



## **July 2009 - Leadership Letter (40)**

### **GETTING THE MOST OUT OF YOUR TIME!**

**Hello again ...**

It seems we all have problems with "enough time" these days (some folks who've been laid off for lack of work may be an exception). But, for those still at work, there's more to do than ever before!

Last winter I had the pleasure of leading a class of grad students at the University of Cincinnati, mostly in the College of Engineering, as they explored the course topic "Management of Professionals."

They were a lively, earnest, hard-working group. Many will go back to their home countries (India, Egypt, Sudan, China, Germany) to contribute there, based on their education and motivations.

Part of the class work was an independent project on a management topic of value to all and of interest to them. **ALL** were quite good and contributed to the class. Not surprisingly, several related to "starting a business."

It occurred to me that several of their projects would be of interest to **all** leaders, young and old, at any level and in any kind of business, agency or pursuit.

Following is the first of those ...

#### **TIME MANAGEMENT, by Aleef Hassan**

Used with his permission; hope you enjoy it and find the good insights and helps that I did!

Best regards,

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# TIME MANAGEMENT

**Aleef Hassan**

“Don’t be fooled by the calendar. There are only as many days in the year as you make use of. One man gets only a week’s value out of a year while another man gets a full year’s value out of a week.”

*Charles Richards*

To work effectively, you really have to manage your time. We all have our moments when we wonder what happened to the day and we seem to get nothing done, but in a business, time is money and every hour you spend at work costs your employer a lot of money.

Good time management involves getting a balance in all important aspects of life, like study, leisure, part-time work and relationships.

## **Parkinson’s Law**

“Work expands so as to fill the time available for its completion.”

*Cyril Parkinson, 1957*

## **Pareto Analysis** (also known as the 80-20 rule)

80% of tasks can be completed in 20% of the disposable time, and 20% of tasks will take up 80% of the time. If we focus on the 20% of tasks that really contribute to the end product, we can get things done a lot more effectively.

## **Poor Time Management**

Poor time management is usually shown by:

- Getting less done than you expected.
- An inability to meet deadlines set by your line manager.
- Spending much longer on some part of the job and then having insufficient time to do the rest of the job.

## **Time Wasting Culprits**

Poor Planning, Procrastination, Waiting/Delays, Paperwork, Junk Mail, Drop-In Visitors, Not Setting/Sticking to Priorities.

## **Procrastination**

Procrastination is a behavior which is characterized by deferment of actions or tasks to a later time.

## Reasons for procrastination:

Unpleasant task, thinking that one is not good at the task, thinking that one doesn't know how to do it, task seems too big, no clear deadline or the deadline is far off, too tired or panicking.

## Reducing Procrastination

- Recognize you are procrastinating - review often.
- Identify why you aren't enthusiastic.
- Break tasks into small chunks.
- Set deadlines.
- Do the easy tasks first (Swiss Cheese technique), or
- Do the hard tasks first (both help motivation).

## Understanding Time



## Prioritizing

It is very important to prioritize all the tasks; one method to prioritize is ABC method:

- A - those jobs it is critical to do today
- B - those jobs which would be good to do today
- C - those which will wait

At the end of the day review and reschedule those jobs you have not done.

## Time Management

It can be divided into 4 generations:

- First generation: reminders (based on clocks and watches).
- Second generation: planning and preparation (based on calendar and appointment books), includes setting goals.
- Third generation: planning, prioritizing, controlling (using computer- or PDA-based systems) activities on a daily basis.
- Fourth generation: being efficient and proactive, places goals and roles as the controlling element of the system, favors importance over urgency.

## Time Management Tips

- Break things down into small steps.
- Do the ugliest thing first.
- Complete a “to do” list at the end of each day.
- Consolidate similar tasks.
- Try to prioritise your tasks.
- Make sure you do the most difficult tasks in your prime time.
- Try to avoid being interrupted.
- Learn to say “No.”
- Do “smart work” rather than “hard work.”
- Learn to use idle time.
- Don't spend time in regret - look forward and get motivated.
- When panicking, prioritize and do one job at a time.
- Ask yourself frequently, “Is this the best use of my time now?”
- Ask for help.
- Make decisions.

“Don't say you don't have enough time. You have exactly the same number of hours per day that were given to Helen Keller, Pasteur, Michelangelo, Mother Teresa, Leonardo da Vinci, Thomas Jefferson, and Albert Einstein.”

*H. Jackson Brown*

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***Summary by Aleef Hassan, Graduate Student, University of Cincinnati  
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