

Effective Time Management in Organization Panacea or Placebo

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Abstract: The need to help staff get organized thereby reducing stress, freeing up time to do other activities and improving work performance and productivity has been more vigorously stressed in the recent times than in the past. This study examines a practical guide on how to manage your schedule, staff and your life. Basic rules of organizing, planning are explore strategies, techniques and learning to use this process will help the organization control its financial future and improve productivity. It offers suggestions on how to develop effective work habits and manage yourself effectively with respect to time.

Key words: Management, organization, productivity, financial future, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Definition of time: A period of time considered as resources under your control and sufficient to accomplish something.

- This is the period during which actions or processes take place- Webster's Collins dictionary calls time as a system or measuring duration.
- A scarce resources which must be properly managed otherwise nothing can be managed (Heather, 2005).
- The continuum of experience in which events pass from the future through the present to the pass (Anand, 2007).

The supply of time is very limited, while the demand for it is limitless. Time lost is lost forever. Time is life. To waste your time is to waste your life. To a typical European, time is money, it must be respected. To a Nigerian time is a snail. It must crawl and wait for him and no event should take place until after two or three hours of advertised take off time.

CONCEPT OF TIME MANAGEMENT

Time is an essential resource; it is irrecoverable, Limited and dynamic. Irrecoverable because every minute spent is gone forever, limited because only 24 h exist in a day and dynamic because it's never static. It keeps on moving and does not wait for any body. According to North (2004), Time management is the organization of tasks or events by first estimating how much time a task will take to be completed, when it must be completed and then adjusting events that would interfere with its

completion so that completion is reached in the appropriate amount of time.

Time Management is not about getting more things done in a day. It is about getting the things that matter most done. Time management is the ability to decide what is important in life both at work, at home and even in our personal live. In essence, you are the one in control of your life; you are the driver of your car.

EFFECTIVE PERSONAL TIME SURVEY

To begin managing your time you first need a clearer idea of how you now use your Time. The personal time survey will help you to estimate how much time you currently spent in a given task. To get a more accurate estimate, you might keep track of how you spent your time for a week. This will help you get a better idea of how much time you need to prepare for each subject. It will also help you identify your time wasters. But for now, complete the personal time survey to get an estimate. When deciding if effective time is Management important, consider why you should manage your time. The old adage says "all work and no play make Johnny a dull boy" is absolutely true. Practicing time management at your job is not merely to get more work squeezed into an eight hour day, but mostly so that you have time for the important things in life.

ATTRIBUTES OF TIME

- It is a unique resource.
- Time is most scarce resource in the universe.
- Time cannot be replaced like man.
- Time cannot be accumulated like money.

- Time cannot be turned on and off like Machine.
- Time cannot be stock piled like raw materials.
- Time passes at a pre-determined rate whatever happens.
- Everybody is equally endowed with the same amount of it irrespective of his position.
- Time like any other scarce resource must be managed and used judiciously.

WAYS IN WHICH MANAGER'S SPENT THEIR TIME

Routine work: This involves the writing of memos, letter, phone calls, record checking and library research.

Regular duties: Assigning duties to subordinates, meetings, briefings, counseling subordinate. Ad-hoc duties out- of- station duties, seminars, conferences and courses

Creative work: Developing new ideas, improving on existing standards of performance.

Non- productive work: Attending to personal visitors, reading Newspaper, Magazines, making personal phone calls and etc.

STEPS ON HOW YOU CAN MANAGE YOUR TIME

Try to divide your workload into 3 categories:

- Essential tasks.
- Important tasks.
- Low Value tasks.

You can decide which tasks fall into these categories by asking:

- Which tasks are most valuable to the organization?
- Which tasks does my manager consider most important?
- If I cannot complete all the tasks which should I complete?

Use the following guidelines to ascertain how well you manage your time:

- Make a list of your responsibilities and the time they should receive.
- Look at how you spend an average day, are you devoting enough time to high priority tasks
- Change your schedule so that high priority tasks receive the appropriate time and attention.
- Periodically repeat this process to ensure effective time management.

ASSESSING YOUR TIME MANAGEMENT

It is important to determine the success of your time management. This will allow you to make the necessary changes to the way you use your time to do this:

- Make a daily list of the tasks you wish to achieve.
- At the end of each day review this list as you reach your goals?
- Use this information to make any changes that may be required
- Get feed back on your time management from other employees.

BUDGET TIME EFFORT

Budgeting is an art of prudent allocation of resources to meet demands. It could be yearly or on monthly basis.

Just as we budget other resources that we have identified to be limited in supply, so also the need to budget time can never be over emphasized. Preparation for week's programmed should normally commence towards the end of the proceeding week.

In the same manner, tomorrow time budge must be planned by the end of today's activities.

The following steps can therefore be taken in time budgeting:

- Identity and list jobs that have to be done in group and type.
- Determine the order in which they are to be done.
- Allocate the time available to the jobs which are to be done.
- Identity those extraneous factors that can inhibit or delay the jobs.
- Provide alterative course of action to counter the delay.
- Establish checking routines.

At the start of each day, there will be certain problems which we might know about and which require our attention; others will arise during the course of the day. We must therefore budget time for the known and for the unexpected problems.

It might be argued that some workers can not fore see emergencies so they can not reserve a precise amount of time for them. A school of thought has recommended a way out by making a day's plan to be flexible. It is always dangerous to have a rigid programme of work.

To control your time, you need a very clear understanding of your priorities, not only for your life. This required constant planning, review and revision. Take time every day to determine what tomorrow's priorities are. Frequently and regularly review your goal;

make sure that what you do forwards them. Do the same things with your life determine what is important and make sure that you spend time forwarding those things, focus, have goals, have a plan and time management will be easier, because you will have some basis for the decisions and choices you will have to make.

PRINCIPLES FOR EFFECTIVE TIME MANAGEMENT

Planning: This involves the formulation of goals and the definition of practical ways or steps to be taken to achieving same. If you fail to plan you have plan to fail. If you are committed to bridging the gap between your potential and your performance, better time management should become your lifestyle choice. There are 3 types of plans namely;

- Strategic plan.
- Intermediate plan.
- Short term plans.

Guidelines for planning:

- Be specific about goals.
- Make goals that are attainable.
- Set quantity and time targets for same.
- Mind the association you keep. Do not relate with dream killers.
- Start little and with what you have.
- Be sincere.
- Do not isolate yourself.
- Be flexible.
- Move plans to appraise your results.

Organization: Organization means putting all resources you have into plain to achieve personal goal. Listed below are principles for personal organization at work.

- Setting your priorities.
- Time targets are set for priorities.
- Allow time space for the unexpected.
- Do not embark on more than one project at a time.
- Be a productive thinker.
- Separate duties properly.
- Work according to your temperament.
- Do not develop impossible systems.
- Allow time for idle minute between meetings and major jobs.
- Focus on results not in activity.

Responsibility: The essence of modern management borders on responsibility and accountability. It is common to find people passing the buck for every iota of failure or irregularity.

Winston Churchill said “The Price of greatness is responsibility. The steps towards responsibility are:

- Being responsible for who you are.
- Being responsible for what you can do.
- Being responsible for what you have received.
- Being responsible to those that you lead.

Accountability and integrity: It is one thing to have a goal or dream; it is another thing to achieve that same goal. At the end of a specific periods. It is important for every responsible person to take stock of actual results of his/her actions and compare same with plans

ESTABLISHING TIME WASTERS

There are established habits and activities that affect the effective utilization of time. Some of them are listed:

- Visitors.
- Unnecessary paper work.
- Procrastination.
- Ineffective delegation.
- Unnecessary meetings.
- Gossip.
- Indiscipline.
- Duplications of tasks.
- Incompetent staff.
- Problem of industrial crises.
- Energy.
- Handling more than one tasks/project.
- Wrong decisions.
- Unproductive time of telephone.
- Petty tasks.

Visitors: Unnecessary visits by outsiders e.g. friends and relations are a common reason for ineffective time utilization of many people. Many people do not have the discipline or courage to stop unnecessary visits. The resultant effect of this apparent weakness is doing a job that should not take more than 30 min in 4 h.

Paper work: Work delayed is work denied. Accumulating papers on the table may bring unnecessary bottle necks which can arise as a result of:

- Not being able to retrieve important ones on time when the need arise.
- Forgetting to take action when necessary.
- Non-separation of relevant papers from relatively less important ones.

Procastination: It is important to handle problem as they arise. The non-attention to the problems at the appropriate time can lead to lack of credibility in the eyes of other people.

Gossip: Do not encourage gossip. Do not say what you cannot say in front of the affected people.

Indicipline: Unproductively is the resultant effect of an undisciplined life. Good organization, obedience to rules and focus on goals are the ingredients of success, indiscipline can cause disruption to work and lead to loss of productive hours.

Telephone calls: Unrestricted attention to telephone calls can lead to loss of productive hours. It is common to find executives attending to all calls and spending endless hours discussing irrelevant unofficial things. Many executive have all telephone calls screened. It is only those that are absolutely important that the telephonists refer to them.

Ineffective delegation: Delegation of tasks requires some planning and monitoring to be adequately successful. A manager in an organization must take the following guidelines into consideration.

- Provide necessary authority, resources and support.
- Delegate for results, let your staff handles projects in their own way. You are after result, not process.
- Make sure a particular staff is not over-loaded with too many tasks.
- Handles important tasks yourself.
- Review progress and follow-up.

Non-recognition of the above principle can lead to unnecessary time wastage.

Unnecessary meetings: Meetings can be huge time-wasters if you do not plan them carefully. First, decide if you really need to hold a meeting? If there is a decision to be made, can you make it yourself? If a meeting is necessary, limit the attendance to only those who really need to participate. Also, try not to allow colleagues to distract your attention with trivial issues.

Distraction: Poorly organized people always at the mercy of distraction both internally and externally. Learn to organize yourself and your office in such a way that important papers are not misplaced. Have control over yourself and be decisive whenever it comes to decision making.

Confused responsibility: Some managers lack focus and desire to be involved in very detailed activity in the organization. This is caused by lack of objectivity with clear priorities of tasks. Manager should recognize what is essential and what is not and learn to know responsibilities, decide priorities and have time for everything.

CONCLUSION

Effective time management is a panacea to organizational effectiveness and not a placebo. Effective time management will improve staff productivity, make scheduling of jobs easier, make staff to perform tasks at their highest skill level, help staff to prioritize and accomplish important task, record and guide the organization towards achieving set goals.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Every effective person must treat time very carefully, because nothing affects the bottom-line of an organization more than the time effectiveness of its people. Few executives do nothing serious about it.

If you want to create a time-conscious organization becomes more time efficient and that the organization itself streamlines its process.

The benefits you reap in future depend on what you do with your time now. The basic element of time is event. And key to effective time management is event control. This is to say that you can not control your time, but you can control what you do with time. Do not assume that the people of your organization know how to manage time just because you do always emphasizing the importance of good time management in your comments at regular meetings.

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