

Time management 10320



Effective time management is one of the most important factors for succeeding in college and despite my success in high school and Air Force training I had a lot of problems with it. Some of you might not think that time management is important. I was one of those some, when I first began my degree in Paralegal Studies at a university in Florida.

Here is what I knew from high school and the Air Force: all I have to do is go there, sit there until the classes ended, and then go home and do whatever I wanted. I managed to do all of my homework between classes and nothing was left for home. To get a 95 on the test, all I had to do was sit in the class and listen to the teacher. I quickly learned that in college it wouldn't work the way that it had worked in high school and in the Air Force. I needed to make some changes and develop a system to succeed at my new challenges.

The most frustrating thing for me in college was the way that my schedule would be arranged and the time constraints it created. For example, when I had to manage the combination of college and military duty from 8 in the morning, until 9 in the evening, without a break during the day, there was no time left for my family and friends. Additionally, if I planned on doing my homework at home in the evening, then most of it probably wouldn't get done. Now that's where learning effective time management became an integral part of my life.

The first principle that I learned is that I needed to set goals, which I would have to accomplish by the end of the day. I would see when I had free time,

and try to separate my tasks into smaller tasks and fit them into the remaining available time that I had.

I know it sounds easy, but believe me it's not. I have learned that effective time management takes some practice. The first step that I took was to get a piece of paper, and record all of my daily activities for a couple of days. By doing so, I was surprised at the results. The most surprising thing that I learned was the amount of time that I wasted on the unimportant tasks, interruptions, distractions and other trivia. When I thought I was studying for one hour for my business law test, I found out, that in fact I was only studying for half of that time.

I discovered that it was critical that I know exactly what I was doing. For example, if I had a huge assignment to finish for school that was due the next day but I was working on a project for work that was not due until the end of the month, I was probably confused on how to manage my time. Of course if I was using the rationale that I was going to get paid a million dollars for my work project then I may have made the right decision. But since I probably wouldn't, it was apparent to me that I had created a time problem and I would not have ample time to complete my school assignment.

Getting the right amount of sleep is also an important factor of effective time management. For example, if after I finished my work project and then stayed up all night to finish my school assignment, I would probably fall asleep in my class the next day or I would be unable to work to my full potential. I thought I was invincible and I would drink Mountain Dew since it

contains more caffeine than any other drink or I would chew gum when I was falling asleep since any kind of movement would help me stay awake.

This experience revealed that if I tried to manage my time without accounting for sleep, my plan was not viable for long-term time management. I came to the conclusion that proper rest was essential to my time management plan but I still needed to be flexible. I realized that in the future there would be unavoidable circumstances when I was faced with pressing problems, crisis or several deadline driven projects at the same time. I would have to sacrifice some sleep as a result of those situations, but if I utilized effective time management as a form of prevention and with planning my sacrifice and the impact would usually be minimal.

To effectively manage my time I identified the most important tasks and set a well-defined goal. It was important that I have an understanding of individual responsibilities, relationships and priorities. I would prioritize my day, or a "time waster" could steal the day away from me before I realized what had happened. I find it useful to give my tasks for the day some priority rating, and then follow it during the day. I would do the hardest or the most uninteresting tasks first. I was uncomfortable for a short time from having made these changes, but all I had to do was think about all of the time that I would regain into my day and it was worth it.

Now comes the good part from time management. I would get to reward myself. I would always reward myself for even completing the smallest task. When I complete the tasks that I have set, I do something that I enjoy and have fun. This way I continue to be motivated to do the things that I need to

accomplish. I also feel that it is a good idea to leave a couple of hours unplanned during the day. This helped me to deal with distractions, interruptions, and other upcoming events.

Through my experience I have learned the importance of using effective time management as a tool to create a pattern in my life that balances appropriate direction and control. I have also learned to balance excellence in work and college with excellence in play, fun and relaxation. This has made my life happier, healthier and a great deal more creative.

Bibliography

No bibliography

Word Count: 1033