others before we put our hands to them. It should be recognized that it is more important to prevent ‘new fires’ from developing.

5. Ineffective delegation

At times, we want to do ‘everything’ ourselves. At times, we feel more comfortable in ‘doing’ rather than ‘managing’. If we relax and avoid ‘perfectionism’ in everything we are doing, we can get lot of things done through other people.

6. Lots of paper work

Technology has made life easy. Is this true? or has technology made life difficult? We have lots of emails to respond to, lots of papers to be filed and lots of information to be taken care of. If we read an email or a paper only once, have a ‘do it now’ rather than ‘i will read this again’, much of the things can be done faster. If we organize our filing habit, we can find our papers fast.

7. Socializing

Thanks to face book, email, twitter and blogs, we have lots of time to socialize! Socializing and networking is a good habit but not at the cost of wasting time. If we plan to obtain information on a systematic basis and try to control our urge to log on to face book five or six times a day, we can focus on tasks on hand and do them better / faster.

5. Five (5) 'Ds' for better time management

1. Don't do it!

There is an option available to us: Not doing the task at all!

The first question which one should ask: What will happen if I don't do this task? What are the consequences of the task not getting done? Can I live with consequences? If yes, not doing it is one of the options.

2. Delay it

Ask the following questions: Due to time pressure, can the task at hand be delayed?

Can it be done later? What are consequences of delaying it? Would it be a matter of life and death? Is the task must do?

3. Delegate it

One of the ways to get things done is to 'delegate' it. This does not mean that tell someone to do a task and then forget about it. This means taking full responsibility of the work but telling someone else to do it for you. At the same time, you will monitor it and ensure that desired results are achieved.

4. Dissect it

Instead of doing all at once, dissect the task in smaller steps and get it done in pieces.

Remember: We can eat elephant but one bite at a time!

Anthony Robbins has used the word 'chuncking' for dissection. While learning to drive a car, the 'whole' is broken into 'parts' and each part is learnt as a separate task. In other words: Divide and rule i.e. divide and get it done.

5. Do it with delight

If all the above is not workable, than do the work with enjoyment. Any task which is done with smile is likely to be executed fast and with passion.

6. ABCDE method and 6 P formula for effective time management

I read somewhere: **“People say: Time pass away – Ah! No – Time stays, people pass away!”**

A great formula from the book is six P formula. What is it?

Proper Prior Planning Prevents Poor Performance.

To begin with, a person is required to ‘set the table’ first. How? Very simple acts to read but difficult to do:

1. Determine the ‘goals’ – What do I want to do?
2. Write the goals down – Pick a paper and pen and start writing
3. Dead line please – Someone defined a goal as “a dream with a dead line”; If there is no target date, it is difficult to track performance and ensure that the task really gets done.
4. Prepare a list of all tasks which are required to done to ensure that the goal is achieved
5. Act on plan immediately and keep on moving – **set some reward for yourself** once the task is accomplished.

One of the tools provided by Brian Tracy in this book is **‘ABCDE’** categorization of the work which we do i.e. all tasks which we perform on daily basis should be categorized as A, B, C, D or E.

A category task: These are the tasks considered as very important i.e. something that we must do. It is something that carries with it serious consequences (e.g. some task given by our Boss!).

B category task: The tasks that we should do but those have only mild consequences. **We should make it a habit to never do a “B” task when there is still an “A” task left undone.**

C category task: The tasks which are considered nice to do. Whether or not we do that task, there are no consequences at all. This sort of task has no effect at all on our work or personal life.

D category task: Tasks which can be delegated to someone else.

E category task: Tasks from which we can get rid of altogether and it will not make any real difference nor pose any serious effects.

Take time to think -

- Am I trying to do everything at the same time and as a result, not getting anything done?
- Do I have any priority list of my work?
- Am I doing with work which should not be done at all, something from E category?
- Am I doing some work which can be delegated, something from D category?

Conclusion and references

We can all manage ourselves to manage our time in an effective manner. Once we are determined to get something done, we can do it – believe it. It is said: If you think you can or you think you cannot, you are right!

Thousands of people read time management articles and ideas on a daily basis. Those who take the initiative of taking action and implement the time management tools are the ones who can enjoy their lives. I wish you good luck.

If you have enjoyed reading this small E-book, feel free to share the ideas with others, make copies, distribute it and provide your feedback by visiting <http://wisdomfrombooks.com> You may consider subscribing to my blog and read ideas related to personality development, motivation, inspiration and success.

You might have noticed that on the cover page, the clock's picture is upside down. It depends upon us whether we let it like this or we take first step after reading this small E-book to put the clock in correct form.

In this E-Book, ideas of Brain Tracy, Mr. Qaiser Abbas and Mr. A.L.Malani have been presented from their books: Eat that Frog, Tick Tick Dollar and Dare to win for which the author is duly thankful to them. You may visit their official websites to obtain more information.
