



# Management Perspective: The time of your life

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What's more important than time itself? After all, time is life. To waste your time is to waste away your life. Learning to make better use of your time requires forming new habits. It can be done. Here's how you can become more effective in managing your time.

What do you want out of your life? After all, it does belong to you. Many people wander aimlessly through life never deciding what they want to accomplish. They are the ones who say, "I wish I had," "If I'd only," and "Maybe I'll." Effective time management requires setting lifetime goals.

Make a list of your 10 lifetime goals. Be specific. For example, earn \$4,000 a month by next year, complete the marathon race in December, start a new business in five years. Pick out three of your most important goals and concentrate on these. The goals should be just out of reach, but not out of sight. Revise your lifetime goals periodically. Find out what you want. It's the way you begin controlling your time and, more importantly, your life.

Stop and think. Get a handle on the tasks needed to reach your goals. Take an hour out of each day to develop your plan of attack. Planning should be done on paper, not left up there bouncing around the gray matter. Prepare that wonderful time saver and motivator—a list. Adopt the ABC system of ranking the items by their importance. Accomplishing an A item will give you the energy to complete those less important B's and C's. Always, always do the most profitable A's first. You will also seek new A's for another list.

Remember the 80/20 rule. Eighty percent of the value comes from 20 percent of the items. Doing the two most important items on a list of 10 most likely yields the greatest value. Keep paper and pencil with you at all times to jot down new ideas and tasks as they come to mind. Plan your work and work your plan. The key is writing it down.

Every day we come into contact with situations which waste our time.

- **Paper** - Employ the ABC system on the in-box. Be aggressive and use the waste basket. Handle each piece of paper once. Arrange your office space so you know where everything is. Be selective in what you read. Put effort and dynamics into reading. Read for ideas. Learn and use the dictaphone. Dictating letters and memos can be a tremendous time saver.

- **People** - Learn to say no. Delegate work to subordinates. Use your secretary. Keep small talk to a minimum. Shut your door. Set deadlines for yourself and subordinates. Making mistakes is part of learning. Tell subordinates to break the bad news early. Socialize during the lunch hour, not on the job

- **Telephone** - Get the purpose of the call established early on in the conversation.

Have your secretary screen your calls. Set aside a part of the day to return phone messages. For business calls at home, use an answering machine.

- **Meetings** - Determine the purpose for the meeting. Send out an agenda ahead of time and follow the agenda during the meeting. Set a time limit. Have someone take minutes. Sum up the points discussed at the end of the meeting. Delegate responsibilities before the meeting adjourns, and if needed, determine the time and place for a follow-up meeting.

- **Other tips** - Allow time for the unexpected. Concentrate on one thing at a time. Use commuting and waiting time for planning. Limit TV. Teach others your time management methods. Set aside time to do nothing. Relax, give yourself a break (after all the above, you need one!).

Applying these timesaving techniques will actually bring more freedom into your life. Treat time like money become a saver, not a spender. Ask yourself, "What is the best use of my time right now?"

