

Time management assignment

[Business](#), [Management](#)



There never seems to be enough of it. Most managers experience time management problems that are exacerbated by an increasingly fast pace of life (Heaven, 2010). Throughout my career, I have always believed that next to personnel, time is the most precious resource. While I consider myself a mostly organized non-procrastinator who tends to prioritize tasks, I know that I am not unlike most managers and leaders who struggle with time management.

Therefore, it came as little surprise to me that upon receiving dieback from the beginning of the semester class survey that the results revealed my lowest ratings were in the area of time management. My challenges with time management were once again exposed as a result of the Use-of-Time Diary assignment. Although the assignment only tracked three full business days (Jan 23-25) for a total of 72 hours, it indicated that my time was not used productively. This was further underscored by a general feeling of a lack of accomplishment at the end of each work day.

In order to achieve greater granularity of the issues surrounding my time management struggle, I cited to extend my use of the time diary assignment for ;'0 additional work weeks Non 28 -? Feb. 8). At the end of the two week period, I analyzed the time diary in order to identify those areas that presented the greatest challenges in terms of time management. An analysis of the diary easily indicated that meetings overwhelmingly absorbed most of my time. The diary established that on average nearly 40% of my work days were spent in meetings of which over 80% required my attendance.

Furthermore, using the assignment's 4 point productivity scale ranging from 4 being most productive to 1 being least productive, the meetings averaged a low score of 2.1 points in terms of productivity. More alarming were the notes that I had compiled summarizing the lack of effectiveness of each meeting. Generally speaking, most comments revealed that at the time immediately following the meeting I felt frustrated, confused about the purpose of the meeting and mystified by the results or lack of results.

I seemed to be suffering from the same symptoms described in an August Track Via survey where 37% of the respondents said at least half the time spent in meetings was wasted (Whisper, pond further analysis, I identified four major problems that were 2013). Causing our meetings to be unproductive. First, many of our meetings did not necessarily support the goals or objectives of our organization. In essence, we were putting our effort and energy into meetings that were not important to the success of our organization. Second, our meetings lacked organization and structure.

The lack of an established agenda with meeting objectives caused the subject of our meetings to wander and to waste inordinate amounts of time. Third, many of the meetings in our organization did not include the correct participants. As a result, we found ourselves having to reschedule a meeting to accomplish something that could have been achieved had the correct participants been invited. Finally, we failed to conduct follow ups. Because we failed to follow up with action items discussed at meetings we had a tendency to revisit the same topics time and time again in successive meetings.

Having identified what I believed to be the greatest contributors to the ineffectiveness of our meetings and loss of productive time, I implemented several measures over the following two weeks (11 - 22 Feb.) in an effort to correct the problems. With the concurrence of my supervisor, the first measure I implemented eliminated any meeting that I felt did not directly or indirectly support the goals and objectives of our organization. In doing so, we were able to eliminate several meetings over the two week period.

When conducting calendar reviews, we decided which meetings to eliminate by making an assessment of which meetings supported our organization's strategic objectives. In order to address the lack of organization and structure, senior management issued a directive that all meetings would have a set agenda with defined meeting objectives. In doing so, those responsible for holding meetings were forced to think through the outcomes that they wanted to achieve. The advanced preparation allowed the participants to come to meetings prepared to contribute.

Over the two week trial period, an established agenda enabled the meetings to stay focused and shortened the average length of our meetings. In addition to adding structure to our meetings, we scrutinized who we required to participate at each meeting. By scrutinizing invited attendees, our organization made great effort in ensuring that we had the right personnel at the right meetings. Not only did our efforts include getting the right personnel to meetings, but it also eliminated several managers from meetings where their presence was neither required nor made the best use of their time.

In an effort to improve meeting follow up, the meeting facilitator documented all assigned or unassigned action items. These action items were included in the post-meeting notes or summaries that the meeting facilitator emailed to attendees following a meeting. These action items were also included as review items on the agendas of any subsequent related meetings. All indications were that use of these follow up measures assisted us in reducing the number of meetings that duplicated topics from previously held meetings.

While these four corrective measures were described in simplistic terms, they are in no way meant to imply that an implementation of better practices over a two week period will correct the poor practices that took many years to develop. However, over the two week period that we implemented these practices, we saw a reduction in the number and duration of meetings. The results over this short implementation period indicate enough improvement to convince us that these changes will become increasingly effective in the long term.

Through senior management emphasis of meeting relevance, meeting preparation, and detailed follow-up our organization is well on its way to inculcating a cultural change that will improve time management and increase the effectiveness of the largest consumer of time in our daily work day.