

# Time Management

## Background

Scheduling and managing time wisely are important for the student organization leader. If you miss important appointments and deadlines you will cause complications both to your organization and to your academic and personal life. This causes anxiety, frustration, guilt, and other nasty feelings.

## Purpose

### What is Time Management?

- It is a process of **prioritizing**, constantly asking what is more important, and arranging priorities to reflect each choice.
- It is knowing:
  - **Yourself:** Your habits, goals, and time during the day when you're most alert and productive.
  - **A system:** For helping you meet your goals
  - **Practical tips:** For using your time effectively
  - **How to succeed:** When facing stumbling blocks or procrastination

*Time management really means managing yourself!*

## Time Management Tips

- Only 20-25 percent of a student's time is controllable, and the average student is interrupted every 10 to 15 minutes. This fact suggests the need to **minimize interruptions** but also to plan them into your day.
- An effective way to isolate and manage the interruptions and any unexpected items is to use a priority system. On your **daily to-do list**, mark the important and essential things to be done today with A, the secondary items with B, and the marginal items with C.
- **Delegate**
  - Determine who and why
  - Determine what and when
  - Check for understanding and acceptance
  - Have interim status checks
  - Recognize and reward
- **Paperwork:** Handle materials *once*. Choose one of the four D's: dump it, do it, delegate it or delay/defer it.
- **Reading materials:** Scan the index and tear out articles of interest. If you keep a reading pile, schedule a time to read the materials; otherwise, throw them away immediately.
- **Personal organization:** Write your to do list at the end of the day. It gives you the chance to review what you have accomplished, to look at it fresh in the morning, and to keep you on track for the day. Block out your prime time for the A items.
- **Studying:** Don't make your schedule overly vague. Don't delay your planning. Be prepared for assignments. Be flexible, monitor, and adjust!

- **Writing:** Once the outline is done, 70 percent of your work is completed. Word processing is wonderful for putting in the outline and simply filling in the details.

## **The Most Important Hindrance to Time Management Procrastination!!!**

### **Procrastination = Negative Delay**

Tedious, difficult, or uninteresting tasks are usually those that we put off doing. Yet, it is these tasks that are essential to success in college. Procrastination slows achievement of current goals, and restricts future opportunity as time is clogged up. The time spent before the job is not properly tackled and is usually wasted. Procrastination can come about in a number of ways:

#### **Paralysis by planning**

Here the planning process is drawn out to avoid confronting an issue. Plans are argued and polished and perfected, but implementation of the plans is delayed unnecessarily.

#### **Perfectionism**

Often tasks are fussed over long after they have been achieved to quite a sufficient level. This often serves to delay tackling other problems. Often perfectionism simply is not required, and is not cost effective to achieve.

#### **Boredom**

Boring jobs are very easy to delay for spurious reasons. Here self-discipline is needed.

#### **Hostility**

Where you are hostile to the task, or the person giving the task, there is a strong temptation to delay.

#### **The Deadline High**

Coming up against a tight deadline and meeting is immediately satisfying. It can be associated with strong rushes of adrenaline. The problems with this are that you may find that jobs are being delayed precisely to get this rush of adrenaline, and that occasionally jobs may fail because they are begun too late. The way to tackle procrastination is to set deadlines by which goals should be achieved. The way to avoid Deadline High procrastination is to set intermediary goals which must be achieved.

#### **Positive Delay**

Occasionally delay can be positive and useful. When you are tired, upset, or angry it can often be best not to tackle jobs that require sensitivity and clarity of thought. If you do not have the information or skills to do a job properly, it may be best to delay until you have acquired them. It is okay to delay if there is something more important to do than the job being delayed.

Delay can also be useful in a situation where you feel threatened or are unhappy about the course of action needed to meet a crisis. By delaying in these cases you give time for more information to come to light to guide the choice, may see a different perspective that changes your view of the circumstances. Alternatively, random occurrences may give you a useful advantage, or may reduce the severity of a problem. These positive aspects of delay must not, however, be used as an excuse to avoid action that is obviously essential.

### So how do we get out of the habit?

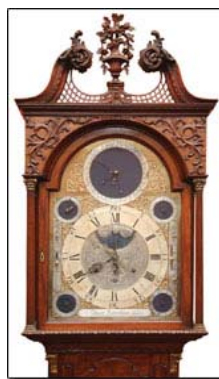
- Set acceptable standards, but avoid perfectionism
- Schedule the difficult, the important, and the unpleasant tasks first
- Set deadlines. "Go public" by announcing them.
- Handle a task just once. When you pick it up, dispose of it.
- Reward yourself after the job is finished!

### Now What?

- Procrastinate procrastination!
- Plan for the unexpected.
- Learn to say NO!!
- Once you have found the extra time, enjoy it! Avoid over scheduling.

## Time Management Tips

*Written by Day-Timer, Solutions for Success*



1. List everything that you need to do today - then number each item in order of priority.
2. Distinguish between "urgent" and "important" items - and make time for the latter.

3. Don't just dream your goals - plan them. Write down the steps to each goal, and get started on step 1.
4. Make a quick decision on each piece of paper that crosses your desk: act on it, file it, or toss it. Prevent paper pile-ups!
5. Set a starting time as well as a deadline for all your projects.
6. Treat a big project like a pie: cut it up into slices!
7. Take 10 minutes a day to plan your day, and save up to an hour in execution!
8. When you're swamped with work, don't be afraid to say "no" to new projects.
9. If you run out of steam on one project, switch to another. A great revitalizer!
10. Trim the fat from your schedule: cut out low-payoff activities.