

Delivering Time Management for IT Professionals: A Trainer's Manual



Dr. Jan Yager

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Delivering Time Management for IT Professionals: A Trainer's Manual

**Tools, methods, and strategies for delivering effective time management
training**

Dr. Jan Yager

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Delivering Time Management for IT Professionals: A Trainer's Manual

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For more on Dr. Yager, or to read her blogs or excerpts from some of her writings, go to: <http://www.drjanyager.com>

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> Preface

How many employees or freelancers are telling you that they're dealing with one or more of these situations?

- Working every minute of every day but still not getting enough done.
- Answering e-mails at night and on weekends when they'd rather be relaxing or interacting with their family and friends.
- Sitting in front of a computer screen for 8, 10 hours a day without any breaks, even for lunch.
- Agreeing to an unrealistic deadline for a major, complex project and then scrambling to make that deadline even if it means going with little or no sleep for days at a time. Or having to reluctantly admit to needing more time and missing the original deadline by days, weeks, months, or even years.

The time management workshop you will be offering to your employees or freelancers will help them with these and numerous other time management-related challenges.

I've been studying time management since the early 1980s, when I researched and wrote my first book on this topic, published by Prentice-Hall under the title *Creative Time Management*. I conducted my first time management workshop through Sacred Heart University in Fairfield County, Connecticut, in 1984, and I've continued my research, speaking, coaching, and writing about time management ever since. (My other books on time management include: *Put More Time on Your Side: How to Manage Your Life in a Digital World*, *Work Less, Do More: The 14-Day Productivity Makeover*, *365 Daily Affirmations for Time Management*, and *Creative Time Management for a New Millennium*.)

But this new book on time management, *Workshop in a Box Time Management for IT Developers*, is unique in two very fundamental ways:

1. It's a training manual, written for you, the trainer, to use as you conduct a workshop on time management for your staff.
2. It is specifically geared to those in the IT—information technology—field.

The fact that this training manual on time management is geared to IT professionals is significant. That's what sets this book apart from other time management books, including my own previous ones.

In order to write this new book, I of course relied on all the previous in-person and phone interviews, surveys, and observations that I have done over the years. But since I am not an IT professional myself, although I was a fulltime assistant professor for two years at a technology college, the New York Institute of Technology, to learn more about the time management concerns of IT professionals, I did interviews with a diverse group of men and women that I found by getting the word out that I was researching this new book, including using a free research tool known as HARO (Helpareporter.com). I heard back from men and women throughout the U.S. and as far away as India, the UK, France, and Singapore, working in various areas of IT, from project managers, CEOs, and SEO experts to software or website developers, programmers, and cyber security specialists, who wanted to share by e-mail, phone, or in-person. In addition to those respondents, I reached out to my LinkedIn network, which includes dozens of IT professionals around the world, as well as contacting those in the IT field whose blogs or books I discovered in researching this new book.

Secondly, this book is specifically written for you, the trainer. It is your manual. You are the reader of this manual, not those in your training program, although you will be photocopying or e-mailing materials from the manual for your attendees to fill in or print out and complete. But this is your guide and it is written with that focus in mind.

Who are the IT workers that you will be training? Of course only you know the answer to that question. There will be as many answers, and different workshop configurations or attendees, as there are trainers who are reading and using this manual. But, in general, this manual has been put together with the idea that you, the trainer, might be offering this time management training to anyone who has something to do with the storage, retrieval, manipulation, or transmission of information or data including:

- Computer programmers
- System administrators (SA)
- Help desk personnel
- Operators
- Network administrators
- Software development (software designers)
- Software applications developers
- Website designers
- SEO (Search engine optimization)
- Database managers
- Cyber security/Data protection
- Sales people
- IT company entrepreneurs or CEOs
- IT educators
- Project managers
- Teachers of IT
- E-commerce workers

-
- Managers of IT professionals
 - Application (app) developers
 - Print-to-e-book converters

Goals for this manual

Here are my goals for you for this manual:

1. In this Preface, to provide you with an overview about what you will be teaching your attendees about time management by summarizing what each of the chapters of this training manual cover, with each chapter tied to another recommended training module.
2. In the Introduction that follows, to make available a summary about training as well as some specific materials, such as four popular ice breakers to choose from, that will enable you to jump start your time management workshop teaching.
3. In Chapters 1 through 11, to offer you information about time management and how to improve productivity that will enable you to teach the topic covered in each chapter to your employees/workshop attendees with the focus specifically on IT professionals.
4. To give you worksheets that you can use in your workshop.
5. To offer exercises that you can ask your workshop attendees to carry out to reinforce or extend what they are learning in the workshop.
6. To conclude each module with a bibliography that relates to that topic or chapter, associated resources, activities, and a summary that highlights the key ideas that module covered.
7. To offer self-assessments that your attendees can complete before and immediately after the training, and one month later, to track where they are before the training, the instantaneous benefits of their participation in your workshop, and to discover what they believe they have retained at least one month later.

Wasted time and getting more done

For each person attending your workshop, and even for you, there may be another application of what time management improvements will make this focus on improved productivity worthwhile. But as I point out in my book, *Put More Time on Your Side*, here are the fundamental goals of better time management:

1. Making productive use of each and every moment at work, whether that's working on a project or even taking a break, for a few moments or for lunch, which is still a worthwhile use of your time and not a frivolous distraction.

2. Figuring out what is the "right" thing to be doing in the first place so someone will set the correct goal and then meet or exceed that goal by making achieving that goal his/her priority.

The good news is that time management is a skill that can be taught. This training manual will provide you with all the necessary information, worksheets, and other tools that you need to train IT professionals who take your workshop to take better control of how they manage their time including how they go about everyday tasks as well as complex projects. A more productive worker usually means that projects get done in a more efficient way which usually means a more successful company. Since one of the definitions of better time management is a balanced life, those who manage their time well are also usually happier and less stressed.

Your role as a time management trainer

This training manual is based on a One-Day all day, 8:30 to 5 PM, training program. Each of the eleven chapters are included in the one-day training, detailed in the *Appendix* where you will find an agenda that starts at 8:30 a.m., with registration and networking, and ending at 5 PM with a Q&A (question and answer); review; handouts; and the completion of a training evaluation.

You will also find an alternative two-day, half-day agenda in the *Appendix*, for those who prefer to break up the training into two days, whether those two days are done consecutively or a week apart.

A third possible approach to covering the key information in this training manual is the 10-week course agenda, which you will also find the *Appendix*. This approach will have you covering one chapter in one 45-minute, one-hour, 1-1/2 hour, or 2 hour session per chapter a week. (*Chapter 11, Closing the Training*, is the conclusion, is also covered in the 10th week.) A 4th 90-minute shortened agenda is in the *Appendix* and a 5th 2-day all-day agenda.

Although the training manual is written with the basic assumption behind this training that you will be doing the one-day, two half-day, or weekly training in person, that assumption may not be true. Today, more than ever before, training is taking place over the phone, or over the Internet, through Skype or through free or fee-based online seminar programs or systems.

What's important to you as the trainer is of course how you will be doing your training, e.g. in person versus over the phone or over the Internet, as it impacts on your training style.

Each method of delivery – in person, over the phone, or online – has its own challenges and benefits. What's key to you as the trainer, however, is that you make sure your attendees get the key ideas from each chapter that you want to share in your training despite the place or style of delivery.

You will see that every chapter/every training topic has anecdotes and examples with IT professionals, primarily, and, occasionally, other types of workers, if additional contrasting examples will be useful. However, you are certainly welcome to substitute other cases or anecdotes from your company or your own past experiences, as appropriate, if it will make this training material more customized to your employees and company.

**Make a note**

For a more detailed discussion of your role as a time management trainer, as well as suggestions for ice breakers to start the day, and brainstorming rules to share with your attendees, see the Introduction that follows.

Pre-training daily time log for a work day

In *Chapter 2, How Efficient Are You? Self-awareness of Your Body Clock and Work Style* you will find three Daily time logs. If you are able to distribute one of the Daily Time Logs to your attendees before training begins, that would be ideal. If not, you can have your attendees fill out the first log during the first meeting, based on their memory of how the previous day was spent. Or if the training is a half-day session, or a series of one hour courses, have them fill out a Daily time log for the rest of the day or the following day and have them bring it back when they return for the second half of the workshop or when the next session is offered, for review and discussion.

You can also find these logs in the *Appendix*.

What this book covers

Delivering Time Management for IT Professionals: A Trainer's Manual is divided into the following 11 chapters and sections:

An *Introduction* directed at you, the trainer or workshop leader, is the first chapter.

In *Chapter 1, Why Time Management Is More Important Than Ever*, you will learn the definition of time and of time management as well as how time management relates to productivity. After a brief overview of the study of time through history, you will learn the consequences of poor time management and the benefits of more effective time management. You will share the agenda for your workshop with your attendees based on whether you will be following the one-day, two half-days, or weekly class approach to this time management training. The philosophy that time management is a skill that can be taught, and mastered, is emphasized in Chapter 1; it is the justification for this time management training.

In *Chapter 2, How Efficient Are You? Self-awareness of Your Body clock and Work Style*, you will learn the importance of being aware of how you currently spend your time so you can assess where time is being wasted or not used effectively, as well as having a base line to evaluate the effectiveness of the training. In this chapter, you will have a pre-training self-assessment to ask workshop attendees to fill out. You will also have two daily time logs for workdays as well as one for the weekend for attendees to complete if they have not already completed one or more Daily Time Logs in advance of the training.

Make a note



Please note: Workshop attendees who are attending the one-day training may have been provided with the pre-training self-assessment and at least one daily time log, mentioned above, one day or even one week before the training begins. If they did complete those materials in advance of the workshop, remind them to bring those materials with them for the workshop or for the first of two half-day sessions, or for the first course of a 10-week course.

This chapter ends with a discussion of helping attendees to figure out their energy highs and lows so they can use that information to maximize their work effectiveness.

In *Chapter 3, Setting Goals and Prioritizing*, you will teach your attendees how setting short- and long-term goals will make them more efficient. Pareto's 80/20 rule for prioritizing will be discussed as well as how to properly use "to do" lists to prioritize plus what the ACTION! system is, and how it can enhance productivity.

In *Chapter 4, Getting Organized*, attendees will learn organizing principles; causes of disorder and how to overcome each one; clearing the clutter; and creating a filing system that is organized.

In *Chapter 5, Identifying and Overcoming the Top 15 Time Wasters*, you will teach the top 15 time wasters, causes of each one, and ways to overcome them including procrastination; perfectionism; poor planning; poor pacing; fear of success; fear of failure; depression; over-valuing or under-valuing your worth; jealousy; and blaming others. Attendees will also be asked if there are any other time wasters that were not covered that they are grappling with; what are those habits including the possible causes and solutions.

In *Chapter 6, Dealing with Distractions, Interruptions, and Handling Change*, you will teach a better understanding of your brain and how to improve concentration and focus; dealing with distractions; **ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder)** and how that impacts on concentration; coping with interruptions; and handling change. This chapter also explores multitasking.

In *Chapter 7, Enhancing Your Verbal and Written Communication Skills for Efficiency*, you will teach how body language impacts on how our words are perceived; how improved verbal and written communication skills enhance productivity; how to write more effective e-mails; how to listen better; making the most of meetings; and better use of the phone including a smartphone.

In *Chapter 8, Setting and Meeting Deadlines*, you will teach guidelines for setting realistic deadlines; working with a project manager; strategies if someone realizes the deadline he or she agreed to is unrealistic; and developing a more positive attitude about deadlines.

In *Chapter 9, Improving Your Work and Personal Relationships*, you will teach how to get along better with others at work including how to collaborate for innovation and efficiency; and successful delegation.

In *Chapter 10, Cultivating a Work-life Balance*, you will teach what work-life balance is and whether or not it is attainable. In addition to the top 4 ways to develop work-life balance, you will learn and teach why vacation time aids work productivity, and how to make better personal use of one's evenings and weekends.

In *Chapter 11, Closing the Training, the Conclusion*, you will teach how to keep up with technology. You will also learn and teach how culture impacts on how we manage time including gender, age, and cultural issues to consider when doing business globally. In addition to the top twelve time management ideas that IT professionals will find especially useful, this chapter will help your attendees to create a work and personal self-improvement plan to keep them moving forward with the time management skills they learned through your workshop.

In the *Appendix*, there are five agendas: an all-day time management seminar; for the two half-day agenda; for the 10-week course schedule; a 90-minute program, and an expanded two-day all-day one. You will also find blank master daily time logs; daily phone logs; a blank ACTION! Plan, a blank course evaluation; and a glossary with concise definitions of key terms related to this time management training.

Who this book is for

This training manual is for anyone leading a time management workshop for IT professionals including in-house or outside trainers; HR staff; managers, vice presidents, or CEOs; time management speakers; trainers; and other speakers.

Conventions

In this book, you will find a number of styles of text that distinguish between different kinds of information. Here are some examples of these styles, and an explanation of their meaning.

New terms and **important words** are shown in bold. Words that you see on the screen, in menus or dialog boxes for example, appear in the text like this: "clicking the **Next** button moves you to the next screen".



For Reference

For Reference appear like this



Lists

Lists appear like this



Action Point

Action points appear like this



Make a note

Warnings or important notes appear in a box like this.



Tip

Tips and tricks appear like this.

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> Introduction

In this chapter, geared to you, the trainer, you will find an overview about presentation and facilitation skills and in particular how these skills apply to this time management workshop, seminar, or course for IT professionals. If you are new to training, this will be a way to start gaining the skills that will help you to effectively lead a program on time management. If you are already a seasoned trainer, please see this material as a review; you might also pick up a few useful tips.

Getting ready to present this workshop

In this section, directed at you, the trainer and workshop leader, you will learn some basics that can be applied to this time management training.

Working on your training and facilitation skills

The first decision you have to make in preparing your time management training for IT professionals is: What will be your presentation style? Lecture? Audience participation? Facilitator?

Presentation skills basics

This training manual is not a substitute for learning how to be a better public speaker or trainer. That is a topic unto itself. Fortunately there are lots of available resources to help you to be a better speaker or trainer. The National Speakers Association (NSA) (<http://www.nsaspeaker.org>), through its annual conference and monthly events offered through various state chapters, is one place to start. Toastmasters International (<http://www.toastmasters.org>) is another well-regarded association dedicated to honing your public speaking skills. The **Association for Talent Development (ATD)**, previously known as **American Society of Training and Development (ASTD)**, is a premier association focused on trainers and training.

As I pointed out in my book, *The Fast Track Guide to Speaking in Public*, the two key concerns of anyone who speaks, or trains, is *what* you want to say or impart (teach, inspire, educate) and *how* you will deliver that information. The "how" refers to your speaking style or, in the case of conducting a workshop, your approach to training.

You have probably delivered a speech before, but have you previously conducted a workshop? There is, of course, a big difference between delivering a 20 minute or even a 45 minute speech versus running an all-day or two-half day trainings. Although the basic principle of engaging your audience, rather than just lecturing to them, will apply, whatever the length of your workshop, it's essential that you avoid straight lecturing if you have an all-day seminar for several reasons. First of all, you may just lose your voice after a certain number of hours. Second of all, you may find your audience tuning out or literally falling asleep if they fail to actively engage in the learning process. Recently I conducted an all-day time management training that lasted from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. When I broke up "straight lecture" with asking the attendees to contribute their own experiences to the discussion, it was clear that their interest level in the subject matter was enhanced.

Third of all, without audience engagement, the training will be less satisfying to those in the workshop, and even for you. If you involve your trainees, you will be a learner as well as a teacher. If you only lecture, it will be a one-way learning experience. By having a more interactive approach to conducting a workshop, not only do you learn from your attendees, and they learn from you, but they are more likely to learn from each other.

If you are used to educating adults, you are probably already aware that we have learned things about how adults learn that has impacted how to best present an adult workshop. You'll find some basic information about adult learning in a section that follows.

If you haven't presented to adults before, or recently, it is important to read through those points about how to structure your workshop so it will appeal to adults. This is not the place to provide you with an in-depth training skills program. But if you feel insecure or uncomfortable about your presentation or facilitation skills, you might want to consider getting a coach to work with you, reading books about training, or taking a one-day or longer course in training to hone your skills. If you have the time, in-person is best. But if you're pressed for time, there are online programs to consider taking. See the *Resource* section in the back of this chapter for a list of organizations that offer programs for becoming a better trainer or speaker.

The **Association for Talent Development (ATD)** (<https://www.td.org>), has extensive materials related to training that you can purchase. They also have an annual international conference with dozens of educational sessions related to training as well as targeted additional conferences throughout the year. You will find the details on their website. Although there is a discount if you buy material or attend any conferences if you are a member, materials and conferences are still open to non-members as well.

Here, however, are some general guidelines before you start offering the training to your staff or freelancers:

1. Read through the manual yourself at least once. You want to be familiar with the entire program before you present it.
2. Do all the required exercises and activities that you will be asking your trainees to do. In that way you will be confident about your own time management knowledge and skills.
3. Do the "Time Management Self-Assessment" provided below for you so you are aware of your own time management strengths and challenges.

Understanding how adults learn in a nutshell

Some of you are professional trainers, so what I will share now will be old hat to you. But others will be training for the first time. Or, if you've done training before, you may not have liked your approach to training. That is because so many of us were raised with the out-dated notion that you train by lecturing to your audience. You impart to them all the knowledge that you have and maybe you throw in a question and answer period so it seems like it's more interactive.

Research into adult learning, however, has resulted in a revised view of training especially when you are training adults. During the 5-day training certificate program I participated in, sponsored by ATD, I learned this about adult learning:

1. It's more participatory. It's not just lecturing about what you know.
2. The preferred presentation style is being relaxed and laid back.
3. Written materials that are used have fill ins so participants can be more involved in their learning. Filling in the written materials also makes it more like a self-study experience.
4. There are generous breaks. Every 7 to 20 minutes, there is a 10 minute break.
5. Learning styles and techniques are frequently switched, to keep the interest level high.
6. PowerPoint is used properly as an aid to the learning experience and to share materials that are not available otherwise, such as videos or photographs projected on the screen. It is not used as something that outlines what is being taught or that asks participants to have their eyes glued to the screen to the exclusion of interaction and individual or group participation.
7. If you are trying to help your attendees change behaviors that they are currently practicing, even if those behaviors are holding them back, you may need to first deal with the blocks that are keeping them from improving specific skills or ways of thinking.

Pre-training time management self-assessment

If you are able to take this self-assessment yourself now, as well as give out the pre-training self-assessment to your attendees in advance of the workshop, that would be ideal. This will enable you to get to know your own time management strength and weaknesses and also to offer the attendees a pre-training starting point for their time management skills. (But it's okay to keep what you find out about yourself to yourself.)

Pre-training time management self-assessment/ self-quiz

To help you determine just how productive you really are, take this five question self-evaluation. On a piece of paper, or on your computer, answer each question with a yes, no, or sometimes:

1. Do you make a conscientious effort to separate important, strategic, or urgent matters from other demands?
2. Do you take the time to do enough background research so you can make the best possible decisions?
3. Do you allocate at least one hour each day for uninterrupted time for thinking, reading, planning, or creative work?
4. Do you spend sufficient time developing and maintaining business and personal relationships?
5. Do you work hard to do your best, rather than measuring yourself by a standard equated with unattainable perfection?

How many questions did you answer yes to? If you answered "yes" to those five issues, your time management skills are excellent. But if you answered "no" or "sometimes" to one or more questions, you will benefit by improving your time management skills.

You may already suspect that how you handle your time could be enhanced since you are probably more stressed than you would like to be, busier than usual though getting less done, or finding yourself saying, more and more often, *I just don't have the time.*

Do you have specific time management challenges that were not included in the five questions? If yes, write down those challenges now:

Make sure one or all of those challenges are addressed in the time management training ahead. If for any reason one or all of those concerns are not discussed by your trainer, pro-actively bring up those time management concerns so you can get the help with those issues that will positively impact on how you manage your time.



Make a note

*Excerpted and adapted from *Creative Time Management for the New Millennium* by Jan Yager (Hannacroix Creek Books, 1999). (Edited from the version of this self-quiz that is posted at <http://www.drjanyager.com>.)

Introducing yourself to the attendees

Starting the training off on the right foot is pivotal whether you are offering a full-day, half-day, or one hour weekly course format for this training. A proven positive way to start off training or a course is by introducing yourself to your attendees and doing it in a way that your attendees feel welcomed by you as well as impressed with your background, and why you are the right person to be offering this training. You also want your attendees to be excited about what they will be learning during the hours or hours ahead.

What is your role? Manager? Trainer? Owner?

Be prepared is the motto of the Boy Scouts. It is also the name of a song from Disney's *The Lion King*, with music by Elton John and lyrics by Tim Rice. But to a trainer, those words, "be prepared," are pivotal to a positive training experience with a greater likelihood of an excellent outcome.

A big part of the training, fortunately for you, I have already done for you by creating three detailed sample agendas for your time management training. For anyone who has done training, you know that creating the detailed training agenda is a very important **big** first step.

You also have worksheets and additional content related to each of the chapters to help you to provide meaningful content in all the areas that this manual is covering.

But there are some areas where only you can create the content, and introducing yourself to your attendees is one of those areas.

Just how important is your introduction? As I point out in my book, *The Fast Track Guide to Speaking in Public*, how you are presented to your attendees, whether it's a workshop of 25 or an annual meeting of an association audience of 2,000, is pivotal. It should not be left to chance.

First of all, decide what role you will be playing in the training. Will you be the trainer? Will you be supervising someone else who is doing the training? If you are the trainer, but you are also the owner of the company, will you be conducting the workshop in both roles or only one?

Second, write down the key information about your background that is important for those in your training to know about you. Whether it's where you worked before, your educational background, or any of your known or lesser known accomplishments that should be highlighted, have it all written down.

If possible, get your introduction to someone who will be in the training, or another staff member who could be trusted to stop by at the beginning of the training, to give your introduction. If they have it in advance, they should be able to memorize it so they can deliver it in an engaging way. Whether you ask someone in advance who has time to read your prepared introduction or someone you ask right at the beginning of the training, try to have the key details you want shared written down.

Keep your introduction as short as possible and walk that fine line between sharing the important details and explaining why you're qualified to give this workshop versus bragging or boasting. Let the attendees know what it is in your background that gives you an appreciation of what they are going through. When I do a time management training, in addition to sharing about my credentials, I usually add that I was raised by a workaholic father who was a dentist and a workaholic mother who was a kindergarten teacher. When I left home at 16 to attend college, my parents were basically strangers to me. We had gone on three vacations as a family during my entire childhood. I vowed that when I became a parent that I would find a way to practice a better work-life balance. I let them know that the tools I learned through studying time management helped me to better combine family relationships, work, a strong marriage, and even friendship.

If you are not used to the trainer role, it's okay to say that, without creating too much anxiety in your audience. Tell them you look forward to their help with the training if you are doing anything that they think you need some help with, such as when to take a break.

Housekeeping/ground rules – brainstorming and sharing without judgment

Before you get to the ice breaker part of the initial training, you want to share with your attendees about housekeeping or ground rules. The housekeeping will relate to where the bathrooms are, the exit signs, as well as what is expected about cell phones—turn it off, put it on vibrate, and let calls go to voicemail unless you are expecting an important call or you see from caller ID it is an emergency call that you have to take. In that case, suggest your attendee goes into the hallway to answer it.

Remind attendees that, if possible, they should wait to go to the bathroom when there is a break but if it's an emergency, just go and be as unobtrusive as possible about leaving and returning. (You might point out that if someone is expecting an urgent call, or has bladder issues, they might want to sit on the end of the aisle or near the back.)

Also share the following brainstorming rules:

1. If you are asked to share/brainstorm, it is to be done without fear of judgment by other attendees.
2. Although everything that is shared during the workshop should be considered confidential, since you may all work for the same company, or in the same industry, remind your attendees to use their judgment about what they share. Always avoid using any complete names of individuals or companies, especially if someone's being critical, in any way that might have political, legal, or practical complications.
3. Try to let everyone speak at least once. Avoid hogging the brainstorming sessions.

If your style is to ask for questions to be "held" till the end of a "module" that you've been discussing, or till the end of the day, let everyone know that. Encourage them to write down the question they want to ask, on paper or in their computer or smartphone, so they don't forget their question. But if you're okay with questions being asked throughout the workshop, where and when someone has a question, or a pertinent comment, let everyone know that's your training style.

Using an ice breaker

Whenever you attend a workshop, you have probably found that your leader starts the training with some type of an ice breaker. Whether it's just having everyone say their names and introduce themselves to the leader and their fellow attendees, or it's an interactive activity as a way to get the group warmed up, using an ice breaker can help set a positive tone for your time together learning about time management.

Using an ice breaker to have the group become more comfortable working together

Here are four sample popular ice breakers:

1. **Getting to know you**

This ice breaker gives each attendee a few moments to share with the group by providing their name —first name, last name (or just first name, if that's your style for the group) — what company he/she works for, and one piece of information about themselves that the group might not know and that they want to share and won't regret sharing tomorrow or the next day. (You don't have to add in that last caveat but I find it suits my sensibilities to head off any confessions that might prove embarrassing or worse.)

The ice breaker would therefore go something like this:

My name is Jan Yager and I am president of Timemasters.com, a time management training, research, and communications company. One thing you might not know about me is that when I was just five years old, I swam an entire mile when I was at sleep away camp.

The goal is to share something about yourself that is not shared in typical biographies. You want your attendees to share something unique and memorable about themselves so they are more than just a name or department to each other. Providing one memorable piece of information about oneself is a way of breaking the ice for spending an entire day, two half-days, or being in a weekly session being trained in time management skills.

2. What do we have in common?

For this second ice breaker, you have everyone in the training pair off with someone that they do not know. (Of course if the training is for a department that works together every day, this will be harder to achieve. In that case, ask each person to pick someone that they don't know as well as they know the others.)

Give this ice breaker a five minute time limit. The instructions are that each person in the pair is to keep sharing about herself/himself until they find two things they have in common. It can be anything from their taste in music, to where they grew up, to their favorite food or movie. If you have a smartphone with a timer, set it for five minutes. It's quite convenient to have the time announced with the music or sound that goes off when the timer hits five minutes. If you do not have a built-in timer, use your watch or the clock on the wall to call out Time's up when five minutes have passed.

You don't have to go around the entire room for this ice breaker. You can just call on volunteers and have a couple of the pairs share what two things they found in common with each other.

In addition to being a popular ice breaker, this also reinforces the communication skills of listening, sharing, and showing an interest in others that will be discussed in *Chapter 7, Enhancing Your Written and Verbal Communication Skills for Efficiency* and *Chapter 9, Improving Your Work and Personal Relationships*.

3. What's your bag?

This ice breaker was shared at the ASTD, now known as ATD, 5-day training certificate program that I completed. This icebreaker asks attendees to *Draw a picture or create a motto that best introduces you*. Attendees are provided with a handout that has a box/bag drawn on it in outline format, to be filled in by the workshop attendee. Ask a couple of attendees to hold up their picture or piece of paper with their motto so the entire workshop can see it and to share it with the others.

4. What's your #1 time management challenge?

This ice breaker is tied to the subject matter of the training workshop: time management. It is a way to get to know everyone better who is in the workshop but it also allows the attendees, and you, the trainer, to find out more about the time management concerns of your attendees. This is especially useful if you didn't have time to survey each of the attendees in a pre-workshop survey or if it is a department or company-wide workshop so that there are attendees with whom you are not familiar.

You can have a flip chart at the front of the room where you write the answers that you hear as you go around the room asking the questions, *What is your name, where do you work (or what department do you work in), and what's your #1 time management challenge?*

You don't have to write the same challenge more than once. Once you get a list of the key challenges, put a 1 or check next to each one. As someone else agrees with that challenge, keeping adding a 1 or a check mark, crossing through four ones—1111—or check marks so that you can tell how many are offering that challenge, in groups of five.

This is an excellent way to build trust in your workshop since you are showing that by sharing what someone's time management challenge is, everyone is taking a bit of a risk to admit that their time management skills aren't perfect. This ice breaker also helps attendees to see that there are other workshop participants who share their productivity challenge, promoting a sense of community around a common cause among attendees.

You can also use this ice breaker skill when you hand out and discuss the agenda for the day to show during what part of the day/what topic those challenges will be covered. For example, if someone says *My number one time management challenge is that I get interrupted practically every five minutes*, when you discuss the day's agenda, you can mention that interruptions will be explored right after lunch in the section entitled, *Dealing with Distractions, Interruptions, and Handling Change*. If someone says, *I wish I had more of a work-life balance, I'm working nights and weekends too much*, you can say, *We'll be exploring "Cultivating Work-life Balance," at the end of the day, right before the conclusion.*

5. Creating your own ice breaker

You might want to develop an ice breaker of your own, on your own or in discussion with your attendees. See what type of group you are training, and listen closely to comments or opinions that you hear in the time right before the training starts, if you have a registration and networking time. Or perhaps you might get a sense about what the group needs that the ice breaker might help with. For example, if this is a group that has been sitting in front of their computer screen for a couple of hours before the training starts, you might want to do an ice breaker that involves some kind of physical activity. You can use a beach ball and have everyone stand up, in a large circle, and you can ask them to throw the ball to the person next to them, or across from them, and ask them a particular question, or answer a question that you ask them.

Here are some possibilities, but you can make up your own: *What's your favorite movie? What's the last book you read?* Fill this in as you toss (and catch) the ball: My name is _____ and my favorite movie is _____.

Explain how the training will proceed

You may have given out the agenda for the day (2 half-days, 10-week course, or 90 minute) before now, sending it electronically or getting a printed version on to everyone's desk.

But even if you sent the agenda in advance, you should distribute another copy and, if possible, if you're using PowerPoint or some kind of projection system, project the agenda onto the screen, or write it on the chalkboard at the front of room.

Take a few minutes to go over the agenda with your group. If you like, call on various attendees to read one or more parts of the agenda, as a way of keeping the training interactive and lively. Then explain that each topic on the agenda will have basic content that will be covered and, if this is your plan, that you will also be providing worksheets from this training manual that you will be photocopying and providing to each attendee to fill out.

Let attendees know that there will also be other activities or exercises throughout the training that you will expect everyone to do, individually or as one large group, or that you may possibly divide them into several smaller groups. Advise them that each topic will have a minimum of three activities or exercises associated with it. Those activities will be organized as a beginner (first), intermediate (second), and advanced (third) activity but everyone is invited to complete all three activities (levels) if they wish.

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Resources

- ▶ Association for Talent Development (ATD) (previously known as American Society for Training and Development, ASTD)

<https://td.org>

This international membership association, headquartered in Alexandria, Virginia, dedicated to the advancement of training skills, sponsors an annual conference, creates related educational materials, as well as offering training workshops throughout the year at its headquarters and various locations and online.

- Dalecarnegie.com
Headquartered in Hauppauge, New York, this international company, founded in 1912 by speaker Dale Carnegie, is one of the leaders in presentation skills training.
- National Speakers Association (NSA)
Nsaspeaker.org
This membership association is focused on speaking, including an annual conference in the summer months as well as several smaller, targeted training programs organized around one theme. There are chapters throughout the United States with those chapters offering regular programming on speaking to its members; guests, who are usually aspiring speakers, are also welcome to attend meetings, which are usually held monthly from September through June.
- Toastmasters International
www.toastmasters.com
Founded in 1924, this international membership organization has more than 200,000 members in more than 14,000 clubs in 122 countries. Members meet regularly and present to each other, honing their presentation skills by giving each other feedback.

Summary

Here are the key ideas that we covered in this chapter:

- The main concerns as a trainer are with what you say and how you say it. Being prepared by knowing the information that you are conveying to your attendees, and working on your presentation skills will help you to offer an effective time management training experience.
- Adults learn better when the information is presented in an interactive way, rather than through an exclusive lecture approach. You will keep your audience engaged and involved by varying the way that you present the information including breaking the workshop into smaller groups, having activities that the attendees can work on together, as well as giving out handouts that require responses or sharing audiovisual materials that you can show about various topics that you are discussing to reinforce the information that attendees are learning.
- Share a list of basic brainstorming guidelines so your attendees know that they will be able to participate in the workshop in a non-judgmental environment.
- Use at least one ice breaker to start the training so your group will be more comfortable working and learning together. Depending on the size of the group, you can have each attendee introduce himself or herself to the group and say something that will help the group get to know them. Various activities will be shared at the end of each chapter or training module throughout the training that you can use as a way to continue to break the ice as the workshop proceeds.

> 1

Why Time Management Is More Important Than Ever

To the trainer:

In this chapter/training module you will establish the core idea of time management with your attendees and why it is useful to your workshop participants in how they go about their work, as well as their personal time.

Here are the topics that will be covered in this chapter:

- A definition of time
 - A definition of time management
 - The consequences of poor time management
 - The positive benefits of effective time management
 - Time management is a series of skills that can be taught
 - Deciding on your training agenda depending upon the time frame your training covers: a 1 all-day seminar, 2 half-days, a weekly class, or 90 minutes
 - Sharing the agenda for the training with your attendees
-
-

Introductory exercise

You can begin this first key module in your time management training by sharing examples of how the management of time has made a difference in your own life, or at your company, or you can ask your attendees to share examples from their own departments or even previous job experiences.



Tip

Please note that if you think your workshop attendees were sufficiently invigorated by the ice breaker exercises described in the introduction, you can skip this introductory exercise and go right to the definition of time.

A definition of time

We all have a notion of what time is, from the concrete—seconds, minutes, hours, days, months, years, and decades—to something more esoteric, "*I'm having the time of my life*," meaning you're enjoying yourself or, "*Is that really worth your time?*" meaning you're making the value judgment that time is equated with something that is worthwhile to do.

Those in the IT field, your workshop attendees, will probably agree that time is something that is key to how their value is measured by the companies they work for. The two basic measures for practically everyone in IT are:

- How fast can you get something done?
- How effectively and accurately can you do it?

Being fast—getting work done *on time* or *in time* or *with plenty of time to spare* or even being *late* because you ran *out of time*—is a key factor, of course, to how effective you are. But if *what* you deliver is wrong, outdated, inaccurate, or just plain *same old, same old* if innovation was required or preferred, just being *on time* will not turn out to be the best use of your time.

Make a note



Time is a finite measure, usually by the use of a clock or a calendar, of a set number of units of moments, whether it's a second, minute, hour, day, month, year, or lifetime that help us to organize projects as well as interactions between individuals or groups. Time gives order to events so someone in India can set up a specific moment when it will be possible to interact by phone in *real time* with someone even if he or she is on the other side of the world, in another time zone, and even if it is a different day of the week.

A definition of time management

We all have to deal with time, whether you feel you don't have enough of it in general or for a particular project, or, quite the opposite, you perhaps have lost your job and suddenly you feel like you have "too much time" on your hands.

Time management is a way of approaching time that refers to a more proactive system of taking control of how you go about certain tasks in your work so you can accomplish more while being extra effective as well. There are certainly references to a greater concern about how time is handled by such inventors and observers, such as Benjamin Franklin in the 1700s, who wrote, "A place for everything, everything in its place" or by essayist Henry David Thoreau, a century later, who wrote, "Our life is frittered away by detail... Simplify, simplify."

But it is an outgrowth of the industrial revolution that time was looked at differently. As parts of the world became industrialized, it was no longer recommended that time be measured by the rising or setting of the sun, or the changes in the seasons as denoted by the growing of crops in mostly agricultural societies (or the availability of fish or meat in societies that fish or hunt by season).

Frederick Winslow Taylor's book, *The Principles of Scientific Management*, published in 1911, reveals his views on how to increase the productivity of workers. Some of his findings, which today may seem like common sense, back then were considered revolutionary:

- Giving incentives to employees to become more productive could lead to greater accomplishments
- It would increase productivity to learn the optimal number of rest periods during the workday and to allow time for those breaks
- Offering training to workers to help them to do their jobs rather than depending on self-training would lead to more efficiency

With the work of Taylor, it became clearer that time management is not just how each individual deals with his or her time. It is also the way that management approaches tasks, scheduling, and even the training of the employees and how that can have a positive impact on how much is accomplished.

Just as the industrial revolution forced a dramatic assessment of how work could best be accomplished, working around the clock became possible because of the invention of the light bulb. But instead, a push to take one or two days off a week—the so-called *weekend*—might be a better alternative. The most widespread industrial application of the weekend is attributed to American car factory head Henry Ford who, on May 1, 1926, according to <http://www.history.com/> and other sources, instituted the policy of a five-day, 40-hour week, which included granting his factory workers Saturday and Sunday off.



Make a note

Time management means the conscious effort to improve what you do with your time, how much you accomplish, as well as the quality of those tasks so that you get more done but in less time and, ideally, with less stress.

Why time management is more essential than ever before

Today, because of the widespread availability of mobile or cell phones, which make it possible to be connected to work 24/7, as well as the ability to work at home or from home, some or all of the time, looking at "best practices" for today's workers to achieve optimum time management is crucial.

You would think that because we have smartphones that enable us to connect with people at any time of the day or night, or we have the Internet that allows us to write to each other, across time zones, and to be in touch with each other in just a few minutes or even instantaneously, that we would have fewer time management challenges. Ironically, I have observed that just the opposite is true. Theoretically having 24/7 access now puts the burden on each and every one of us as to when we will answer the phone after work, if at all, and how often we will check e-mails, not just after the official workday ends, but during the day as well.

Are you finding yourself feeling distracted—what I call "distractionitis"—or even being fragmented? When's the last time you had one whole hour, or two, or three of uninterrupted time to work, to think, to interact without phones ringing, or even phones on vibrate distracting you through the vibrations? Have you avoided the temptation of allowing your eyes to wander to the incoming e-mails, wondering whether it's a priority or something you can delay responding to till later in the day, the next day, or never?

Why is time management so important today? Not only will it increase the likelihood that you will shine and get ahead at your current job, it can make the difference in how appealing a candidate you are when you're looking for a new job. For example, Lindsey Madison, cofounder of Social Centiv, previously known as HipLogiq, shared with me how time management skills are crucial when considering a new candidate for an IT job at her company. Two questions she asks, says Lindsey, are: "*What did they do for other companies and how long did it take them to accomplish that task? That really helps us find the right person for our needs.*"

How time management relates to productivity

If you are managing your time better, in most instances, you will also be more productive. Researchers have discovered that working every moment is not the secret to being more productive. That's where time management comes in. If you're on a deadline, or even if you've passed the deadline, it may be tempting to work around the clock thinking that that will lead to greater productivity. You might think that you'll even be able to catch up, as much as possible, and get that project in sooner rather than later.

Alas, working around the clock is usually a sign that someone is not managing his or her time well. Time management—the kind of time management that *does* lead to greater productivity—means taking breaks at regular intervals and getting enough sleep. It means interacting with your family and friends, as well as making the time for recreation and leisure time activities—measures of what we like to call a life that has a *work-life balance*.

Managing time in the IT world

There is no better time to be an IT professional throughout the world. Facebook just agreed to pay a company started by two former Yahoo employees, the app Whatsapp, \$19 billion—that's billion with a "b"—for their company. (It also turned the 50+ employees into instant millionaires as well.)

There are oodles of other IT-based millionaires and even billionaires, such as the developers of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and a 2014 article posted at Times.com, "*These are The Five Most In-Demand Jobs Right Now*," includes *software developers, systems software* in the number three slot.

So the numerous jobs in the **IT (Information Technology)** field are in demand, and growing, in industrialized and emerging countries around the world (although the recession did take its toll in the IT field as it did in most fields). Fortunately, as the worldwide economy is improving, so too is the need for IT professionals.

There's a useful book entitled *Time Management for System Administrators* by Thomas A. Limoncelli. The edition I have been reading was published in 2006 and there are, of course, certain pieces of advice Limoncelli offers that are somewhat outdated. For example, he says that the central tool for time management is your Personal Digital Assistant (PDA) such as a Palm Pilot, Zaurus, or similar product.

If you share that with your workshop attendees you will probably hear many of them saying, "What? A Palm Pilot? What about my iPhone or the Samsung Galaxy?" But the iPhone wasn't even introduced until June, 2007 so when Limoncelli was finishing up his book in 2005 or 2006, the smartphone that was about to change the landscape for how phone calls are placed and information is accessed, retrieved, and even stored was still in development or beta testing at Apple.

Limoncelli, who has a degree in Computer Science, points out some aspects of being an **SA (System Administrator)** that justify having a separate time management book just for those who are SAs. Here are the three ways he sees SAs having different time management concerns from others:

- SAs have more interruptions than others who interfere with doing a project.
- SAs are able to solve problems with more technical solutions than a nontechnical/average person.
- SAs lack mentors who could teach them time management skills. As he notes, "Our mentors are technical peers, often on e-mail lists, and often in different parts of the world."

Although I agree with Limoncelli on bullet points 2 and 3, I disagree with him about bullet point one. Perhaps before smartphones and the increasing habit of checking e-mail constantly to the point of addiction, SAs may have had more interruptions than others. But today, it is rare to find *anyone* whose job does not include the potential or reality of constant interruptions. How you handle those interruptions, and whether or not those interruptions can be deferred to someone else, or avoided completely, is something that each and everyone one of your workshop attendees have to explore.

Another interesting trend is the necessity of non-IT professionals to learn IT skills. This is an intriguing development because it impacts on what kinds of individuals you may have in your training programs for time management. You can no longer assume that everyone who works at an IT company, or in the IT field, is someone who majored in computer science or IT. For example, I know a psychology major who had a series of jobs as a journalist and in public relations. But a recent writing job for a company website required him to learn HTML coding. So in addition to writing and editing, he was also, basically, a programmer. Another example is that those who do marketing are being asked to learn **Search Engine Optimization (SEO)**. Some in HR are also being asked to learn HTML basics. Being a tech-savvy professional is becoming a requirement for more and more individuals beyond a more narrow definition of who is an IT professional that might have been true previously.

This is a useful idea to keep in mind: be careful what assumptions you make about who is in the audience for your time management training. That is also why I especially like the ice breaker at the beginning of a workshop that I discussed in the introduction. By asking attendees to say their name, and their job title, especially if it is training that has participants from a variety of departments or job categories at the company, you will have a better idea of what types of jobs your trainees have. You will also learn how many in your training are more likely to have a shared IT background.

In this training manual, and in the workshop you are conducting, I will try to point out technology that will help your attendees to save time as well as changes in their way of thinking because, as Limoncelli points out, SAs—and I would generalize from that to those working in the IT field—are more inclined to find technical solutions to their challenges, in this case their time management challenges, than nontechnical persons would. But you will still benefit from an understanding and application of more general time management principles.

There are two reasons for that. The first is that technology is known to fail or to be discontinued. So if you're reliant on a particular app or technology to help you with a time management concern, such as scheduling, if that app is discontinued, or if your electronic device loses its power, you need a backup plan so you don't miss all your meetings.

The second reason is that you may have to interact with those outside of your IT world who are uncomfortable with a particular technology solution or using technology in general. How will you communicate or solve your scheduling challenge without an overreliance on technology? Will you alienate them or fail to make the appointment that you both need to schedule or will you turn to the old-fashioned telephone or put an appointment in your calendar through an e-mail communication instead of the calendar app that you personally swear by?

If you look over the table of contents of Limoncelli's book, *Time Management for System Administrators*, almost all the chapter headings, and the subheadings, such as Stress Management, Eliminating Time Wasters, Prioritization, and The Cycle System: Life Goals, would apply to anyone in business.

But there are also a few chapters, such as *Documentation and Automation*, which are geared specifically to IT workers.

The book *Death March* by Edward Yourdon focuses how time specifically impacts on IT professionals as it highlights a key IT time management issue. Published in 1997, Yourdon, who at that point had spent 30 years working in the software industry, explored the causes and solutions of finding oneself working on a death march project in his book. Just what is a death march project? In a nutshell, it's an IT project that should take 12 months, but you've been given just six to complete it; the budget is way smaller than what's needed to do the job and there are fewer people and resources assigned to it.

But no one wants to say *no*, or to ask for more time, out of fear that they will be seen as lazy or inefficient. Yourdon also makes a case that the *Death March* type of project that results in working 13 to 14 hour days, six days a week, rather than the *normal* 40 hours work week has, for software developers in the IT field, become the norm. (There was a consensus in the interviews I did with a range of IT professionals that the *Death March* situation is quite common, and is a situation that most have had to deal with at least once, or more frequently, in their careers.)

Although it is also my observation that the *Death March* projects that Yourdon writes about have become a norm for more than just for IT software developers, such as association managers, sales professionals, a whole range of service providers, since this training manual is focused on IT professionals, let's stay focused on the more typical IT population. Hopefully this training will help all those in the IT field in your workshop, including software developers, to hone the practical time management skills to reverse the death march trend.

Consequences of poor time management

Just within the past year, we've seen the horrific example of how poor time management can lead to an early death. It wasn't an IT worker; it was an intern based in London working for a major international bank, and the official cause of death was ruled epilepsy. But the 21-year-old student's father believes that the epileptic seizure could have been brought on by his son's lack of sleep from the grueling schedule he was keeping as an intern. Pacing oneself, including getting enough sleep, is one of the cornerstones of excellent time management. Burning out, or worse, are dramatic consequences of poor time management.

Here are some other examples that denote the consequences of poor time management:

- Missing a deadline and having a client or customer who is furious with you as he or she waits days, weeks, or even months till you get the project done
- Showing up late for work or for a meeting and getting a bad reputation for being late and not showing enough concern for the time of others
- Having to work around the clock for a couple of days, or most evenings and weekends, for days at a time because you agreed to an unrealistic deadline that you are breaking your back to try to meet

Benefits of excellent time management

By contrast, here are some examples of how different is the outcome if you evidence commendable time management habits in work or personal situations:

- ▶ Working in a more relaxed way that includes pacing yourself throughout the day and in the evenings and weekends
- ▶ Taking at least one extended weekend or a week or two of real vacation time on a regular basis
- ▶ Feeling like you are getting your priorities done and you still have time for the people and activities outside of work that matter to you

Here is a chart that shows, on the left side, examples of poor time management and, by contrast, on the right side, the preferred way to behave that is an example of excellent time management:

Poor time management	Exemplary time management
Being late	On time
Exhausted from too little sleep	Getting enough sleep regardless of what's going on at work
Tuning out or even falling asleep in meetings	Taking regular breaks throughout the day including, if a meeting is long enough, as part of a meeting
Needing more time	Making or beating deadlines
Saying "yes" to everything and everyone	Making sure what you say "yes" to is in the best interest of you, the company, and your job
Doing everything yourself	Delegating when appropriate and wise
Always overwhelmed by work	Feeling you have enough time to get done what you have to get done
Being constantly distracted	Having either a schedule or a plan that you apply to how and when you deal with distractions or interruptions

Time management is a series of skills that can be taught

During our formative years, at least till now, few are taught time management. (There are exceptions, of course, including the weekly Saturday course I once taught over several weeks to ten year olds.) For most, however, we learn how to manage our time by observing our parents or by studying those at school or in the workplace who seem to handle their time well in contrast to those who do it poorly.

Of course there are countless books on time management available, as well as workshops that you can attend. You may have read one or more of those books. You may have attended one or more of those workshops.

The good news is that time management consists of skills that can be learned. Whether this is the first time you're systematically looking at your time management skills, or the third, it's a skill that can always stand improvement. Also, time management is not frozen in time. What you need to do today to have a better handle on your time is going to be somewhat different than what you might have done ten or twenty years ago, not just because technology has changed, as well as the world, but you have changed as well.

In the next workshop module we'll look at how you are currently spending your days, evenings, and weekends. You'll also look at the work and personal demands on you now so you can figure out what the best way to handle your time today is, not tomorrow or two years ago.

The time management skills you will be learning, or reinforcing, in this workshop, will help you on your journey to achieving more in less time and with less stress.

Training agenda

This workshop can be presented in one of five basic ways.

One way that you could present this time management training is as an all-day seminar, beginning at 8:30 a.m. with registration and networking, and ending at 5 p.m. It could also be presented as two half-day workshops, with day one from 8:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. and day two from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. (If you prefer, of course, the two half days could take place on two afternoons, from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., rather than over two mornings.)

The third way this workshop could be presented is as a weekly course, for 10 weeks, with one topic per week. (Content from *Chapter 11, Closing the Training* (Conclusion) can be merged with that from *Chapter 10, Cultivating a Work-life Balance*.) The sessions can last from 45 minutes to an hour, or an hour and a half, depending on your style of presenting, how much time you want to devote to the training, and how interactive you want the sessions to be.



Tip

A 4th possibility as shown in the sample agenda in the *Appendix*, is as a 90-minute workshop. A 5th way is a 2-day all-day retreat.

You may want to photocopy the Agenda from the *Appendix* that matches the workshop schedule that you will be following. Have your workshop attendees look over the agenda with you. Discuss it, in a general way, and ask whether there are any questions. (You can also have your attendees download the agenda if you are using the electronic version of this manual.)

Worksheet #2 Ask your attendees:

What are your goals for this training? Write down your top three goals.

List your 3 top goals.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Activities

Here are several activities for your attendees to do, which are related to this chapter. The activities begin at a more elementary level, with the second activity more intermediary, and the third for someone who has more advanced time management skills. But you can also have everyone do all three activities if you like. The benefit of having all the attendees do all three levels of activities is that they are getting two or three times the reinforcement of the ideas that they learned in this module. The negative aspect of having attendees do all three exercises is that it will take two or three times as long to complete the activities.

Activity 1

Make a list of time management challenges that you are currently facing. Next to that list, note whether you think that particular challenge is unique to your IT position, or if anyone and everyone deals with it.

Look over your answers and see whether you can group your IT-specific challenges apart from those that you would be facing, whatever field you were working in.

Activity 2

Think about the last time you felt that you were in total control of how you were spending your work and your personal time. When was that? What were you doing differently from what you are doing now? Was the office environment different? Were you performing a dissimilar job?

How can you recreate the conditions that aided your productivity?

Activity 3

Take out your smartphone and program your phone to go off in five minutes. If you do not have a timer on your phone, tell the group that you are going to stop them after five minutes. Ask them to sit and *do nothing but think* for the five minutes.

At the end of the five minutes, ask the group to share their answers to the following questions:

- How did you feel taking five minutes to "just think"? Was it comfortable? Uncomfortable? Stressful? Relaxing?
- When was the last time you had five minutes of uninterrupted thinking time?
- What did you think about?
- Would there be a benefit to building into your work day at least five minutes of uninterrupted thinking time?
- When and how will you implement that five minutes of thinking time if you agree this would be beneficial to your goal of improved time management?

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Resources

- *Everything Sysadmin*
www.EverythingSysadmin.com, blog written by system administration expert Thomas Limoncelli, author of *Time Management for System Administrators*.
- *Harold Taylor Time Management Consultant*
<https://www.taylorintime.com/>
Resources including planners as well as a blog from veteran time management consultant Harold Taylor.

➤ *The 4-Hour Workweek*

<http://www.fourhourworkweek.com/>

Website for Timothy Ferris, author of the mega-bestseller *The 4-Hour Workweek*. It includes a blog.

➤ *The Productivity Pro*[®]

<http://theproductivitypro.com/>

Website of Laura Stack, time management expert, whose latest book is *Execution IS the Strategy*.

Summary

Here are the top ideas in this chapter:

- Time is one of the two key ways an IT professional is judged. How quickly can you accomplish something? Is it on time? With the second key factor: how well have you done it? These two factors may sometimes be at cross purposes which means you don't want speed to have a negatively impact on quality.
- Time management is the application of certain principles and strategies that will help you to get more done in less time and with less stress. As an IT person, you may be more inclined to want to find technical solutions to your time challenges but you will still benefit from an understanding and application of more general time management principles such as prioritizing, writing things down to gain mastery over what you have to do including using a to-do list, the value of delegating, and how better communication and improved relationships aid in our productivity.
- There are some characteristics of those who are in the IT field that are unique to that field such as the projects that have become known as the ones with intense pressure and too short deadlines for software developers labeled as the death march. But there are other time challenges, such as goal setting, prioritizing, eliminating time wasters, better e-mail management, and dealing effectively with stress, which are universal whether you're a banker, a lawyer, a writer, or a laborer. The key is to know yourself well and to know what your particular job in the IT world demands of you so you can adapt and adopt in the most efficient way.

> 2

How Efficient Are You? Self-Awareness of Your Body Clock and Work Style

Time can slip through your fingers and you don't even notice it. This chapter will help you to assist your attendees to see where their time is going by having them fill in time logs.

This chapter will cover:

- A time management self-assessment (reviewing the answers if done before the seminar began or taking it now and analyzing it)
 - Daily time log #1 (workday, to be completed for today)
 - Weekend time log
 - What is the way that you are judged to be efficient?
 - What are your energy highs and lows?
 - What is your preferred work style?
-
-

Time management self-assessment

As noted in the introduction, if you were able to give out the pre-training self-assessment to your attendees in advance of the workshop and have completed it yourself as well, that would be ideal. It will enable the attendees to have a starting point for their time management skills. But if that was not possible, you may now have your attendees take the self-assessment self-quiz as part of the second module in your agenda.

Time management self-assessment/self-quiz

To help you determine just how productive you really are, take this five question self-evaluation. On a piece of paper, or on your computer, answer each question with a yes, no, or sometimes:

- Do you make a conscientious effort to separate urgent matters that need your immediate attention from other non-priority demands and get them done first?
- Do you take the time to do enough background research so you can make the best possible decisions?
- Do you allocate at least one hour each day to uninterrupted time for thinking, reading, planning, or creative work?
- Do you spend sufficient time developing and maintaining business and personal relationships that will help you perform better on your current tasks as well as help you to advance in your career?
- Do you work hard to complete what is expected of you and do your best rather than measuring yourself by a standard equated with unattainable perfection?

How many questions did you answer yes to? At least on those five issues, your time management skills are excellent. But if you answered *no* or *sometimes* to one or more questions, you will benefit by improving your time management skills.

You may already suspect that how you handle your time could be enhanced since you are probably more stressed than you would like to be, busier than usual though getting less done, or finding yourself saying, more and more often, "I just don't have the time."

Do you have specific time management challenges that were not included in the five questions above? If yes, write down these challenges now:

Make sure one or all of these challenges are addressed in the time management training ahead. If, for any reason, one or all of those concerns are not discussed by your trainer, proactively bring up those time management concerns so you can get the help with the issues that will positively impact on how you manage your time.

This has been excerpted and adapted from *Creative Time Management for the New Millennium* by Jan Yager (Hannacroix Creek Books, 1999). (Edited from the version of this self-quiz that is posted at <http://www.drjanyager.com>)

Daily time log

Now that you have done the time management self-assessment, whether or not attendees were able to do a pre-training time log, distribute or have them download a daily time log that they will use for today.

Make sure you instruct your attendees that this daily time log is for their own information. No one will judge them by it so they should be as thorough and as honest as possible about it. Whatever breaks they take, or fail to take, whatever tasks they are doing during the workday and in their evening hours should be noted. This will help them to see their starting point in their quest to gain better use of their time.

The first daily time log, unless they have also done the pre-training time log, will be for the day of training, whether it's a full day or half day or the second week if the program is being offered on a topic per week training schedule.

The second daily time log should be filled out on the next day. Just photocopy the daily time log that follows and have your attendees use that blank time log for the second one. That daily time log will therefore be included in the *Chapter 11, Closing the Training* (Conclusion).

Please point out to your attendees that you are going to add just three little words to this new time log, compared to the first daily time log: *Activity*, *Duration*, and *Outcome*.

Ask them to observe how differently they feel toward a particular activity that they are doing as they record today's activities just by adding the words "duration" and "outcome."

Do they see themselves already starting to make better (or different) choices about how they are spending their minutes or hours?

The following blank time log is based on a 12-hour clock. If your attendees prefer a version where they fill in the time, you can find a blank sample of that version in the *Appendix* of this book.

Time	Activity	Duration	Outcome
12:00 A.M.			
12:15			
12:30			
12:45			
1:00			
1:15			

How Efficient Are You? Self-Awareness of Your Body Clock and Work Style

Time	Activity	Duration	Outcome
1:30			
1:45			
2:00			
2:15			
2:30			
2:45			
3:00			
3:15			
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Time	Activity	Duration	Outcome
10:45			
11:00			
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11:45			
12:00 p.m.			
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12:45			
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Time	Activity	Duration	Outcome
8:00			
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11:15			
11:30			
11:45			

Make a note

Creating a daily time log of how you are currently managing your time empowers you to see where your time is going:



"Where did the time go?" is something that so many ask themselves at the end of the morning or even at the end of the day. By keeping a time log, especially in the beginning of your quest to improve your time management skills, you will have the answer to that question. Don't be embarrassed if you record that you are taking too many breaks, or too few. Or that you are on the phone with too many calls that you should have let go to voice mail or you are reading things on the Internet that are unrelated to your priority project. Or maybe you will chronicle a "perfect" work day but you are still not getting enough done. Be as detailed as you can be in recording what you are doing every minute of the day you are chronicling. This daily time log, and the pre-training time log if you did one before the training began, will be your starting point as you work on improving how you manage your time.

Setting up a weekend time log

Working on work-related concerns for an hour or two, or even through the weekend, on an occasional basis if you have a deadline crunch at work, is one thing. But if your weekend is all work and no play, it is actually going to hurt you in the short-run and long-run not just in terms of productivity, but in terms of your relationships and even the quality of your life.

The best approach to see in a concrete way how your time is being spent over your weekend is by keeping a weekend time log. Pick either Saturday or Sunday if those are your days off, and keep track of how you spend your day away from work time. (If your two days off are Monday and Tuesday but you work weekends, then chronicle either Monday or Tuesday.)

If your training is just one long day, put this weekend time log assignment aside for after the training, when it is your weekend.

If your training is two half days, and ideally those two half days will be Friday and Monday, you will have a weekend between the two half days of training, so you can fill out a weekend time log as your homework assignment for your training.

If your training is a series of weekly presentations, do your weekend time log between this second course topic, *How Efficient Are You?* and the next topic, *Setting and Prioritizing Goals*.

Reviewing and analyzing the time logs

Of course, creating a time log is a pivotal step. But the second equally key part of gaining a better self-understanding is to review and analyze your time logs so you see what patterns emerge in how you are spending, or wasting, your time.

- ▶ Look at your pre-training time log. Take a pen, pencil, or highlighter/marker and highlight or circle the activities that are directly related to work. Pinpoint where you took a break, or wasted time, especially if it wasn't beneficial to your wellness or work productivity.
- ▶ Look over the log again and focus on which activities were tied to your priority project for the day. Highlight the time you spent on that priority project. How much time does it add up to? Write your results here.

_____ Hours _____ Minutes on priority project of the day
(List here what your priority project was/is)

- ▶ Did you spend time searching for something you were missing in your office or even for a file you couldn't locate on your smartphone or computer? Add up that time spent searching for things. I spent _____ minutes _____ hours searching for something. Write down what you were searching for: _____
- ▶ Were you interrupted? When? By whom? Could you have handled it differently?

Now add up the amount of time you spent on concentrated work and the number of minutes or even hours that you spent or wasted. Write your results here:

_____ Hours _____ Minutes spent productively working

_____ Hours _____ Minutes spent inefficiently



Make a note

Please note: Wasted time excludes a 20 minute break if that was after working 1-2 or more hours straight. That's a productive break. By contrast, surfing mindlessly on the Internet or working on a low-priority project when you should have been working on your key time sensitive task is time that could have been used in a more efficient way.

How is your performance being evaluated?

In order to show improvement in your performance, you need to be clear about what your employer expects from you, and how you are judged and evaluated. What are your employer's expectations? How is your value to the department or company being measured?



Make a note

Having clear measures for your efficiency will help you to assess where you are starting from and where you need to go to become more efficient.

Read over some of the ways that IT professionals tend to be judged. If you don't find the way you are judged and evaluated by your boss (as well as your colleagues and clients or customers), add it in:

- I am judged/evaluated by how quickly I can get a new website designed, broadcast, and online
- I am judged/evaluated by how quickly I can get an answer for the person calling or e-mailing my help desk for technical support
- I am judged/evaluated by creating something new and innovative that helps people to do things faster, easier, or better than before
- I am judged/evaluated by how much revenue I make for the company
- Other: _____

Energy highs and lows

We all have times during the day and evening when we have more or less energy. No two people are alike. This may change for you, of course, at some point in your life, but for most of us, you know whether you're a "morning" person, which means you perform better in the morning hours and your energy dips after lunch, or in the late afternoon. That might be when your energy is lowest. By knowing what your particular energy highs and lows are, as well as observing this about those you work with or work for, you can maximize how you best make use of those energy highs and lows. For example, if you are most energetic and "perky" at 9 A.M., that might be the best time for you to schedule a presentation that could make or break your career, not at 4 p.m., when your energy is so low you feel like you need a nap.



Make a note

Getting to know yourself better and what your energy highs and lows are as well as how you work best around other people, alone, at night, during the day, in a quiet or a noisy environment will help you to be more productive.

Look over your pre-training or day 1 time log. Do you see any pattern as to when you are more efficient or when you tend to be working on more demanding tasks? This might be an indication of when you have more energy in the day.

In his book, *Be Excellent at Anything*, co-authored with Jean Gomes and Catherine McCarthy, Tony Schwartz, CEO and President of The Energy Project, refers to the well-known study by Anders Ericsson and his colleagues at Florida State University. In that study, they put 30 violinists into three groups and observed, by analyzing the hourly diaries that they were all asked to keep, what the difference was in their practice and rest behaviors. Based on the rankings by their professors, the first group was the violinists who were designated most likely to go on to get solo world-class performance careers. The second group were those who would probably be in an orchestra. The third group were those who would probably become music teachers.

Here are the findings that may be helpful to all of us, whatever our profession: groups one and two practiced the most each day, 3.5 hours, which probably is not a surprise. But what is informative to know is that they practiced in the morning, and they broke the practice up into three sessions of no more than 90 minutes per session, before they took a break. They also slept 8.6 hours a night and took an average of 3 hours of naps each week.

By contrast, the third group only practiced for 1.4 hours a day and they didn't have a routine for when they practiced, like the first two groups. They also tended to practice in the afternoon, which Tony Schwartz suggests might indicate that they procrastinated about getting to the practicing.

They slept almost an hour less than those in the first two groups—just 7.8 hours—and they napped a lot less too, less than 1 hour a week compared to the 3 hours a week of naps practiced by groups one and two.

The findings of Ericsson's study of violinists was also cited by Malcolm Gladwell in his mega-bestseller, *Outliers: The Story of Success*.

For the purpose of our exploration of how you can improve what you accomplish each day, you might conclude that working intensely a couple of hours a day will take you farther as well as taking breaks, getting enough sleep, and even taking naps. But it's also key to look at *when* you do your most important work. The violinists who were most likely to go on to have the most successful careers, based on their current assessment by their teacher, practiced in the morning which, presumably, might have been when they were freshest and most energized.

Look at your daily time log. Think about yourself now and even in bygone years. When are—or were—you most refreshed, most energized, and most likely to perform at your peak?

Have you always been a "morning" person or do you do your best work at 6 or 10 at night?

There are, of course, no right or wrong answers. But you want to figure out what works best for *you*. When are your energy highs or lows, so you can plan your work day around that information?

What is your preferred work style?

Just as getting to know when your energy highs and lows are will help you to be more productive, knowing your preferred work style will empower you as well. That doesn't mean that you have to turn down working in a team setting because you are more comfortable working alone, but you might have to make adjustments in the kind of work you do, when around others versus when you are working by yourself.

Work style self-quiz

Take the self-quiz that follows and see what you learn about your work style preferences:

Q1. How do you prefer to work?

- a. Alone
- b. With others nearby
- c. With others in the same room

Q2. How do you prefer to communicate?

- a. By phone
- b. By e-mail
- c. In-person

Q3 How do you keep track of your appointments?

- a. In a paper planner
- b. On my smartphone
- c. Through Google or another computerized or online program

Q4. How do you prefer to organize your projects?

- a. I make a plan and I stick to it
- b. I jump right in and see where it leads me
- c. I make a plan and revise it as the project evolves

Q5. What's your attitude toward free time?

- a. I think it's important to have fun in my free time
- b. I use it to get more work done
- c. I try to have at least one planned activity in my free time

Q6. Where do you prefer to work?

- a. In an outside office
- b. In an outside cubicle
- c. In a home office

Q7. How do you prefer to get your information delivered?

- a. Depends on what it is
- b. Electronically
- c. Hard copy (paper or print)

The more you know about how you are spending your time and about how you prefer to work, as well as your energy highs and lows, the more you will take advantage of your natural proclivities when it comes to working at your optimum level. However, just because you have a preferred work style now, or a way of doing things till now, does not mean you can't change if you know in your heart of hearts that you could and should do things differently.

Activities

Here are several activities for your attendees to do related to this chapter. The activities begin at a more elementary level, with the second activity more intermediary, and the third for someone who has more advanced time management skills. But you can also have everyone do all three activities if you like.

Activity 1

Consider the study of 30 violinists that you learned about in this training module. How much time do you spend daily doing the most important tasks for your job? What time of day are you doing those tasks? How much sleep are you getting at night? (If you're unsure, refer to your daily time log or keep track today and tomorrow and see what you discover.) Do you take any naps? Figure out the number of minutes or hours you are actually spending on your primary tasks. Is that number more or less than you thought you were accomplishing? Are you tired after you put in intense hours at work? If so, how do you replenish yourself?

Activity 2

Sometimes we learn more about ourselves when we do things that are outside our comfort zone. Consider what you know about—learned about—yourself and what work style you are best at. Whatever style that is, see whether you can put yourself in a work style that is the opposite of what you prefer. If you prefer to work alone in an office with doors on it, try working in the midst of a coffee shop, like a Starbucks, at its busiest time of day. Are you able to accomplish anything? If you are, are there skills in concentration or focusing that you were forced to employ that you could bring to your preferred work style situation to make yourself even more productive?

Activity 3

Find someone you know who works in a job and at a company that is completely unrelated to IT and ask if you learn about how he/she goes about his/her job. See whether you could "shadow" him or her to observe how he or she goes about their workday. Hopefully in this way, you will learn ways to work that will be beneficial to you since you're seeing examples from outside of IT. If you can't get permission to shadow someone at his or her company, see whether you could at least do an interview with someone over the phone or over coffee. Discovering new or innovative ways that they approach work that can be eye-opening for you to apply to yourself.

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Resources

- ▶ *The Energy Project*
<http://www.theenergyproject.com>

Tony Schwartz is the President and CEO. Their clients have included such top companies as Google who hired them in 2006. Here is an explanation of their core philosophy reflected in one of their case studies: *A firm learns that it's not the number of hours employees work that determine the value they create, but rather the energy they bring to whatever hours they work.*

Summary

Here are the top ideas in this chapter:

- Keeping a daily time log and looking over how you are spending your time will help you to get a clearer picture of where each and every minute, hour, and day is being spent.
- Knowing whether you are a morning person or work better in the afternoon, or at night, and scheduling your most demanding activities for when you have the most energy will help you to become more productive.
- Being aware of what work style works best for you such as around other people, working alone, doing interviews by e-mail, phone, or in-person will also help you to be more efficient and effective by building on your strengths.

> 3

Setting Goals and Prioritizing

Note to Trainer:

Ask your workshop attendees: "How will you know what you should be doing if you don't set long and short-term goals? Then, once you set those goals, how do you decide which goal to work on first?"

This workshop module is about the time management benefits of goal setting as well as the companion time management skill of prioritizing.

This module will cover:

- What you need to know about goal setting
 - Setting a measureable goal
 - Goals should also be S.M.A.R.T.
 - Setting short- and long-term goals and why it will make you more effective
 - Prioritizing goals for greater clarity and productivity
 - Pareto's 80/20 rule
 - Re-evaluating and setting new goals
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What you need to know about goal setting

In *Chapter 1, New Developments in Goal Setting and Task Performance*, a collection of writings by some 70 authors and co-authors, Drs. Locke and Latham, who have been studying goal setting for decades, share these insights from their 1990 title, *Goal-Setting Theory*.

- The level of complexity of the goal that you set matters. The performance of those study participants who set the highest goals was 250% higher than those with the easiest goals.
- Not only do goals have to be difficult to make the biggest difference in performance, but the goals have to be specific.

Their own studies and an analysis of the findings of others who have studied goal setting is that those who set specific and higher or difficult goals perform better than those who either had no goals or the goals were vague, such as "do your best" or goals that were too easy.

Setting a measurable goal

As noted above, the research shows that setting a goal that is difficult, specific, and measurable will help your performance.

What does "specific" mean? It means something that is clear and that can be measured. That means that instead of "I will get this website done quickly," you create a goal that is challenging, specific, and measurable that is more like "I will get this website that will increase the customer's sales by 25% within 1 month of its launch ready on or before December 11" or "I will create 50 to 100 word scripts in answer to the top three questions that I am asked by customers by e-mail or who call into the help desk and have the scripts completed within 4 business days."

Goals should also be S.M.A.R.T.

The acronym S.M.A.R.T. is a widely-accepted way to approach goal setting especially in management and HR circles. Although, as Mike Morrison in his article, *A History of SMART* points out, there is some debate over whether S.M.A.R.T. was the creation of George Doran in 1981 in his *Management Review* article, "There's a S.M.A.R.T. way to write management's goals and objectives" or by Anthony Raia, back in 1965, in his article, *Goal Setting and Self-Control*, published in the *Journal of Management Studies*, the widespread application of this useful acronym is clear. Here is what each letter stands for in its application to goal setting as to what an ideal goal should be:

- **S:** Specific
- **M:** Measureable
- **A:** Achievable
- **R:** Relevant
- **T:** Time bound

You can share this acronym with your workshop attendees and ask them how they would apply S.M.A.R.T. to setting their own work or personal goals. You could start with an example from your own life and then open it up to the attendees to share from their work or personal life in setting a S.M.A.R.T. goal.

Setting short- and long-term goals, and why it will make you more effective

The sample goals in the preceding section on setting a measurable goal are examples of _____ (ask the attendees for their input). Yes, the answer is short-term goals.

Short-term goals are useful to keep us on track but you also need long-term goals to help you to have a vision of yourself, your work, or your career to drive you forward.

At the Academy Awards on March 2, 2014, in his acceptance speech, actor Matthew McConaughey talked about needing three things in his life: God, family, and someone to look up to as a hero.

He shared that when he was 15, he decided his hero would be himself 10 years later. When he was 25, it was going to be him in 10 more years. When he was 35, once again it was going to be him in 10 more years.

He would always keep pushing himself or, as McConaughey so eloquently put it, in one of the few acceptance speeches that was truly memorable and refreshing that evening:

"My hero's always 10 years away. I'm never going to attain that. That keeps me with somebody to keep on chasing."

Substitute "hero" for "goal" and you have one of the key benefits of having a long-term goal. It gives you direction, a compass to steer you through the professional, or work, and even personal choices that you could make. Rather than going from job to job, from day to day, or from relationship to relationship, you have a vision that will lead you on in a more challenging, clear, and determined way.

In my very first book on time management, *Creative Time Management*, back in 1984, I remember sharing the concept that at certain times in our life, especially when we are in school, setting goals is part of the process. "I want to get my high school diploma," or "I want to get my college degree," or "I want to take my junior year abroad," or "I'm going to get my Ph.D. and use that to get a teaching job at a university."

But as we age, too many stop making professional or personal goals and instead they seem to be drifting from the completion of one short-term project objective to another.

In this training, however, you are telling your attendees that they have a chance to change that approach. They have a chance to put the time and energy into considering their short and especially their long term goals. These short- and long-term goals will help them to push themselves forward.

Here's another important piece of information about goals from the research and even my own observations over the years: goal setting is more effective if you *write down your goals*. It's not enough to consider your goals and have them in your head. You have to write them down somewhere that you will be able to refer to again, whether it's in your smart phone, on your computer, or in a journal or appointment book. You want to be able to review your goals so you can monitor your progress.

Are you achieving your short- or long-term goals? If not, why not? How can you modify your behavior so you are more likely to achieve your goals?

By writing down your goals, you are also increasing your accountability to yourself for meeting and achieving those goals.

In the sheets that follow, you'll be asked to write down your short- or long-term goals for both work and personal concerns. This is not the same thing as project management, which will be discussed in other chapters, especially in *Chapter 8, Setting and Meeting Deadlines*.

These worksheets refer to bigger overarching goals that will guide how you plan your next day, week, month, year, five years, or ten years down the road.

You might even want to consider beyond 10 years. Stephen Covey, in his mega-best seller, *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, offered this wisdom as *Habit 2, Begin with the End in Mind*.

What a great concept! Consider your legacy. What do you want to accomplish by the end of your life? Of course you can revise a very long term goal especially if you're in the first third of your life. Your life experiences may definitely shape what you want your legacy to be. But it doesn't hurt to think about decades ahead. But do consider what you want to accomplish with the time you have on this earth.

Make a note

If you are resistant to setting goals, why?

We all know that setting short- and long-term goals is a positive thing to do. So why don't you do it or, if you do it, why do you do it reluctantly? Perhaps you are goal-resistant? If that's you, what might be the reason for that? Think back to the events in your earlier years. Did your parents or teachers make you feel that what you did was always tied to something in the future so that setting a goal makes you feel "controlled"? Do you have goals in your head but you're averse to writing your goals down? Fill in the goal-setting sheets that follow. Hopefully it will help you to become more comfortable with setting work (or school) or personal goals. These are goals you are setting for yourself. Not for your parents or your teachers or even for your employer. These are goals you commit to yourself.



Chapter 3/Module 3/Worksheet #1

Use the following space to write down your short- and long-term goals for work. One to three goals seems workable and manageable. We'll discuss which goal you should work on first when we get to the next section on prioritizing. For now, just list those three short- or long-term goals.

Goal-setting worksheet

Type of goals (Work: short and long term)

Based on the research and writings of Drs. Locke and Latham, remember that you want your goal to be:

- Difficult
- Specific
- Measurable

Short-term work goals by the end of today

1. I will _____ by _____.
2. I will _____ by _____.
3. I will _____ by _____.

Short-term work goals by the end of this week

1. I will _____ by _____.
2. I will _____ by _____.
3. I will _____ by _____.

Short-term work goals by the end of this month

1. I will _____ by _____.
2. I will _____ by _____.
3. I will _____ by _____.

Long-term work goals by the end of this year

1. I will _____ by _____.
2. I will _____ by _____.
3. I will _____ by _____.

Long-term work goals by the end of 5 years

1. I will _____ by _____.
2. I will _____ by _____.
3. I will _____ by _____.

Long-term work goals by the end of 10 years

1. I will _____ by _____.
2. I will _____ by _____.
3. I will _____ by _____.

Chapter 3/Module 3/Worksheet #2

Use the following space to write down your personal short- and long-term goals. One to three goals seems workable and manageable. We'll discuss which goal you should work on first when we get to the next section on prioritizing. For now, just list those three short- or long-term goals.

Goal-setting worksheet

Type of goals (Personal: short- and long term)

Based on the research and writings of Drs. Locke and Latham, you want your goal to be:

- Difficult
- Specific
- Measurable

Short-term personal goals by the end of today

1. I will _____ by _____.
2. I will _____ by _____.
3. I will _____ by _____.

Short-term personal goals by the end of this week

1. I will _____ by _____.
2. I will _____ by _____.
3. I will _____ by _____.

Short-term personal goals by the end of this month

1. I will _____ by _____.
2. I will _____ by _____.
3. I will _____ by _____.

Long-term personal goals by the end of this year

1. I will _____ by _____.
2. I will _____ by _____.
3. I will _____ by _____.

Long-term personal goals by the end of 5 years

1. I will _____ by _____.
2. I will _____ by _____.
3. I will _____ by _____.

Long-term personal goals by the end of 10 years

1. I will _____ by _____.
2. I will _____ by _____.
3. I will _____ by _____.

Goal setting and the Agile Manifesto

Seventeen software developers met in Utah in February 2001, and together they created what is known as the **Agile Manifesto**. Here is what that manifesto suggests:

We are uncovering better ways of developing software by doing it and helping others do it. Through this work we have come to value:

Individuals and interactions over Processes and tools

Working software over Comprehensive documentation

Customer collaboration over Contract negotiation

Responding to change over Following a plan

That is, while there is value in the items on the right, we value the items on the left more.

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Kathy Harris, who is Managing Director of Harris Allied, a New York-based executive search firm in the technology field, shares these insights about how principles from the Agile methodology can be applied to short- and long-term goal setting. Harris says:

Establish time frames, project milestones and specific deliverables. Recalculate to move forward. Look at all of those things from the framework of what it is like to work in an Agile environment. A team might review deliverables once or twice a day. They will ask the team, "What are we delivering today?" "When are you going to deliver today?"

Prioritizing goals for greater clarity and productivity

Now that you have a minimum of three short and long-term goals, you need to figure out what you will do first. Of course some may try to juggle several goals at once. But if you observe those who seem to be working on several projects at once, you may find that they are actually practicing selective attention—when they're working on one project—they have the other project or projects "on hold." Once they've done enough on that first project, or even finished it, they switch back to the other project.

Prioritizing helps you to decide where to put your attention in a more formal way.

Take your short-term goal list of three. Look over those three items. Which one is the absolutely most important one to do? And why is that your priority? It could be because your boss asked you to do that project first. It could be because it will pay more and you need the money. It could be because there's a very clear time element to it—a fixed in stone launch date for the new software. Whatever the reason, you want to put a #1 or a letter A next to the project that you will do first.

Then you'll put a #2 or letter B next to the project that is second on your list of importance.

Finally, you'll write a #3 or a C on that third project.

Once you finish a project and you can cross it off your list, then you'll move on to a new priority project, which can become either your #1, #2, or #3 goal.

Follow the same procedure with your long-term goal lists.

Make a note

Prioritizing is sometimes as much a question of perception as reality. If a customer or your boss thinks something should be done first, if you do it first, you will be a hero and they will be thrilled with you. If you make them wait, even if the other projects that you decide to invest your time in first seem more important to you, you will probably be seen as someone who doesn't take their concerns seriously enough.



It is also key to prioritize the people that you need to deal with at work as a way of determining how your work load will be structured. If it's your boss, and you're asked to take a meeting out of town, which means you won't be able to spend your anniversary with your spouse, if your boss is your priority, hopefully your wife or husband will understand. If your wife is scheduled for a C-section for the birth of your child, you just might decide your boss has to reschedule that meeting or, if it is not possible to do that, that someone else will have to go in your place.

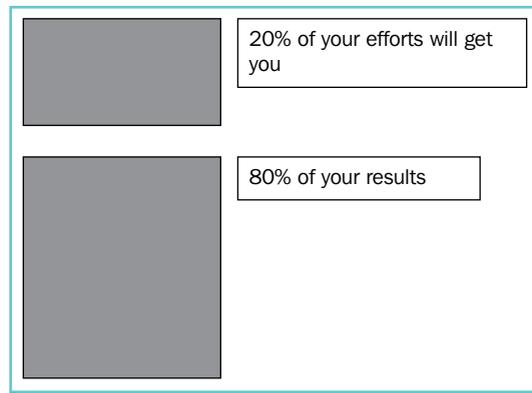
Pareto's 80/20 rule

The origin of Pareto's 80/20 rule of efficiency is the Italian economist, Vilfredo Pareto, who, in 1906, observed that 80% of the land in Italy was owned by 20% of the people. In time, it came to be popularized as relating to efficiency that 20% of your efforts will get you 80% of your results. Here are some examples of applying Pareto's 80/20 rule to your work:

The key, of course, is to figure out what your 20% is and to focus on that so you can get those 80% of the results.

- 20% of the contacts in your address book (or that you are connected to on LinkedIn) will give you 80% of the information and insights that will help you keep up in your field
- 20% of your customers will lead to 80% of your sales
- 20% of the time you spend during the day will get you 80% of your day's accomplishments

The key, of course, is to figure out what your 20% is and to focus on that so you can get those 80% of the results.



Re-evaluating and setting new goals

As noted earlier in *Prioritizing goals for greater clarity and productivity*, when you finish a priority goal, you can cross it off your list and go on to the next one. In general, you are going to want to move on to the next goal on your list of priority goals to tackle. But you also have to be open to some flexibility about this especially if time has passed or circumstances have changed, since you originally set your goals and your prioritized those goals. What that means is that sometimes, even if you don't finish a goal, as hard as it is for most of us to leave a goal undone, you may have to put it aside. That is because, upon re-evaluation, you realized that you need to change your goal and do something else or do the same thing differently.

That is one of the most powerful time management tools of all: knowing when to keep going with a certain task to completion, and knowing when to put it aside or abandon it all together, because you find out that you have another goal that you now realize is truly your priority. Later on, we will look at procrastinating. It is key to know when you are simply procrastinating on finishing a goal versus making the determined and wise decision to delay or discontinue your efforts and shift to another goal.

What is a guiding principle that will help you to keep your goals and priorities in the service of your job and yourself? It is the values that you have and how those values apply to your work load and the commitments you have made. There are of course contractual obligations that have to be considered and you may even learn to build a re-evaluation period into your projects and the contracts related to those projects, after a certain time frame of days, weeks, or months, depending on the project.

Using a to-do list to prioritize goals

To do lists are one of the best ways to make sure that you're attending to the goals that you have to deal with. You will decide how detailed your to-do list will be and if your to-do list will be a broader listing of your goals or something more detailed that what fall into the *Project management basics* section that will be discussed in *Chapter 8, Setting and Meeting Deadlines*.

If you make a to-do list of specific tasks, always make sure that you try to estimate how long something will take. You may also want to write down any far off or interim deadlines that you need to be concerned about.

One of the ways that you'll diminish the value of a to-do list is if you allow yourself to go on to other tasks or things to do, while still leaving something on your list unfinished. You need to move that item to the next list, or the next page, or if you're using a smart phone, or an electronic to-do list system, you have to find a way to clearly indicate that something still needs to be done. That unfinished project, task, concern, or goal should be staring you in the face till you do it and you can cross it off as "done."

In my interviews with IT professionals of all levels, I was often told that writing it down, making a list of what had to get done, was a great way to stay on top of goals and priorities. There are even those who advocate lists for health reasons like Paula Rizzo, a senior health producer for a major cable station, who is also the creator of a productivity website called <http://www.listproducer.com/>. In her article, *5 Health Benefits of List Making*, she shares these five reasons to create a to do list, which she says could be anything from a list of healthful goals or a grocery list:

- Reduce anxiety
- Boost your brain power
- Improve focus
- Increase self-esteem
- Organize your thoughts

I recall interviewing a worker who had been having sleepless nights caused by worrying about the next day's work load. But once he began the habit of writing down in list format at night, before he went to bed, a to do list of what he had to accomplish the next day, he could sleep.

Your to do list should be ordered by an organizing principle, whether that's a chronological order of events or by prioritizing, from most to least important. Include a brief description of the task you have to do, why you're doing it, what the due date is, when you actually complete it, and what will be your reward for completing it. Here's a sample you can use if you like:

Chapter 3/Module 3/Worksheet #3

Use the following sample to create a to-do list for today:

Number/ Letter	Task	Why do it?	Due by	Date/time done	Reward

Using the ACTION! system

Most of us in the business world today are in a fast-paced, competitive environment that thrives on results as well as speed. In most circles, just being smart, considerate, and competent is not enough. You also have to generate revenue and keep adding products and customers or clients so your business, or the company you work for, thrives. You and your company need to be financially successful; you and your family are depending on you to produce and to be productive.

What is one way to increase your productivity? You may find the ACTION! system that I created to be a catalyst to improving your time management skills. It's a way of looking at what you have to do that is results-oriented, as you get the most done in the least amount of time. The emphasis is on speed and quality. Both are important. Neither should or has to be sacrificed for the other if you follow the ACTION! system for optimum productivity.

Let's look at what the ACTION! strategy trains you to do consistently:

- **A=Assess.** Determine what you should be doing in the first place. As management guru Peter F. Drucker writes in *The Daily Drucker*, an anthology of his key writings, "Are the premises that you base your decision on obsolete? Do you need a new intellectual framework to win in the market, as it exists today?" Once you determine that you are, in fact, working on what you should be concerned with now, decide what you need to know or what you need to find out, and do the research, make the phone calls, and ask the questions that will enable you to do your job.
- **C = Control.** Take control of what you can influence—your own behavior—and deal with any of the obstacles to working more effectively on a particular task or project that are causing you to slow down or misuse your time. Practice saying *no* politely or if you must agree to competing demands on your time, make sure you return to your own priorities as soon as possible. Apply **C** to enhancing productivity by creating a more effective environment to work in, delegating efficiently, as well as through developing clear short- and long-term goals, which we've just been discussing, and dealing with the phone, e-mail, and the Internet so you are in better control of yourself and your time.
- **T = Target.** Once you have identified the specific task, project, and/or goal you are going to address today, stay with your target. If you're able to effectively juggle more than one primary target activity or project—multitasking—make sure each one is a priority concern.
- **I = Innovate.** What have you learned about your job, subject matter, or even other projects that you can apply to your own situation, enabling you to accomplish more in less time? Don't be afraid to try new systems or ideas (or go back to the tried-and-true ones that worked for you in the past.)
- **O = Organize.** Use organizing strategies that allow you to accomplish your goals better and faster. Group similar tasks together. Organize your files, books, and supplies. Spend the time keeping your database up to date, since this will save you time when you need to find a person, place, or information that is pivotal to the task at hand. (We'll discuss organizing in the next module/chapter.) Take special note of some of the more dramatic or radical time management suggestions or organizing tips described in this workshop for your office or for your home, and experiment with implementing any of those suggestions that might work for you.
- **N = Now!** The key to the ACTION! strategy to help you to become more productive and effective is to address your key priority concern **Now**, not tomorrow or after you've done a million other less important things. The N for Now is a reminder that you need to stop procrastinating, making excuses, distracting yourself, and putting everything and everyone before taking—and completing—the ACTION! that will move this project, and your career, along. Doing something **Now** will feel oh so terrific when you let yourself focus on an assignment, a project, a key concern that is your #1 goal for today. This usually requires that you immerse yourself in whatever you have to do and not diffuse

your energy by tackling multiple less pivotal concerns. Once you apply **Now!** to your **ACTION!** strategy and plan, and complete whatever you have to do, you can go on to the next project as you apply the **ACTION!** strategy to that time sensitive or crucial project or goal.

ACTION! strategy worksheet

Use the following worksheet that follows to apply the **ACTION!** strategy to a priority project that you're working on, or something that's in the planning stages. See how it helps you to take better control of how to approach this priority project.

Project or Task: _____

A (Assess): _____

C (Control): _____

T (Target): _____

I (Innovate): _____

O (Organize): _____

N (Now!) _____

Activities

Here are three activities for your attendees to do related to this chapter. The activities begin at a more elementary level, with the second activity more intermediary, and the third for someone who has more advanced time management skills. But you can also have everyone do all the activities if you prefer.

Note to trainer: You can photocopy and distribute one or all of the activities that follow to your attendees.

Activity 1

The following activity/image has been adapted from *Effective Time Management* by Peter Turla:

ACTIVITY #1

Pick three work and three leisure activities that you are currently doing or trying to find time to do. Put those activities in the following box based on the categories.

Essential / priority

	A	B	C
1* hi value	Do now	Do soon	Can't wait
2 med value			
3 low value			

Activity 2

Look over the three short-term goals that you wrote down earlier in this part of the workshop. Take the one that you consider your #1 priority. Spend the next five minutes thinking about how you are going to accomplish that short-term goal. Then create a plan for achieving the goal. What is the date for starting that goal? What are the steps you are going to take to complete it? When will you finish it?

Activity 3

One of the best ways to reinforce the concept of prioritizing is to apply the question that made time management expert Alan Lakein famous, author of the classic *How to Get Control of Your Time and Your Life*, namely, "What is the best use of my time right now?". Consider that question and your answer. Write your answer here:

Consider what you spent yesterday doing. How much time did you spend on the activity that you have just written is the best use of your time? Write down the amount of time you spent here.

_____ minutes/hours

Was that enough time? What stopped you from spending more time on this activity? What will you do differently later today or tomorrow to spend more time on this key activity? Use the space that follows to write down your plan.

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Resources

<http://www.timeman.com>

Website for time management expert and trainer Peter Turla who is also the president of the National Management Institute.

Here are several online products for help with goal setting that I learned about from an article posted at the website <http://writerswin.com/>.

- ▶ StickK

www.stickk.com

Based on the concept of a commitment contract, this program was co-founded by Yale University professors including economics professor Dean Karlan. Although the examples at the site are based on quite hefty financial incentives, you could certainly use the concept with less costly rewards.

- ▶ Achievr

www.achievr.biz

Based on a four-step program:

1. Set your goals.
2. Check S.M.A.R.T. criteria (S: Specific, M: Measureable, A: Achievable, R: Relevant, T: Time bound.)
3. Review your goals.
4. Track your progress.

- ▶ Weekly planner for effective people

www.weekplan.net

Inspired by Covey's *7 Habits of Highly Effective People* and Allen's *Getting Things Done*.

- ▶ Lifetick

www.lifetick.com

Fee-based service developed by an Australian company in 2008, Meridian 86, that is also based on the S.M.A.R.T. criteria for goal setting.

Summary

Here are the top ideas in this chapter:

- By setting short- and long-term goals and prioritizing what project you should be working on now, you should feel more in control of what you should be doing as well as what you want to accomplish in the near and far future.
- As goal experts E.A. Locke and G.P. Latham point out, to have the biggest positive impact on productivity a goal needs to be difficult, specific, and measurable.
- There are reasons why you should prioritize a project or a task. Be clear about what is driving your decision about what to do now so you make the best use of your time.

> 4

Getting Organized

Note to Trainer:

If you haven't given your attendees a break so far in the all-day or half-day training, now is a good time to give them a 10 minute break to stretch, place or return phone calls, check their smartphone for e-mails or text messages, or grab a cold beverage or cup of coffee or tea.

This module on getting organized will cover the following topics:

- Organizing your day: the value of routine
- Organizing principles to apply to your things including equipments, tools, and other objects
- Causes of disorder and how you can overcome it
- Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- Clearing the clutter
- Organizing your office or workspace
- Creating a filing system that is organized
- Making the most of commuting time
- Business travel tips

Getting organized is a way of taking control of your activities as well as your work space. It leads to greater efficiency than having papers all around or going from task to task without organization.

Organizing your day: the value of routine

Let's start off with the more macro concern: organizing your day. We can go from there to the more micro concerns of what to do with the clutter on your desk.

System administrator and author of *Time Management for System Administrators*, Thomas A. Limoncelli, is a big advocate of developing routines and having those routines become habits. That concept is right up there in *Time Management Principles*, the very first chapter of Limoncelli's book.

So the first step in having better organization in your job is to take control of how you organize your day. If possible, create a routine that works for you. Start with when you will get up each day and when you will get to work each day. Are you allowing yourself enough time in the morning to get ready, including having breakfast? No time to exercise? Maybe taking a walk or going running for just twenty minutes in the morning will be your solution.

Perhaps you have discovered that if you get to work an hour before everyone else, it is nice and quiet at that time in the morning. Perhaps that's your best time to do the concentrated work that is your number 1 priority for your day. Checking e-mail, returning e-mails, and other chores or tasks that take less concentration can be done in your second hour or later in the day when you're looking for something less taxing to do.

The key is to turn how you organize your day, especially if you're trying something new and it seems to be increasing your productivity, into a routine so you don't have to think about it. It becomes second nature and, along with the new routine, will provide you with increased productivity.

When you leave work each day, if you work in an office, you might benefit from the routine related to traffic patterns in your area. If you drive to and from work, and there are times when the traffic is more manageable, if it is possible to adjust your departure, and arrival, times accordingly, you might cut down on your commuting time.

We discussed using your energy highs and lows and your work style preferences in *Chapter 2, How Efficient Are You? Self-awareness of Your Body and Work Style*. Apply what you learned about yourself to your work day, evenings, and weekends.

Do you need to get more organized?

Quiz: signs of disorder

Take the following quiz and see how many of the following typical signs of disorder you can relate to. Answer the following questions with *yes* or *no* and keep track of your answers.

Q1. I misplace a file at least once a week.

1. Yes
2. No

Q2. I misplace my car keys, house keys, or eyeglasses more than once in a great while.

1. Yes
2. No

Q3. I regularly misplace a phone number or the name of someone I need or want to contact.

1. Yes
2. No

Q4. I find myself going to a meeting without a key file because I could not find it in time.

1. Yes
2. No

Q5. I wonder, "What should I be doing now?"

1. Yes
2. No

Q6. I find out that someone I want to impress is going to be visiting my office, and it takes more than 20 minutes to first clean up my desk.

1. Yes
2. No

Q7. I can't remember the last time I saw the top of my desk.

1. Yes
2. No

Q8. I would send out a mailing to my key clients or customers, but since I have not been maintaining my database on a regular basis, I first have to find and/or update that information.

1. Yes
2. No

Q9. I can't find the file stored in my computer that is the most recent version of a document I have been writing.

1. Yes
2. No

Q10. I burst out with, "Why can't I find anything that I need?" on a regular basis.

1. Yes
2. No

Q11. I pay late fees on credit cards because I get my payment in too late more than once a year.

1. Yes
2. No

Q12. I discover that I've made two appointments for the same time.

1. Yes
2. No

This self-quiz has been reprinted from *Work Less, Do More* by Jan Yager (Sterling, 2008; 2nd edition, Hannacroix Creek Books, 2012)

Evaluating your answers

If you answered *yes* to two or more questions, you are surrounded and consumed by disorder that is slowing you down and decreasing the joy in your life, as well as potentially sabotaging your ability to do things effectively and efficiently. If you had three to five positive responses, you are in such a state of disorder that it's probably increasing your stress level. If you had six or more *yes* answers, you are so chronically disorganized that it may be jeopardizing your job as well as seriously impacting how you handle your time as you spend more and more minutes, hours, and even days searching for missing files or rewriting letters or reports that you already finished but cannot locate.

Activity for training session

Ask your attendees to turn to the person next to them and for the next 3 minutes, ask them to share about what is the most disorganized part of their office, their things, or their day that they want to change. After 3 minutes, have them switch and their partner gets to talk. At the end of the exercise, depending on the size of the group, either go around the room and get input from all the attendees, or if the group is very large, just ask for a few volunteers to share. Write their answers on the white or black board or flip chart at the front of the room. Ask all the attendees to comment on the answers that you're receiving. Is that also their problem? What are some possible causes of that situation? What are some of the solutions?

Causes of disorder and how you can overcome it

Here are the most common reasons for disorder:

- You're too busy to stop and organize your day or your "things."
- You don't see getting organized as part of your job. You see it as something that you'll do *when I have time*.

- You share your space with one or more individuals who are the disorganized ones, not you.
- Till now, you weren't even aware that being disorganized—not having routines in place or control over your work environment—might be having a negative impact on how productive you are at work.
- You have a psychological need to hold on to things to the point of being a hoarder. (If you are a hoarder, you may need to consult an expert in hoarding or even a psychotherapist or psychiatrist if you have an extreme case).
- You have **Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)**.
- You have **Attention Deficit Trait (ADT)**.

Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

ADHD is the acronym for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder which is a medical condition that Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD®) estimates to affect 9 percent of children and 4 percent of adults in just the U.S. The American Psychiatric Association in its Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, fifth edition (DSM-S), according to the 3-page fact sheet, "ADHD and the DSM 5 developed by CHADD and its National Resource Center on AD/HD, lists symptoms that could be present in either children (six or more symptoms) or adults 17 and older (having a minimum of five symptoms) to get the diagnosis of ADHD for the two main types, inattentive presentation or hyperactive-impulsive presentation. For inattentive presentation, the symptoms include the following, according to CHADD: "Fails to give close attention to details or makes careless mistakes; has difficulty sustaining attention; does not appear to listen; struggles to follow through on instructions; has difficulty with organization; avoids or dislikes tasks requiring a lot of thinking; loses things; is easily distracted; is forgetful in daily activities."

Here are the symptoms CHADD lists for Hyperactive-impulsive presentation: "Fidgets with hands or feet or squirms in chair; Has difficulty remaining seated; Runs about or climbs excessively in children; extreme restlessness in adults; Difficulty engaging in activities quietly; Acts as if driven by a motor; adults will often feel inside like they were driven by a motor; talks excessively; blurts out answers before questions have been completed; difficulty waiting or taking turns."

CHADD notes there is a third presentation which is a combined inattentive and hyperactive-impulsive presentation where a child or adult "Has symptoms from both of the above presentations." What does this mean for someone who has ADHD in terms of being more productive and efficient? Treatment, including medication, is available to help those diagnosed with ADHD so that they will have improved concentration and organization.

Note to trainer: This condition is something for you or the participants in your training session to keep in mind if anyone exhibits enough of the above noted symptoms that you or your trainee suspect ADHD might be the cause. Help is available for those who have ADHD; getting the necessary help might be necessary to see the changes in how those individuals handle their time and project.

Attention Deficit Trait (ADT)

This is a condition that was named by psychiatrist Edward M. Hallowell, who is also the founder of the Hallowell Centers for Cognitive and Emotional Health. In his article, *Overloaded Circuits*, Hallowell defines ADT, a term he invented, as the condition with these key symptoms: distractibility, inner frenzy, and impatience.

What is the cause of ADT, according to Dr. Hallowell?, *Brain overload* or *doing too much at once*, because the brain can only focus on so many projects, concerns, clients, or patients at once before you get ADT, or the feeling of being frenzied and out of control of your life.

Here are Hallowell's three suggestions for controlling ADT:

- Foster positive emotions
- Take physical care of your brain
- Organize for ADT

Hallowell says that by connecting face-to-face with people throughout your day, you will foster positive emotions. I also suggest that those people, as much as possible, are positive people who make you feel inspired, motivated, and uplifted rather than downtrodden and sad.

Hallowell's proposals for organizing for ADT include keeping part of your desk clear at *all times* as well as devoting part of your day for *thinking and planning*. Take note of the suggestions I offer in the following section about how to make your office more effective, which could be useful to you in carrying out this *organizing for ADT* recommendation.

Organizing principles to apply to your things

These principles will help your attendees be more organized in where they put and retrieve the items they need in order to perform their work.

Here are some effective ways to organize yourself and your materials:

- Organize by a principle: by date (chronologically), by category, by file color, or alphabetically.
- Rearrange your materials so that files or books related to current, active projects are close at hand, as well as supplies you use every day.
- Group similar tasks together. (See the Repetitive Tasks Organizer box.)

- Eliminate clutter: Discard, give away, pass along, recycle, or sell unnecessary items.
- Make a commitment to getting and staying organized as part of your job, not something you will do when you get around to it.
- Have a master appointment book or calendar where you record all your upcoming meetings. You can keep a paper appointment book, use your smartphone, or any of the free or fee-based scheduling apps, software, or websites that are available. Whatever system you use, have everything in one place. Avoid having a business and a social appointment book or calendar or you may find yourself unwittingly scheduling a business trip and buying non-refundable airline tickets when you discover you'll be leaving the day before your daughter's ballet recital and you could have flown out a day or two later if you had just been more aware of your scheduling conflict. <https://www.timecenter.com/> is an online appointment scheduling system that offers a free one month trial. Google offers a free online calendar, <https://www.google.com/calendar/m>, which has its advocates. <https://www.toggl.com/> is another free online scheduling alternative.
- Whether you use an electronic or a paper organizer, use this central place to store phone numbers and reminders and to schedule projects and appointments, both business and personal, since each will probably impact on the other.
- If you use an electronic appointment book or organizer, back up your data.
- Everything in its place and, if you remove something to use, such as a stapler, a scissors, or a file folder (if you're still doing paper filing), put it back in the original place.
- Keep the things you need regularly nearby and move anything that you rarely need to retrieve to another location. (You might, however, intentionally keep something you often use, like a hole puncher or a stapler, far away if getting up and walking across the room will force you to get much-needed exercise.)
- Have at least one replacement item for the key things you need to perform your work duties so you will not be caught off guard when you run out. This includes everything from staples and printer replacement ink cartridges to mending tape or batteries. (If you have someone at your company who handles supplies, just make sure you let them know what your needs are on an ongoing basis.)
- Save to at least three places, if possible, including secure cloud or backup flash or travel drive that will enable you to work anywhere. (IT professionals I interviewed praised Google drive as a place to locate their appointment calendars and files although you need to research if that is a preferable system for you and your company.)
- As you'll see in the section in clutter, the more "things" you have to go through, the more time you spend looking for something. So prune down what physical things you have to go through as well as having an efficient and lean electronic and/or paper filing system that you regularly sort through.
- Take the time to create a system or at least write down where key papers or "things" are, so if you are unavailable someone else could locate everything without your help.

Organizing your desk

Now let's look at how you're going to organize what's on your desk: your stapler, books, open files, family photos, and any knick knacks. In theory, removing as many distracting objects as possible will help you to be more focused. But having at least one family photo may remind you why you're working so hard and to help you feel more connected during the work day.

I personally don't mind having a lot of open books or files on my desk when I'm hard at work. It helps me to find and use materials faster than if I put everything away. In my case, you can tell by looking at my desk if I'm working on a project or "between projects." But if someone was visiting my office, even if I was working on a project, I would put everything away so I would have a clear and neat desk. That's not so much for my own needs but there is this pretty universal assumption that if you have a messy desk, you must be disorganized.

As long as you can find everything on your desk and it doesn't get out of hand, a little bit of clutter won't hurt you. But you do have to consider how others will view you if you have a cluttered desk especially if you have books and equipment on the floor around your desk. That creates a visually unappealing look but is also potentially a hazardous situation if you or a co-worker risk falling over the material strewn around your work space.

Clearing the clutter

You can basically do the following with your stuff:

- Sort it and reorganize it
- Share it by donating or gifting
- Shred it and toss it
- Sell it
- Salvage (recycle)

Here are some items and solutions to dealing with that kind of clutter.

Clutter	Solution
Papers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Recycle■ File■ Scan and store electronically
Files	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Sort through■ Recycle or shred those you do not need■ Move those you want to keep offsite
Magazines	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Donate■ Recycle

Clutter	Solution
Books	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Donate ■ Gift or pass along ■ Swap
Furniture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Sell ■ Donate

Does clutter have a positive side?

Before you get rid of everything on your desk, consider what researchers at the University of Minnesota discovered when they conducted several experiments in the U.S. and the Netherlands to see the impact of clutter. They compared the behavior in a few ways between those who had a tidy environment versus those whose surroundings were more cluttered.

The tidy environment tended to lead to making better food choices—an apple over a piece of candy—and being more generous about giving to charity.

But those who had a more cluttered environment tended to be more creative and to think more outside of the box.

Lee Dye, who shared the research findings of lead author psychologist Kathleen Vohs in the column through *Good Morning America*, posted on August 11, 2013, shared her own experience with how one world renowned scientist dealt with clutter:

"Years ago I was fortunate to spend three days with Linus Pauling, including one day at his estate on California's Big Sur coastline, which he bought with the winnings from his second Nobel Prize. I was eager to see the living room in his home, because I had read that he wrote many of his scores of research papers while standing at a grand piano.

But when I entered the room, I had trouble even finding the piano. Files and research notes were stacked from floor to ceiling around the entire room. I finally spotted one leg of the piano, which was also covered with papers.

Only one corner of the piano had enough vacant space for the old chemist to stand and share his wisdom.

Apparently, other things were more important to him than tidiness."

The good news is that since it does take time to go through your clutter and reorganize your office, if you can't get to it this minute, it is not as bad as it used to be considered to have a bit of a messy work area.

Organizing your office or workspace

Having a space where you can function well is key to maximizing what you accomplish when you're in that space. Of course, not everyone has total control over their workspace. If you have a home-based office, or if you're the owner of the company that you work for outside of your home, you'll probably have a lot more say about furniture, equipment, and even what you can hang on the walls than if you're a typical employee.

But everyone has *some* control over their office space, even if it's just what's kept on your desk, whether or not there are piles of papers on it, or how the desk is positioned within your office. How to create and maintain an effective office filing system will be discussed in the following sections. At this point, let's address key considerations for organizing your office.

I first learned about the value of using a chair or desk designed with ergonomics in mind when researching my book *Making Your Office Work for You*. Fortunately, ergonomically designed office furniture—designed to boost productivity by improving the user's comfort—is much less expensive than it used to be, and its benefits to improving comfort and productivity for those who sit a lot are more widely appreciated today. Now, you can get a chair for less than \$ 100 that is designed according to ergonomic standards, so you are less likely to get a backache.

To help yourself work more efficiently, look at your current office chair. Is it ergonomically designed or are you sitting on a straight back chair that is more typical for a kitchen table? Some ergonomic chairs include padded sections and movable parts that adjust to your back or arms. In general, if your chair is in one piece—if it looks more like the kind of chair you would more likely find at a kitchen or a dining room table than at a desk in an office—it's probably not an ergonomically designed chair. If the chair is not ergonomically designed, consider replacing it with one that is if you want to increase your productivity and decrease the likelihood of a chair-related backache.

In addition to organizing your office so the furniture meets ergonomic standards, you might want to consider the impact that color has on your efficiency. Of course everyone reacts differently to color. So consider what colors promote *your* concentration and focus? Do you find a beige or white wall more soothing than a bold color? What about lighting?

There are entire books on the topic of organizing your office, but, for starters, look at the space where you work. When's the last time you looked at your office space and organized it for effectiveness and efficiency? Who originally set up your office, and when? Was there a master plan?

Where are the windows, if there is one? What is near the window? Your desk? A filing cabinet? A cabinet?

Now consider what you would prefer to do with your office. Perhaps you want to move your desk in front of the window. You know if you are the type of person who needs to be in front of a window. You will not look out the window as a distraction. But without sunlight during the day, you may feel more restricted or confined which would cause you to be less productive.

Do you want to add more shelves to display items or store books? Or do you want to take away shelves, or add another desk, or, if you have enough room, perhaps a sofa instead of two chairs? What counts is that your office, whether it is a separate room with a door, a cubicle in the midst of a huge room with dozens of other co-workers nearby, or a desk in the corner of your living room, needs to be organized so you will be as efficient as possible for your particular job.

Creating a filing system that is organized

As we finally truly move to a paperless office, it's becoming more of a question of making sure all your data is backed up and that you can find and retrieve electronic documents days, months, years, or even decades down the road.

Back up often and back up to multiple sources such as an external hard drive, a cloud that you purchase, or even a cloud that is part of the software or operating system that your computer is using.

For those who are still using paper, your file system has to be just that, a system. If you are out for a day or longer, or if you leave the company, those who take over for you, temporarily or permanently, need to be able to find what you have filed.

You also want to make sure that you file the letters or documents that you need to store right away. Letting lots of papers pile up on your desk is a practice that can lead to misplacing the paper, and the time-consuming search for each and every one can literally waste hours of time. But it is also a lot less daunting a task to do a little at a time than if massive amounts of paper need to be filed all at once.

As we head toward the paperless office, what is the preferred way to deal with paper today, like receipts or the occasional document that was not generated by your own computer? One solution is to scan the paper through the use of a system like the one made by The Neat Company. They have a series of scanners that make it easy to scan receipts and other pieces of paper into digital files that are stored on your computer or on a cloud.

Remember that there are definitely benefits of having everything stored digitally, since it means less paper, less clutter, and taking up less physical space in your office. But you have to be careful to back up your digital files in more than one place since you may not have any hard copy paper copies anymore. If the digital files crash or get erased, you will lack any duplicates. So back up on a combination of at least two different places where your data is stored such as one or two clouds, on a hard drive, an external drive, or a flash drive.

If you still want to have a paper filing system, make sure you put time into not just setting up your filing system by a principle that you use consistently, such as alphabetically, by color, or chronologically. But prune your files on a regular basis or you can find the space you need for your files and file cabinets expanding. By failing to go through your files on a regular basis and keeping the files lean and easier to go through, you are also giving yourself more paper to sort through in search of what really matters.

Make a note

Activity for training session:



Divide the group into smaller groups of four. Give out various types of items, or cut up pieces of paper, that need to be organized. Give each group 10 minutes to decide how to organize the materials. Have a discussion about what their thought process was in deciding how to organize the materials. Also point out that by dividing into groups and doing the task as a group, this activity emphasizes that practically everything we do is a combination of the work itself as well as the relationships that may directly or indirectly impact on our work, from the manager who assigns the work, to the co-worker that we might work with, to the client, customer, or service providers that we depend on.

Creating a routine/repetitive tasks organizer

Do you perform tasks regularly that you could be organizing more efficiently, rather than reinventing the wheel each time you do them? For example, do you have a master list of upcoming meetings or dates that you can incorporate into your planning calendar going forward, so you can budget your time accordingly? Are there supplies that you or your assistant have to reorder regularly? If so, do you have those specifics noted so that you don't need to keep looking up preferred brand names, quantities, and order information? Do you have a system for regularly updating, backing up, scanning, or purging paper or electronic files? Make a master list of tasks for yourself like the following one:

Tasks done daily:

Tasks done weekly:

Tasks done monthly:

Tasks done semi-annually:

Tasks done yearly:

Two common ways that your attendees can become more productive is by better organization of the time they take to get to and from work or, if they have to travel for business on a regular or occasional basis, improving their business travel time. In the two sections that follow, *Making the most of commuting time* and *Business travel tips* your attendees may discover some ideas that will enhance their travel time productivity.

Making the most of commuting time

Kathy Harris, founder of Harris Allied, an executive search firm that recruits for the IT industry, recommends using commuting time to keep up with your field. She wants to recruit those in the field and executives who are "really passionate about technology." She continues:

"They're always going to be reading, they're always going to be learning. Do you have a github account? Have you ever worked with stack overflow <http://stackoverflow.com/>, a Q & A site for programmers?"

What are you reading? What was the last thing that you read from an industry perspective or from a career perspective? What's the last thing you read that had a big impact?"

I think it's tough sometimes for people to see the forest for the trees. I know you have a lot to do and everyone is busy. [But] to be competitive in the market you need to be aware of what's going on in your industry. When we run an internal training program, we give our people reading material [including] a list of articles that we have available to them through our website or through our internal resources. We recommend everyone spends time reading. Everyone in the city spends time on the subway, on a bus or on a ferry. Carve out pieces of time during the day and stay on top of things. You could designate your ride in the morning for reading even if you're just reading the headlines in the Wall Street Journal or an article that's relevant. It doesn't have to be a book but you'll be investing in yourself and staying on top of things."

What else can you do with your commuting time besides reading?

- Meditate
- Commute with one or more friends so you get some socializing time
- Listen to music
- Listen to books as audiobooks instead of reading
- Catch up on TV programs you've missed or watch movies
- Catch up on your social media
- Send or receive e-mails or text messages
- Surf the Internet for useful information
- Take an online self-paced educational course
- As long as you're not in a quiet car, or driving, make or receive phone calls
- Consider your short-term and long-term goals and re-evaluate each one
- Observe others and see what you can learn from them about what they are doing with their commuting time

Business travel tips

Commuting time is usually done regularly and for as little as 10 to 20 minutes to as long as two or more hours, depending on weather and traffic conditions. But business travel can take as much as 12 hours or an entire day or even longer especially if you have to get a connecting flight, you're going to another continent, or half-way or all the way around the world.

Here are some suggestions to make your business travel more productive:

- As far in advance as possible, or certainly as soon as you find out that you are going to a new place for a business trip, if you do not have friends or colleagues who can give you information about your destination, contact local people before you arrive. Your government embassy is one place to start as well as the local travel bureau which probably has a website that you can access before you leave home. In addition to the official information you can read on a website, you should e-mail or talk with locals who can give you an insider's view of what you need to know to make your trip as pleasant, successful, and safe as possible.
- Since your computer, table, or smartphone might run out of battery life, to make your trip as pleasant as possible, also bring along something to read in case you can't access your electronic equipment.
- Although most airlines may have headsets to listen to music or to watch a movie or TV if they provide that service, not all trains or buses may offer that equipment so pack your own. If you forget to pack a headset, you can usually buy one at the airport.
- Arrive at least a day early for a domestic trip; 2 days early if you are traveling internationally, especially to Asia. Use that time to adjust to the time zone changes, the food, and exploring where you have traveled to. Use the time also to prepare for any meetings or presentations that you will be doing.
- Use the trip to catch up with old friends or colleagues or make new ones. Those meaningful relationships will make you feel that your time (and money) spent traveling in person is worth it.
- Take one or more days, and if you're going far enough away, as long as a week, and explore the city, or country, that you've traveled to. You might not get back to this part of the world again and it might even help you appreciate the people and the culture, which might make the project you're working on go more smoothly.
- Take the time to keep the home office, as well as the home front, up on your itinerary and your trip. Staying in communication can make a big difference in how you are still perceived back at the office if you are away for a couple of days or a week or two.
- Especially if someone else is picking up some or all of the tab for your trip, make sure you keep them informed about your activities. They're not *checking up on you* as much as they want to be kept in the loop.

- Keep track of all of your spending, including getting receipts, especially for cash purchases, whether you put the receipts in an envelope or have another system for entering the information on a daily basis. It will save you a lot of time when you return from your trip, since down the road, you won't have to try to track down information or documentation that you lack. (The Neat Company even makes a portable scanner with a carrying case for those who want to stay more organized digitally on the road.)
- Be careful about what you share about a business trip on social media including Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. You don't want to brag too much about how much fun you're having. Share in a way that is professional, informative, and "engaging" rather than just self-serving.
- Pack light.
- Have a rolling suitcase so you won't hurt your back.

Activities

Here are several activities for your attendees to do related to this chapter. The activities begin at a more elementary level, with the second activity more intermediary, and the third for someone who has more advanced time management skills. But you can also have everyone do all three activities if you like.

Activity 1

Look around your office. Consider where you sit. What do you face? A wall? A window? Is that optimal for you? Look at your chair. Is it an ergonomic chair that gives you the best support for your back so you can be as productive as possible? What about your desk? Is it a kitchen table or an actual desk? What's on top of it? What's around it?

Use the following space to draw an alternative organization plan for your office, even if your office is the corner of the living room. Look over your drawing and see if you think you should rearrange furniture and then consider implementing your new plan.



Activity 2

Think about your day and the kinds of tasks that you have to do. What tasks are so routine that you might be able to seek out software or an app that would help you to automate that task, if you're not doing that already?

Do you have a set schedule for how your morning goes? If not, see whether creating a morning routine that you will stick to and make a habit of could be a time saver for you.

Activity 3

Divide your workshop attendees into groups of four. Give each group a topic from the following topics:

- Organizing your desk
- Organizing your office
- Getting rid of your clutter
- Making the most of your commuting time
- Preparing for a business trip to another country

Ask each group to select a note taker for the group as well as a presenter. Then give them 5 minutes to discuss their topic and create a way that they will present their best ideas to the rest of the group. Let them know that they will be expected to give one to two minute overview of the best ideas when it is their turn to present.

Set your timer or keep track of the time on your watch or on a wall clock.

When the time is up, have at least one group present on each of the five topics. After all the presentations are done, ask the group to discuss which of the groups they thought presented most effectively and why. Ask the groups and the training attendees to discuss what they learned from both the exercise and the presentations that they just heard that is useful. What ideas that were shared in the training were reinforced? What new ideas were offered? Did brainstorming together help the learning process? Did anyone in their group, or did any of the groups in particular, pay attention to how they organized their discussion as well as their presentation? Whether a presentation was organized as important as the content that was shared?

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 - *Put More Time on Your Side*, Hannacroix Creek Books. 2014.
 - *Work Less, Do More: The 14-Day Productivity Makeover*. 2nd edition, Hannacroix Creek Books. 2012. Sterling. 2008.

Resources

- *Ad-In of Plymouth (Attention Deficit Information Network)*
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/AD-In-of-Plymouth-Attention-Deficit-Information-Network/148709321836404?sk=info>
Massachusetts-based; founded in 1980.
- *Attention Deficit Information Network (Ad-IN)*
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/AD-In-of-Plymouth-Attention-Deficit-Information-Network/148709321836404?sk=info>
Massachusetts-based; founded in 1980.

- CHADD® (Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder)

www.CHADD.org

A national non-profit membership organization with more than 12,000 members, headquartered in Maryland, founded in 1987, offering support and information about ADHD in children and adults

(See related listing below for its National Resource Center on ADHD.)
- National Association of Professional Organizations (NAPO)

<http://www.napo.net/>

Membership organization of thousands of professional organizers who will organize your home or office for a fee. There is a blog of posts related to organizing at their site.
- Hallowell Centers

<http://www.hallowellcenter.org>

Founded by physician and ADHD expert Edward Hallowell, M.D., there are Hallowell Centers in New York City, Sudbury, Massachusetts, Seattle, Washington, and San Francisco, California.
- Hallowell, Edward M. *Overloaded Circuits*. Reprinted in *On Managing Yourself* (HBR's 10 Must Reads) Harvard Business Review Press. 2010 (Originally Published in January 2005).
- *National Association of Professional Organizations (NAPO)*

<http://www.napo.net/>

Membership organization of thousands of professional organizers who will organize your home or office for a fee. There is a blog related to organizing on their site.
- Unclutter

<http://unclutterer.com/>

A blog devoted to personal observations and research related to clutter.

Here are a few of the many online scheduling apps or websites that you can consider using if you don't like a paper calendar which is actually still my personal preference [For the last few years, I have favored using the oversized 8-1/2x11 DayMinder® Weekly Appointment Book, produced by Mead Products (<http://www.ataglance.com/>). that organizes my weekdays into 15 minute "slots" from 7 a.m. till 9:45 p.m., Saturdays from 7 till 6:45, and a place to include Sunday activities]:

- TimeCenter

<https://www.timecenter.com/>

Offers a free one month trial

- Google calendar
<https://www.google.com/calendar/m>
- Toggl
<https://www.toggl.com/>
Free online scheduling alternative
- The Neat Company
<http://neat.com>
Manufacturer of various scanners that help to digitally file paper to your computer or to a cloud

Summary

Here are the top ideas in this chapter:

- Being organized includes having a way of going about your day, the bigger picture, as well as how you organize the little things, down to where you put your paper clips.
- Commuting time can be golden time for catching up on your reading and making sure you're aware of the trends and breakthroughs in your industry.
- Business travel can be one of the most rewarding aspects of your job. Used wisely, even though you may be at airports or in transit for hours or days at a time, it can be the highlight of your work.

> 5

Identifying and Overcoming the Top 15 Time Wasters

Note to Trainer:

This chapter/module on identifying and overcoming the top time wasters covers the following 15 time wasters:

- Procrastination
- Perfectionism
- Poor planning
- Poor pacing
- Failure to delegate
- Doing too much at once
- Complaining
- E-mail addiction
- Internet surfing
- Fear of success
- Fear of failure
- Depression
- Over-valuing or under-valuing your worth
- Jealousy
- Blaming others

Recognizing and understanding what the most common time wasters are and how to deal with each one is an excellent way to gain control of your time.

Procrastination

Procrastination means putting off something you should be doing, which is usually something you are resisting or a task you don't want to do, by doing something else that is not on your list of priorities.

Possible causes

There are entire books on procrastination, such as the classic *Overcoming Procrastination* by psychologists Albert Ellis and William Knaus, as well as the more recent *Solving the Procrastination Puzzle* by Timothy A. Pychyl. From my own research and observations, in a nutshell, the causes behind procrastination can be divided into these categories:

- Reluctance to perform the required task
- Unresolved emotional issues
- Practical constraints
- Strategic concerns
- Positive benefits of procrastination

A reluctance to perform the required task includes everything from just not wanting to do something because it's boring, repetitive of something you've done before, or because you simply would rather be doing pretty much anything else but whatever you're putting off.

Unresolved emotional issues might lead to someone have a need to get yelled at and by procrastinating and failing to deliver what they have promised to do, they do, indeed, unconsciously create the situation at work where they are very likely to get yelled at.

Other unresolved emotional issues behind procrastination, discussed in this chapter, have to do with a fear of failure and a fear of success. Since these issues will be discussed later in the chapter, I will here point out that the fear of failure can lead to a delay in completion of a task. This is because the fear of being criticized or judged relates the negative attention to procrastination, which makes it far more acceptable than the feared judgment from completing a job.

Similarly, the fear of success leads to delays because if you don't finish something you can't succeed, which can bring up complicated emotions in some.

The practical situations that might be the cause of procrastination include the "waiting on others" syndrome. If you need input from a co-worker or employee to be able to move forward with a project; your procrastination is caused by their delays, not yours, but the end result is the same: you're seen as someone who has put off finishing something.

A second practical constraint that could be the cause of procrastination is if you're overcommitted to too many projects, what looks like procrastination is actually you prioritizing what you will work on at any given moment.

Third, the strategic concerns that might account for procrastination are when a delay is actually a proactive behavior that is mislabeled as procrastination. In this case, you are actually rethinking whether you even want to do something, rather than just putting off an action or the completion of an entire project because of being either lazy or overcommitted.

Finally, the positive benefits of procrastination are that it actually forces you to slow down and delay if, in fact, you are exhausted or having poor pacing so you need to take rest.

Potential consequences

Those who procrastinate are usually seen as disorganized, lazy, and off the fast track to success. If you procrastinate, you may also find those who depend on you getting angry at you because your delays also delay them. You may be yelled at, talked about behind your back and labeled a procrastinator, and you might even, if this trait is causing you to underperform or even fail at your job, find yourself out of a job.

Ways to overcome it

There are lots of ways to overcome procrastination:

- ▶ Disliking the task that you have to do as the main reason for your procrastination requires some very positive (and stern!) self-talk. Remind yourself that you're probably spending more time feeling bad about not doing the task than the time it will take to complete it. Also remind yourself how good it's going to feel when you've done the task and it's behind you so you can go on to do other tasks you might like doing.
- ▶ Try the reward system. Give yourself a reward—and make it something that you really care about that will motivate you—and promise yourself that reward if you finish what you're procrastinating about. For example, you'll go for a movie if you finish a project
- ▶ If your procrastination is caused by an unresolved emotional conflict, you need to deal with the underlying cause. If you have an unconscious need to be yelled at or to disappoint people, you have to overcome that issue on your own or through the help of a therapist.
- ▶ If practical constraints are behind your procrastination, you have to deal directly with those individuals or issues. For example, if a co-worker or employee has not provided you with the information or materials you need to go forward, discuss it with them or, if that is not the procedure at your company, if necessary go to their manager and figure out how to deal with it. Perhaps a more realistic schedule for delivery of certain materials is necessary. Or if there is one far off deadline that everyone is working toward, perhaps several mini interim deadlines are what is needed. (We will explore this more extensively in *Chapter 8, Setting and Meeting Deadlines*, where project management is discussed.)

- If procrastination is a strategic technique, figure out why you are delaying. See this delay as the chance to obtain more information about whatever it is you are putting off. You might gather data about why you are procrastinating about a certain project. Perhaps you regret starting the project in the first place. Perhaps things have changed and it's necessary to completely redo the project or even cancel it. Maybe you're reluctant to go forward because you've learned something about the individuals you would be working with and the procrastination is your way of figuring out how to cancel the project before it even starts. However, just putting off dealing with the project—or procrastination—will not offer you a solution. You need to deal with the situation at hand in a proactive way and figure out what you are learning from the procrastination that can help you to either go forward or pull back.
- If procrastination is offering you the positive opportunity to take a break, instead of procrastinating and achieving a break in a passive-aggressive and negative way, schedule some rest time into your day. Now, instead of procrastinating, you are taking a 20 minute break before going back to the task at hand.
- Make whatever you're procrastinating about the first thing you do in the morning. Don't check e-mails. Don't make phone calls. Get right to the project you're putting off and make progress on it, or finish it—depending on the length or complexity of the project—and then go on to other daily concerns or new priorities.
- Try creative procrastination. This is a concept I introduced in my first book on time management, *Creative Time Management*, published in 1984, and I explored that concept again in my next book, *Creative Time Management for the New Millennium*. Here is what I first wrote about creative procrastination in *Creative Time Management*.

Creative procrastination allows you to deviate from your ideal of working sequentially, from task to task, until you're done, but you may get the job done in the same, or even less, time. This method requires flexibility in your approach to your tasks (and it may not work in all situations), but for projects comprised of numerous steps it can help you to conquer a seeming insurmountable tendency to delay.

Creative procrastination means that you're doing a priority task, either related to a specific project you're procrastinating about, or another key project, and you do that other key task or project. In that way, you're moving along the completion of necessary and priority tasks so you are more likely to succeed rather than delaying with a frivolous or non-priority distraction, such as making a personal phone call to someone because you're procrastinating. The person you're calling might even get annoyed at you because now you're putting them in the situation of procrastinating when they really want to be working! With creative procrastination, let's say you have a report to do, and you're putting off writing the introduction. Instead of doing something completely unrelated to the report, you work on the report's bibliography, or you gather more research so when you do write the introduction, it will be even better.

- Allow for delays. Tell yourself, "I'll take half an hour to make some calls or walk around outside."
- If you force yourself to start the project that you're putting off and tell yourself, "I'll only work on it for half an hour," you may find yourself getting involved in what you're doing and that you are back on track with less resistance toward it.

Perfectionism

Perfectionism is when you're striving for an unreasonable standard that cannot be achieved rather than being pleased by striving for, and meeting, a level of excellence that is possible.

Possible causes

If you had parents who told you when you got 98 on a test that only 100 was a good score, you might grow up having a problem with perfectionism. If you are always comparing yourself to others who seem to be much more competent than you are, you may be setting yourself up for perfectionism by not focusing on what you do achieve.

Potential consequences

The self-hate that perfectionists often feel because they fail to achieve the unattainable perfection that they seek makes it hard for them to enjoy what they do accomplish. They are often unhappy and dissatisfied people, which makes it hard to be around them, especially since others see their achievements and wonder why that's not enough.

If a perfectionist is in a managing or boss role, they may drive their employees to an extreme degree, seeking from them the perfection they need for themselves. In that way, they may find employee turnover is high since perfectionistic bosses can be difficult to take or, if employees do hang around, there may be a lot more worker dissatisfaction than there needs to be.

Ways to overcome it

To overcome perfectionism, you can:

- Face that you're a perfectionist rather than being defensive about it if others tell you that you're a perfectionist (and not in a good way).
- Work on the underlying reasons for your perfectionism. If necessary, seek out help from a trained professional on the causes.
- Accept that no one, including you, is absolutely perfect, and that's okay.

- Try to catch yourself when you're falling into an unrealistic perfectionist mindset. If someone pays you a compliment about something you've achieved, and instead of simply saying "Thank you," you respond with, "But..." listing the reasons it could have been better, make note of when you do that. Until you're able to just say "Thank you" when someone compliments your excellent performance, make note of your tendency to focus on the "half empty" rather than the "half full" of what you do.
- Delegate. By accepting that someone can do specific jobs for you, perhaps not exactly the way you would do it but maybe at least well enough or almost as well as you—you will free up all that time and energy for other pursuits.

Poor planning

By planning, you have control over what you are going to do and when you are going to do it. Poor planning is the exact opposite: you fail to make effective plans and attend to your day, and your time each day, so instead you approach your day and your projects in a disorganized and unplanned way. Being prepared is the cornerstone of excellent planning. Poor planning means that you are unprepared and taken off guard by what others are expecting of you because you failed to do your homework in advance.

Possible causes

You just may have never learned the tools for more effectively planning so it could be a question of having fallen into some bad habits. Or you may find it hard to say "no" so you find yourself overcommitted and trying to do too much at once rather than having a plan for each day that puts you in control. (See the section on the time waster, *Doing Too Much at Once*, for help with saying "no.") Being disorganized is another possible cause of poor planning. Effective planning means you have to figure out what is required of you by people and projects, and budget time and resources to meet those expectations in a way that shows forethought.

Potential consequences

Planning increases the likelihood you will reach your goals because you are clear in what you want to achieve and how you will go about accomplishing it. Poor planning, by contrast, means that you are more likely to miss achieving your goals, or at least in as timely a fashion as you might have done. Another consequence of poor planning is that you may be more inconsistent in how you approach a particular project or your job in general leading to less than exemplary results. Another probable consequence of poor planning is that you are taken off guard more than if you had planned for a range of possible outcomes in situations and projects. Success is harder to achieve without adequate planning.

Ways to overcome it

You can overcome poor planning by doing the following:

- ▶ Whenever you now begin a new project, make sure there is a solid plan, with interim realistic deadlines, not just one major deadline far off in the future, that can help you to plan better. (Note to Trainer: You can also tell the workshop attendees that you will deal more with this topic in *Chapter 8, Setting and Meeting Deadlines* workshop chapter/module.)
- ▶ Create a plan that is tied to a specific or recurring event. For example, you could start to use the Sunday night each week as the time to set out your plan for the next week, day by day, with specific goals for each day and to achieve by the end of the work week.
- ▶ Work with coaches or experts who can help you to create a specific plan with concrete deadlines to get you back on track.
- ▶ Make a list of the consequences of poor planning to you personally, such as missing out on attending someone's party because you still had to finish up a report that was due, and see how you could have planned your time better so that won't happen in the future.
- ▶ Reinforce that planning is a positive trait and behavior, not a sign of being overly controlling or rigid.

Poor pacing

Pacing is how you space out your day so that you are working in a way that includes regular rest time for mental and physical rest as well as for eating. Even if it's just taking a break of a few minutes now and then to stand up and stretch, you can cut down on the increase in errors or greater likelihood of an accident that research has shown may happen if you try to work straight through for hours upon hours without a break. Poor pacing also includes failing to get enough sleep at night so you have enough rest so you can perform well.

Possible causes

Poor pacing is caused by those who don't plan for rests or for food and nourishment. There are those who have a more frenzied personality so regular pacing is a new habit that they have to implement. Others start off a project with appropriate pacing but then, as the deadline looms, they falsely assume that working around the clock and having poor pacing will help them to achieve their goal. (Yes, of course it may help to get to the finish line, but, as noted in the next section *Potential consequences*, there are many consequences to that poor pacing.)

Potential consequences

Failing to take breaks throughout the day can lead to a greater likelihood of errors in the work itself or even accidents if you are exhausted and trip over something in your way that you might have noticed if you were not so tired. Poor pacing can lead to being grumpy or downright angry because you have not allowed yourself to rest and replenish. Failing to pace yourself, including not taking time for a vacation, even if it's a "staycation," the new word that has been coined to indicate when you have a vacation but do not leave home, can lead to greater physical or mental stress.

Ways to overcome it

The acronym PACING offers six ways to overcome poor pacing:

- ▶ P = Plan for efficiency breaks. Build those breaks right into your day. If necessary, even put it into your electronic or paper appointment book or organizer. (Between 11 a.m. and 11:15 p.m. I will take a break and walk around the office floor or go to the break room for a refreshment.)
- ▶ A = Aim to please yourself, first and foremost, and make taking the time to rest and replenish yourself.
- ▶ C = Concentrate and avoid distractions, which will make it easier to pace yourself because you are getting more done when you are working.
- ▶ I = I count. See time for yourself as necessary rather than a frivolous luxury.
- ▶ N = No is an okay word. Learn to say "no" to non-priority tasks of your own so you have more control over what you're doing and giving yourself the necessary breaks or rest periods that you need. If a junior staff member believes that the work their supervisor is asking them to do is too difficult or time-consuming and other projects they are already working on may suffer because of these added demands, it should be okay to postpone the additional work or delegate it to someone else who is available, without penalty.
- ▶ G = Gear up by giving yourself necessary down time. Use the weekends to do at least one fun activity, not just chores and errands. Similarly, during the work day, take the necessary short breaks from your computer screen so you can keep working throughout the day. If your company has an on-site gym, get to it even if you just walk on the treadmill for 10-15 minutes. Take a lunch break, however short it is and, if possible, get out from behind your desk to eat. Eat with a colleague and get some social interaction during the workday as a way of pacing yourself.

Failure to delegate

Those who fail to delegate want to do anything and everything themselves. It could be the most demanding tasks or the most menial ones, but those with a reluctance to delegate may want to do everything and anything themselves even if there are others who report to them or to whom they report who might be better suited to completing those other tasks. Sometimes the failure to delegate is caused by financial limitations: you or your company simply does not have the funds to hire additional personnel so you feel that doing everything yourself is the only option or things won't get done.

Possible causes

There are, of course, instances when you truly are the only one who can do something, or at least do it in the unique way you would do it so delegating does not seem to be an option. When you are one of many who could do something, and do it almost equally as well, in those instances the failure to delegate may have the emotional cause of distrusting others to do a good job. There can be the feeling of grandiosity, as in, "I'm the only one who can do this," even if that's an exaggeration. There are also the practical causes, such as you haven't taken the time to check out potential candidates to delegate to, so by default you end up doing everything yourself. There is the additional practical situation that delegating does often mean that someone has to teach the person to whom something is delegated how to do it. There is the thinking that it will probably take as long to teach someone else how to do it as it would to do it yourself, so why not just do it yourself? Of course, as noted in the next section on *Potential consequences* to failure to delegate, there are time-related results from believing that you have to do everything yourself.

Potential consequences

If you are doing things that others could do if you would just delegate, you may not be doing the one or two things that you can do better than everyone else because no one can do everything in any given day. Also, trying to do everything yourself can lead to burnout. It can also be very inefficient if you're performing tasks that someone else could do better or faster than you. New start-ups often have entrepreneurs who are doing everything themselves. At some point, however, they have to delegate certain tasks to others or the company will not be able to grow. At a traditional company, sometimes in order to move up the ladder, an IT professional has to go from doing the programming and the *hands on* work to a more managerial role.

Ways to overcome it

If you want to overcome a failure to delegate, you can:

- Pick carefully what tasks you are willing to delegate. You may actually decide you prefer to do the programming and would rather hire a business development team to perform the managerial roles. There are no hard and fast rules about what to delegate. But it is true that by trying to do it *all* by yourself, you will probably either limit your company's growth or find yourself overwhelmed by tasks and details, leading to fatigue and even spending too many hours working.
- Have a reliable screening process in place so you pick the right person to delegate to.
- Set up a system for reviewing the work of those you delegate to periodically, or have others whom you trust doing that review process, so you feel more confident that even though you are not doing it all yourself, quality control issues are being effectively dealt with.
- Delegate responsibility for the job, not just the task.
- Give credit to those you delegate to. As much as it is possible to do this—some companies, of course, have a policy that work is seen as authored or created by a *shared* collaborative group rather than specific individuals—that will create a fair and positive work environment and make it more likely that those you delegate to do optimum work because it is their reputation and image at stake not just yours and the company's.

Doing too much at once

Doing too much at once means you feel you have too many projects or tasks to handle. There is no objective number of tasks that any one person is able to handle. This is an entirely individual situation. You may be able to handle just one project at a time. Others can juggle six major projects. The key is that doing too much at once means that you feel you have too much for *you* to handle.

Possible causes

The biggest cause of doing too much at once is the inability to say *no* when new projects are offered to you or assigned to you. Of course you may not be able to say *no* easily or at all, especially if it's your boss or a major client asking you to do something. But you need to at least be able to assess when you will be able to finish what you are currently doing so you will be free to start a new project. Another cause of the "doing too much at once" syndrome is that you underestimate how long a particular project will take. Unwittingly, you stack up multiple projects because the first project takes longer but you've already said "yes" to project number two or three. And so, like in a game of dominos, your schedules and projects keep expanding and before you know it, you're overwhelmed and defaulting on all your multiple deadlines.

You may have a deep-seated need to please everyone and always say "yes" even if it's not in your best interest. You might need to work with a trained therapist to help you to become more comfortable putting yourself first for a change rather than everyone else.

Potential consequences

If you're doing too much at once, you may find it hard to focus on any one project and to keep working on it till completion. You may be seen as "overextended" and unproductive, which are not good ways to be viewed. You may also find yourself stressed, working excessively long hours, and afraid to stop and take even a break for lunch because you are doing so many things at once.

Ways to overcome it

Here are a few ways you can overcome doing too much at once:

- ▶ Simplify your goals. Decide what you absolutely have to do and force yourself, if possible, to say "no" to any requests that will take time away from that goal or send you in a different direction in terms of what you're working on.
- ▶ Try putting off someone's request. Let the person asking you know that you can't do it now but you might be able to do it down the road. Give an approximate time table. Hopefully they'll find someone who is more readily available and you can keep your focus on your priority project.
- ▶ Get more comfortable with *saying* and even hearing "no" so you'll be less likely to always need to please others by agreeing to whatever they ask you to do.
- ▶ Remind yourself what it feels like when you're overcommitted and see whether it's possible to be more aware of just how many projects or tasks you can take on before you get to the point of being overwhelmed.

Complaining

When you moan and groan about things, especially if you go on and on with your grievances, you are a complainer. Complaining is a time waster because it can negatively impact on everyone around you. It is a negative way of thinking and looking at things. Rather than focusing on the 80 percent of things that are going well, the complainer may be dwelling on the 20 percent that is disappointing.

Possible causes

Complainers are whiners, moaners, and groaners who focus on the disappointments. They were, most likely, raised by complainers, so the trait is passed on from generation to generation. A complainer is someone who feels disgruntled and dissatisfied with life. Feeling powerless and unable to actually change things, he or she complains a lot.

Potential consequences

Linda Byars Swindling, author of *Stop Complainers and Energy Drainers*, points out just one pivotal way that complaining can waste everyone's time, and even sabotage someone's career: being left out and even replaced. As Swindling explains:

"You're seen as a roadblock so you get left out of key meetings and communications. Or they'll outsource so they don't have to deal with a complainer."

What are some other ways that being a complainer wastes time? Occasional venting may let off some steam, but chronic complaining can become very debilitating to everyone around the complainer. "Enough already!" they may be thinking, or even saying. The trend today in the workplace, and what everyone is looking for, is for positive people. Someone who's positive tends to be almost the opposite of a complainer. Who would you rather be around for eight to ten hours a day? Someone who complains or someone who is positive and upbeat? You don't want to find yourself out of a job because you're a complainer.

Ways to overcome it

You can overcome complaining in the following ways:

- Remember the consequences of complaining and that it is something that might cause you to be ostracized or even lose your job.
- Make a list of the positive things associated with whatever you are tempted to complain about and focus on some or all of those pluses.
- Seek outside help if your complaining is actually a symptom of a deep-seated depression or negativity that you need to deal with.
- If you have to deal with someone else's complaining, see if you can give him or her a time limit rather than having the complaining going on and on throughout the day. *Okay, you can complain for the next five minutes. Get it all out and then let's get back to work!*
- Work to proactively turn the complaining into a way of examining what can be done to change whatever it is that someone is complaining about. See the complaints as information that can lead to change.

E-mail addiction

Being addicted to e-mail, like any addiction, means that your behavior is being controlled by unconscious forces beyond your conscious regulation. If you are checking your e-mail constantly, or every one, five, or ten minutes, or even once an hour, and there is no particular reason for doing so, you may be addicted to e-mail.

Possible causes

Causes for e-mail addiction range from the simple one that you have gotten into a bad habit and need to break out of it to the more complex one that you are constantly seeking external approval and the need to interact with others, and that takes you away from the work at hand, draining your energy, grabbing your time, and ruining your focus.

Potential consequences

E-mail addiction causes you to break your concentration on the priority project you may be working on. Your co-workers, boss, or employees may see you as unfocused and out of control. By focusing on the constant e-mails that are being sent to you, you can miss the "big picture" including what you should be considering on a daily, weekly, monthly, or annual basis in terms of achieving your goals. Time how long you are spending checking e-mail, as well as monitoring what priority tasks you interrupted yourself to stop to check your e-mail, as a way of emphasizing in more concrete terms the toll e-mail addiction is having on you.

Ways to overcome e-mail addiction

Here are several ways you can overcome e-mail addiction:

- The first step is to admit that you have a problem and that you are, indeed, addicted to e-mail, which includes checking it, reading it, and/or sending it.
- If you're checking it too often, start by spreading out how long between the checks, making the intervals longer and longer until you are checking just once in the morning and once in the afternoon. Of course if your job requires you to be checking e-mail constantly, let's say you work on a help line and the way customers contact you is through e-mail, then this suggestion obviously would not apply.
- Alex Bratton, CEO of Lextech Global Services, realized six years ago that he needed an executive assistant to delegate dealing with his e-mail. Now the assistant exclusively handles it. How many e-mails is that? "Anywhere from one to two thousand a day," Alex explains. Alex has created a system that works for him and his company so that he is alerted, but not through e-mail, about anything that he needs to deal with. His employees and clients also know how to communicate with him if it's urgent without sending an e-mail. The system that Alex and LexTech use is called Asana (<https://asana.com/>) (You'll find a further discussion of how Alex deals with e-mail in *Chapter 7, Enhancing Your Verbal and Written Communication Skills for Efficiency.*)

Fear of success

If you are afraid of achievement and succeeding, you have a fear of success. This time waster is when someone has an unconscious aversion to achieve and because of that, tends to do things to sabotage his or her efforts to succeed. Those who fear success often lack the self-confidence to feel that they can handle whatever fantasies they feel about the *trappings* that success might bring.

Possible causes

The root of this time waster may be parents or authority figures during the formative years that were very successful themselves, but it took a toll on the family. For that reason, success may be seen as something that comes with too high an emotional price. Or, by contrast, someone may have been raised in a family where the parents viewed themselves as unsuccessful so their offspring may have mixed feelings about succeeding and potentially outshining their parent.

Potential consequences

By fearing success, you, or someone with this time waster, may set up roadblocks to finishing projects, and succeeding, without even realizing that's what is slowing you down. Unless you get over this fear, you may always either fall short in achieving your goals or once you accomplish something, unconsciously do something to undue your achievement so you become less successful.

Ways to overcome it

The following are a few ways you can overcome fear of success:

- Consider success and imagine yourself dealing with all the consequences related to it, the good and the bad.
- If you equate being successful with lots of negative things, like people being jealous of you, make a list of five of the positive things that you might experience and feel because of success.
- Think back to a time in your life when you considered yourself successful. How did it feel? How did others react to you? Was there anything about that experience, or those experiences, that soured you on success? See yourself getting beyond those previous experiences and approaching success with a different mindset.

Internet surfing

Robert Half Management Resources found in a survey released in February 2014 of 270 Canadian Chief Financial Officers (CFOs) that water cooler chatter (29 percent) and web surfing (including social media, 25 percent) were the two biggest time wasters at work.

When you read and surf the Internet but it has nothing to do with your priority job, including visiting sites and reading articles that are totally off topic, it can waste literally hours of time at work. In addition to the time that is wasted visiting these sites, such as the most popular social networking sites actively visited by more than 1 billion around the world, it takes the focus away from the work at hand. Of course there have probably always been individuals at work who would waste time reading a newspaper, or wandering off to the bathroom just because they wanted to "kill time" at work but that was a much rarer occurrence. Internet surfing unrelated to work has become a time waster of epidemic proportions.

Possible causes

I have observed that boredom is one of the likely causes of web surfing unrelated to your job. If you are engrossed in what you are doing, you are less likely to surf the Internet, getting pulled in by celebrity gossip, the latest video that's going viral on YouTube, or stories about sports events. Another cause, probably even harder to overcome than boredom, is that surfing the Internet unrelated to work for so many has become a habit. We all know that habits are a challenge to break. Curiosity and wanting to find out about what your colleagues, friends, or even family members are up to can be another cause. For more people, social networking sites are becoming an informal way of getting information that they might not otherwise have about their extended network.

Potential consequences

As the Daily Mail Online article, "Surfing the Internet for long periods of time can cause withdrawal symptoms similar to people on a comedown from ecstasy" points out, those who surf the Web too much can be in a more negative mood. The article also suggests that heavy web users are more depressed than those who do not surf the Web as often. At the office, if you are seen web surfing and reading articles completely unrelated to your work, you will be seen as someone who is "goofing off." Another consequence of Internet surfing unrelated to your work, in addition to being a time waster, is that it's putting additional strain on your eyes as well as keeping you at the computer, staring at the computer screen, when you could be doing something more productive or, if you finished your work, you could leave work and enjoy socializing or exercising.

Ways to overcome it

Here are some ways that you can overcome Internet surfing:

- The self-management way to overcome it is to keep your computer screen clear of the Internet when you are working on a priority project. Voluntarily discipline yourself to avoid Internet surfing unrelated to work, especially visiting Facebook, Instagram, or Pinterest during work hours. If you want to use your lunch hour to catch up with those social networking sites and management approves, by all means, go ahead. But visiting those sites during regular work hours is a time waster that will cut down on your productivity and might even lead to a reprimand or worse.

- Some companies are implementing more proactive ways to make it impossible for employees to visit certain sites or even surf the Internet. There are also Internet blockers that you or your employer could install to block those sites during the work day. Software programs like Rescue Time (<http://www.rescuetime.com>) will monitor how you are spending your computer time at work so you can see how much time you are spending on those sites. There's also more than half a dozen programs known as "employee monitoring software" that your employer could buy that will keep track of what you're doing online.
- See your Internet surfing unrelated to work as a sign that you are not fully engaged in the work you're doing. If possible, shift to other more engrossing work either within the same company or get another job, at the same company, if that is a possibility, but one that is better suited to your skills level so you will be less tempted to surf the Internet. If such a job is unavailable, start looking for a new job, or even fresh work, that will keep you fully occupied during work.

Fear of failure

When you are afraid that you will disappoint or fail we call it a fear of failure. Those who lack this fear will eagerly look forward to completing a project because they assume they will get rewarded for finishing whether that includes praise, a bonus, or just the self-satisfaction of getting something done. But for those fearing failure, the fear that they will be criticized and told what they accomplished is inferior scares them to the point of delaying, sometimes indefinitely, everything from meeting new people to finishing a report or a major project.

Possible causes

Whether someone else, such as a family member, or an authority figure, criticized what you did, or you are overly self-critical, you can fear finishing things because by finishing you will be judged. You are so afraid of being told you are not good enough or that your work falls short that the fear immobilizes you. Like those who fear success, those who fear failure lack self-confidence. Their low self-esteem slows them down or even brings their efforts on a project to a halt.

Potential consequences

You, or whoever has this time waster trait, puts off finishing a project or a task so you can't be judged. If you don't finish, you can't be told what you've done isn't good enough. Unfortunately, by delaying you may be bringing about the very failure you fear since you are wasting valuable time that you could have spent working toward a better project. You may get yelled at, disciplined, or even let go because you let your fear of failure stop you from finishing jobs in a timely fashion. Someone who has this time waster imagines the worst is going to happen when they finish a project and so, consciously or unconsciously, they delay completing a project thereby postponing what they see as the inevitable failure.

Ways to overcome it

The following are several ways to overcome fear of failure:

- ▶ Get the training and experience you need so you are more likely to succeed at what you're doing. You will hopefully be more confident and less inclined to delay because of a fear of failure.
- ▶ Change the script in your head toward what you're doing and envision yourself getting praise and succeeding, not failing.
- ▶ Imagine the worst consequence of finishing what you're doing, and see yourself getting through that. In that way, by allowing yourself to finish, you are more likely to get praise and less likely to be perceived as the failure that you fear.
- ▶ Rethink your attitude toward failure. See failure as a learning experience. Do some self-talking with yourself that you will finish the project, and turn it in, and if you do fail, you'll learn from it. But still try to have an open mind and see what happens rather than dwelling on the negative.

Depression

This is a mental health condition that means that you are emotionally down and very sad but in a chronic way. When someone is depressed, he or she is not just in the occasional bad mood. There are other symptoms associated with depression including insomnia, an increase or decrease in eating or overeating, especially pertinent to our discussion of productivity and being more efficient, and the inability to concentrate or pay attention. In extreme cases, depression can lead to suicidal ideation and feelings of hopelessness.

Possible causes

There could be something that suddenly happened to cause the depression, such as the loss of a loved one or dealing with an illness or a change in fortune, or it can be caused by feelings of sadness that are the result of a deeper, long-standing chronic depression. If it's the former, it will probably run its course in just a few weeks or months. There are support groups or individual therapy sessions available to help you through a crisis. But if it persists for too long, or if it is a chronic feeling of depression, working with a trained therapist may be necessary to help you deal with what it is that is the underlying cause of your depression.

Potential consequences

Depression can make it hard to concentrate and focus at work so that it takes much longer to do even the simplest tasks let alone a major, complex project. When someone is depressed, they may feel like avoiding people, giving excuses about why they are unable to attend a meeting, which can waste everyone's time because what is shared at the meeting is missed. It may be harder to meet or even beat deadlines if someone is depressed because time becomes distorted and the ability to stick to a task, especially complex tasks, can be hampered by the depression.

Ways to overcome it.

Here are some ways to overcome depression:

- For situational depression, seek out help related to the immediate issue whether it's a self-help support group or working with an individual therapist.
- For chronic depression, work with a trained therapist to get to the core issues, with or without the use of prescription drugs that might help to deal with the depression.
- Take a mental health day which means you don't go to work if you need one if you find yourself having an especially hard time coping.
- Consider your work and home life. Are you in too isolated a situation at work or at home? Isolation can contribute to depression. Working around more people and, if you live alone, getting out more and socializing with friends or seeking out a romantic partner, can help to reduce depression.
- Consider exercising more, even taking a walk. Being inside too much, especially if you work in a place without windows, or stay inside all the time after work, can contribute to depression.

Over-valuing or under-valuing your worth

This time waster is based on an exaggeration of your worth or a devaluation of your value which causes you, or others who have these traits, to feel like you're entitled to more attention or more of everything than everyone else, or, conversely, if you under-value your worth, less of it. Those who have either version of this time waster are unrealistic in their self-evaluations.

Possible causes

Feelings of inadequacy can cause you to over-compensate by either over-valuing or de-valuing your worth. Either of these extremes are a poor alternative to having a healthy but realistic self-assessment. There are early childhood and school roots of this time waster in that you probably had parents or other authority figures that either over-valued or under-valued your worth. If for programming you did in elementary school you were told that you were as good as a pioneer at IBM or, the opposite, that you couldn't draw for beans, you could have internalized those views of you so now you are unrealistic about what you really are.

Potential consequences

Others may feel put off by how you either exaggerate your value or put yourself down and denigrate yourself, leading to your ostracism by your department or others at work. If you over-value your worth, you may also have unrealistic feelings of grandiosity that cause you to agree to unrealistic deadlines or taking on projects that are far beyond your capabilities. If you under-value your self-worth, it may lead you fail to convince that you can do a stellar job.

Ways to overcome it

You can get help overcoming over-valuing or under-valuing your worth by doing the following:

- Join an outside group beyond work, whether it's based on a shared interest or concern, and work on your sharing and listening skills.
- Ask someone to point out if you're dominating the group, or discussions, or being too reticent.
- Work on developing a healthy and realistic view of yourself, and a strong self-esteem, on your own or with professional counseling, so you will require just the right amount of time and attention from those around you.

Jealousy

A definition of jealousy is the feeling that someone else has something that you want. The part of jealousy that is especially mean-spirited is when someone feeling jealous believes the other person who has something he or she wants did not deserve to get what they have.

Possible causes

The root cause of jealousy is from not getting enough of the love and attention from a parent or at least feeling as if you did not. Whether it's sharing a parent with the other parent or with a sibling or two, jealousy stems from being unhappy with yourself or with what you have.

Potential consequences

Showing your jealousy to others, or about others, can make you get labeled a jealous person, which is not considered a favorable trait. Jealous people tend to be vicious, angry, and resentful. They are not fun to be around usually because they may dwell on what others have that they want. Their envy is unappealing and a trait that pushes others away.

Ways to overcome it

In order to overcome jealousy, you can:

- Focus on what you do have so you don't have as much of a need to be jealous of others.
- Build up your self-esteem so you to feel that others are entitled as well. You will be less resentful of whatever they have, whether it's more money, a higher position, or the recognition that you think you deserve.

- Turn jealousy into something that gives you useful information. It helps you to pinpoint what you want for yourself so you can go after it in a more concerted way instead of begrudging someone else for already achieving what you seek.

Blaming others

This time waster stops you, or the person who has this trait, from being as productive as possible because you are always faulting others for projects getting delayed or going wrong. By failing to take responsibility for your own actions, you waste time because it's harder for you to learn from your mistakes.

Possible causes

At the basis of this time waster could be the little child who, like the cliché goes, took a cookie from the cookie jar but when their parent asks whether they did, they deny it because there's a deep fear of being yelled at. Rather than taking responsibility, and dealing with what has happened, this individual goes through life saying, "It's not me. Someone else is to blame."

Potential consequences

In addition to failing to learn from your mistakes, as noted earlier, others will become very annoyed with you for blaming them or everything and everyone but yourself. You may find no one wants to include you on their team and, eventually, you might find yourself out of a job because in most companies, you need the cooperation of others to achieve your goals.

Ways to overcome it

If you want to overcome blaming others, try these suggestions:

- Recognize that you have this time waster
- Start by taking more responsibility for the little things and work your way up to the really big ones
- If there's someone you trust, ask him or her to point out when you're falling into the trap of blaming others if you're often clueless yourself that you're doing it
- Work on your self-esteem so you feel secure enough to say that you did something wrong

After you have gone through all of the time wasters, or as many as you wish to cover with the group, now say to them: Consider your own time habits. Are there any additional ways that you waste time that are not on this list? What are those habits? Go over each of those additional habits and apply the same analysis to each one: definition, possible causes, possible consequences, and three ways to overcome it.

Understanding and overcoming these 15 time wasters, if you recognize some or all of these time wasters in yourself or others, will increase your productivity.

Activities

Activity 1

Photocopy and distribute the following blank time waster worksheet. Now have the workshop participants pick one of the time wasters that they are most concerned about. Ask them to fill in the answers on the worksheet based on your previous discussion.

Worksheet

Time waster: _____

Definition:

Possible causes:

Potential consequences:

Three ways to overcome it:

Activity 2

Photocopy and distribute this second worksheet. Ask your workshop participants to turn to their neighbor and work together on this second sheet. Have them decide on a second time waster that they want to work on together to discuss. This time, instead of answering the questions alone, have them work together as a team, filling in their answers. Give them five minutes to discuss the time waster and fill in the worksheet.

Worksheet

Time waster: _____

Definition:

Possible causes:

Possible consequences:

Three ways to overcome it:

After five minutes, ask for volunteers to share what time waster they picked, how they defined it, what they listed as the possible causes, consequences, and at least three ways to overcome it.

Now ask the group how they would compare filling out the first worksheet, where they worked on a time waster on their own, versus working together with a fellow workshop participant. Was it easier or harder to work with someone? Was it more fun or more stressful? Did they learn anything about that time waster, about themselves or about their workshop participants that they didn't know before?

Activity 3

Think about your various time wasters and pick out the third time waster that you want to overcome that was not the focus of the previous two activities. Write down that time waster here:

How do you plan to tackle it? Do you have any colleagues (or bosses or employees) who are especially skilled at dealing with this challenge? If yes, could you interview him or her about what techniques they use or observe him or her for ways that you might implement yourself? Pick a date to observe, if possible, two weeks from now and write that date down now: _____

What is your plan for dealing with this particular time waster? Write down the steps you will take to overcome it. Spend some time between now and when you plan to follow-up and re-assess your progress researching this time waster and evaluating how you are losing time because of it. By making this time waster a key concern and working on ways to overcome it, you should see positive results.

Now put in your appointment book—digital or paper—that you will follow-up with yourself and assess if you're doing better at dealing with this top time waster.

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Resources

- *Association of Internet Researchers (AOIR)*
- <http://aoir.org>

An international membership association, started in 2000, whose members are engaged in research on the Internet. The group has an annual conference and they also publish a research journal, *Information, Communication, and Society*, through Taylor and Francis.
- <http://www.stopcomplainers.com/>

Website of complaining and negotiating expert Linda Swindling who is also a speaker and an author.
- <http://www.procrastination.ca>

Website of psychology professor Dr. Timothy Pychyl. Includes his podcasts, research, and other materials about procrastination.

Summary

Here are some of the top ideas in this chapter:

- There are many time wasters you can have that can slow down your goal of being more effective. The key is to recognize the time wasters in your life and to deal with each one, determining what the cause might be, understanding the consequence of that time waster, and finding ways to overcome it that will work for you.
- For most people, procrastination is one of the biggest time wasters. Putting off something you have to do because you don't want to do it usually makes you feel bad and of course it slows down finishing any project. Understanding the causes of procrastination is crucial as well as implementing one or more ways to overcome it such as using the reward method or making what you have to do that you are procrastinating about the first thing you do in the morning.
- Poor planning and poor pacing are both time wasters that can lead to increased mistakes at work, inconsistent or inadequate rest periods, and unrealistic or too distant deadlines that make it hard to meet or beat a project's schedule. Learning how to effectively plan and pace will take you far in becoming more productive and efficient.

> 6

Dealing with Distractions, Interruptions, and Handling Change

Note to the Trainer:

This chapter/module may be the most important part of this time management training for IT professionals. That is because, for them, interruptions caused by others can happen at any time or projects can change at any moment. Those interruptions have to be dealt with and those changes have to be considered. Even if you delegate to someone else, or to technology, you need a contingency plan for distractions, interruptions, and change, or it will be a major impediment to maximizing your time management effectiveness. What is discussed in this module, or chapter, is how to separate out the self-made interruptions that you can more easily control, like poor concentration or surfing the Internet unrelated to work, and how to put into place ways of handling distractions, interruptions, or changes imposed by others, whether it's a customer, co-worker, or a boss, so your quest for better time management is not derailed.

Here is a list of topics that will be covered in this chapter/module:

- Taking control of your time and your day
 - Improving your concentration and focus—understanding your brain!
 - Dealing with distractions
 - Most typical reasons for distractions at work
 - Coping with the most common work distractions
 - Limoncelli's mutual interruption shield approach
 - Cirillo's The Pomodoro Technique®
 - ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder)
 - Coping with interruptions
 - Multitasking: does it work?
 - Handling change
-
-

Taking control of your time and your day

It would be nice if we could all have a completely uninterrupted day and do whatever we want to do for our job and, at night, for our personal life, without anyone or anything interfering. But that is rarely the case whether you work in a big office with 50 co-workers or you work at home. A co-worker drops into your cubicle and asks you about the project you're working on together, just as you've gotten your concentration to where you wanted it to be. You get a text message from a client about a server that's down, seen as a crisis by your client, and you have to deal with that message, even if you delegate the actual handling of the situation to someone else. The project manager asks for an emergency meeting, in person, for those who work on site and locally, with the other members of the team involved in the meeting remotely through Skype, Google hangout, or <http://gotomeeting.com/>.

This chapter/module looks at how to master distractions, interruptions, and change since it's inevitable.

Improving your concentration and focus – understanding your brain!

There's a useful book about the brain called *Your Brain at Work*. It's by a business consultant and writer, David Rock, who is not a neuroscientist but he interviewed scientists as part of his extensive research into the way the brain works. Here is some information about the brain gleaned from Rock's book to help you better understand your brain. It will help you if you are finding yourself consumed by interruptions and distractions, rather than getting the priority "big picture" work done on a daily basis:

- Rock suggests that to maximize your brain's functioning, you should create routines. As few as three repetitions will be viewed as a routine by the brain.
- Rock offers some concrete research that sending and receiving e-mails and text messaging is even making us dumber. Yes, he cites a study done at the University of London which shows that "constant emailing and text-messaging reduces mental capability by an average of 10 points on an IQ test." That's five points lower for women, and 15 points lower for men. Rock continues, "this effect is similar to missing a night's sleep."
- If you want to maximize your brain's functioning, Rock suggests to get it out of your head by creating visuals so there is something concrete to see. That's the scientific reason that writing things on a to-do list will actually help you to be more effective. This is because it helps your brain to function so it saves its energy by saving your brain, as Rock puts it, "for comparing the elements instead of using energy to hold each one."

- ▶ Figure out when you are most alert and make sure that is when you are doing the tasks that require your optimum concentration. If you are a *morning person*, that will be the first thing in the morning. (Or are you wasting that time checking over e-mails?) If you are less alert toward the end of the day, that's when you could be checking e-mails or doing work that does not require your best focus.

Dealing with distractions

Wondering if you are you distracted at work? Take this self-quiz and see your results.

Quiz: signs that you are distracted

See how many of the following typical signs of distraction that you can relate to. Answer the following questions with yes or no; keep track of your answers.

Q1. I check my e-mail regularly from every few minutes to once an hour, at a minimum.

- a. Yes____
- b. No____

Q2. If the phone rings, I automatically pick it up rather than look at caller ID or let it go to voice mail if I'm in the midst of something.

- a. Yes____
- b. No____

Q3. I have at least one hour of uninterrupted thinking time daily.

- a. Yes____
- b. No____

Q4. I have labeled myself, or others have told me, that I seem distracted a lot.

- a. Yes____
- b. No____

Q5. If I'm working on something, my mind is constantly wandering to what other project I should be doing, or thinking about a personal issue.

- a. Yes____
- b. No____

Q6. I surf the Internet unrelated to my job at least 30 minutes a day.

- a. Yes____
- b. No____

Q7. I can work in any type of environment, whether it's noisy or quiet.

- a. Yes _____
- b. No _____

Q8. I can read an entire book in one sitting.

- a. Yes _____
- b. No _____

Q9. Music helps me to concentrate at work.

- a. Yes _____
- b. No _____

Q10. My office is clean and my desk does not have any distracting files, books, photos, or knick knacks on it.

- a. Yes _____
- b. No _____

Evaluating your answers

If you answered *yes* to four or more questions, excluding question number 3, you have distraction issues that you need to be dealing with. If you answered *yes* to question number 3, at least you are providing yourself with one uninterrupted hour daily to concentrate. But if you answered *yes* to question numbers 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6, you are distracted in a multiplicity of ways that you need to address and minimize to get your concentration and focus back on track and to see an increase in your productivity.

If you answered *no* to question numbers 7, 8, and 10, you are the type of person who may need to improve your external environment, your office, so you are less distracted. For example, if you answered *no* to question number 7, then you could see if there are ways to improve the effectiveness of your work environment since you cannot concentrate in all workspaces. If you work in a cubicle, and the noise around you distracts you, see if you can officially move into an office with a door. If you cannot do that officially, see if there is a quieter workspace, such as an empty office, if someone is on vacation or temporary leave, or a place in the building that is usually empty, such as the lunch room at all times except 12 p.m. to 2 p.m., the typical lunch hours, and relocate to that space for some or all of the day for greater concentration.

If you answered *yes* to question number 9, that music helps you to concentrate at work, and you are in an outside office, rather than a home office, see if your employer would be open to you playing music at work if you wear earphones or a headset. Of course if it's your own company where you can set the standards as long as the productivity of others is not compromised, or you work remotely in a more secluded office situation, without anyone else around you, you might be able to even have music playing in your office without the necessity of a headset.

Most typical reasons for distractions at work

Here are some of the most common reasons for distractions at work:

- The immediate office environment
- Outside the office environment
- Your inner self
- Other people

In the next section, you will learn how to cope with these common causes of work distractions.

Coping with the most common causes of work distractions

As you will see from the following discussion, even though three of the four reasons for interruptions are caused by others, you can still find solutions to those situations. The fourth reason, interruptions that you cause (even though that is most within your control), may actually be the hardest to cope with. This is because habits may become engrained and challenging to change, such as an addiction to constantly checking and rechecking e-mail, even during key business meetings.

- Immediate external (the office environment)

In *Chapter 4, Getting Organized*, we discussed organizing your office for maximum effectiveness. Take another look at your office now and consider how it works in terms of keeping your distractions to a minimum. Do you have any posters in front of you that take your concentration away from the work at hand? Could you move those posters to behind you so at least you are not seeing them? How about what's on your desk? Are there distractions there that can be removed? Family photos? File folders? Knick knacks?

- External distractions (outside of the office/immediate surroundings)

Of course some external distractions you might just have to deal with, like hearing blaring sirens now and then if there is an ambulance passing by. But others you might have some control over. For example, parts of the building where you work might be quieter than other parts. If you are able to ask to have your office moved to the quieter part, that might help cut down on the external distractions that interfere with your concentration. If that option is not available, what about a noise machine, the kind that therapists often use in their offices to both soothe their patients and obscure the voices that someone in the waiting room might hear? Do a sound or distraction check where you usually work and see how you might improve your environment so you can be more focused. Ear phones are another possibility if your office permits that option.

If you have a door, closing the door, at least part of the day, might block out distracting noise such as the voices, blaring printers or copy machines, or noisy air conditioner wall units if your office does not have central air which tends to be quieter or silent.

➤ Your inner self

It's all well and good to improve your office, or reduce the external distractions around you, but what about the self-made distractions? How are you going to overcome your addiction to constantly checking your e-mail, or web surfing unrelated to your work? Refer back to some of the solutions for those time wasters that were shared in the previous chapter/module, *Chapter 5, Identifying and Overcoming the Top 15 Time Wasters*.

Help yourself to improve your concentration, which will also assist you in avoiding distractions, by doing the following:

- Create a distraction-free environment. (Refer to the previous *Immediate External (the office environment)* bullet.)
- Write a to-do list of what you need to accomplish each day, ordered by priority. (See earlier discussions of to-do lists, in the section on *Improving your concentration and your focus – understand your brain!* as well as in the chapter/module in *Chapter 3, Setting Goals and Prioritizing*.)
- Take regular short breaks to break up working for hours at your computer. This will decrease the likelihood of making mistakes and help your concentration.
- Get enough sleep at night and eat healthy, protein rich food that will fuel your body and your brain.
- Avoid overeating at lunchtime which can lead to you feeling tired, as pointed out by Linette Lopez in her article at www.businessinsider.com, "What Overeating Does to Your Body."
- Get your eyes checked. You might need glasses. If your vision is impaired that could be impacting on your concentration and even causing headaches or increasing the likelihood of errors.

If you have inner turmoil, such as feeling anxiety, depression, or fear that is preventing you from concentrating at work, you might need to talk to a professional therapist to help you to overcome those emotions so you can improve your work focus.

➤ *Other people*

If your job requires you to be immediately responsive to others, such as working in the IT department and you've just been told that the server is down, you just might have to stop everything and take care of that crisis. But if it is just a question of having fallen into the habit of letting others interrupt you—in the hall, wandering into your office, without an appointment, or texting you and expecting an instant response, even if it's a frivolous comment—then you need to let everyone know, without being rude, that you need to have more uninterrupted time. Creating a specific time to get together and discuss things might help cut down on those unplanned interruptions.

Jim Christian, a technology consultant who runs the IT department for a primary school in Kensington, in London, England, has found that by having a regular meeting like this for the last two years, the number of interruptions he has had to deal with from drop-in visitors to his office, since his office is in a very public area, has been reduced. Says Christian, "Holding an hourly open table tech session every Tuesday has been very beneficial. Once a term I would remind the staff: 'If you have any issues, come along to the library on Tuesday and we'll discuss everything together over lunch.' It's reduced the number of interruptions if they feel they can talk to someone about what's working or what isn't working or discuss technology and education as a group. It has also helped to break down any barriers that can occasionally rise up between IT staff and their customers."

Limoncelli's mutual interruption shield approach

None of us can eliminate interruptions but at least we can learn to interrupt ourselves less often and, when others do it, find a way to cope with it more effectively. In his excellent book, *Time Management for System Administrators*, Thomas A. Limoncelli suggests right on page one that you and a co-worker create what he calls a *mutual interruption shield*. What that means is that you divide up who will be getting interrupted with a type of "buddy system" approach. As Limoncelli writes, "Before lunch, you field all the interruption so that your coworker can work on projects. After lunch, your coworker fields all the interruptions and lets you work on projects." He cautions that of course if there's an emergency that only you can handle, you'll make the time for it no matter what. But for the run of the mill interruptions that anyone could handle, by sharing the interruptions and giving each other some solid time to focus, "you'll see an immediate improvement in the amount of project work you get done."

Cirillo's The Pomodoro Technique®

Francesco Cirillo developed what he calls The Pomodoro Technique®. In this technique, you are asked to stay focused for just 25 minutes on a specific task. There is a timer that you can buy that will let you know when the 25 minutes is up but of course you could also just set your smartphone or clock to let you know when 25 minutes has passed.

When the time is up and you stop, you are advised to *Put a checkmark to indicate the point on a paper* you stopped at. This will help you go right back to where you left off if you were reading, writing, or editing something. Next, a key third part of the technique is that you are then advised to take a five minute break and do something that will recharge your batteries. Here are some of the activities they recommend doing during that break: "Breathe, meditate, grab a cup of coffee, go for a short walk or do something else not work-related."

Make a note

Activity for training session:



Ask the attendees: "What are some of your own five minute rewards that you could add to this list that would help you to feel replenished as you go back to work and have another 25 minute focused work time?" As attendees share their suggestions with you, write their answers on the white or blackboard or on a flip chart. Once everyone provides you with at least one suggestion, see how many in your group gave a similar answer. "Look at the range of rewards that you contributed. Did someone else suggest a reward that you might now consider pursuing for yourself?"

Simplicity helps memory

There was a study done at Kansas State University of sixty students by Lori Bergen, Ph.D., Tom Grimes, Ph.D., and Deborah Potter, M.A., as reported in the book by Nicholas Carr, which was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize, *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brain*. Two groups of university students watched four programs on CNN. The first group had graphics and some text crawl along the bottom of the screen. (What the researchers refer to as a "visually complex video condition" as depicted in Figure 2, on page 324 of the original journal article published in volume 31 of the *Human Communication Research*.) The second group only viewed the stories, referred to as the "visually simple video condition." When they compared what each group had remembered about the four stories, the group that only saw the stories, without the graphics or text crawl, remembered *more* "story facts" than the group that saw the "visually complex" version. In a nutshell, their research confirms that simplicity in how the information was depicted aided memory and retention.

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

We discussed ADHD in more detail in ADHD and *Attention Deficit Trait (ADT)* in *Chapter 4, Getting Organized*. Dr. Craig Liden has seen over 10,000 patients with ADHD, and is Medical Director of the Being Well Center. Here are symptoms of ADD/ADHD, which they do not consider an illness, but an *inborn individual difference*. As noted on their website, here are the traits that they see associated with ADD/ADHD:

- Low arousal level
- Inefficient working memory
- Impulsivity
- Distractibility
- Inefficient responses
- Inefficient task management
- Inefficient problem solving
- Poor self-monitoring

If you have ADD/ADHD, it will be useful to modify your environment as much as possible to reduce the *distractibility* that is part of ADD/ADHD. To cope with *poor self-monitoring*, you can use the time log system that was described in *Chapter 2, How Efficient Are You? Self-awareness of Your Body Clock and Work Style*, namely, keep track of everything you are doing as well as how long you are taking on each task, including breaks.

Multitasking – does it work?

In *Your Brain at Work*, David Rock points out that the mistaken notion that the brain can handle seven pieces of information at once was replaced with the idea, also false, that the brain can easily handle four. According to Rock, one piece of information at a time is actually ideal. As he writes early in his book, "While the brain is exquisitely powerful, even the brain of a Harvard graduate can be turned into that of an eight-year-old simply by being made to do two things at once."

Douglas Merrill, in his article published at <http://www.forbes.com/>, "*Why Multitasking Doesn't Work*", shares about how trying to multitask during meetings actually is counterproductive. He writes about what happened when he was at Google and many in the meetings chose to work on their laptops while trying to participate in the meeting. Writes Merrill:

"Soon it became clear that many people were missing important stuff in meetings. They weren't paying attention to what was going on around them because their brains were otherwise occupied. So the information shared in meetings never had a chance to break into their short-term memory banks."

Then he continues:

"Fairly soon, it became clear that having laptops open in meetings was lowering productivity instead of raising it. So we declared some meetings no-laptop zones."

"Side note: Of course, this created an unintended consequence. When people thought they had something more important to deal with, they simply left the meeting. While this was distracting for the others in the meeting, at least it was a more effective use of the escapees' attention."

Here are some tasks to consider. You should also check whether multitasking is a good option for you if you are performing the following tasks at work:

Task	Multitasking as an option?
Talking on the phone or texting when driving	<p>In general, absolutely never talk on the phone when driving although in some states you are allowed to talk if you are on speakerphone or you are using a blue tooth/hands-free device.</p> <p>Check with your state for the rules but also be aware of your own limitations; even if talking on a speakerphone is permitted, you might not personally be able to handle talking and driving safely.</p> <p>Keep in mind that according to the U.S. government website, http://www.distraction.gov/, headset cell phone use is not substantially safer than hand-held use.</p> <p>Texting while driving is a definite no no under all circumstances. As they point out at http://www.distraction.gov/: five seconds is the average time your eyes are off the road while texting. When traveling at 55 mph, that's enough time to cover the length of a football field blindfolded.</p>

Task	Multitasking as an option?
Talking on the phone at work	<p>If you are on speakerphone, you might be able to do physical things that do not require much concentration, such as dusting the top of your desk or sorting through files, but you have to be careful that you are really listening to your caller and not so distracted by the secondary task that you miss the key points of the conversation</p> <p>Also make sure no one else can hear your caller or you on speakerphone or that would be a violation of everyone's privacy.</p>
Reading a book	<p>If it's a print book or an e-book, the book should be your complete focus.</p> <p>If it's an audiobook, you have to be the judge if you're able to handle certain other tasks while you're listening to the book, such as walking on a treadmill, walking on the road, or driving. (Be especially careful if you're walking on the road if you have earphones on and you're engrossed in a good book or you could be at risk if you cannot hear horns honking. You need to pay adequate attention to the traffic and cars or trucks whizzing by.)</p>
Attending a meeting	<p>Of course it is tempting to receive or send text messages, or surf the Internet on your smartphone, or read your e-mails, especially if the speaker is boring or the meeting is dull. However, be careful if you do these tasks and miss what is being said at the meeting especially if it is important or if others see you distracted. They could consider that rude or unprofessional conduct.</p>
Watching TV	<p>If you are a TV news reporter, anchor, producer, or broadcast journalist, you probably need to have the TV on in the background at all times. Even if you are an Internet or print journalist, you might need to have the news on because of any breaking stories. But if being up on the news every single minute is not part of your job, having the TV on in the background at work or in your home office is probably a distraction that is hurting your concentration.</p>

Task	Multitasking as an option?
Surfing the Internet while working	You have to decide if this is distracting you from having optimum focus and concentration working on the computer or even talking on the phone. Experiment with eliminating the Internet in the background when you're working and see if you are able to accomplish more than when you go back and forth between the Internet and any articles you are reading or sites you are visiting versus total focus on your work.

Handling change

Some changes are dramatic, like the change, over the last thirty years, from using a typewriter to writing and even designing or illustrating on a computer. But other changes are more subtle, like saving your files to a *cloud* instead of just to the computer's hard drive, floppy disk, or an external drive.

Make a note

Discussion question for training session:

Ask your attendees the following questions about change and record their answers on the white or blackboard or flip chart: *How do you handle change?* Is it something you embrace and find exciting or do you fear doing things differently or new things? Discuss their answers. How many see change as something scary and annoying? How many find it exciting and embrace it?



Discuss their answers and then point out that how you handle change relates to how you will handle interruptions and distractions.

If you see changing from one activity to another, because you were working on a priority task but now someone needs an answer from you and you have to shift gears, as normal and part of your job, it will be easier for you to deal with the interruption, and get back to the priority work at hand.

By seeing change as normal, you will be more likely to *go with the flow* so at least you can get back to the priority task at hand even if you do have to pull away.

The concept attributed to Dr. Maxwell Maltz in his classic self-help book *Psycho-Cybernetics*—that it took those who lost a limb 21 days before they no longer saw the limb as there—is often applied to making any change stick. Old habits are very hard to break. If you have gotten into the habit of multitasking, it may take several weeks for you to go back to being comfortable working on just one task at a time. But when you are focusing and working on that one task, feel the difference in your mental state as you are clearer in your thinking and *in the zone* of focus and being productive.

It may feel somewhat uncomfortable initially compared to the frenetic way you've been as you allow distractions and interruptions to be too much a part of your day. But stick with it and that focused approach to your time will become your new habit.

Perhaps it is your approach to time and your time management skills that are in need of change. Bravo to you for realizing that! Pat yourself on the back for taking the key steps to learn how to do things differently and better so you will become more productive. Instead of narrowly defining the way you are handle your time, you are open to changing. But remember that nice, reassuring insight that I shared earlier in this chapter/module from David Rock's book about change and developing a routine: he found as few as three repetitions of a new behavior could make the brain see it as a new routine. The brain likes routines. But it's up to you to make the routines new behaviors that are in the interest of getting more done. For example, first thing in the morning, in that hour at the office before everyone else arrives, when it's still quiet and peaceful, you should work on the priority project that is your number one goal that day. Try to avoid checking e-mails or surfing the Internet or reading random articles unrelated to your job during that first hour.

Keep up this change in how you handle that first hour at work and before you know it, you are accomplishing more in a given day, and during each week, than you have achieved in the longest time. You may find you have more free time or you will go on to finish your work projects that you might not have gotten to as quickly, if at all.

Activities

Here are several activities for your attendees to do related to this chapter. The activities begin at a more elementary level, with the second activity more intermediary, and the third for someone who has more advanced time management skills. But you can also have everyone do all three activities if you like.

Activity 1

In *Chapter 4, Getting Organized*, we had workshop attendees look at their office in terms of organization. Now let's revisit their office and consider it in terms of distractions.

Consider your office especially your desk and your walls. Make a list of what you recall is on your desk and on your walls.

Desk

Walls

Look over your list. Cross off anything that is superfluous or potentially distracting to your focus.

Activity 2

Worksheet on distractions

Make a list of the top five ways you most easily get distracted at work. Consider all your senses: what you see, what you hear, what you smell, what you touch, even what you taste.

Figure out at least one way you will deal more effectively with each of these distractions.

Solution for dealing with distraction #1: _____

Solution for dealing with distraction #2: _____

Solution for dealing with distraction #3: _____

Solution for dealing with distraction #4: _____

Solution for dealing with distraction #5: _____

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 - *Put More Time on Your Side*. Hannacroix Creek Books. 2014.
 - *Work Less, Do More*. 2nd edition. Hannacroix Creek Books. 2012. Sterling. 2008. (See especially *Day 10, Handling Change and Interruptions*.)

Resources

Here are some programs to keep track of how you spend your time:

- *At Task*
<http://www.attask.com>
Time and project management tracking system with three versions: for IT teams, management teams, and everyone.
- *Bees Apps*
<http://www.beesapps.com/>
Electronic note-taking system.
- *Time Doctor*
<http://www.timedoctor.com>
This website tracks how long you spend on specific tasks.

- *Rescue Time*
<http://www.rescuetime.com>
Monitors your general productivity and also sends you a weekly report on how you're spending your time.
- *The Pomodoro Technique*
<http://pomodorotechnique.com>
Provides more information on The Pomodoro Technique®
Help for those with Attention Deficit Disorder/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADD/ADHD).
- *Adult Attention Deficit Disorder Center of Maryland*
<http://www.addadult.com/>
Direct help with children, teens, and adults with ADHD as well as an educational resource with a blog by David W. Goodman, M.D.
- *The Being Well Center (BWC)*
<http://www.thebeingwellcenter.com/>
This center offers a five-step program for dealing with ADD/ADHD. It is available through a face-to-face program at their center in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania or globally through their Long Distance Program. Craig Liden, M.D., is the Medical Director of BWC. He is the author of *Pay Attention! Answers to Common Questions about the Diagnosis and Treatment of Attention Deficit Disorder*.
- *Attention Deficit Information Network (Ad-IN)*
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/AD-In-of-Plymouth-Attention-Deficit-Information-Network/148709321836404?sk=info>
A Massachusetts-based network, founded in 1980, for those dealing with ADHD.

Here are some sources of information about the dangers of distracted driving:

- *Distracted Driving Information Clearinghouse*
<http://www.fcc.gov/encyclopedia/distracted-driving>
<http://www.distraction.gov>
This is the official U.S. government website dedicated to providing information about the hazards of distracted driving, especially texting while driving.

Summary

Here are the top ideas in this chapter:

- ▶ Our brain works best when it is focusing on one project at a time rather than trying to do two or more things simultaneously.
- ▶ Work on the external causes of distractions and interruptions that you can change, such as improving your office environment or repositioning your chair and desk, as well as those that you are causing because of your own inner turmoil or bad habits. Develop ways to deal with the interruptions of others that are not rude but show responsiveness, such as developing a regular meeting time when issues can be discussed rather than a stream of distracting unplanned drop-in visitors that have to be dealt with constantly.

Change needs to be embraced rather than resented. Sometimes change, even if we know it's for our own good, such as exercising more, eating healthier foods and not snacking as often, or focusing on one priority task at a time, rather than multitasking, may take a while. Dr. Maltz suggested it could take 21 days for a new way of thinking to become the norm. Remember that changing a habit takes time to become a new, comfortable, and positive habit.

> 7

Enhancing Your Verbal and Written Communication Skills for Efficiency

Note to the trainer:

This is a topic that you might not often see in a popular book on time management where the focus is on prioritizing, getting organized, and doing first things first. But it is my observation that having more effective verbal and written communication skills can save a lot of time for an individual, for a project, and even for a company. Do overs are less frequent and getting it right the first time, and accomplished faster, is a side benefit of better communication skills which includes the words you say, your body language, and even the tone of voice that you use to say it.

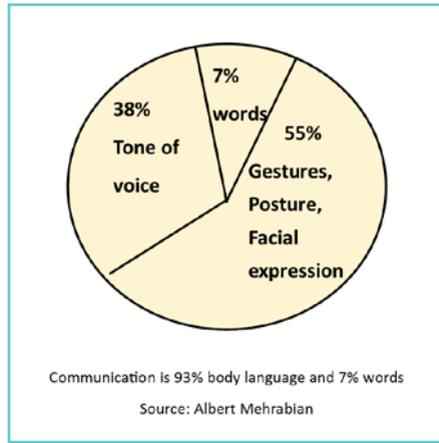
This chapter/module on communication will cover the following topics:

- How body language impacts on how your words are perceived
- How improved verbal and written communication skills will enhance your productivity
- Writing effective e-mails
- Improving your listening skills
- Making the most of meetings
- Making better use of your phone

Fasten your seat belt as you look at verbal and written communication skills in a new way—from the point of view of how to improve how you communicate as a way to save time.

How body language impacts on how your words are perceived

In one of the most famous body language research studies, the one by Albert Mehrabian, it was discovered that only 7 percent of how we communicate is through words. The rest is through non-verbal cues, what is often referred to as body language, namely 38 percent through the tone of voice and 55 percent through general body language such as gestures, posture, or facial expressions.



Perhaps you sit in front of a computer all day and except for an occasional phone call, and perhaps a short break at lunch, you have little verbal communication with others. But even during that brief phone conversation, are you frowning or smiling when you talk on the phone? I'm not referring to a webcam conversation or using "Face Time" on an iPhone. I'm talking about an old-fashioned phone call without anything visual to it. Yes, whether you are frowning or smiling may show in your voice. Of course it will show even more if you do use a webcam so you want to be aware of your body language, over the phone, or when you meet people in the hall at work, or at a meeting, because it impacts on how the verbal messages you are sharing are received.

It may be especially disconcerting if your body language and verbal or written messages are inconsistent. For example, if you tell someone during a meeting that you think his or her idea is terrific, but you look annoyed or displeased, the person you've just said that to is going to wonder if what you said was valid or not. That means that time is wasted in dealing with that disconnect between the message and your body language.

Being able to *read* someone else is a skill that will help you save time because you will be learning what someone is really saying rather than just what his or her words are, which might not match what he or she actually means. Communication, especially through e-mail or over the phone, can be extremely challenging, lacking the 93 percent body language (as noted earlier) that you are privileged to when you are face to face with someone, so you are dependent on the 7 percent which is words. Words, unfortunately, can be misinterpreted especially if the other non-verbal cues are lacking.

How improved verbal and written communication skills will enhance your productivity by setting goals

Whether you are talking on the phone, or sending an e-mail, you will communicate in a more time-effective way if you set goals for each and every verbal or written contact that you have with someone else.

Furthermore, if you make sure that you and all of your employees are at least aware of the bigger picture for your company, that may improve the effectiveness of your communications. If you are an employee, although of course your self-interest is going to be your primary concern, finding out what the vision is for your company and showing that you understand it and share it, should help you and your bosses to feel you are speaking the same company language.

I interviewed 27-year-old Katie Kapler, who three years ago co-founded the New York City-based company, <http://coursehorse.com/>, which coordinates local available courses for more than 1,000 schools. She highlighted why it's so important to share with your employees what the goal is for anything that they are doing, instead of just asking for a task to be performed. As Kapler explains: "I think one thing I've learned from developers and engineers is that their mind works a little bit very differently, and it's incredibly valuable to clearly communicate the goal of whatever someone is being asked to do and to be flexible enough to be able to change how you get there. The mistake I made on a previous job was not involving the IT and engineers on the creative and solutions development and just giving directions, 'Here, do that.' But you get so much more from them when they feel invested and empowered and excited to work and motivated."

Writing effective e-mails

There are some who can delegate e-mail to others, and that can be a big time saver. But if you are still writing your own e-mails, there are some tips for improving those communications so you will save time.

For the e-mails that you write

Before you even write an e-mail, ask yourself if this is the fastest and most effective way to communicate with this person? If not, pick the way that will work better, whether that's picking up the phone, sending a text, setting up an in-person meeting, scheduling a video chat, or even writing a letter. If you decide an e-mail is the optimal way to communicate, then in your e-mails, try to:

- Keep it succinct.
- Have a clear subject line in the heading that is more likely to get your recipient's attention. For example, FYI is less likely to get opened immediately than "Regarding this morning's client meeting."

- ▶ Watch how quickly you are responding to someone else's e-mail.
He or she may take it as a sign that he/she should respond quickly as well. That's fine if you're in a rush to get a response but if you have other priorities, pacing when you send (and respond to) your e-mails might be more effective.
- ▶ Even though it takes a few extra minutes, re-read your e-mails before you send each one checking for typos, name misspellings, and making sure that what you wrote reflects what you meant to write.
That will save you time so you don't have to send a follow-up e-mail, either apologizing for something you wrote, re-explaining something that was initially unclear, or correcting a typo.
- ▶ If you say you're going to attach something, make sure you do it the first time, to save time on *re-sends*.
- ▶ Make sure you know the policy on accepting attached files for the person you're e-mailing. Some cannot open an attached file under any circumstances. In that case, you would have to send the attached material in another way, such as cut and pasted into the body of your e-mail.
- ▶ For efficiency's sake, create basic responses you can reuse by cutting-and-pasting the repeated text while customizing other parts of the message.

As long as it doesn't sound stale and rehearsed, do have some boiler plate answers that you can place into the e-mails that you write if you're dealing with the same situations over and over again. Just make sure you tailor your responses where it counts, such as in how you refer to someone, adding a phrase or line or two that's personalized, or even being selective in how you sign it using your full name or a nickname, as appropriate.

For the e-mails you receive

- ▶ Develop a system for sorting out your low-priority or even junk or spam e-mails from the high priority ones.
If necessary, create your own system or see if there's software or an app to help you with this.
- ▶ Have a schedule for checking e-mail that fits your particular job.
Unless you work in a call center or you have the type of job where you have to monitor literally every e-mail that you receive, work out a schedule whereby you check e-mails at only certain times of the day. Otherwise you may find yourself constantly checking e-mails and failing to get your priority tasks done.
- ▶ Develop a system to be able to quickly recognize urgent incoming e-mails.
Have a system in place with your assistant or staff that priority or urgent e-mails can be flagged so you know to address those e-mails first.

- Prune the non-priority newsletters or e-mail blasts you receive.
Get off as many e-letter lists as possible so your mailbox gets fewer non-essential communications.
- Create two or more e-mail accounts targeting different populations with each one.
Have several e-mail accounts so you can direct personal and business, as well as priority, e-mails to the various accounts.
- If you have the resources, you might minimize or even eliminate your use of e-mail completely, delegating e-mail to someone else, finding another way to communicate.

Alex Bratton, CEO of Lextech, realized six years ago that he needed an executive assistant to delegate dealing with scheduling and his e-mails. Now she exclusively handles the e-mails. He stayed out of it almost entirely. How many is that? "Anywhere from one to two thousand e-mails a day," Alex explains. Alex has created a system that works for him and his company so that he is alerted on his mobile devices, but not through e-mail, about anything really important that he needs to deal with. His employees and clients also know how to communicate with him immediately if it's urgent. By using certain words in an e-mail, a service called Award Find turns that e-mail into an alert. When he sends an e-mail that he needs to see the response to, he uses the same tagging and is notified when the response comes in, as discussed in *Chapter 5, Identifying and Overcoming the Top 15 Time Wasters*, in the discussion of how to overcome e-mail addiction. The other key system that Alex and his assistant use for tasking and communicating with each other is called Asana (<https://asana.com/>); the tag line for the company on its website is *Teamwork without e-mail*.

Improving your listening skills

If you want to become a better listener, a skill that will surely improve your effectiveness as a communicator, is to follow this acronym for L-I-S-T-E-N:

- **L** – Look someone right in the eyes when he or she speaks to you.
- **I** – If someone is speaking for a while, indicate you are listening by nodding your head when you agree, smiling, or through other gestures so it won't look like you're tuning out.
- **S** – Show interest in what you're hearing by reframing what someone has said to you to by asking questions about what you just heard. For example, "So you're saying that we have to completely redesign the website and have it ready to launch in just five days?"
- **T** – Take the time to listen to someone. By listening you are making a co-worker (employee, customer, boss, or service provider) feel deserving and valued in a positive and respectful way.
- **E** – Empathy is a trait that you want to show in your listening about whatever your coworker (or boss, employee, customer, or service provider) is saying it will get you a lot farther than showing criticism or judgment.

- ▶ **N** – Never interrupt your coworker (or boss, customer, employee, or service provider) before he or she has finished a sentence or is completing his or her thought or point. Try to avoid looking at your watch, smartphone, or a clock in such an obvious way that it might make him or her feel that you're bored or dismissive.

Making the most of meetings

Unfortunately, meetings have gotten a bad reputation as a way of conducting business because too many meetings are unproductive or called without a clear goal or purpose. Avoiding meetings in general may save you time in the short run but in the long run, if meetings were what was required, it can cost you and your company precious time.

So the first consideration when it comes to meetings is this one: Is this meeting even necessary? If your answer is *yes*, then the next question should be what type of meeting should it be? In person, by phone, or remotely over the Internet? Of course if your company has staff throughout the country and even around the world, if the meeting includes some or all of those employees, not just those working on site at the office, it might be necessary for a combination of in-person and virtual meeting tools. You could accomplish that by having some people sitting in a room, talking on a speakerphone, or some or everyone viewed on a screen via Skype, Google hangout, or meeting software like <http://gotomeeting.com/>.

Some executives, like Czarina Walker, CEO and founder of InfiniEDGE Software, finds the five minute daily meeting the company has one of the key ways she keeps her staff focused and productive. At the end of each day, they meet to share their answers to the following simple questions:

- ▶ What did you knock out today?
- ▶ What are your goals for tomorrow?
- ▶ Are there any things managers or others have to address for you?

Czarina explains: 'It takes around five minutes to answer those questions and the process of looking at "What am I supposed to be focused on tomorrow?" That's one of the key things to keep us on the right track.'

Share with your attendees the following elements that go into making sure a meeting is a time saver and not a time waster:

- ▶ Have a clear goal or goals for the meeting.
- ▶ Prepare for the meeting. Do whatever research is necessary to make sure the meeting time is well spent.
- ▶ If necessary, use a facilitator for the meeting.

- Make sure there is an agenda for the meeting.
- Send a reminder about the meeting 24 hours in advance and distribute the agenda to all attendees at that time.
- Start on time.
- Stick to accomplishing the original goals for the meeting.
- Have specific follow-up action statements related to the meeting.
- End on time.

Meeting frequency

Another key element to a meeting's effectiveness is its frequency. A short daily meeting may be very productive for you and your company; a weekly or bi-weekly meeting may be what's best. Especially if there is a meeting that occurs every single week, on the same day and at the same time, you and your team have to monitor if the meeting is a valuable use of everyone's time or if it has just become a routine or habit that needs to be reassessed.

What about how often you should meet with your remote team? Juana Clark Craig, PMP, a project manager for more than 25 years and author of *Project Management Lite*, recommends communicating at least weekly, which of course does not necessarily mean a face-to-face, in-person meeting. Fortunately, thanks to free virtual communication tools, like Skype or Google hangout, or subscription services, like <http://gotomeeting.com/>, it is possible to stay in touch with your remote workers or team visually and not just through an e-mail or a phone call.

But even for these remote communication meetings, whether it is with just you or with a team, follow the same elements suggested earlier to increase the likelihood that you will have a more effective meeting, especially if you set one or more goals for the interaction and you prepare for it. Do your research; have specific things to share. Make it as focused and as productive as possible beyond just asking *What's new with you?* or *How's the project coming along?*

Worksheet 1

List five ways that you can think of making a meeting that you will be attending more productive:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Worksheet 2

List five ways to make a meeting that you've been asked to lead more effective and productive:

1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____
 5. _____
-

Make a note

Activity for training session:



Ask the attendees to consider the most productive meeting they've ever attended. What was it like? Why was it so efficient? What was the topic of the meeting? Why was the meeting called? Who led it? Did it start on time? How long did it last? What was the outcome of the meeting? Do you remember what transpired in the meeting? See if from this discussion you and your attendees can come up with some key rules for effective meetings in addition to the ones shared so far in this module based on the examples and anecdotes that they share.

Using your phone more efficiently

Do you have a smartphone? Hopefully the answer is *yes*. Phones that provide e-mail, text capabilities, Internet access, as well as note-taking functions, and the ability to have all sorts of apps to help you to become more productive are called smartphones for a reason: these phones are truly smart and excellent communication tools. If you have not gotten to know all the features that your phone has to offer, do it now. Did you know you can make a three-way call on your iPhone by just conferencing in a third party? You don't have to use a conferencing service for a three-way call unless you want to.

What about your contact book in your phone? Do you put all the essential information in there about the key people that you call or e-mail so you don't have to continually track down someone's key information?

I used to wear a watch every single day. That's every single day since my teen years. Alas! In the last year, I stopped wearing a watch and I use my iPhone as a clock instead. I tell time when I have to with my phone and I also use it to do something my watch never did: as an alarm clock. (Some of you reading this training manual may not even remember what an alarm clock is anymore!) I also use the timer part of the smart phone when I lecture or train, and the students or attendees do a timed exercise.

I have stopped carrying a separate camera with me as well. How about you? Are you using your phone to take still and video pictures?

But your smartphone, like all technology, can be a time waster if you've gotten into the bad habit of checking the time, or who is sending you an e-mail, too often throughout the day. If your phone has become another distraction for you, it is a communication tool that needs to be used in a more controlled way. Just as we discussed in *Chapter 5, Identifying and Overcoming the Top 15 Time Wasters* on time wasters, web surfing unrelated to work can be a huge time waster, and misusing this glorious communication tool we call a smartphone is another form of technology that you need to use in the service of your communication and time management goals.

The long-winded caller can be a huge time waster. But what do you do if you want to be polite and not offend the caller especially if it's a boss or client/customer? Try practicing some or all of the following closing lines, picking the ones, to use that fit your actual situations. Learn to speak in a way that the loquacious caller understands and is not offended:

"I have to go now. Let's catch up again soon."

"Sorry. I have another appointment so I can't talk much longer."

"I have a staff meeting that is about to start in five minutes so we have to wrap this up now."

"I can't talk right now. I have a roomful of people."

"When's a good time for me to call you back? Unfortunately I have to get off the phone now."

"I was just on my way out the door when I picked up the phone. I'll have to get back to you."

"I'm on a deadline. I have to get off the phone now."

Make a note



Activity for training session:

Write down how often, and when, you check your smartphone, and why. Read over your responses. Is this in the best interest of your job or have you gotten into some very unproductive habits that are slowing you down?

Communication time saver

Lextech CEO Alex Bratton has found that the number one time management challenge of his employees is connected to how they communicate with each other; he thinks they could find a more efficient way. Alex explains: "Lots of time is wasted in context switching to address many short e-mails, instant messages, and other requests for information in the work day."

What does Bratton recommend as an alternative communication strategy to save time? "I think batching up conversational topics for different people so everyone can have fewer but more productive discussions rather than dozens of separate simultaneous conversations is a big productivity boost," he suggests. "I encourage everyone to keep a list of topics to be addressed with each person on their team and then regularly use that list as the agenda for a call or meeting."

Here are two of my own tips that I have found a huge communication time saver over the years:

- Find out how someone prefers to communicate and follow their lead.
Everyone has a way he or she prefers to be contacted. Find out what that is—by an e-mail, by Instant Messaging (IM), by phone, by fax, or in person—and start with that favorite way. Find out the ideal times as well, whether it's early in the morning, after 4 p.m. Monday through Thursday, or never between certain hours when there is a regular meeting in progress. (See the table below that discusses the pros and cons of each way of communicating.)
- If someone's preferred way of communicating is not working, instead of repeatedly using that same method, and failing, try another method till you achieve your goal of communicating.

They say the definition of a neurotic is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting to get a different result. That is similar to the outcome you will probably achieve if you send the seventh e-mail if the first six were ignored. I am not referring to situations where someone is intentionally trying to ignore you so no matter what you do, you will probably still be ignored. I am suggesting that at a certain point, you should assume that someone's e-mail is either down, their mailbox is full, somehow they are just not getting your communication, or they are so overwhelmed by e-mail that yours is simply being lost in the shuffle. In that case, a phone call may get you much further or perhaps, used very selectively because IM can be so intrusive, sending an IM.

Type of communication	Pros	Cons
E-mail	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Free to low-cost■ Readily available on computer and phones■ Can be sent across time zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Only words, no non-verbal cues■ Too many e-mails mean what's important gets lost in the shuffle■ Potential security or confidentiality issues■ One-way communication

Type of communication	Pros	Cons
Text message	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Immediate ■ Since fewer people use texting, messages stand out ■ Usually a two-way, interactive communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Sense of immediacy may not be realistic ■ Could interrupt important meetings or concentrated efforts ■ Requires knowing someone's cell phone number ■ Depending upon your cell phone plan, sending or receiving text messages can get costly
Fax	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Immediate ■ Since fewer people are faxing these days, each fax stands out ■ Relies on either phone line or Internet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Requires recipient to be able to receive a fax either within their computer or through a dedicated fax line or machine ■ Fewer and fewer people and businesses are using dedicated faxes today ■ One way communication ■ Sending faxes through telephone numbers can get expensive especially internationally

Type of communication	Pros	Cons
Phone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Immediate ■ Two-way ■ In addition to words there are the non-verbal cues of tone of voice, pauses, laughter, silences, communication innuendoes ■ Internet-based alternative phone services can be free ■ Smartphone or computer calls can include images not just voice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ It may be convenient for the caller to place the call but not for the recipient to receive it ■ Requires someone to be available to pick up the call ■ Can be costly especially internationally if you don't have a special calling plan ■ You may find yourself always talking to voice mail and not to a person ■ If no one is there to receive the call, someone has to call you back and that may not happen
Internet calling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Free or low-cost ■ Just requires a computer, not a phone ■ Can include pictures of the callers and not just voices ■ Available around the world ■ Two-way communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Some systems are not that easy to install on your computer or figure out how to use it ■ Requires a microphone in the computer ■ The quality of the service can vary greatly ■ Requires both parties of the call be available at the same time which is not always possible because of schedules or time zone differences

Type of communication	Pros	Cons
In-person	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Two-way communication ■ Provides the most non-verbal and verbal cues ■ Involves all the senses including potentially smell, touch, taste, language and sights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Depending on how far one or both individuals have to travel, can be costly ■ More time-consuming than electronic, fax, or phone communications ■ Usually requires more planning to set up ■ Travel and weather last-minute developments can cause a meeting to get canceled at the last minute

Activities

Here are several activities for your attendees to do related to this chapter. The activities begin at a more elementary level, with the second activity more intermediary, and the third for someone who has more advanced time management skills. But you can also ask everyone do all three activities.

Activity 1

You have been asked to conduct a meeting. Pick a topic for this meeting. (Choose a meeting topic or situation, such as a brainstorming session or a status update that you are likely to be asked to conduct.) What are the steps you could take to make sure the meeting is successful?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.

Make a note

To the trainer:

The possible answers could be:



- Have a clear goal or goals for the meeting.
 - Prepare for the meeting.
 - Make sure there is an agenda for the meeting.
 - Consider if you should have a facilitator, besides you, to run the meeting.
 - Send a reminder about the meeting 24 hours in advance and distribute the agenda to all attendees at that time.
 - Start on time.
 - Stick to accomplishing the original goals for the meeting. However, be flexible if issues come up because of the meeting that must be deal with.
 - Have specific follow-up action statements related to the meeting.
 - End on time.
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Activity 2

Write an e-mail and make it as short and concise as possible. Use the following questions as a guideline for writing an e-mail effective:

- What will you write in your subject line?
Subject: _____
- Who is this e-mail to?
- Will it be to one person or to many individuals?
- Will you copy in yourself?
- What is the purpose of this e-mail?
- Does the e-mail end with an action plan or statement?
- Is there another way of communicating besides sending an e-mail that could be a faster or more effective way to share?

After the attendees write their sample e-mail, have them exchange e-mails with the person sitting next to them. Time them by giving them three minutes each to offer each other feedback on their e-mails. What worked in the e-mail? How might it be improved? Should the e-mail be sent in the first place or was there a better way to communicate?

Activity 3

Learning how to end conversations gracefully but effectively can save you a lot of time. Practice having some good closing lines that work for you and your personality. Write down at least three ways you would feel comfortable ending a conversation the next time you have a long-winded caller:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Make a note

Note to trainer:



This might be an excellent activity to turn into a role-playing with the workshop attendees. Ask for one or two volunteers. Have them interact or role play a brief conversation and then have one try to end it despite the other's reluctance and wish to keep talking. Then ask the workshop attendees to discuss how effective he/she was in ending it. Ask the person who was cut off how he/she felt about it and discuss his/her response.

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Summary

Here are the main ideas in this chapter:

- Body language can be as pivotal as your words in how effectively your verbal communication is perceived. Be aware of the non-verbal messages you are sending to others through how you stand, show emotion in your face, your tone of voice, or even how you sit at a meeting.
- Work on your listening skills at in-person meetings or when you are talking on the phone at work. You might be amazed at how much you actually miss when you think you were paying attention at a meeting or when you are talking on the phone. However you are really distracted by your own thoughts or you find yourself only half-listening to what is being expressed.
- Your smartphone has many tools to make your verbal and written communication much more efficient. But if you've become addicted to constantly checking your e-mails, or sending too many text messages, it could be a time waster.

> 8

Setting and Meeting Deadlines

Note to Trainer:

In this chapter/module, you and your attendees will explore the concept of a deadline as well as better ways to set and meet deadlines, so IT professionals can be more efficient and less frenzied.

This chapter/module on deadlines will cover the following topics:

- Why do so many people dread deadlines?
 - Changing attitudes toward deadlines
 - Deadlines as a useful time management tool
 - Guidelines for how to set realistic deadlines
 - Project management basics
 - Working with a project manager—is this something you should be delegating? If so, to whom?
 - Strategies if you agreed to an unrealistically quick deadline.
 - How to handle the realization that you can't make your deadline
 - If you and your staff practice effective time management, you are more likely to set and meet deadlines
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Why do so many people dread deadlines?

According to Ty Kiisel, writing in his article, *Are Deadlines Important?* published on [www . Forbes . com](http://www.Forbes.com), based on research he did on [www . history . net](http://www.history.net), author Christine Ammer wrote that the "*first written record of the word deadline appeared in an 1864 report by Col. D.T. Chandler.*" Kiisel continues to say, "*However another report to Col. Chandler from a Captain Walter Bowie, describes the seriousness of a deadline. He describes a line inside Andersonville Prison, inmates could not cross. 'On the inside of the stockade and twenty feet from it there is a deadline established, over which no prisoner is allowed to go, day or night, under penalty of being shot.'*"

No wonder the word *deadline* still makes most of us quake in our boots!

But, as Kiisel points out in his article, the concept of a deadline in business has, unfortunately, gotten abused, misused, and confused as deadlines no longer have the power and meaning that they should. As Kiisel writes, "*Although I'm not in favour of capital punishment for missed deadlines, I do think we need to take them more seriously than most people do.*"

I suggest that to restore the idea of a deadline to its rightful status as the sound and useful time management tool that it is, we must all re-examine how, and why, a deadline is set. In order for a deadline to be a motivator and not an unrealistic productivity drain, it has to be:

- Clear and specific.
- Attainable, because you and your team use information from previous projects that are similar to make an accurate prediction and projection about a reasonable deadline for this new project
- Agreed to by all parties involved in meeting that deadline
- One overall deadline needs to be enhanced by breaking it down into shorter interim deadlines that will help everyone to better manage their time

Changing attitudes toward deadlines

Before I turn to some of the deadline-setting and attaining techniques that might be helpful to you, let's re-assess how you see deadlines. Take the following short quiz to see whether you have a positive, neutral, or negative attitude toward deadlines. **Note to the Trainer** - Use this Self-Quiz with your attendees:

Self - Quiz – deadline attitudes

Answer the questions below with a *yes* or *no* as truthfully as possible. This quiz is for you to see your own attitudes toward deadlines.

1. I hate deadlines.
Yes ____ No ____

-
2. I only hate deadlines if it's unrealistic.
Yes ___ No ___
 3. I reluctantly accept deadlines as a necessary part of my job.
Yes ___ No ___
 4. I never miss a deadline.
Yes ___ No ___
 5. In the last year, I have had to renegotiate a deadline more than once.
Yes ___ No ___
 6. I equate a deadline with being told what to do.
Yes ___ No ___
 7. I don't see any benefits of a deadline.
Yes ___ No ___
 8. When I applied for this job, "*Do you have the ability to meet deadlines?*" was one of the requirements of the job and I answered "*yes.*"
Yes ___ No ___
 9. If I were the CEO of this company, the first thing I would do is eliminate deadlines.
Yes ___ No ___
 10. I see a deadline as a helpful way to organize my priorities and my time so I get a specific project done in a timely fashion.
Yes ___ No ___

Evaluating your answers

If you answered *yes* to question one, "*I hate all deadlines,*" you have some serious deadline issues that you need to explore. Hopefully this chapter, especially the section that follows, will help you rethink your attitude toward deadlines and see a deadline as the useful time management tool that it's intended to be.

If you answered *yes* to question two, that you "*only hate deadlines if it's unrealistic,*" you have an attitude toward deadlines that will take you far in business. But you are also self-aware and self-nurturing enough to know that only deadlines that are realistic are going to be useful. A deadline that is too soon or too far out in the future can lead to stress, or taking so long on a project that other projects suffer and you lose the business or get beaten to the marketplace.

Look over the rest of your answers and see what trends you're or no answers reveal. If you never miss a deadline (question four), it may indicate that you are a very organized person who works for a company with optimum deadline-setting strategies, it might also indicate that the deadlines that someone is setting for you, or you are setting for yourself, are allowing so much time that it is relatively easy to make those deadlines. If that is the case, and your business is thriving, that's terrific. Keep it up. But if your business could be more successful, maybe you need deadlines that are tighter so you get your product to market faster than the competition or in time for any seasonal demands that you may have missed in previous years.

Your answer to question 10 is absolutely pivotal: "*I see a deadline as a helpful way to organize my priorities and my time so I get a specific project done in a timely fashion.*" That is my philosophy and the philosophy of this workshop, an attitude that we will explore in the next section. It's an attitude that should take you far in setting, meeting, and perhaps even beating, deadlines.

Deadlines as a useful time management tool

Let's discuss how and why deadlines help to keep you and your projects on track.

What deadlines do you have to deal with? The first is the one that a client or customer sets for you: "*We need the new software by this date.*"

The second deadline is the one that you and your team know is possible. The third deadline is the one you all agree to. Ideally, the first and second deadlines should be the same, or at least close together, so that the third deadline that everyone agrees to is realistic and possible.

Setting and meeting deadlines can be a challenge especially if it's a new client or customer, or a new product or project, so that you do not have any similar successful projects to fall back on as a way of assessing the time frame. Of course as you do more and more similar projects, either for the same client or for other clients—but the projects have similar elements—you will get better at assessing how long something should take. Similarly, with employees, freelancers, or to those you outsource, the longer you work together, the better you will get at assessing how quickly someone can complete his or her assigned tasks.

Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) educated Mark Herschberg, who is now the CTO (Chief Technology Officer) at Madison Logic, explains what happens that may cause a big IT project to miss its deadline. Herschberg notes, "*Let's say it's January 1st and the client says, 'We're going to do this project. What do you think? The IT department says they can build it in a year.' Okay. We'll see you December 31st.*"

But two things commonly happen. Here's how Herschberg describes it:

"The first time is that the specifications will change. 'Listen, it's May but our competitor just announced they're building four things so we need to change the scope of our project.'

The second thing that happens is that, it's October, and the IT department is almost done, but now the product is reviewed and the reaction is, 'That's not what I wanted.'

'But that's what you said in your specs?'

This is in addition to the fact that specifications are simply hard in the first place. Ideal specifications are clear, consistent, concise, and correct. The reality is they rarely are and subsequently the estimates, which aren't easy in the first place, get even harder."

Herschberg emphasizes that *"Communication is a big, difficult part in engineering."*

But communication can help IT professionals to meet their deadlines because there is ongoing communication about whether the specs are changing on a project, or even if expectations have to be managed by revisiting a deadline and revising it if it is no longer realistic.

Without that revision of the deadline, a process may start that Herschberg says which is known as the death march, which is also the title of the book about this phenomenon by Edward Yourdon, whereby programmers, trying to meet a deadline, will start working around the clock, putting in seven days a week, 16 hours a day, and skipping any even vacation time until a project is done. Herschberg continues to say:

"Even then, the deadline is missed; business blames developers for bad estimates and developers blame business for moving the goal posts and everyone walks away unhappy."

Of course the death march takes its toll on an individual's mind and body since failing to get enough sleep can have consequences, ranging from making more mistakes, having more workplace accidents, as well as lacking enough sleep, not to mention the toll it can take on family and other relationships in the short- and long-term. It is, of course, far better to have consistent pacing throughout a project although there may be some ground swelling of enthusiasm and adrenaline as a long-term project starts to come to fruition, but not days upon days of gruelling death march overworking behavior. As Herschberg notes:

"Such projects were more common in the 20th century, but today, with the high demand for developers and constant barrage of e-mails from recruiters, such death march projects find they have a high turnover rate."

Mark Herschberg was not the only IT professional to emphasize that communication is key in meeting deadlines. This point was definitely seconded by Czarina Walker, the CEO and founder of InfiniEDGE Software, who has been running her own companies since she was 19 years old. Czarina says that her current company has never missed a deadline. She attributes this to the open and consistent face-to-face communication that she and her staff of seven always have. Everyone works on-site and they also all have the same work hours—from 8 a.m. till 5 p.m.—so communication can be facilitated. (Sure, there are those who would prefer to get in to the office by 7 and those who might want to get in at 9 and leave later, but this is better for the company and for consistently meeting those deadlines, Walker explains.)

Czarina has found by avoiding technologies such as text messages and e-mails, as the sole way to communicate internally, and instead communicating in person, they are able to deal with any challenges on a project very quickly so they can keep projects on track. Czarina says:

"We still document our conversations after the fact using technology, but it's a whole lot easier to have a conversation in person. With that in mind, it's important for all of us to be under the same roof and on the same schedule. For example, if we're testing software before we release it to the customer, if there's a bug or an issue, I can send a description of that bug 15 times to somebody but if I walk over to their desk and explain it to them that can save someone so much more time than just going back and forth. Everyone, even the leadership within our company, can just walk down the hall and talk to somebody. Certain things are so simple if you just have a quick conversation for thirty seconds that could have been a 10 e-mail chain or 5 instant messages and still gone wrong."

Guidelines for how to set realistic deadlines

We have considered that establishing a deadline and meeting it is pivotal for success in the IT world. That idea was reinforced in my interview with John Reed, Senior Executive Director at Robert Half Technology, an international recruiting firm for project-based and full-time IT positions. Reed, who's been in the IT field for more than 25 years, manages operations for more than 100 Robert Half Technology locations globally. Reed says:

"Over the course of nearly three decades, I have become incredibly familiar with a great deal of IT projects. There have been many instances where technology executives have been relieved from their duties because projects missed critical deadlines."

You and your team will be more likely to meet or beat project deadlines, if you practice the time management principles you are learning in this workshop. But you are also more likely to make—not miss—a deadline, if the deadline you set is realistic in the first place.

Here are some pivotal points to remember, to help you to set more realistic deadlines (that are more likely to be met):

- Have we done a project like this before? If *yes*, how long did it take that time?
- If you have not done a project like this before, what project was closest to it that you could use to estimate how long the current project will take?
- Are there any personal or business events that need to be considered when estimating how long this project will take? For example, any religious or government holidays? Are you moving to another office or another apartment or home? Is there a family wedding you are either planning or have to attend? Any vacation time or business trips including professional conferences you are speaking at or attending?
- Do you already have the team you need to rely on to complete this project or do you still have to hire one or more team members? How long will that take? Is there any "start up" time you need to factor into the deadline in terms of training?
- What system for periodic or regular review do you have in place or do you need to put in place to keep your team members on track to meet the overall deadline?
- Will you set interim deadlines? If *yes*, when will those deadlines be? Will you meet in person as a group at a meeting or individually, or by phone or e-mail, to help to keep your team on track?
- What are the consequences for failing to meet the agreed upon deadline? Is there a penalty for lateness? Do you risk a competitor beating you to market?
- As you get closer to the ideal deadline, will you have features in the new product that you and your team agree are less pivotal that you could delay till after the initial launch so you can meet that agreed-upon deadline?

Here's another tip from Gayle Lynn Falkenthal, a San Diego-based public relations consultant in the Falcon Valley Group who has also been a broadcast producer, which definitely emphasized the importance of meeting deadlines. As Gayle notes, "*Live radio and TV waits for no one!*" She continues "I consider a project I am asked to deliver *to be late delivered after the deadline, no exceptions*" However, Gayle explains:

"When I ask for responses, contributions, articles, or other materials for any kind of project, I make the deadline at least 24 hours in advance of when I really need something. This gives me one last opportunity to press for the materials and avoid production failures."

Could you add in a margin of 24 or 48 hours to an absolute deadline so you and your team will be more likely to make your client's deadline? Is this concept of buffering deadlines something that would work for you and your company when it comes to increasing the likelihood that you and your team always meet deadlines?

What's key to this concept is that you are still working with the same deadline that everyone agreed upon. You are only adding the additional time margin in how you structure when you and your team must meet their deadline goals. You are not adding time to the deadline; you are simply creating an additional mini deadline toward the end of your time frame so that there is no question that the original firm deadline will be met.

Project management basics

We have already defined time management as the study and practice of behaviors that improve how effectively you use your time. Better use of your time will of course help you to more effectively manage projects, whether you're the project manager or someone working on the team that is creating the project. But project management is considered a separate field of study than time management. Jon Quigley, **Project Management Professional (PMP)**, the author of seven books with a Master of Science (MS) in Project Management, defines a project in this way: "*A temporary endeavor to achieve an objective that employs processes and people.*"

Of course better time management skills, like proper planning and pacing, which have already been addressed in this training manual (workshop) will impact on the timeliness and success of a project. And it is not the intention of this training manual to duplicate the detailed and very specific field of project management in this chapter on setting and meeting deadlines. But it is useful to at least explore the key steps that go into project management as a way of increasing the likelihood that a project will be delivered on time and that all of the goals for the project are met. Obviously if a project meets its deadline, as long as the budget for the project was correct in the first place, it is more likely that that element of project management—money concerns—will be achieved and not exceeded.

Juana Clark Craig, PMP, has written a nifty little book on project management entitled *Project Management Lite*, available as an e-book and in print, which lists ten key steps that each project needs to address and each project manager needs to be concerned with, whether that's you or someone else on your team, namely:

1. Define what you're trying to do.
2. Come up with a plan to do it.
3. Work through the plan.
4. Make sure the work gets done.
5. Handle the problems.
6. Deal with any changes.
7. Manage the team.
8. Keep everyone informed.
9. Wrap it up.
10. Celebrate.

Here is my own five-step guide to project management, based on the years I've spent either on my own projects or as project manager, in my role as a book publisher, editor, or publicist:

1. What is the purpose of this project? What is its goal?
2. What is the step-by-step plan to complete the project with each step having a specific time estimate for completion?
3. What is the plan or schedule for checking on each step in the plan as well as dealing with any problems?
4. If it is necessary at any point to adjust the schedule or modify the project, is it likely that the original target completion date will be met?
5. Finish up, present the project, and rejoice on your own or as part of the team before you move on to the next project.

The preceding five-point plan is based on the idea that there is on-going communication among everyone working on the project, including the project manager, developers, programmers/coders, and anyone on the marketing or leadership side of things. Juana Clark Craig, PMP, from Project Management Lite, describes project management as:

"Project management is 90 percent communication. Real estate is location, location, location. For projects, it's communication, communication, communication. The more you keep people informed, the better off you'll be."

Communication needs to be an ongoing process like it is for Czarina Walker's company, which might account for why Walker says that her company has never missed a deadline. Instead of having her employees keep a timesheet, they designed a simple app that they use internally that asks each employee three questions that they must answer before the end of each and every day. Those questions are:

1. What did I knock out today?
2. What are my goals for tomorrow?
3. Are there any things managers or others have to address for me?

Walker explains that *"It takes around five minutes to answer those questions, and that process of looking at 'What am I supposed to be focused on tomorrow?', is one of the key things to keep us on the right track."*

Working with a project manager – is this something you should be delegating? If so, to whom?

If you are a one-person shop, you may be the programmer, the project manager, the marketing and sales person, and every other function that is required to complete a project. But if you have more than one employee, or you are considering whether or not you need to hire more staff, having a dedicated project manager just might be one of the most efficient things you can do for your business. That is because keeping a project on track is a job is a commitment, and it is a very different job function than being one of the individuals who is actually doing the job or, if you have other jobs you are doing, such as marketing and sales, it could be the activity that falls by the wayside until it becomes clear that the project is not on track and there are problems that needed to be dealt with immediately that fell through the cracks.

You can aid your own project management skills or tracking system by trying and using any of the various products that are available today to help you keep track of one or multiple projects. Those products include Microsoft Project, Teamwork Project Manager, Basecamp, or ActiveCollab. For the website address for each, go to the *Resource* section at the end of this chapter.

Strategies if you agreed to an unrealistically quick deadline

Okay, so you agreed to a deadline because you thought you would not get the business if you told the potential client that it was really going to take twice the time that they want it delivered in. Now you're regretting that you got yourself, and your company, in this mess, but you needed the money, and you may even have figured that you were overestimating what was involved and that you would be pleasantly surprised.

Unfortunately, you were right and instead of being halfway through the project, you are more like a third of the way there. At this rate, you are not going to have a completed project by the target date.

First of all, take a deep breath and review all your predictions and projections and see whether there is any way you miscalculated and you actually might get the project done in time.

If you do, indeed, need at least another couple of days, weeks, or even months, the next step is to reconsider the project and to see whether there are ways to make things go faster, and even make the original deadline, without sacrificing quality.

Since this is technically your mistake, would it help to bring in more staff, even if it's at your own expense, or will the necessary learning curve just slow things down even further? If more staff could be a time-saver, consider that option before telling the client you have to renegotiate the deadline.

You did, after all, make a promise about the date you could deliver and your client may have made business decision based on that promise that would hurt their credibility, economic viability, or even this position in the field as an innovator with the first product of its kind being released before the competition.

If you cannot fund additional workers, consider whether some or all of the team is willing to put in extra hours for just a short period of time. Perhaps you can motivate them by promising them some extra paid vacation time when the project is delivered, a bonus, or maybe you offer to bring in free lunch and dinner for x number of days or weeks to save your staff on the cost of dining out or going out for meals. But you want to be very careful about asking employees to voluntarily be part of an intense work schedule to meet, or at least finish close to, an original deadline.

But you have to be concerned about their health, both physical and mental, including getting enough sleep to avoid falling asleep at the wheel on the way home from working excessively long work hours, or even the greater likelihood of mistakes or accidents that too little sleep, or exhaustion, can cause. Also, those workers who agree to working extra hours, even if they do get enough sleep and take care of their emotional and physical needs, will have to be careful about how this request impacts on the other relationships in their life. Everyone wants to avoid having the necessity of meeting a project deadline, or close to it, as the reason for a marriage or other romantic relationship to start having problems, or children or teens feeling ignored and abandoned. What seems like a relatively short period of time to the employee or freelancer, let's say a day or two, or a week or more, can seem like an eternity to the loved ones who feel like they are being left behind because of this intense work period.

In Hollywood they have an expression about a film project, a way of emphasizing that the project was handled well, by saying that it was **on time and under budget**.

That concept could of course apply to any project but if you're working on an app that could change the way healthcare is delivered around the world, it might be more important to take a bit more time and get a bit more funding than risking the release of an inferior product.

These are decisions that the project manager or, depending upon the size of the company and how it's structured, the CEO of the company will have to make.

But certainly the goal is to have a 100 percent on time performance record so that meeting deadlines is just what you and your company do.

But if you realize you just won't make your projects deadline, Here are tips for what to do once you realize you can't make your deadline:

- If possible, be proactive in advising your client that you are going to miss the deadline. There are many reasons for doing this. First of all, the client might have another product that is ready for release so getting additional time for your product is not as negative a situation as you thought it might be. Second of all, your client may have to make adjustments in their own business plan to accommodate the delay of the product. Third of all, there may be contractual and financial consequences to missing the agreed deadline and delivery date.

- Find out what, if anything, are the consequences of missing a deadline or if there is some range of time, such as an extra few days, weeks, or months, that was built into the original contract.
- See whether there are some functions that you could suggest postponing till version 2, 3, or 4, if you are working on an IT product or project that everyone knows will be tweaked once it's released, but it's more important to get something to market than risk delays. What are those functions that can be deferred? Your client will want to know about that and agree to those specification adjustments.
- If you do have to ask your client for more time, explain that you simply need additional time to deliver the product that meets or exceeds everyone's expectations. Of course you want to say that in a way that puts the situation in the best light, but be direct and clear about it. You want to convey this idea, in your own words of course: *"I deeply regret that we need more time. But we just can't deliver the quality product we all want by the deadline we originally agreed to. Thanks for understanding. Fortunately we can have it ready by"* (state another specific date). By suggesting an alternative date, at least you're not leaving it in an open-ended way, which might make the client fear that the project is going to languish indefinitely.
- You and your client will have to figure out whether getting more time is better spent defaulting on the project completely. You also will have to show, probably in a concrete way, that you will actually finish and deliver, and by a new target date, since the client might be tempted to take the project away from you totally and to start from scratch with someone else or, if what you have done so far could be transferred to others, to have them complete what you started. That would not, however, be the same as taking a project through to completion, which will usually speak better for you and your company than handing a project over to another—potentially competing—business. The bragging rights are usually reserved for the person or company that finishes a project rather than those who started and stopped along the way.

If you and your staff practice effective time management, you are more likely to set and meet deadlines

The good news is that if you and your staff practice more efficient time management, you are more likely to set realistic deadlines and to meet those deadlines, every single time.

To review, those key behaviors for each staff member or freelancer are:

1. Identify, understand, and overcome whatever time wasters are personally slowing you down.
2. Keep your focus on the project at hand and avoid distractions, especially those that are self-imposed such as excessively checking e-mail if that is not your daily function (for example someone in IT support or customer relations who has to monitor each and every e-mail that is received).

3. Keep the lines of communication open with the project manager as well as everyone else who is on the team for the project, from the developer to the programmer, to the marketing and sales force.
4. If possible, work on one project at a time, finishing up the project, or your part in it, before going on to another project, avoiding the *doing too many things at once* syndrome. You especially want to avoid having scores of projects in various stages of completion without finishing one or all of those projects, and in a timely fashion.
5. Take a workshop, or read a book, on project management and use those principles in all the projects that you are either directly involved in working on or managing.

Activities

Here are several activities for your attendees to do that are related to this chapter. The activities begin at a more elementary level, with the second activity more intermediary, and the third for someone who has more advanced time management skills. But you can also have everyone do all three activities if you like.

Activity 1

Hand out a copy of the blank project management worksheet that follows and allow your workshop attendees 10 minutes to fill in the blanks. Suggest that they use the worksheet on an actual project that they're currently working on, or bidding on, or provide them with a fictitious project to manage, such as creating a website from scratch, or developing and launching a new app.

Once everyone is finished with their completed worksheet, ask for volunteers to share information about their projects with the group. What did they learn in this module that helped them to approach the timing of the project differently? Is anything missing from the worksheet that they suggest adding?

PROJECT MANAGEMENT WORKSHEET

Name of project: _____

Type of project (website, app, companywide new system, and so on)

Audience for the project: (internal, public) _____

What will the project accomplish/do? _____

Today's date: _____

Date the project is commencing: _____

Date for delivering finished project _____

Necessary tasks in order to complete this project with projected deadlines and who will be working on that task

Task	Person working on that task	Deadline
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		

Name and contact information for the project manager:

Name and contact information for persons on the team and their functions:

Name	Contact information	Function

Communication plan for this project.

Note how the team will communicate about the project and the frequency of that communication.

Communication about this project will be:

Daily Weekly Monthly

Other (please list)

Communication will be by:

E-mail Text messaging Instant messaging

Phone Skype or another form of video conferencing

In-person meetings

List additional details related to the above, such as where and when the in-person meeting(s) will take place, who will be included in those meetings, and whether e-mails will be between specific individuals or among the entire team.

Communication details:

If there are target dates that you and/or your project manager will use to access your progress on this project, please note those dates below:

Starting date: _____

Deadline: _____

Interim deadlines:

Budget for this project: _____

Any financial consequences or other details related to the deadline that should be noted? For example, launch publicity that has been pre-arranged, a competitor has announced it will have a rival product ready by a certain date, meeting or beating the deadline will result in a bonus, and so on.

Activity 2

Think about the last project you were working on. What went right with that project? What could have been handled differently or better? Use the space below to write down about that project in as detailed a way as possible, so you can consider this situation and learn from your previous challenges so your projects will go better now and in the future.

Activity 3

You know the adage about all work and no play makes so-and-so a dull person. Keep that in mind when you're addressing how to increase your motivation to meet or beat deadlines by writing down rewards that you truly care about when you make a deadline. Although you want to pick rewards that are meaningful to you, you also want to note realistic ones. If you are having financial challenges, promising yourself that if you make the deadline on the project you were just assigned that you will buy yourself a Maserati luxury sports car is probably not going to be the motivator that you want it to be. Promising yourself that you will take a drive to a new town within thirty minutes of your apartment or home as you walk around and enjoy experiencing a new community might be more realistic.

Here are the rewards that I will give myself each time I meet a deadline for a project:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

And take this next worksheet and use it to actually chronicle the projects you have now or in the near future, the date when you made the deadline(s), and what reward you actually did give yourself.

DEADLINE ACHIEVEMENT WORKSHEET

Project	Deadline	Day I finished	Reward I gave myself	Date completed

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Resources

Project management software: you should check with each product about their subscription fees. Some offer a free version with fewer features.

➤ *Basecamp*

www.Basecamp.com

Project management software company co-founded in 1999 by Jason Fried and David Heinemeier under the name 37signals (<https://37signals.com>) Pricing is based on the number of projects and storage space that is used.

➤ *Microsoft Project*

www.microsoft.com

Check out what the terms are for this project management software at their main website. There is a professional version upgraded periodically.

➤ *Teamwork Project Manager*

www.Teamwork.com

Started in 2007 in Ireland. Pricing is determined by the number of projects that are managed starting at \$12 a month for 5 projects. Enables monitoring projects, tasks, and comments through their software (also offers a free plan with 10 MB storage).

➤ *ActiveCollab®*

www.activecollab.com

Started by Ilija Stude and Boran Radulovic. All their plans include unlimited projects and clients. Their pricing, beginning at \$25 a month, is determined by the number of members and the amount of storage on their cloud. There is also a self-hosted version that is charged on a one-time fee basis. There is a 30 day free trial also.

Associations

Project Management Institute® (PMI)

Global Operations Center

14 Campus

Boulevard Newtown Square, PA 19073-3299 USA

www.pmi.org

An international membership association with 280 local chapters worldwide of those working in the project management field. They offer a program that leads to the designation of a certified Project Manager (PMP). There is an online bookstore with books related to project management. There is an annual global educational conference at a different location each year.

Summary

Here are the top ideas covered in this chapter:

- The fastest way for you to be judged as a poor or excellent time manager is whether you consistently set and meet (or miss) deadlines.
- Communication is pivotal in meeting deadlines by making sure you and your entire team are discussing, and solving, any problems that are arising and that any changes in specifications are being addressed throughout the project.
- If getting to market on time is pivotal, and you think you're not going to make the original agreed-upon deadline, see whether you can negotiate with your client or customer about what are agreeable modifications in the product's specifications that would enable meeting the original deadline. Find out if the modifications could be made in the next version or even after the basic project is launched.

> 9

Improving Your Work and Personal Relationships

Note to the Trainer:

You may find that some of your workshop attendees might have a bit of resistance to the idea that work and personal relationships are topics that should be covered in a training on time management. For sure, they understand how prioritizing, goal-setting, dealing with distractions, and e-mail are the stuff of time management. But why relationships? Hopefully by the end of this module, including the activities that attendees will be asked to do, they will have a better understanding of how work and personal relationships, especially when those connections are positive and working well, are pivotal to being more effective and efficient.

This chapter/module will cover:

- Why work relationships matter
 - Getting along better with others at work
 - Dealing with conflict
 - Making time for connections at work
 - Tips for improving your business relationships
 - Collaborating for innovation and efficiency
 - Successful delegation
 - How delegating is a time saver
 - Selecting the right person to delegate to
 - Dealing with the poor time management skills of those you work for or report to
 - Fostering better personal relationships
-
-

Why work relationships matter

Getting along with those at work can make a big difference in worker satisfaction as well as enthusiasm about the job and even efficiency. Sometimes it can be a clash of personalities that has to be sorted out but other times, it is a question of putting in the time to get to know your co-workers as well as exercising tact and good judgment in how you get along with bosses or subordinates.

Here is a list of the many benefits positive work relationships have for IT professionals, such as:

- **Increased productivity:** When you get along with your co-workers, boss, or employees, you are more motivated to work; you can also help each other out
- **Greater worker satisfaction:** If you like those you work with or for, you are more likely to enjoy your job
- **Working better as teams:** You need more than one to have a team
- **Superior work products:** The expression *two heads are better than one* comes to mind as relationships can contribute to enhanced work products
- **Less stress:** Having someone to share with at work, whether it's about work or, appropriately, about personal issues, can help offset the stress you may feel
- **Lower worker turnover:** Relationships will inspire you to want to stay at a company longer

Conversely, here are the consequences of poor work relationships:

- **Higher worker turnover:** Getting away from negative work relationships by changing jobs may seem like the solution to an unsatisfactory situation
- **Negativity at work spills over into other business related relationships including customers, clients, or vendors:** Being mistreated at work can have an impact on how you treat others in your life, from other business connections to your family and friends
- **Greater absenteeism:** If you fail to get along with those at work, you may find yourself wanting to stay away; poor work relationships might even stress you out leading to becoming ill
- **Lower productivity:** You may be less motivated to work at your best because of the frustrating work relationships

The website <http://www.mindtools.com/>, in its article, *Building Good Work Relationships*, points out that research conducted by the Gallup Organization found that having a friend at work increased your job satisfaction. Those who reported having a best friend at work were seven times more likely to be engaged in their jobs, and job engagement is tied to increased productivity and worker satisfaction.

I have written extensively about the benefits, and also the challenges, of workplace friendships in four books: *Productive Relationships*, *Who's That Sitting at My Desk?*, *Friendshifts* and *When Friendship Hurts*. I point out that there are pluses and minuses to having a friendship at work, especially a best friendship, but there is another relationship, which I call a **workship**, which is ideal at work. That is because a workship is less intimate than a friendship, with all the potential challenges that a friendship might cause at work, especially between superiors and subordinates, where accusations of favoritism must be avoided, but a workship is more connected than a co-worker or acquaintance.

Here are some of the pros and cons of having a workship or, if well-managed, a best, close, or casual friendship at work:

Relationship	Pros	Cons
Close or best friend	Most intimate	Could feel compromised if asked to supervise
	Feel like you can share everything	Could be seen by others as favoritism
	Lots of opportunities to discuss work-related issues and even individuals	Could stop you from moving on
		Could take up too much work time with chatting May know too much about each other including secrets
Casual friendship	Stronger bond than just being a co-worker or a workship	Potential for being considered a relationship where there is favoritism
	Involves some personal sharing but not as much as a close or best friendship	Could grow into close or best friendship and might make it harder to be objective
		Could know too much about each other
		Can be misused to get information or special considerations
		Could be hard to supervise since as friends you are supposedly equals
Workship	More than an acquaintance but less intimate than a friend	What is shared can be less personal than with a friendship
	Feeling of connection; someone who has your back	Kept to business rather than a personal connection

Relationship	Pros	Cons
	Avoids potential accusations of favoritism that might happen when the relationship is a friendship	May feel "too" distant and remote
	Easier to manage the information you share about and with each other	

Getting along better with others at work

The title of this chapter/module is *Improving your work and personal relationships*, and the best way to accomplish that is to get along! Here are 12 tips for getting along well with others at work:

- Have mutual respect for everyone you work with; you do not have to be liked by those you work with but you should feel respected.
- Show a commitment to getting along at work. Let others know that they matter to you.
- Understand and pay attention to the boundaries that others show in their work relationships. If someone prefers to keep things more professional and distant, that's okay. Everyone has his or her own comfort zone about how much personal information he or she wants to share at work.
- Keep all confidences, whether work-related or personal.
- Avoid holding a grudge if you do have issues that you need to resolve.
- Beware of hubris. No one likes a braggart.
- Listen to what others have to say before you immediately jump to conclusions. There can be extenuating circumstances that explain things in a much different light than your initial assumptions.
- Emphasize your similarities and shared goals with others rather than dwelling on your differences. However, differences should be appreciated and celebrated too, rather than seen as a threat. But avoid talking about, or asking about, someone's political views or discussing religion, beliefs, and topics that can polarize rather than unite.
- Share credit, as appropriate, so you get labeled a *we* and not just a *me* colleague.
- Learn to shoulder responsibility. Share credit when things go well; admit one's mistakes, as appropriate, when things go badly.
- Deal with conflicts or disagreement immediately and appropriately.
- Occasionally talking about shared or common interests is useful in getting to know your co-worker better. It also can be a constructive distraction from being bored from a day that is consumed with only work.

Dealing with conflict

But what if you and someone at work have a conflict? When you interact with someone, there is always the potential for harmony, or for conflict. Here are some suggestions for how to deal with conflicts:

- Cool off. Avoid over-reacting and saying words in the heat of the moment that you may regret later.
- Maintaining a polite tone is very important. Nothing will scare or intimidate people more at work or in business than a raised or angry voice.
- Avoid ultimatums.
- Let them tell their side of it.
- Put yourself in the other person's shoes.
- Agree to disagree.
- Reinforce the value of your relationship.
- Say *I'm sorry* if you were wrong.
- Ask for understanding. For example, if you know you were wrong, explain what might have been the reason for your behavior. Without sharing too much that might put you in an embarrassing situation, you can at least let a colleague know that you are dealing with a sick relative, or a child or teen with challenges, and that's contributing to whatever you said or did that you need to be forgiven for.
- Use the interest-based bargaining approach: look at the reasons something happened and that might help you to find a solution that is a win-win.
- If necessary, consult a third party for help, such as a human resource department, if there is one, or a manager that you and your co-worker both report to. But being perceived as a "tattle tale," even if justified, can backfire so if it is possible to work through your conflicts informally, between the two of you, this is usually preferable.

Making time for connections at work

*Whether it's maintaining work or personal relationships, you have to make it a priority to reach out to people on a consistent basis, says Donna Troy, Executive Vice President (EVP) Americas at Austin, Texas-based Epicor Software, a billion dollar company with 4,800 employees. Donna, who has a degree in Computer Science and has also worked at Dell and IBM, among other companies, continues, reinforcing that you have to make the time to connect with your colleagues. Says Donna, *You have to schedule time to do that because, otherwise, there's never enough time to do that. It always seems like an optional thing.**

Since we are in agreement that relationships are pivotal, what can you do to make time for connections at work and in business? Are you failing to plan your day effectively and efficiently so that you have some time available for interacting, whether it's at the water cooler or in the company cafeteria or break room? Instead of seeing the time you connect as wasted time, consider it as a productive way of reinforcing your relationships at work.

Since there is so much time and money invested in training employees to be able to work at a particular company, and finding a new job can be challenging, especially if there is time when you are unemployed and between jobs. So making the time to connect may be one of the best ways to spend some of your work time, in addition to doing the actual work, of course.

But the time to connect with co-workers, the boss, employees, clients, customers, and even service providers is never going to happen on its own. Everyone's busy. Of course realistically the work still has to come first. But you also need to make the time to connect to your work relationships whether that means having breakfast, lunch, or a drink after work together, getting together on the weekends with your co-worker and their spouses for a movie or dinner, putting together a company software or soccer team so you have a shared activity that brings you together, or starting a workplace book club or exercise group so you have another opportunity to interact.

Tips for improving your business relationships

Here, therefore, are some ideas, based on my research, observations, and interviews, that should help you to make better connections at work:

- Deal with people based on what's happening now, not from your past

Too many people arrive at the office and they are unaware that how they feel about their mother, their father, their siblings, their spouse, or co-workers, or a boss from another job is creeping into how they handle people now. That is an unproductive approach to your current work relationships. Of course it's great to learn from those relationships, and hopefully you have learned, but your boss is not your mother, and your co-worker should not be treated with hostility just because the co-worker at your last job betrayed you. Similarly, you want to be careful that you don't automatically assume that your new boss is your best friend because you got along great with your first boss. This new boss has to earn your trust.

So keep an open mind about those work relationships in your current job. If you find yourself feeling overly positive or negative toward someone, take the time to do a thorough assessment about where that is coming from. Is it truly based on situations that have occurred in your current job and with this specific person, or are you reacting from some previous experience/relationship, whether it's from a year ago, ten years ago, or even your very earliest experience?

- Stop making excuses for avoiding people

Stop making excuses, including the *I don't have enough time* excuse to avoid connecting at work. If you're avoiding interacting with people, especially in person, if you all work in the same office or building, ask yourself what's really going on. Are you afraid you'll say or do the wrong thing with your co-workers and it will be worse than avoiding them? Are you introverted or shy? Do you need to reinforce the benefits of connecting to others so you will make the time for it?

Do a self-assessment and if you think your social skills are getting in your way of connecting at work, consider seeking outside help to become more self-assured. There are a range of helpers out there to improve your communication skills. It could be anyone from a professional counselor to a communication coach. There are also books, such as Dale Carnegie's classic, *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, or my own book, *Productive Relationships*, that offer help, inspiration, and useful tips.

- Avoid demonstrating the scariest trait in the workplace

Do you know what the scariest trait is in the workplace? It's not being overly verbal and it's not being a workaholic. It's anger. No one wants to be around an angry co-worker or boss so work on your anger issues so you can get along better at work. And if there's a co-worker or boss who has anger issues and it's upsetting to you, you may have to increase your ability to tolerate someone else's anger and not overreact to a raised voice if that makes you uncomfortable. But at least, you shouldn't be the one losing your cool or raising your voice.

- Become a better listener

As Carnegie pointed out in *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, and it's as true today as it was when first published in 1937, to be considered a great conversationalist, be a great listener. (If you haven't read that book at least once, it's worth reading since the advice will take you far.)

- Share information or opinions at work appropriately

This is, after all, the workplace and not the health club or your dorm room. Yes, it's okay to share about yourself in the workplace but don't share too much and certainly avoid sharing intimate or embarrassing details about yourself, your family, or opinions about others that might jeopardize your image or your job. For example, especially for single workers, on a Monday morning, it's fine to share about what you did over the weekend, such as going to the movies, or out on a date or to dinner with a friend, but you should avoid going into any of the intimate details. Also, avoid being considered a gossip.

- Use technology to aid your relationships

Use technology to help to start, and grow, your work relationships. What kind of database are you using to keep track of your contacts? What is the policy on social media? Within that policy, strengthen or expand your work connections. Do you use <https://www.LinkedIn.com> to connect to your current or previous colleagues? If you do, make sure your profile is up-to-date and complete. If possible, have an e-mail as part of your "Contact info" on your profile that is a business e-mail but something more direct than the general company website.

- Welcome change

Get to know the new staff (or client) by starting with a positive attitude that you will get along and find a way to make that happen.

- Read the non-verbal cues co-workers, clients, or your boss are sharing with you
Don't just rely on praise or expressions of friendship or camaraderie to let you know how someone is currently viewing you. Look at the nonverbal cues. That includes everything from whether or not they are communicating with you, how often, and by what means. If you do speak to each other, do you sense there is a positive energy between you or is it negative? If you ask questions about your co-worker, client or customer, or boss, just to be friendly, is he or she asking you questions as well or is the interest and exchange of information one-way? How does this person stand in your presence? On the phone, what tone or voice is being used and how long are the conversations? Is he or she getting off abruptly after the business at hand is completed? Are your phone calls, IMs, or e-mails being ignored or replied to in a timely fashion?

Use the information you gather from these nonverbal cues to determine if you need to take a more proactive approach to communicating and interacting with this individual if you are to get your relationship back on track again.

- You need to communicate regularly with those you work with, especially if you have remote work relationships

Develop a schedule for regular communication with work and business relationships that suits the project you are working on although you of course have to be aware of, and participate in, the style and frequency of communicating that your boss has set up for you. For some, daily and in-person, if you work together, or other ways to communicate, such as IM, Skype, phone, or e-mail, Google hangout, or other conferencing tools, if you work remotely, may be the ideal schedule. For others, it might be better to communicate every other day, once a week, once every two weeks, or with even less frequency. The key is not to take your work relationships for granted; you need to invest time and energy in maintaining those relationships to optimize how you work together. Whenever possible, make the time to meet and connect face to face.

- Say *no* when and wherever it is required

You also need to be able to say *no*, and hear *no*, when a *no* needs to be communicated. For example, you can ask your supervisor to lunch, because you think that's the way to get to know each other better. But if he or she says *no*, adding, *I prefer to get together over coffee, rather than stop and take the time for lunch*, respect his or her perspective, and see if he or she will schedule a coffee get together for the two of you rather than you backing off completely because he or she said *no* to lunch. You may find yourself having to say *no* to your co-workers, or subordinates, for a variety of reasons. It's of course a lot harder to say *no* to your boss.

Collaborating for innovation and efficiency

One of the concrete ways that work relationships can improve our productivity is through collaborating. Collaborating means that you and at least one other person are putting your heads together to hopefully come up with a better solution than each one of you would have had on your own.

In his article, *Collaboration Rules: Five Reasons Why Collaboration Matters Now More Than Ever*, originally published in O'Reilly Media and reprinted at www.Forbes.com, author Joshua Michele Ross points out one of the key reasons collaboration is even more pivotal now:

As our organizations slowly diffuse across time zones and space, collaboration is a glue to keep people together.

Collaboration requires communication to function smoothly. We discussed communication, and how to improve it, in *Chapter 7, Enhancing Your Verbal and Written Communication Skills for Efficiency*. If necessary, review the summary of what you learned in that module. Those ideas apply to collaborating and to optimizing your work and personal relationships.

Furthermore, when you collaborate, you might get involved in a brainstorming session. Here are some brainstorming rules that you should keep in mind whenever you collaborate.

Brainstorming rules

Here are some rules for brainstorming, which is usually a key part of collaborating, so you and those who brainstorm will share openly and without fear of being judged or criticized:

1. Allow the person you're brainstorming with to say what he or she thinks without judgment.
2. Have an agreement about what you will do with the ideas that are shared.
3. Try not to interrupt when someone is sharing. Let him/her finish his/her complete idea, thought, or suggestion before you give feedback.
4. Create and maintain a non-judgmental environment so the brainstorming becomes more and more relaxed and creative.
5. Encourage participants to avoid self-censorship. Say anything that you freely associate with the project, topic, or idea that you are collaborating on.
6. Agree if you will have a definite start and finish time to your brainstorming session or just keep going till one or both of you run out of ideas or things to say.

Successful delegation

Delegation usually means passing off to others tasks that you could do yourself, if you wanted to make the time for it, or tasks that you absolutely do not have the knowledge or the skillset to do, so you must find someone else to do that task. A human resource specialist pointed out to me these guidelines, *A simple rule of delegation is if anyone can do what you do 80 percent as well, delegate. When one can't do it at all, it's not delegation; it's called requesting assistance.*

Few of us can do it all. We need others, especially after we get out of the one person or start-up phase of the work we do. Even if you work in a department where you are the only one doing a certain kind of task, there may be jobs that are necessary but unrelated to your pivotal job, such as website design or programming, that you could delegate to others.

Delegating is a way to free you up to do the things you're good at. By delegating to others, you have more time to specialize in what skills are your strengths.

Should you be delegating?

To find out if you need help divvying up your workload, take the following self quiz:

1. Are you working much longer hours than everyone around you, especially your subordinates or your boss?
2. Are you spending an inordinate amount of time each day on tasks that could be easily delegated to an on-site employee or even a virtual assistant, such as routine correspondence or non-priority phone calls, leading to the gnawing feeling that you are spreading yourself too thin?
3. Have you had an ulcer since taking your current job, or do you feel much more stressed—tense, jittery, nervous, and pressured—than you ever have before?
4. Do you doubt that you could select competent people to delegate to?
5. Do you dwell on past delegation mistakes—the interns who didn't show up, the employee who made lots of mistakes—as a justification for doing everything yourself?
6. Has anyone ever called you a control freak, a micro-manager, or someone who has to do everything yourself?
7. Are you a perfectionist to the point that you're rarely satisfied with what you or anyone else achieves?
8. Are you unwilling to delegate the responsibility for an entire job when assigning a specific task?
9. Have you ever fantasized that life could be more pleasant, and you could actually take some time off and not worry about work, if you could just give up doing everything yourself and rely more on others to help you succeed at work?
10. Have you come close to being fired or have you been fired one or more times over the issue of delegating?

If you answered *yes* to one or more of the above questions, your delegation skills probably need some fine-tuning. Read the rest of this chapter carefully for tips on how to accomplish this goal.

Why delegating is a time saver

Delegating saves time because there is only so much time in each day and if you are doing tasks that are low-priority tasks, or tasks that someone else could do as well, or even better than you, you are showing poor time management. We agree that no one can do it all and we can also probably agree that, in most instances, there is not just one person who can do any particular task. But the key is making sure that you are spending your time on the tasks that you do best and anything that others can do as well, or even better, than you that, if possible, you are delegating those tasks.

For example, when you first start out, you might have to answer the phones and set up your own travel plans. But now that your company has three people, instead of just one, and your strength is in product development, why not have the office manager handle those more clerical functions? Of course you have to be earning enough money to pay that assistant but most who move away from doing it all themselves find that the money they spend to have others dealing with their non-priority tasks, which frees them up to do the more highly paid skills that only they can do or only they can do in a particular way, is money well spent.

So the first step is for you to decide what tasks you do on a daily, weekly, monthly, or annual basis, which ones you must do, or want to do, and which ones you can delegate to someone else or, in some cases, to software that either you or someone else handles. But it helps you to at least delegate some of the functions that you might have been doing completely by yourself. Included in the following worksheet is a place to put the pros and cons of delegating that task.

Here's a sample:

Task	Frequency	Who's doing it now?	Why?	Could I delegate?	To whom?	Pros	Cons
e-mail	constant	me	habit	delegate	Assistant	Focus Time	Cost Logistics

Worksheet: Delegating possibilities for my required tasks

Task	Frequency	Who's doing it now?	Why?	Could I delegate?	To whom?	Pros	Cons

Selecting the right person to delegate to

Delegating to the right person is as key as delegating the right task. If you're a web designer, you might be willing to delegate making sales calls and signing up new clients to someone else, but you might not want to delegate actually designing the website if that is your strength and how you want to build your unique brand.

But who do you delegate even making sales calls or following up on closing the deal or handling the details related to a new client? How do you find a freelancer or employee who is right for this task and for your company? And what if you decide that you should be delegating priority technical jobs to others? How do you find someone who will be right for your company?

This is a topic for an entire book! (See the titles on delegation by Robert Heller and Richard A Luecke and Perry McIntosh listed in the Bibliography at the end of this chapter/module.) Suffice it to say you need to make the choice of the person to whom you delegate as pivotal a decision as the realization that you need to have others helping you.

In addition to the skills of the person you're delegating to, you need to find out the character traits, the values, and the time management habits of this person. (In this chapter, you will find suggestions about how to deal with someone who has poor time management skills. But it is better to find out in the vetting process if someone has excellent time management skills or not, rather than have to work around that situation once the person is hired.)

If you put the time and concern into the hiring process, hopefully you will pick the right person to delegate to. Once you choose that person, you need to trust his or her so he or she have a chance to do his or her job without you looking over his or her shoulder in such a way that they feel they are not trusted to do a good job. But that does not mean that you do not supervise the person you have delegated to. The question is, *How much supervision is just the right amount and how much is so extreme and taking up so much of your time that you're back to probably saving time by doing something yourself?*

How much supervision is just the right amount?

One way to make sure that your supervision of the person you delegate to is not perceived as checking up on him or her is to have a regular schedule for your supervision. Whether it's daily, weekly, every two weeks, or once a month, by making it a regular activity it does not have that element of *I don't know what you've been up to so now I'm asking you to report back to me*, to it. That kind of sporadic or random supervision might undermine the confidence of those to whom you're delegating, making them feel that you're suspicious of the quality of the job that they are doing.

You also have to decide whether you are delegating the complete responsibility for a task, so that you no longer have to supervise the person you delegated to—they are supervised by someone else—or if you are still going to scrutinize their work including the process and end product that they submit.

I used to suggest that people delegate tasks rather than relationships and in theory that sounds good and makes sense. But today, you even have to consider delegating making new relationships, based on the level of those relationships. For example, you may not want to delegate to anyone else the maintenance of the relationships you already have, because those are your connections to maintain and develop. But making new relationships, this assignment might have to be delegated by level. For example, if you're a senior vice president, you might want to handle your own new relationships at the senior vice president level, up through CEO. But you might want someone else to handle making new connections at the entry level up through manager or vice president level.

Dealing with the poor time management skills of those you work for or report to

Here are some suggestions if your co-workers, boss, or employees have poor time management skills and it's negatively impacting on your own productivity:

- Suggest that the department or company bring in a time management coach or trainer, so those who could use some help are offered it in a neutral situation.
- Despite their behavior, continue to exhibit the model time management skills yourself that hopefully they will start to copy or emulate.
- If your company offers regular skill building internal sessions, recommend one of the topics related to time management, such as goal-setting, prioritizing, dealing with distractions, and handling change, so everyone, especially those who could use some help, can improve their skills.
- If having a messy desk is an issue, suggest a **Clean Your Desk Day** so everyone deals with this concern, without singling out a particular individual.
- If procrastination is someone's problem, see if having more interim deadlines, rather than one overall deadline, could help him/her to set more realistic goals, and make each one, helping to cut down on delays.

Networking tips

Socializing at and outside of work takes time and can involve risk—you have to watch what you say and do—but there are definite benefits. And you don't have to include your family. It could just be going to a business dinner with colleagues, an after-work networking party, or having lunch with a co-worker.

Today it is easier than ever before to network through social media including the most common sites for business networking, especially www.LinkedIn.com, which boasts more than 200 million members worldwide. LinkedIn is based on the idea that you only connect with those you already know so it's actually perfect for networking because you need to have the e-mail address to invite someone to connect to you and usually that is quite a personal piece of information to have.

But once you connect to someone on LinkedIn, whether that person already works at your company, is a former co-worker, or boss, how do you engage him or her so the connection is beneficial? Of course you can post a status update so those you are connected to can read about what you're up to, or share links to the useful blogs or articles that you direct others to.

However, if you want to optimize your LinkedIn connections, you need to e-mail each person individually and, if possible, you need to take the connection offline. That means you either call on the phone or get together in person. If your only connection is through LinkedIn, or through Facebook, or even Twitter, you will not be optimizing that new or current connection.

Networking is a word that has an opportunistic connotation for some. It sounds like you're meeting, and cultivating people to help you get ahead at work and in your career. It really should not have that negative spin to it, however. Networking is just what people do, who want to reach out and make a connection to someone because we all need people that we care about, and that care about us. But in business, we all need to share information, as long as it's not with a competitor who could actually sabotage our company's growth.

Networking has four basic steps:

1. You or someone else makes the overture to start a connection.
2. You or the other person responds with a shared wish to connect.
3. You develop the connection through the back and forth dance that takes place when two people are getting to know each other.
4. You both maintain and strengthen the relationship through an ongoing interaction and a continued shared commitment to your connection/relationship.

In step one, either you try to make the connection with someone else, or (step two) he or she wants to connect with you. But (in step three) you both have to agree to develop the connection. Often the reason for this is a simple likeability factor. You both like each other and want to connect. Unfortunately that cannot be forced. You can throw your net out to others, and you can see who is caught by it, but it needs to be mutual and voluntary. The networking has to be a shared wish for the connection to start, and to be maintained. If one or both of you at any point want to pull away, or end the connection, that decision has to be respected, even if it's painful and disappointing. Forcing someone to stay connected to you is not just appropriate but it can actually backfire because that person might unwittingly badmouth you because he or she is annoyed that you are being so pushy.

Step four, maintaining and strengthening the relationship through ongoing interaction, will usually benefit by communicating directly with each other on a regular basis. That means more than just through status updates to everyone through social media. It needs to be one-on-one connecting; whether that's through a phone call, IM, e-mail, or getting together in person.

Fostering better personal relationships

Most of the rules for getting along better at work will also apply to your personal relationships except that in your personal relationships, it is completely acceptable to share personal confidences and to expect those secrets to be kept. (As noted previously, you should usually avoid sharing secrets, especially any of a personal nature, at work or in most business relationships.)

This time management workshop is not the venue to spend a lot of time focusing on how to improve your personal relationships. That's a topic for a separate workshop. But there should be at least a little time to mention personal relationships because for most, there will be spill over between one's home life and one's work life. Ideally, you should be able to leave your personal relationship issues at the door of the office or, if you work at home, put any concerns out of your mind while you're supposed to be working.

But for most, having personal relationships that are rewarding and nurturing will help you to be more effective at work. If there are temporary or prolonged personal relationship issues that are distracting you, seek help so you can deal with those issues so your work focus can be heightened. For many, however, the problem may turn out to be a time-related issue. Whether it's a hardworking couple who barely see each other because of their demanding jobs, or a parent whose child or teen feels ignored because of you putting in excessively long hours on a project with a grueling deadline, taking just twenty minutes a day to have uninterrupted time communicating with each family member, as well as at least a couple of hours over the weekend, can go far to repairing those relationship trials.

Here are some tips to help you improve your personal relationships:

1. Do you focus on what your loved one adds to your life rather than his or her faults?
2. Do you compliment your loved one rather than always criticize?
3. Do you spend time together each evening and weekends?
4. Do you have an open line of communication with each other including enough face time as well as using technology for communicating conveniently (via IM, Skype, phone calls, e-mails)?
5. Do you try to get away for a weekend or vacation time with your loved ones? (We will deal with this topic further in the next workshop chapter/module, *Cultivating a Work-Life Balance*.)
6. For your romantic relationship, are you making the time for physical intimacy?
7. For your friendships, are you making sure that you are adding new memories and shared experiences, especially with your friends from childhood or your schooldays, so your relationship is based on now and not just nostalgia?

Activities

Here are several activities for your attendees to do related to this chapter. The activities begin at a more elementary level, with the second activity more intermediary, and the third for someone who has more advanced time management skills. But you can also have everyone do all three activities if you like.

Activity 1

Find someone in this workshop that you do not yet know. If the workshop is made up of those in your department, pick someone that you are not that familiar with. Now pick a topic you both want to explore. Favorite movies? Time management concerns? Relationships? Preferred books that you've read? Solving world hunger?

Set your smartphone alarm for 1 minute. Begin by asking your partner just one question.

Once you get an answer, continue asking questions, following up on each answer, without interjecting your own comments. Keep going and see how many questions and answers you can ask in just 1 minute.

At the end of a minute, switch who asks the questions.

When the second minute is over, discuss how it felt to only listen and not jump in when it was your turn to only listen. Was that uncomfortable to you? Is that how you usually interact with others or do you often interject?

Activity 2

Make a list of your current business network. Include up to 15 individuals that you could turn to if you needed a business referral or recommendation as well as all the social media you belong to, or participate in any associations or organizations that you are a member of whether it's professional or social. Write down how much time you spend networking for new business connections as well as getting together with your current business relationships.

Name	Company	Title/Position	E-mail	Phone number
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				

Name	Company	Title/Position	E-mail	Phone number
6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				
11.				
12.				
13.				
14.				
15.				
Social media				
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
Organizations/ associations				
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				

Activity 3

Make a list of the key personal relationships in your life. Include your spouse or romantic partner, children, parents, siblings, and friends.

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Resources

Social media sites to subscribe to for business networking opportunities:

- LinkedIn
<https://www.linkedin.com>
- Facebook
<https://www.facebook.com>
- Meetup
<https://www.meetup.com>
- Twitter
<https://www.twitter.com>

Networking groups

- ▶ Association of Information Technology Professionals (AITP)
Founded in 1951 as NMAA, in 1996 the current name of AITP was adopted. This national membership organization also has local and regional chapters and meetings.
- ▶ Ellevate LLC
<https://www.ellevatenetwork.com>
Formerly called 85 Broads Unlimited LLC, this New York-based women's business networking group has four levels of membership, from \$100/year, for those starting out in business, to \$1,000/year for those at the top of their field. In addition to their educational and networking activities, their website states that they invest *real capital to companies that are leaders in gender diversity*.
- ▶ Young Entrepreneur Council (YEC)
<http://yec.co/>
Invitation-only membership organization for successfully entrepreneurs under 40 who are giving back by mentoring aspiring entrepreneurs through their virtual mentorship program, <http://startupcollective.com>. Mentorship topics include: money, starting up, technology, sales and marketing, running your business.
- ▶ Tech UK
<http://www.techuk.org/>
London-based TechUK represents 850 companies employing approximately 500,000 people in the technology fields.

Summary

Here are the top ideas in this chapter:

- ▶ To improve or optimize your work relationships, take the time to communicate regularly with your co-workers, whether you work together or in a remote way.
- ▶ Deal with conflict appropriately when it arises.
- ▶ Your work relationships, as well as your personal ones, require time to strengthen those connections. Using social media, especially status updates, with hundreds of connections, is not a valid substitute for communicating one-on-one by phone, e-mail, or especially in person.

> 10

Cultivating a Work-Life Balance

Note to Trainer:

There is a reason that this module is toward the end of the training. It is the reward to your attendees who have been working long and hard to master basic time management principles, such as goal setting, prioritizing, planning, pacing, and overcoming the time wasters of unnecessarily checking e-mail or mindlessly surfing the Internet. The tips in this chapter/module about how to achieve a better work-life balance will help workers to accomplish more at work since workers who practice work-life balance are less likely to burn out or to be unhappy.

This chapter/module on achieving a work-life balance covers the following topics:

- Defining work-life balance
 - Why having a work-life balance is so important
 - The hazards of being a workaholic
 - The top 6 ways to develop work-life balance
 - Why taking vacation time is key for your work greater efficiency and better work-life balance
 - Making the most of your evenings and weekends
-
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Defining work-life balance

When your life is in harmony—when you are getting your work done and still having time for yourself, your romantic partner/spouse, your children, your extended family, your friends, and everything else that matters to you, like serving your community—you have work-life balance. At various times in our lives, it may seem easier to achieve that balance. The working parent of small children who is also traveling 30 percent of her time for her IT job may be happy to get through the day and less concerned with work-life balance than someone who is older, with grown children, and healthy retired parents who are still independent.

But the good news is that in this workshop chapter/module, hopefully even the most frenzied IT professional will find some tips that might help him or her to achieve greater work-life balance even if it is not the ideal work-life balance that he or she dreams about.

Why having a work-life balance is so important

Here are some of the reasons that work-life balance matters:

- An out of balance life is unproductive.
- In previous chapters/modules, we have addressed that doing the death march of working around the clock for 16 hours and failing to take weekends off, is counterproductive and even unhealthy.
- Work and personal relationships require time and that means you need to have a balance.
- If you are overemphasizing work in your life, and failing to make the time for your business or personal relationships, you will fail to have a work-life balance, which will lead to a decrease in productivity, especially your long-term productivity.
- Providing a work environment where a work-life balance is possible may be a factor in whether you even want to work for a particular company.

Robert Half Technology's Senior Executive Director, John Reed, points out that providing work-life balance at a company has actually become a job requirement for those entering the work force over the last three to five years. As John, who's been in the IT field for almost thirty years, says:

"Starting about three to five years ago, what we've seen as the number one phenomenon of the generation of employees entering the workforce, is that they are absolutely demanding work-life balance. Organizations have really had to adapt because the philosophy today is "I want to work to live not live to work" meaning, I want to have a job and be an asset to the company, but I also want the time to maintain my hobbies and interests. With just 3% unemployment in IT, providing work-life balance is a critical factor for many organizations if they want to attract and retain top talent. Companies must demonstrate that they don't just say it in a recruiting brochure, but that it's an essential part of their culture. It's become a very effective recruiting tool because of its significance to candidates."

Recognizing if your life is out of balance

Sometimes the first step in making a change is recognizing what your current situation is. Is your life in or out of balance?

According to holistic chiropractic physician Dr. Bradley Nelson, author of *The Emotion Code*, here are some of the signs that your life is out of balance:

"Your personality can tend to change a bit; you tend to cry more easily; be impatient; have emotional outbursts. There may also be physical symptoms such as headaches, digestive problems; feeling like your stomach is tied in knots. Your sex drive may decrease and you may find you're getting sick more often. You might develop irritable bowel syndrome. Your blood sugar level will go up and your immune system will become depressed so that you become more susceptible to illness. An obvious sign [of work-life imbalance] is that you have fatigue. Exhaustion is likely since you can't sleep because even when you try to sleep, your nervous system is so imbalanced that you get stuck in 'fight or flight' mode."

The reality or myth of work-life balance

In the 70s, the term that was used to typify those who failed to achieve work-life balance was *burn out*. As reflected in the huge outcry and debate caused by academic-turned-high-level-government-official-turned-back-to-academic, Anne-Marie Slaughter's lengthy magazine piece in *The Atlantic*, "*Why Women Still Can't Have It All*," published in July 2012, having it all—which is really what we're calling work-life balance in this part of the workshop—is especially challenging for women. But as men increasingly take on the dual role of worker and engaged and involved parent, not just economic provider, more men are also wondering how to achieve work-life balance, without sacrificing their career.

Slaughter conveys in her article her belief that you can work and have it all but you need to have the kind of job that allows you to set your own hours. She compares how she managed, even though it was challenging, being married and raising two sons when she was an academic, with greater flexibility to make her own hours, compared to the much more set 4:20 A.M. to late at night hours of a full-time government job, and in another city from her hometown—Washington, D.C. rather than Princeton, New Jersey, where her husband, also an academic, stayed behind, taking care of their teenagers during the week.

Of course, many attending this workshop might not have the luxury of turning down a job offer because the schedule is not quite right for one's family commitments. But, as John Reed of Robert Half Technology pointed out, especially for the younger workforce entering the IT profession, being able to work at a company that offers work-life balance is a vital consideration when contemplating a new job. Although more and more workplaces are open to flexible hours (flex-time), including working some or all of the time from home, for some companies, it's just not feasible to be as productive unless you go to an outside office some or all of the time. But as Czarina Walker, founder and CEO of InfiniEDGE software company in Louisiana, pointed out in *Chapter 8, Setting and Meeting Deadlines*, she makes sure that all her employees who have to work on-site, have the consistent hours of arriving by 8 and leaving by 5 without working at night or over weekends. Czarina's the only one "allowed" to work after 5 since, as a working mother herself, she's aware that providing her staff with work-life balance is a key factor in their worker satisfaction and their continued success as a company.

But every job is different and every workplace has its own preferences about how the workday and workweek should go. As John Reed of Robert Half Technology indicates, it is possible to build your company's work schedule around the work-life balance that many want to achieve. As John points out:

"If a company provides the technology or device, employees can still effectively do the work from anywhere that's convenient for them. The ability to have a flex-schedule and to work from home may allow you to break away and go to a children's event or a mid-day activity. This has been a big evolution for companies and has changed the dynamics of the workplace and the workforce. The days of burning the midnight oil to get a project done have really softened."

Creating your ideal workday

Yes, there is a range of what most of us consider acceptable for the hours we will put into a job and this can also change accordingly to what's going on in our lives.

Achieving work-life balance is easier if you start with a vision of what your ideal workday and evening would be. You can also create an ideal non-work weekend day and evening. Just as goal setting for work helps you to work to achieve those goals, goal setting about your ideal work or non-work day and evening will help you to achieve that ideal schedule.

Once you create your ideal schedule, you can at least see how close to that dream your current situation is or what you can aspire to at this job or in the future.

An ideal workday and evening worksheet #1

Use the space below to construct your ideal workday. What day of the week will you pick? When will you wake up? Get to work? Will you start the day by attending a seminar or business breakfast? Will you go to an office or will you work from another location? Will you take lunch? How long will your lunchtime last? Will you eat at your desk, or go out to a restaurant with a customer, client, coworker, or friend? What will you accomplish during this ideal workday? How often will the phone ring? Who will deal with the phone calls? How do you feel during this ideal workday? Is it calm and predictable, or chaotic and frantic? How late will you leave the office for home? Will you have evening work-related commitments? When will you go to sleep?

Day of the week: _____

Wake up: _____ Get to work: _____

Leave work: _____ Go to sleep: _____

Use this space to write about your ideal workday:

Think back over the last few months. When did you come closest to realizing this ideal workday? _____

What are you going to do to try to make your ideal day an everyday occurrence?

Pick a date when you will reevaluate your progress, comparing your actual workday to your ideal workday: _____. Mark this date in your day planner or calendar.

An ideal leisure day/evening worksheet #2

Use the space below to construct your ideal leisure day/evening. What day of the weekend will you pick? When will you wake up? What will you do during the morning? Afternoon? Evening? Will you have social commitments with family, extended family, or friends? When will you go to sleep?

Day of the week: _____

Wake up: _____

Go to sleep: _____

Use this space to write about your ideal leisure day:

Think back over the last few months. When did you come closest to realizing this ideal leisure day/evening? _____

What are you going to do to try to make your ideal leisure day/evening a weekly occurrence?

Pick a date when you will re-evaluate your progress, comparing your actual leisure day/evening weekend to your ideal one: _____. Mark this date in your day planner or calendar.

The hazards of being a workaholic

There was a time when working around the clock was seen as a badge of courage and a sign that you were hard-working and dedicated to your job. But the pendulum has swung the other way. As noted in the beginning of this module, younger IT professionals, especially those now entering the field are looking to work at companies where work-life balance is the newer value that is being taught.

Besides having a personal preference for a balanced life, it has become more widely known that being a workaholic can have a negative effect on your physical and mental health, as well as your long-term productivity at work and on your relationships. Workaholism is also even more than just working too much. The term **workaholism** means that someone is addicted to work. Like with any addiction, that behavior or substance becomes a way of avoiding often painful emotions or situations that need to be faced and dealt with. The classic example is the workaholic who makes work everything and anything in his or her life because he or she either has a relationship that has problems and the work is a way to avoid facing or dealing with those issues or he or she is alone and lonely and over-relying on work as a way of assuaging his or her isolation.

Workaholism, like other addictions, unfortunately does not help the person who has this addiction to deal with the actual problem. So the problem is avoided but not dealt with or solved. Furthermore, since the workaholic often has a hard time starting work but once he or she starts the work, there is an even greater problem with putting it aside, the extra-long hours and unrealistic overemphasis on work as the sole concern for the workaholic possibly leads to sleep deprivation and even the increased likelihood of accidents or errors related with too little sleep.

Workaholics are people who are so addicted to work that they cannot stop work once they start. Although workaholics may think they are being productive because they are working very long hours, as we have seen previously in our workshop discussions, pacing and taking breaks is more efficient in the long run. Errors are lower if you take a break and you are much more likely to have a chance at achieving the work-life balance we all seek if you work normal hours in general, although of course on occasion, everyone may find it necessary to work a bit longer now and then. But it should not be a pattern nor should it be for so prolonged a time that it becomes the "death march" that so many software projects have been known to have, the 16 hour grueling days, seven days a week, that Edward Yourdon writes about in his book of the same name.

Workaholism is unproductive because it is the opposite extreme to work-life balance. At a certain point, the workaholic not only has a lopsided all work and no play life, but there can be depression and isolation related to the workaholism that will have a negative impact on the work at hand.

Dr. Bradley Nelson, a computer programmer for ten years before becoming a holistic chiropractic doctor and author of *The Emotion Code* discusses the toll of workaholism:

"If you look at your relationships, if you think about the people you care about the most in your life, what is your imbalance in your work and home life doing? I'll tell you what it did to me. I was a workaholic for 17 years. I was in my own solo practice. As a doctor, I would get up before the sun was up and come home before the sun was down. I paid a price for that and my kids paid a price for that. My kids are still dealing now with the aftermath of their father not being there enough for them. It can take a tremendous toll that you don't recognize at the moment. Then comes the perspective of ten or 15 years later, when you look back and realize the toll it took. A lot of relationships don't survive. Mine did. But a lot of relationships don't."

Perhaps you're now wondering whether or not you are a workaholic. If so, take the take quiz that follows. (If you do not feel you are a workaholic, but you wonder about your boss or a family member, take the quiz below but answer the questions as if you're answering for the other person.)

Self-Quiz: are you a workaholic?

Answer the questions that follow, as honestly as possible. Focus on what is going on in your life right now—not last month or last year, when your work schedule and habits may have been different.

1. Do you find yourself working late (at least two hours past the official end of the day) at least twice a week, as well as working at home weekday nights or on weekends?
Yes _____ No _____
2. Have you had to cancel personal appointments that you were looking forward to because of work one or more times this month?
Yes _____ No _____
3. Do people in your life—either your personal or your professional life—say to you, "*You're a workaholic*" even in a joking way?
Yes _____ No _____
4. Would you rather be working than doing anything else?
Yes _____ No _____
5. If you try to cut down on the number of hours that you work, do you find yourself feeling anxious, depressed, fearful, or experiencing headaches?
Yes _____ No _____

Evaluating your answers

If you answered *yes* to at least one question above (especially question #4), you need to address how work may be taking up a disproportionate amount of your time. If you answered in the affirmative to 2 to 3 questions, it's possible you're becoming a workaholic. If you had 4 or 5 questions with a *yes* answer, you may have a more serious problem. Unless there is a short-term reason that you are putting so much time into work—for example, you have a deadline looming or you need to work double shifts for a few weeks for financial reasons—you will want to work on mending your workaholic ways. The rest of this chapter will offer specific guidance to achieve a better work-life balance.



Make a note

*Reprinted from *Work Less, Do More* by Jan Yager (2nd edition, Hannacroix Creek Books, 2012; Sterling, 2008).

The top six ways to develop work-life balance

Here are some ways that you can achieve the work-life balance that you seek.

- Make it a goal.

Just like setting a goal of accomplishing a certain project by a specific date, make achieving work-life balance a goal that you are going to strive for.

- Take a work and personal time inventory.

Start by looking at your entire work week and weekend. If you have been keeping time logs, look over all your logs. If you are using time-keeping software, such as Time Doctor (www.timedoctor.com), look over your logs and see what it says about your work and personal time. When do you get to work? When do you leave? How much of the weekend do you spend enjoying yourself, doing chores, or doing more work?

- Create a reasonable and realistic schedule that you can stick to.

What is realistic for you and your job? An eight, nine, or ten hour workday? Is it the four hour workweek that Tim Ferris recommends in his mega-bestseller of the same name? If you are working twelve hours a day, and you want to work just eight, start by cutting back to nine, and then getting to eight. If you're working several hours at night, try cutting that back to just an hour. Apply the same scrutiny to how you are spending your weekend time.

- Pick a buddy to whom you will be accountable.

Whether it's your spouse or a friend, agree to check in on a regular basis to review the progress you're making toward achieving work-life balance.

- Reward yourself when for the first time you achieve the balance you seek.

Pick a celebration that will be a real motivator. Buy something that you have wanted to buy but you considered it optional. Allow yourself an enjoyment you've been putting off for a long time, like reading a novel, not for fun or going to a movie in the middle of the week.

- Consider implementing Sharpen the Saw, Habit 7, advocated by Dr. Stephen Covey in his mega-bestseller, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*

Covey suggests developing a balanced program for self-renewal in the four areas in your life: physical, social/emotional, mental, and spiritual. For each of those four areas, Covey offers examples of activities that you might include in your pro-active commitment to self-renewal such as exercising and resting (physical); connecting with others (social/emotional); teaching, reading, learning, writing (mental); and time in nature, meditating, prayer, or doing service (spiritual).

Why taking vacation time is key for your work and for your greater efficiency and balance

One of the indicators of workaholicism, as well as having a life that is lacking in work-life balance, is the reluctance and even the inability to take a vacation, especially if your company offers you at least one week of paid vacation time each year. There is, of course, a wide range in how much paid vacation various types of workers get from as low as just the national holidays to a week or two or as much as Portugal and Austria, the countries that are tied for the highest number of vacation days a year, with workers in each country getting 22 paid days. By contrast, as author Alexander Hess points out, in his USA today article "The United States is the only developed country in the world without a single legally required paid vacation day or holiday. By law, every country in the European Union has at least four work weeks of paid vacation."

As Energy Project founder, and author of *Be Excellent At Anything*, put Tony Schwartz in his blog, More Vacation is the Secret Sauce; 'For the first time in many years, I didn't take a vacation during the winter. It was a costly mistake.'

Schwartz goes on to chronicle how, when he did take a three week vacation that summer, the time off was restorative. He also noticed the importance of taking a vacation from observing the difference in how his staff performed, based on whether or not they had taken vacation time.

Schwartz ends his blog post with these four vacation-related suggestions:

- Use whatever vacation time you are get.
- Even if you stay home and take what's now become known as a staycation, take one at least every three months.
- Chill out during your vacation especially stopping the constant checking of e-mail. (If you have to answer e-mail, only have a short time when you do it.)
- Especially if "you have an intense job", three or four days off won't do. You need at least two consecutive weeks away from work to fully restore yourself.

Making the most of your evenings and weekends

Just like e-mail addiction has become commonplace, sitting in front of the TV or cable, or playing video games, night after night has, unfortunately, becoming too routine as a way of relaxing from work. Some TV or cable, or even video games, can be fun, a pleasant distraction and change from work, and occasionally even educational. But too much TV can lead to obesity, especially if you eat fattening snacks when you watch, and fail to exercise, as well as even early death, as reported by Alice G.

Walton on www.Forbes.com based on a study published on June 25, 2014 in the *Journal of the American Heart Association*. There's some good news from that study; computer use and time spent driving was not "significantly associated with higher mortality," but watching more than 3 hours a day of television had a "twofold higher" risk of mortality after adjusting for other key factors.

Agata Blaszczyk-Boxe, reporting at www.CBSNews.com on that same study about TV viewing and the increased risk of premature death, pointed out that the typical American adult watches an average of four-and-a-half hours of TV daily. The study was based on an analysis of the deaths associated with the 13,284 healthy, college-educated Spanish adults, with an average age of 37, studied for an eight year period by a professor at the university of Navarra in Spain. But the findings are noteworthy for excessive TV viewers of all nationalities.

Of course you probably always guessed this, but research findings like this clearly show that being more active, and less sedentary, at night and over the weekends, will assist you to becoming healthier, more fit, and to live longer. That will help you to put your best foot forward as you begin the next work week refreshed and invigorated. It will also help you to live a longer life.

Since the goal of improved time management is not just greater efficiency and effectiveness, but also more time, avoiding sedentary behavior and becoming more active is one way to add more years to your life. So consider using at least some of your time at night and on weekends to exercise. Physicians recommend exercising thirty minutes a day.

Registered nurse, professional bodybuilder, and certified exercise physiologist Joe Petreycik, author of *Pump It Up! Exercising Your Heart to Health*, also suggests exercising thirty minutes a day but it could be three ten minute sessions if you don't have one thirty minute time block available. Says Petreycik: "The American College of Sports Medicine and American Heart Association endorse performing ten minutes of aerobic exercise three times per day to yield positive health benefits similar to completing thirty minutes in one continuous bout (Haskell et al., 2007). The overall goal is greater than or equal to 150 minutes per week. Although there is a cumulative benefit with several ten-minute sessions, activities lasting less than ten minutes in duration (e.g. walking around the office) would not be counted towards the recommendation. More than 150 minutes per week can produce greater health benefits, but when time is limited, resorting to several ten-minute bouts per day can keep you on track with your regimen - guilt free."

In addition to working out after work or on weekends, consider taking a class that will expand your horizons. Take the class on your own or with your romantic partner or a friend. It is another way to connect with each other and much more of a shared experience than just watching TV, cable, or playing videogames for too many hours each day, day after day.

Some singles, couples, or families enjoy playing board games together or even working on a puzzle. Starting or participating in a book club or a cooking club are other ways to make the most of your evenings and weekends.

One of my single friendship coaching clients complained that she did not currently have any friends. I asked how she spent her free time. She had a demanding job as a manager for a major credit card company and spent her weekends doing chores. When I pointed out to her that maybe she needed to take some of her weekend time to try to meet new friends, she promised to try that out and see the results, which she did, finding a new potential friend who lived in her building to do activities with within a short period of time.

Yes, using evenings and especially weekends in a non-work and preferably unstructured way, trying out new foods and restaurants, catching up with old friends and meeting new ones, and even going on mini vacations, can help your work-life balance.

Even though it's hard for 37-year-old CEO Czarina Walker, who is married with two children, ages 8 and 13, to have the work-life balance that she knows she needs, she makes sure she has a work environment where her IT staff are more likely to achieve it. As noted before in this chapter, everyone gets in by 8 and, except for Czarina, they leave promptly by five. Work hard and play hard is Czarina's motto. Fortunately her husband is a partner in her company so he understands the challenges Czarina faces in achieving a work-life balance for herself. *"I do not practice what I preach on that,"* she explains. *"But for my team, I've very happy that they can leave on time."*

Activities

Here are several activities for your attendees to do related to this chapter. The activities begin at a more elementary level, with the second activity more intermediary, and the third for someone who has more advanced time management skills. But you can also ask everyone do all three activities.

Activity 1

Create an action plan highlighting what you learned in this work-life balance module and how you will apply it to your own weekday nights and weekends.

My work-life balance action plan:

I plan to (include a new or favorite activity you will spend some time on, in the evening and/or on the weekends) _____

The date I will achieve this by is _____

Activity 2

Ask the group to turn to the person on his or her right. Tell him or her to set the smartphone alarm for four minutes and have brainstorm about all the ways he or she is going to achieve a work-life balance in the coming days and weeks. Have one person appoint himself or herself as the note taker and the other can as the presenter. When the time is up, ask for volunteers to share their best ideas with the rest of the group.

Activity 3

Get two flip charts or, if you have a board at the front of the room that you can write on, use that instead with two markers. Divide the group into two teams. Have everyone line up behind the first person. Advise both teams that they are to walk—no running—and that they will write down whatever activity they can think of to use for their free time at night or on the weekend. They can't include TV or cable or video games or anything work-related.

See which team gets the most ideas down on paper. Have each team appoint a spokesperson to share their ideas with the rest of the group. Are there any ideas that are fresh and new?

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Resources

- ▶ The Center for Work-Life Policy (CWLP)
<http://www.talentinnovation.org>
CWLP is a research think tank focused on work-life balance and productivity that is part of the Center for Talent Innovation, which is headquartered in New York City.
- ▶ The Energy Project
<http://theenergyproject.com/>
Founded by Tony Schwartz, author of *Be Excellent at Anything*, this is an international company offering consulting, workshops, and publications related to improving productivity at work. There are offices in the U.S. (Yonkers, New York); United Kingdom (Surrey); Australia (Melbourne); and the Netherlands (Amsterdam).
- ▶ Workaholics Anonymous (WA)
<http://www.workaholics-anonymous.org>
This nonprofit organization, based on the Twelve Step approach most closely associated with Alcoholics Anonymous, dates to 1983. It has grown over the years, with chapters in New York, California, Arizona, and other states, helping those addicted to work to overcome their addiction. Their headquarters are in Menlo Park, California.

Summary

Here are the key ideas covered in this chapter:

- Achieving a work-life balance is a goal that will have benefits not just to you personally but also to your work and the company you work for in increased productivity, less burnout, and greater job satisfaction.
- Being a workaholic is usually a sign of poor time management, not of exemplary work habits.
- Watching too much TV—more than three hours daily—may shorten your life. The study, published in the *Journal of the American Heart Association*, did not find sitting too long at a computer or driving for too long was linked to premature death. So there may be something about the sedentary act of sitting in front of the TV, and possibly the snacking and eating that might occur, that might be a factor. The bottom line is that an increase in being active and a decrease in being sedentary during non-work time is a positive goal, especially for those who sit in front of computers for much of the day.

> 11

Closing the Training

Note to the Trainer:

If you have been following the schedule for one-day training, ideally it will be 4:30 p.m. and you will have 15 minutes to cover the key information in this chapter/module before going on to the Q&A at the end of the training, scheduled for 4:45 p.m. (The one day agenda is reprinted in the *Appendix* in the back of this training manual.)

If you have been following the agenda for a two-day training program covering two half-days training program, this final part of the training will take place approximately at 12 noon. Once again, it is scheduled for 15 minutes, before the final Q&A, which will be followed by an overall review of the day, distribution of any final handouts, as well as the evaluation of the training. (See the Appendix for the proposed two-day agenda schedule.)

If you are following a once-a-week training program, this section should be part of the previous module/chapter on *Cultivating a Work-life Balance* so you will have finished the basic information in this time management training for IT professionals in the proposed 10 weeks. (See the Appendix for the proposed 10 week once-a-week training program.)

This final chapter/module on closing the training, which is also the conclusion, will cover the following topics:

- Keeping up with technology
 - Time and culture considerations—gender, age, and cross-cultural issues
 - Top 12 time management ideas for IT professionals
 - Creating a work and personal self-improvement plan
 - Conducting your Q&A session
 - Distributing and collecting the training evaluation
 - One month later - follow-up
-

Keeping up with technology

Everyone has to keep up with their field but there are few fields today, except science and medicine, where the information is changing so rapidly than in the IT field. How many but a select few thought of a cloud as anything but the cumulonimbus you saw in the sky but now, because of such early proponents, such as Amazon and Dropbox, in 2006 and 2008, respectively, and the more recent additions, such as www.mozy.com, www.justcloud.com, www.zipcloud.com, and www.mypcbackup.com, the way that data is stored and retrieved has had enormous implications for how easily you can work in multiple locations since all your projects, ideally, can be retrieved 24/7.

"*You have to stay on top of the trends,*" says IT professional and start-up specialist Diane Eschenbach of DE Marketing Consultants. "*They're making fantastic apps and fantastic software for you to communicate with your development team.*" Two project management software systems that Eschenbach singled out are www.Teamwork.com and www.basecamp.com.

As an IT professional, your customers and clients are looking to you for the latest and greatest in technology. That means you have to be reading about IT in computing magazines as well as attending conferences and networking with the best and the brightest in your field. You need to know what's new and innovative, and what's a flash in the pan fad that you think your customers or clients might want to avoid.

Keeping up with technology takes time but it will definitely be time well spent since you cannot risk being considered a dinosaur or, even worse, failing to have answers or solutions that are available, as long as you're in the know.

How do you make time to keep up with technology? Here are some suggestions that even the busiest IT professional might find useful:

- ▶ Start or join a mastermind group of at least 4 to 6 in your field and stay connected on a weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly basis, in-person or by phone (or Skype or Google hangout). Share information about the new developments in your field with each other.
- ▶ Do the research into what local, regional, national, and even international conferences are best for you and your area of expertise in IT and plan to attend.
- ▶ If it's in a destination that you would like to spend additional time in, arrive early or stay afterwards and add that additional time on for a vacation.
- ▶ Subscribe to the newsletters, e-letters, and other regular publications sharing the insights of the best in your field. Get the highlights of the month's table of contents e-mailed to you, if possible, so you can zero in on the articles that are must reads.
- ▶ Subscribe to the Twitter feeds of the best and the brightest in the IT field so you can see what they're sharing about including the links to the articles that are must reads in your field.

- Put together a list of the top 10 movers and shakers in your field and find out where they're speaking, follow them on Twitter, see whether they will allow you to link to them on LinkedIn and ask to be on their notification list for any journal articles or academic or popular books that they might be publishing.
- At least every year or two, write an article or blog on a more regular basis about what's new in IT. In conducting research for your article or regular blog, you'll be finding out about what's new in your field.
- Join one or more IT associations. (See the *Resources* section at the back for an annotated list.) Become active in the association's local chapter and read its online newsletter or visit its website regularly for updates about fellow members. They will usually share about their latest research, activities, or workshops.
- At least once a year, or more frequently, attend one half-day or all-day seminar that will attract others in the IT field from whom you can learn—speakers as well as attendees and even the exhibitors or company sponsors of the event.
- Make sure you go on Twitter regularly and read what's new. You can get news faster than even from the news bureaus or TV/cable shows from around the world if you're subscribed to the right Twitter accounts/contributors.
- Keeping up with technology includes knowing about gadgets, equipment, software programs, and hardware. You need to know about new inventions and trends before the general public or your customer. That means you have to be reading, talking to people, networking, observing, traveling, and listening constantly.
- Although in-person training offers the benefits of being able to learn from your peers more easily than if the training is online, online learning, especially if it's interactive, can provide information that you can assess whenever it is convenient for you, even if it's 11 at night.

Time and culture considerations

Time, and how we manage our time, does not exist in a vacuum but I mentioned this before it bears repeating how I was pretty much laughed at when I had six hours between flights at the Fiji airport and I went around the airport interviewing everyone I met on time management, since I was finishing up a book on the topic at that time. I was told there was time and there was Fiji time, which meant no time.

So the first rule about time and cultural considerations is to be aware of the values and standards for the culture you're in. Over the decades I've been researching, writing, and coaching about time management, I have seen a distinct change. Back in the 1980s, in certain countries such as France, when I suggested translating my book on time management into French, I was told that was not something that the French were concerned about. Now, however, the situation has dramatically changed with one of the top apps for time scheduling, <http://www.beesapps.com/>, the creation in 2011 of David Chevenement, a French manager-turned-app-creator-and-business-owner who lives with his family outside of Paris.

Time management has become a concern around the world but there are still cultural differences in when you are considered late in certain countries. Being late 15 minutes in some cultures, such as the U.S. or the U.K., especially in business, is seen in a lot more negative way than in other cultures where being 15 minutes late might be considered almost on time, as a Human Resources development manager from a country in Southeast Asia put it.

Gender

The cliché used to be that women are more likely to be late compared to men. I've been searching for research data that's reliable about whether men or women are more likely to be late in a work-related setting—to meetings, getting in at the beginning of the date, turning projects in on time—but based on my own time management research, I have not found gender to be a factor in lateness or other time management time wasters. I have found some working women with children at home, as reaffirmed by Donna Troy, EVP of Epicor Software, can be incredibly productive at work. They know how to get done what has to be done because once they get home, they have to switch gears and, at least for the next few hours, be Mommy, focused on preparing, or serving, dinner and seeing that the homework is done.

More and more men today, however, are also feeling the pressure to be more involved in their young child's lives so they are trying to get more done at work—and leaving the work at home, at least at the door even if they, like many women, are working on the bus or train, if they have a long commute—so they can be more responsive parents or even spouses or romantic partners.

Whether or not a woman is more often late compared to a man may, like so many stereotypes, be more of a question of perception than reality. It is important, therefore, to consider your own behavior as well as your own preconceived notions when you are behaving in a way where gender may or may not be a factor.

There may also be benefits to a company that is diverse in terms of gender, as reflected in the findings Sangeeta Bharadwaj Badal reported in the Gallup Business Journal. In "The Business Benefits of Gender Diversity", based on a study of 800+ business units from two companies representing a retail and hospitality sector it was discovered that the business units that were gender-diverse had better financial outcomes than those dominated by one gender as demonstrated in these statistics: 14 percent higher average comparable revenue in the gender-diverse business units in the retail company and 19 percent higher average quarterly net profit (\$16,296 versus \$13,702) for the gender-diverse business units in the hospitality company.

All business need to be sensitive to potential sexual harassment issues including considerations about your customers or clients, as well as your service providers, will probably be both genders. There is training available for employees at all levels, both in-person training or even online videos or webinars that cover the key material, to help you and everyone else at your company to understand what sexual harassment is and how to avoid it in the workplace.

Having an employee handbook with clearly-stated policies about dating between co-workers as well as permissibility if one of the employees is supervising the other can help clarify these issues. Make it clear that jokes that might be considered sexist or using language that could be considered offensive are to be avoided.

Age

Just as age considerations can lead to clichés about how it impacts your time management strengths and weaknesses—older people move slower, time seems to move faster as you age—you need to reflect on whether those myths are influencing your own behavior or how you view others.

There might be a connection between age and time management, however, if technology adoption, especially of such potential time-saving devices as a cell phone or the Internet, are less likely to be used by those 65 and over. Although cell phone use among those 65 and up has increased from 69 percent in 2012 to 77 percent in 2013, according to Pew Research Center, 77 percent of adults age 65 and over have a cell phone, up from 69 percent the year before but Internet use does dramatically drop off after the age of 75.

As I point out in my book *Put More Time on Your Side*, you want to be thinking about your legacy, whatever your age, but it is clear that those who see themselves as having more time behind them than in front of them—those 65 and older—may find that a time-related question, concerns them more than their younger co-workers.

Business writer Lisa McQuerrey points out these five benefits of a diverse age workforce in her article, "The Advantages of Diverse Ages in the Workplace":

- Diverse skill sets

In general, younger workers excel at technology and older workers at interpersonal skills.

- Technology

Younger workers whose formative years were associated with technology contribute technology expertise, enriching a work environment life only mature workers.

- Tradition

By having a age diverse workforce, you can appeal to a wider range of customer expectations since e-mail communications may be preferred by a younger worker but a formal business letter is favoured by an older one.

- Mentoring

A multi-generational workforce provides more chances for each age group to teach, share, and learn from one another.

➤ Continuity

"A workforce heavily composed only of people in a particular age group runs the risk of becoming obsolete". Older workers pass on to younger ones what they have learned about a company. If there are no younger workers, after older workers retire, the company's way of doing things, and history, cannot be passed along.

Cross-cultural issues

How time is managed can also be very much a cross-cultural concern, within one's own country and especially between countries. As pointed out in the previous module on work-life balance, in the section on vacation, the United States lacks a mandatory vacation requirement while Germany and other countries require four weeks off a year. Travel eight hours to Europe in the summer and expect your business colleague to meet you at your peril. For most, that is sacred vacation time although you might be fortunate enough to find a compassionate business associate who will take a meeting anyway.

But definitely check the closing times whenever you travel for business because you may find yourself wasting a lot of time if you arrive too early or too late at a company. Also look into any national or religious holidays that may include businesses closing so you will avoid being forced to keep yourself busy because business meetings are impossible during those times.

Top 12 time management ideas for IT professionals

1. Choose the project management methodology that works best for you and your team.

The main objection to the waterfall approach to a project is that the project is delivered based on the original specifications without an interim review of the project and/or a communication with the developers of any changes that now should be implemented. Because the entire project is done before there is feedback, there is a greater probability that the client/customer will be dissatisfied with the finished product and that revisions will be requested, which will result in delays in getting the product completed as well as additional expenses because the project is going past the original projected deadline. Whether you decide to use the waterfall approach, Agile, or some other system, just make sure you understand the system you plan to use and that it will work better for you and your project/team.

2. Stay connected but avoid over-relying on technology to do it.

Part of my addiction to my smartphone is because it's become a habit, checking and rechecking whether there are any new e-mails. But part of it is the necessity of the kind of business I'm in. As a speaker, entrepreneur, coach, and author, I have literally landed, or missed, a major opportunity because I was not quick enough to get to the person making the offer. (The talent booker for a major TV show, the journalist looking for a quote, or the meeting planner looking for a speaker.)

So for me, checking and rechecking my smartphone is definitely something that helps me to do my job better. I can also be more responsive to clients, customers, and even friends and family because of my smartphone, including text messages, e-mails, or phone calls.

But sometimes I realize that I need to force myself to put it aside and, as long as I can hear the ring, or feel it vibrate to time when I glance over at it so I can get some thoughtful work done.

And of course, never ever leave the phone on when you're presenting or at the movies!

And never ever, if possible, glance down at it when you're having a conversation with someone since it could be considered a rude thing to do, as if what they're saying is not engaging you 100 percent.

The bottom line is that our smartphones are a wonderful communication tool but you have to be smart about it and control when you use it so it's in the service, not the disservice, of your career and relationships.

If possible, have two or three different e-mail addresses so you can try to direct priority and lower priority calls to the various accounts on your smartphone.

3. Prioritize. Prioritize. Prioritize.

What should you be doing today? You might find it useful to make a list the night before about what you should do the next day. Everyone has different reasons for picking a priority project. The boss tells you to do it. You proactively decide you need to do something even though no one else has required it of you. You are the boss and you have commitments that must be met, based on deadlines.

Prioritizing what is important for you to be doing, and then doing it, is the most time management skill that will take you furthest in improving your productivity.

Whatever the reason something is your most important task, that is what you must be focused on doing. Procrastinating with lower priority or frivolous tasks will sabotage the goal of having optimum time management skills.

4. Take notes in a way that works for you, whether that's with paper and pencil or electronically.

You need a record of your work, your efforts, and your notes. Make that record something that is accessible to you. Whether you store your notes in a program that is available 24/7 through a cloud service on your computer or your smartphone, or you still write in a lined paper journal with a pen, keep track of what you're doing.

5. Keep some part of your day free so you can focus on what you need to do.

Avoid overscheduling so you lack even half an hour or an hour a day to have completely focused time to think.

6. Even if you juggle multiple tasks, have a period of intense concentration on a specific task before moving on to the next one.

Put all your attention on that one most important thing to do. When you reach a natural stopping point, or you finish completely, go on to the next task. Switching back and forth between tasks—so-called **multitasking**—has been proven to be less efficient and effective.

7. Whether you have a team on-site or you work remotely, have regular communication.

Whether it's your app developer or your 20-year-old child away at school or on a trip, have consistent communication.

8. Set realistic deadlines so that you steadily meet or even beat your deadline.

Deadlines help us to organize our time and prioritize our efforts. But make the deadline realistic so you do not overpromise something that is impossible to meet. You may feel that delivering early is a benefit but your client or customer might not feel that way, especially if delivering means payment is due sooner or, if it is a physical product that is being delivered, space is needed. So make sure, whether you are going to be late or early, that your client or customer approves that change in your agreed-upon terms. In general, delivering on time is ideal.

As David Rock points out in his book, *Your Brain at Work*, it's better to under-promise and over-deliver. Rock, based on the neuroscience research he's reviewed, suggests that "*Unmet expectations generate a large drop in dopamine level, and a strong threat response.*" Rock refers to the research findings of Professor Wolfram Schultz, who is professor of neuroscience at Cambridge University in England. As Rock writes:

"Schultz found that when a cue from the environment indicates you're going to get a reward, dopamine is released in response. Unexpected rewards release more dopamine than expected ones. Thus, the surprise bonus at work, even a small one, can positively impact your brain chemistry more than an expected pay raise. However, if you're expecting a reward and you don't get it, dopamine levels fall steeply. This feeling is not a pleasant one; it feels a lot like pain. Expecting a pay rise and not getting one can create a funk that lasts for days. Expect the spotlight to change and find it taking a long time and your dopamine level falls, leaving you feeling frustrated is something that we all experiencing constantly..."

As Professor Schultz stated in a communication to me:

"Dopamine neurons will be active whenever you have a positive surprise, and will become very quiet when you have a negative surprise (worse than predicted). Meeting deadlines, in particular before the final date, is a good surprise (at least for me), and missing a deadline is, for some, a bad surprise. That refers to [one's] own experience (being elated or disappointed), not to the one who is doing the laudation or the disappointing."

9. Time spent on lifelong learning, including what's new in the field and what's new in technology, is time very well spent.

Keeping up in your field is mandatory for anyone in IT. Budget time for reading, attending conferences, and interacting with others whose expertise will efficiently help you to stay informed.

10. A work-life balance, whatever your age or stage in your career and in your life, is an achievable concept that will improve your work as well as your personal life.

As that classic Harry Chapin song, *The Cat's in the Cradle*, warned about, you don't want to turn around and find out your child is grown and gone, a stranger to you. And, even sadder, that he or she is becoming the same distant parent to his or her child that you were to yours. Whether it's a child, a parent, a romantic partner, an extended family member, or a friend, relationships depend on you spending time together to allow your relationship to grow and deepen. Make the time for those you care about even if you have to put it in your schedule or, as David Hurst, IT professional and Principal with WeiserMazars put it, **timeboxing**. David says: "*That is, set a finite amount of time to get things accomplished. It prevents perpetual distraction from happening.*"

11. Have a central place for information including a database of contacts that you update and back up frequently.

Have all the key information you need to do your work, including a database of your contacts, in a central place that you update and back up frequently. Whether that's a tablet, a PC, a Mac, a smartphone, or through an online program, make sure you have a duplicate copy of everything, that you back it up often, and that you keep the duplicate in a separate location than the primary information source, including a cloud that you store information on.

12. Take the time to create systems, routines, and habits that suit your personality, energy highs and lows, and the project at hand.

Observe yourself. Make a log of what you actually accomplish, hour by hour, so you can see if you're more productive in the morning, afternoon, or evening. Plan the tasks you do based on that information. Be careful that the routines you create are productive ones. If you've fallen into bad habits, that's a routine that needs to be changed.

Creating a work and personal self-improvement plan

Time management, like life, is not a static system. It has to be adapted to whatever stage you are at in life. If you are in your 20s or 30s and you are not yet thinking about starting a family, working around the clock, although not ideal, is at least possible without avoiding the demands of dependent children. So you need to be flexible about how you will apply the principles you learned in this training based on what's going on at work as well as in your personal life. If you are a programmer just starting out you will, of course, have different time management issues than if you're a manager in mid-career. If you are the one that the work is delegating to, you will have somewhat different issues than if you're the CEO and you're doing the delegating.

But the overall goal and theme is the same: to get the most done, in the least amount of time, and to especially make sure you're doing the right thing in the first place. It's important to have a life that is balanced and full of satisfying work, done well, and rewarding relationships.

For many, another part of that work and personal self-improvement plan is to give back to the community.

Think again about your work and personal goals. We considered goals earlier in the training. Now think about it in a much broader way. Use the space below to write down your overall work goal for your life, at least how you envision it right now.

Worksheet

My time management self-improvement plan

Use the space below to create a plan that will help you to continue what you have learned during today's training.

Time wasters I plan to work on:

Time management or related books or articles I plan to read:

Relationships I plan to cultivate:

Conducting your Q&A session

Note to the Trainer:

At this point, have a 5 to 15 minutes Q&A (question and answer period), depending upon how much time you have left in your training session as well as how many questions you receive. You might want to write down a couple of questions in advance and give those slips of paper out to one or two attendees so if there are no questions initially asked, you can start the session going with those first queries.

Here are some questions you might ask attendees to contribute to the training:

- What's the most surprising insight about time management that you learned during our training? Why was that an unexpected or piece of information?
- How easy or hard do you think it's going to be to implement some or all of what you learned today?
- Do you think those in IT have an easier or harder time at time management compared to other jobs? Why? Why not?
- What's your biggest time management challenge? what did you learn today that will help you with that challenge?
- How do you plan to continue working on overcoming it even more?
- What's the one question about becoming more efficient or effective that is still unanswered for you that you'd now like answered? (Note to Trainer: if your attendees don't have any unanswered questions, you can add, "*That's terrific that all your questions have been answered through our training.*" If you like, you can also add, "*Since you don't have any unanswered questions, I'll throw one out to you: 'What do you think is the one technological advance that will take place in the next year that will impact most on how you manage your time?'*")

The final review of the training

We have come to the end of the training, whether it's been an all-day, two half-days, ten 45-minute to 1-hour sessions, or some other presentation style and length. This part of the training is a chance for attendees to pick out the most important idea they learned.

Ask trainees this question, "*What is the number one idea you learned about time management today that will help you to get more work done in less time?*"

Have each one share that idea/concept/fact with you. Write those ideas down on a flip chart or on an erasable board at the front of the room. If more than one person shares the same idea, make a check mark or a line indicating how many people share that idea.

Try to get every single person to share (Depending on the size of your training of course. This will work best in training's up to 25, or if you have electronic means of tabulating answers in bigger groups. Otherwise just a few sample responses). Now tally up the answers and share the top three ideas that the most number of attendees got out of the training with the attendees. Discuss why you think those were the top three ideas that were singled out. Would a group of account executives in public relations, physicians or writers have picked these same three ideas that were chosen by this training of IT professionals? Why? Why not?

Distributing and collecting the training evaluation

As the last part of the training, distribute this workshop evaluation. Give the attendees enough time to fill it out and return it to you. Let them know they can return it anonymously or include their contact information. Also let them know that whether they return the evaluation anonymously or they include their contact information, their answers are confidential.

Workshop evaluation

How would you rate this workshop? Please circle your answer. (5 is highest/best)

1 2 3 4 5

What ideas or information did you learn today that will be most valuable to you?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Please share any additional comments about this workshop:

(Optional: you may also return the evaluation anonymously. Whether you include your contact information or the evaluation is returned anonymously, your responses are confidential.)

Your name:

E-mail address:

Company:

Title:

Address:

Phone:

Website:

One month later - follow-up

If possible, arrange a follow-up session by phone or in-person, or at least have everyone communicate by e-mail, and poll your attendees about what improvements they've seen in how they are handling time at work and in their personal life.

Ask your previous attendees to fill in a time log for the day before and have them compare that time log to the one they filled out just prior to the time management training or during the training. (They will find additional blank time logs in the *Appendix* that they can download or photocopy for you to complete.)

- Are you getting more done? Are you leaving at the same time, or even earlier, but still accomplishing more each day?
- What time wasters have you recognized, and overcome, during this month?
- What are the tangible time management improvements that you've seen because of the training?
- What time management challenges do you still have to work on? What is your plan to accomplish those new goals?
- If you have had time to read one or more of the articles or recommended related books cited throughout the training manual, consider suggesting that your attendees read that article, or some or all of a particular book. Set a time in another month's time to gather again to discuss what they learned and how it's applying to their time management challenges and triumphs.

Consider if you want to do another follow-up in another month, six months, and even a year from the original training. We know from the research that just the act of watching someone influences his or her behavior. Therefore, just by contacting your attendees on a regular basis, whether that's monthly, every six months, or even once a year, by showing an interest in how their time management skills are improving, as well as how they are getting quality work done as efficiently as possible, will help them to reapply the principles that they learned during this time management training as their work and lives change.

In that way, you, their time management trainer, will be their ongoing time management mentor or productivity guru.

Thanks for the opportunity to inspire and educate you and your attendees on creative time management as it applies in the IT field. I look forward to hearing from trainers (as well as managers, CEOs, organizers, speakers, or HR staff who were responsible for doing this training) and workshop participants about how this time management training is helping you to accomplish more in less time and with less stress I also welcome hearing from you if you have journals articles, books, websites, twitter accounts, associations or products that you want to tell me about.

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Activities

Here are several activities for your attendees to do that are related to this chapter. The activities begin at a more elementary level, with the second activity more intermediary, and the third for someone who has more advanced time management skills. But you can also have everyone do all three activities if you like.

Activity 1

Ask your attendees to consider the following five statements, noting whether the statement is *true* or *false*.

When they are finished writing down their answers, go over each question, and the correct answer, explaining why the statement is *true* or *false*. (The answers are below.)

1. Having one gender in the workplace is economically advantageous because you do not have to worry about sexual harassment training or issues. True or false?
2. Time management is a universal concept. True or false?
3. Being in the IT field implies that you will automatically keep up with technology. True or false?
4. Prioritizing is the number one time management skill. True or false?
5. Having a workforce that is age diverse increases the likelihood that there will be mentoring in the workplace. True or false?

Answers

- 1 (false): You still have to worry about sexual harassment issues since your customers or service providers might be the opposite gender even if your company is one gender. There might also be allegations of inappropriate same sex harassment that needs to be avoided.
- 2 (false): Time management is a concept that has to be adapted to the culture that you are working in since there are variations on what is acceptable from country to country, from company to company, and from industry to industry.
- 3 (false): You have to put in the time and effort to keep up with technology. It is not a "given" that you will keep up with technology even for those in IT.
- 4 (true): Prioritizing what is important to do, and doing it, is the most important time management skill that will help you to get more of what you need to do done quickly.
- 5 (true): By having younger and older workers, it is more likely that you will have mentoring in the workplace. Each age group can mentor the other from their strengths and unique knowledge base with, in general, older workers sharing their skill at interpersonal relationships and younger workers mentoring about technology.

Activity 2

Ask for volunteers to role play an interview at a fictitious software company to decide if the person or company should get your project. Have one attendee role play the part of the interviewer and another attendee the part of the person under consideration.

What questions should the interviewer ask to assess the time management skills of the potential company? What behaviors should the candidate be demonstrating—what verbal and nonverbal language—to convince the interviewer that his or her company is the best choice for the job?

After they role play for 3-4 minutes, open it up to a discussion with the group about what they observed during the role playing. Take notes on the discussion and post the key ideas on a flip chart or an erasable board at the front of the training room.

Activity 3

This is a useful worksheet to distribute to your attendees. Ask them to fill it out at least a day or two after the training ends. Have them compare their answers to this post-training self-assessment to the answers they gave when the training started. (This self-assessment was originally distributed to attendees during the introductory part of the training, before *Chapter 1, Why Time Management Is More Important Than Ever*).

Ask your attendees to take this post-training self-assessment after they have had time to reflect on what they have learned and to put it into practice in their everyday work and leisure time hours. Remind the attendees that they will answer *yes, no, sometimes, or I'm working on it* to these five questions:

1. Do you make a conscientious effort to separate urgent matters from other demands?
Yes _____ No _____ Sometimes _____ I'm working on it _____
2. Do you take the time to do enough background research so you can make the best possible decisions?
Yes _____ No _____ Sometimes _____ I'm working on it _____
3. Do you allocate at least one hour each day for uninterrupted time for thinking, reading, planning, or creative work?
Yes _____ No _____ Sometimes _____ I'm working on it _____
4. Do you spend sufficient time developing and maintaining business and personal relationships?
Yes _____ No _____ Sometimes _____ I'm working on it _____
5. Do you work hard to do your best rather than measuring yourself by a standard equated with unattainable perfection?
Yes _____ No _____ Sometimes _____ I'm working on it _____

Suggest that the attendees compare the two assessments, considering whether there has been any change in their answers to these five considerations because of the training.

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Resources

Project management software:

- Basecamp
<http://www.basecamp.com>
- Teamwork
<http://www.teamwork.com>
- Annual technology conference:
ATD TechKnowledge
<http://www.tkconference.org>
- International CES
<http://cesweb.org>
Held annually by the Consumer Electronics Associations in Las Vegas Nevada with exhibitors and attendees from around the world.

Training about diversity and sexual harassment

- We Comply, Inc.
<http://www.wecomply.com/>
This company, which is part of Thomson Reuters, offers numerous online courses to help workers to be in compliance with the rules and laws regarding sexual harassment, diversity in the workplace, preventing workplace violence, responsible use of social media, among other topics.

Summary

Here are some of the key ideas covered in this concluding module:

- As an IT professional, you have a mandate to stay current, and to even know the future trends, in your field, a field that is constantly changing and innovating. Put the time in to keep up with new technology.
- You need to be sensitive to the way that gender, age, and cultural customs impact on how time is perceived. You also need to consider your own stereotypes related to those issues, being careful not to let preconceived notions prejudice you regarding time management concerns such as women tend to be late or older people cannot adapt to new technology or the Internet.
- Unmet expectations cause dopamine levels in the brain to drop causing a sensation that is similar to pain. To avoid that happening, set realistic deadlines that you are able to meet. Dopamine levels are higher by surprise rewards; under-promise and over-deliver.

Appendix

Sample training agendas and additional forums

In this appendix, you, the trainer, will find materials that include five different versions of the training, time, phone and text messages blank logs, a blank master action plan, a blank master course evaluation, and a glossary of key terms.

- Sample Agendas
 - One-day time management training for IT professionals
 - Two half-day time management training for IT professionals
 - A 10-week course schedule for time management training for IT professionals
 - Two-day time management training for IT professionals
 - A 90-minute time management training for IT professionals
- Time, phone logs and text messages
 - Daily time logs
 - Workday log—Day one and Day two
 - Weekend (leisure time) log—Day one and Day two
 - Daily phone logs
 - Mobileleak phone log
 - Landline Textmessages log
- ACTION plan
- Course evaluation
- Glossary

Sample agendas

One-day time management training for IT Professionals

Note to trainer:

This sample agenda is just that; a sample. Please create your own up-to-the-minute delivery plan, following this sample, emphasizing topics that you think your attendees would find especially useful or even skipping over one or more other topics that aren't as important. (This agenda is tied to the chapters in this training manual.)

Time	Agenda
8:30 a.m. to 8:45 a.m.	Register/networking
8:45 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.	Brief overview/ice breakers
9:00 a.m. to 9:15 a.m.	What is time management and why does it matter more than ever?
9:15 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.	How efficient are you? Creating and analyzing time logs
9:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.	Body clock and work style self-awareness
10:00 a.m. to 10:45 a.m.	Goal setting and prioritizing
10:45 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.	Break
11:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.	Getting organized
11:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.	Identifying and overcoming the top time wasters
12:15 p.m. to 12:45 p.m.	Lunch
12:45 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.	Dealing with distractions, interruptions, and handling change.
1:30 p.m. to 2:15 p.m.	Enhancing your verbal and written skills for efficiency, better meetings
2:15 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.	Break
2:30 p.m. to 3:15 p.m.	Setting and meeting deadlines
3:15 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.	Improving a work-life balance
4:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.	Cultivating a work-life balance Closing the training
4:30 p.m. to 4:45 p.m.	Q&A; review
4:45 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.	Handouts; training evaluation

Two half-day time management training for IT professionals

Note to trainer:

Please consider developing your own up-to-the-minute delivery plan, using this sample, highlighting topics that you think your particular attendees would find especially useful or even skipping over one or more topics that aren't as important.

You may wish to give out a homework assignment after the first day of training. But this homework assignment is optional; therefore, discussing it at the beginning of the second day of training is also optional. (You may prefer that your attendees have a completely free night between trainings.)

If you do want to distribute a homework assignment, you can use any of the activities at the end of each chapter/module that you might not have already gone over during that module. That would include any of the activities up through *Chapter 5, Identifying and Overcoming the Top 15 Time Wasters*. Here are several additional possibilities for a homework assignment for a sample two day training:

- Refer back to the #1 time management challenge that you want to work on. What was it/is it? What have you learned so far today that will help you to deal more effectively with that challenge? What changes will you make in how you go about your daily tasks so you will see improvement in what you accomplish?
- Take one of the time wasters we discussed during our time waster discussion. Write down what that time waster is here. _____

What might be causing it?

What are at least three solutions that you think will help you to overcome it?

- Trainer, have the participants fill out the project worksheet that follows. Ask them to reconsider a project, service, or product they were involved with in the last six months. Have them reevaluate the project by considering the deadline, whether or not the deadline was met, and any time management obstacles imposed by others or by themselves. Tell them that their homework assignment is to consider what they learned during this first half-day (or day) of training and how they might have dealt with any of those obstacles differently. Let them know that tomorrow, at the beginning of the second day of training, you will have a discussion of their answers either with another attendee and/or you will ask for volunteers and discuss their answers with the entire group.

Time management obstacle homework assignment

Instructions: Consider a project that you were asked to do within the last six months. Reconsider that project, and your participation in it, from a time management standpoint. Reevaluate the project (product/service) by considering the deadline, whether or not the deadline was met, and any time management obstacles imposed by others or by yourself. Consider what you have learned during this first half-day (or day) of training and how you might have dealt differently and more effectively with any of those obstacles. Complete the worksheet below and bring it to the second day of training for discussion.

Project _____ Deadline _____

TIME MANAGEMENT OBSTACLE

Imposed by other	Consequence	Self-imposed	Consequence	How could have been handled differently?

What have you learned from the training so far that you could apply to how that project evolved that could have led to a better outcome in terms of the quality of the end product/project, how long it took to complete it, any factors related to the completion of it, such as stress levels, meeting or missing deadlines, etc., that might have been changed?

Day One- 2 half day training agendas

Time	Agenda
8:30 a.m. to 8:45 a.m.	Register/networking
8:45 a.m. to 9 a.m.	Introduction
9 a.m. to 9:15 a.m.	What is time management and why does it matter more than ever?
9:15 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.	How efficient are you? Creating and analyzing time logs
9:30 a.m. to 10 a.m.	Body clock and work style self-awareness
10 a.m. to 10:45 a.m.	Goal setting and prioritizing
10:45 a.m. to 10:55 a.m.	Break
10:55 a.m. to 11:20 a.m.	Getting organized
11:20 a.m. to 12 a.m.	Identifying and overcoming the top time wasters
12 a.m. to 12:15 a.m.	Q&A; review; handouts; distribute take home/home assignment

Day Two- second half-day training agenda

Time	Agenda
8:30 a.m. to 9 a.m.	Networking
9 a.m. to 9:45 a.m.	Discuss homework assignment (optional). Dealing with distractions, interruptions, and handling change
9:45 a.m. to 10:15 a.m.	Enhancing your verbal and written communication skills for efficiency
10:15 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.	Break
10:30 a.m. to 11 a.m.	Setting and meeting deadlines
11 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.	Improving your work and personal relationships
11:30 a.m. to 12 p.m.	Cultivating a work-life balance
12 p.m. to 12:15 p.m.	Closing the training/conclusion
12:15 p.m. to 12:30 p.m.	Q&A; review; handouts; training evaluation

10-week course schedule for time management training for IT professionals

To the trainer:

Please note that this is a sample agenda for a 10-week course on time management for IT professionals, based on this training manual. You could conduct these sessions in one hour, one-and-a-half-hour, or two hour time blocks. You could also conduct these sessions in person, over the phone, or through a webinar. You also know your attendees best.

Modify this sample course schedule by adding or subtracting from the topics what you wish to cover. For example, you might want to turn *Making the Most of Meetings* into one complete session, instead of putting it with the 7th session on enhancing your verbal and written communication skills, and then you could add the current 9th session, *Improving Your Work and Personal Relationships*, to the 10th session, on *Cultivating Work-Life Balance and Closing the Training*.

Week	Agenda
1	Introduction; what is time management and why does it matter?
2	How efficient are you; creating and analyzing time logs; body clock and work style self-awareness
3	Goal setting and prioritizing
4	Getting organized
5	Identifying and overcoming the top time wasters
6	Dealing with distractions, interruptions, and handling change
7	Enhancing your verbal and written communication skills for efficiency; making the most of meetings
8	Setting and meeting deadlines
9	Improving your work and personal relationships
10	Cultivating work-life balance; closing the training.

Two-day comprehensive time management training (retreat) for IT professionals (agenda)

Note to trainer:

This sample two day agenda is geared to a more intense and comprehensive time management retreat or all-day boot camp situation, whether at your office or away in another setting before, during, or after a company or even an association meeting. You will note that there is a homework assignment at the end of the first day. Refer to the homework assignment suggestions that were previously noted in the 'Note to trainer' for in-between the two half-day time management training agendas, discussing the results of that assignment is built into this two-day format, on the second day.

Also, because this is a comprehensive two-day retreat format, you will see that there is more activity time built into each day. However, once again, please use this sample two-day productivity agenda to develop your own up-to-the-minute delivery plan, following this sample. Since you have two days to work with, however, it is recommended that you cover all the topics that have been addressed in this training manual. Of course you can emphasize topics that you think your attendees would find especially or add to these topics, but try not to skip any of the topics/modules in this two-day training.

Day One (of two-day all day training)

Time	Agenda
8:30 a.m. to 8:45 a.m.	Register/networking
8:45 a.m. to 9 a.m.	Introduction/overview
9:15 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.	Ice breakers What is time management and why does it matter?
9:30 a.m. to 10 a.m.	How efficient are you? filling out time logs
10 a.m. to 10:45 a.m.	Body clocks and work style self-awareness
10:45 a.m. to 11 a.m.	Break
11 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.	Goal setting
11:30 a.m. to -12:15 p.m.	Prioritizing
12:15 p.m. to 12:30 p.m.	Activities
12:30 p.m. to -1:15 p.m.	Lunch
1:15 p.m. to -2 p.m.	Getting organized
2 p.m. to 2:15 p.m.	Break
2:15 p.m. to 3 p.m.	Identifying and overcoming the top time wasters: part 1 (1-7)
3 p.m. to 3:15 p.m.	Activities
3:30 p.m. to 4:15 p.m.	Dealing with top time wasters: part 2 (8-15)
4:15 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.	Q&A; summary
4:30 p.m. to 4:45 p.m.	Distribute handouts and homework assignment; additional networking time

Day two of comprehensive two-day all-day training

Time	Agenda
8:30 a.m. to – 8:45 a.m.	Register/networking
8:45 a.m. to -9 a.m.	Review of day one's information and activities; go over the homework assignment
9 a.m. to -9:15 a.m.	Ice breaker activity
9:15 a.m. to -9:45 a.m.	Dealing with distractions and interruptions
9:45 a.m. to -10 a.m.	Handling change
10 a.m. to -10:45 a.m.	Enhancing your verbal and written skills for efficiency

Time	Agenda
10:45 a.m. to 11 a.m.	Break
11 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.	Making the most of meetings
11:45 a.m. to 12 p.m.	Activity
12 p.m. to 12:40 p.m.	Lunch
12:40 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.	Setting and meeting deadlines
1:30 p.m. to 2:15 p.m.	Improving your work and personal relationships
2:15 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.	Break
2:30 p.m. to 3:15 p.m.	Cultivating work-life balance
3:15 p.m. to 4 p.m.	Creating a productivity self-study program
4 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.	Closing the training; review of the day
4:30 p.m. to 4:45 p.m.	Q&A; review of the entire training
4:45 p.m. to 5 p.m.	Handouts; training evaluation

90-minute time management training for IT professionals (GPS)

Note to trainer:

Of course it's a huge challenge to cover the topic of time management and enhanced productivity in just 90 minutes. But this sample program, which I've labelled **GPS**, standing for the three key strategies that it shares with attendees, is a good introductory program for those who cannot allocate more than 90 minutes to time management training. You can certainly use this sample program for an introductory program and later, once you have more time for training, you can expand to two half-day, one entire day, two full days, or even the 10-week one-topic-a-week format.

Time	Agenda
8:45 a.m. to 9 a.m.	Arrival/networking
9 a.m. to 9:15 a.m.	Introduction/what is time management and why does it matter more than ever?
9:15 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.	Ice breaker
9:30 a.m. to 9:45 a.m.	How am I now managing my time and what are my top time management challenges?
9:45 a.m. to 10 a.m.	Strategy # 1- G (Goal setting)
10 a.m. to 10:15 a.m.	Strategy #2 – P – (Prioritizing)
10:15 a.m. to 10:25 a.m.	Strategy #3 – S (Self-management: handling distractions and interruptions)
10:25 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.	Conclusion

Daily phone logs

The blank logs that follow are for your convenience to track the phone calls that you are receiving as well as those that you are placing. It will help you to monitor who is calling you, as well as the calls you are placing, the purpose of the call, and how long the call lasted. Photocopy the blank logs so you have enough logs to monitor at least a couple of days, so you can see whether any patterns emerge in your phone calls that will help you to become more efficient.

Phone logs

Track your phone usage for one complete work day and evening as well as one weekend or leisure day, making a note of who calls you, who you call, how long the call lasted, and the purpose of the call. First do a log for calls received, then do one for calls placed.

Calls received (smart phone, mobile, or cell phone)

Today's date: _____

Day of the week: _____

Time	Who called you	Purpose of the call	How long did the call last?

Calls received after work (at home)

Time	Who called you	Purpose of the call	How long did the call last?

Calls received (office landline)

Today's date: _____

Day of the week: _____

Time	Who called you	Purpose of the call	How long did the call last?

Calls placed (office landline)

Today's date: _____

Day of the week: _____

Time	Who called you	Purpose of the call	How long did the call last?

Texts placed

Today's date: _____

Day of the week: _____

Time	Who texted you	Purpose of the text	What were you doing at the time?

ACTION! plan

Project or task: _____

A (Assess): _____

C (Control): _____

T (Target): _____

I (Innovate): _____

O (Organize): _____

N (Now!): _____

Confidential workshop evaluation

How would you rate this workshop? Please circle your answer. (5 is highest/best)

1 2 3 4 5

List three ideas, concepts, or any information that you learned today that will be most valuable to you:

Please share any additional comments about this workshop:

Please list any additional topics (or related topics) that you would like to have covered in another:

Although this workshop evaluation is confidential, and you can turn it in anonymously, if you provide your contact information, for a possible follow-up about future workshops or related publications, it will be appreciated by your trainer. Thank you in advance for your participation and cooperation.

Your name: _____

E-mail address: _____

Company: _____

Title: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ (including country code and area/city code)

Type (check off): mobile/cell phone office home

Website: _____

Glossary

ACTION! Plan

Approach to getting more done, and picking the right things to do in the first place, developed by time management expert Jan Yager, Ph.D. and presented initially in her book, *Work Less, Do More*. A= Access, C = Control, T = Target, I = Innovate, O = Organize, and N = Now! Also known in Dr. Yager's *Put More Time on Your Side* as the Action! Strategy.

ADHD

Abbreviation for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, a condition that makes it harder for someone to focus and concentrate.

Agile

A way of organizing a project, especially in software development, that relies on SCRUM and sprints, with regular updating, so a project can be more responsive to changes rather than waiting till the end of the project to find out that it does not match original specifications or goals.

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, See ADHD.

Body language

The nonverbal ways that a message is communicated including tone of voice, facial expressions, even pausing in-between words, and how you stand.

Creative procrastination

A concept advanced by productivity expert Jan Yager in her 1984 book, *Creative Time Management* (Prentice-Hall, Inc.) whereby if you are blocked on a task, you keep moving your priority projects and goals along by substituting another priority task, either within that project or related to another key project, rather than procrastinating by doing something inconsequential or unrelated to your overall goals.

Creative time management

A creative way to manage your time advanced by productivity expert Jan Yager that includes these 7 principles:

1. Be active, not just reactive.
2. Set goals.
3. Prioritize actions.
4. Keep your focus.
5. Create realistic deadlines.
6. DO IT NOW.
7. Balance your life.

Daily standup

Part of the SCRUM approach to project planning and implementation, this meeting provides an opportunity for the team to discuss the progress they're making, any problems they're encountering, and a chance to communicate their progress with the Product Owner.

Deadline

The date when a project is due. It is usually better to break a major project up into smaller tasks with each of those tasks having an interim deadline.

Delegating

Having someone else do some or all of a task that you are responsible for doing that you have the skills to do yourself but for the sake of efficiency or other reasons you prefer to have someone else do it. You can delegate the task completely or have the person you delegate to report back to you so you still oversee the work.

Distraction

A break in your concentration that interferes with your focus on your priority task, usually hurting your productivity.

DO IT NOW

An acronym created by productivity expert Jan Yager as part of her 7 principles of creative time management, first advanced in her book, *Creative Time Management for the New Millennium* (1999) D = Divide and conquer what you have to do; O = Organize your materials, how you will do it; I = ignore interruptions; T = Take the time to learn how to do things yourself; N = Now, not tomorrow and don't procrastinate; O = opportunity is knocking, so take advantage of opportunities; and W = Watch out for time gobblers such as time on the Internet, reading and sending e-mails, watching TV, talking on the phone or sending/receiving text messages.

European Union

Affiliation of 28 European countries, started in 1993, who have come together to share a currency and facilitate economic trade and growth. The countries are (in alphabetical order): Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and United Kingdom.

Focus

The ability to concentrate on one task.

Fragmentation

When your attention is divided between two or more tasks.

Goal

What you want to accomplish. Your goals could be long-term, such as what you want to get done in the next year, five years, ten years, or as your life's legacy, or short-term, as short as within the next day, hour, or even next twenty minutes.

Interruption

Something that stops you from staying focused on the task at hand. An interruption could be self-made, such as checking your incoming e-mail messages, or caused by others, such as drop-in visitors, requests by the boss to switch to another project, or an alarm going off reminding you that you have to get on a mandatory conference call.

Lateness

When you arrive after the appointed time for a meeting or event, or you deliver a product or project after the agreed-upon deadline.

Long-term goal

What you want to achieve on a long-term basis such as in a year, five years, 10 years, 25 years, or by the end of your life.

Multitasking

Simultaneously doing more than one thing at the same time. Some multitasking activities, such as listening to music when you're working at your computer, are long engrained habits. For some, it does not seem to reduce their productivity although, in most cases, focusing on just one task at a time is ideal. But other examples of multitasking, such as driving and texting, have lethal consequences. At the U.S. government site, <http://www.fcc.gov/guides/texting-while-driving>, it is noted that *the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute found that text messaging creates a crash risk 23 times worse than driving while not distracted.*"

NAPO

National Association of Professional Organizers, an association of those who professionally organize offices and homes for greater efficiency.

Pacing

Taking a break on a regular basis to help cut down on exhaustion, which could lead to having fewer accidents or making fewer mistakes.

Perfectionism

Believing that nothing short of flawlessness is acceptable.

Planning

Having a set plan for activities so there is more control over what someone does during a specific time or what tasks are going to be completed.

The Pomodoro technique

Strategy that recommends breaking up what you do into thirty minute segments—you work, uninterrupted for 25 minutes and then you have a 5 minute break when you do something fun such as exercise, go on Facebook, or place a quick call to a friend.

PMI

Project Management Institute, a membership organization that offers educational information about project management as well as the certification program for project managers.

PMP

Designation for a Project Management Professional who is certified by PMI (Project Management Institute).

Priority

A key task that you need to do that will make a difference in your work or personal life.

Procrastination

Putting off something you should be doing despite the consequences of the delay.

Product Owner

Term for the client or customer when a company is following the SCRUM approach to project management.

Productivity

How much you can accomplish in a specific time period while still having quality achievements.

Professor Albert Mehrabian

Dr. Mehrabian's research discovered that communication consists of three main elements—words, tone of voice, and body language. Simplistically stated, Mehrabian found only 7 percent of how we communicate is words. The remainder is body language and tone of voice. Tone of voice is 38 percent and body language is 55 percent.

Project management

Having a plan for starting, monitoring, and completing a specific project.

Punctuality

Being on time. There are cultural aspects to this, however. Although in the U.S. and U.K. being on time usually means meeting exactly at the appointed time, in some countries and cultures, arriving within twenty minutes might still be considered *on time*.

SCRUM

Part of the Agile approach to project management, which has a minimum of three roles: the product owner, scrum master, and team member. The scrum master is the liaison between the product owner, and what his or her vision for the software is, and the team members, who will be completing the work.

Short-term goal

What you plan to achieve within a short period of time, anywhere from an hour, a day, or a seven day/one week period. A short-term goal may even be for as brief a time period as within the next twenty minutes.

Sprint

The term used by those who practice the Agile technology and the SCRUM technique, which divides the project into sprints with a sprint originally lasting 30 days but there are now teams that have their own variation including, one, two, or three-week sprints.

Time

An arbitrary unit used to measure the passage of a moment measured in units that have been labeled seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, and years.

Time blocking

The technique of putting into your paper or electronic appointment book a specific amount of time to do a task even if it is something that you are only doing on your own use timeblocking whether it's work on a new project, making phone calls to find out information or generate business, or even time to exercise, have lunch, or take a break.

Time management

A way of taking charge of what you do, and when you do it, so you optimize what you accomplish in any given time period in the service of achieving the short- and long-term goals that you have set for yourself or your company.

Time saver

A technique that helps you to save time by getting more done in the same time period.

Time waster

A behavior or habit that hinders your productivity, such as procrastination, poor pacing or planning, or lateness.

To-do list

A way of keeping track of what activities you have to do. Your to-do list can be organized chronologically or in order of importance. If you create and use a to-do list, make sure you always move anything that you did not get to check off as done to another list.

Waterfall methodology

The approach to software development projects that was practiced before the introduction of the Agile methodology with the project being delivered, based on the original specifications, with little or no back-and-forth with the client until the finished project is delivered.

Frederick W. Wilson

Some date the concept of time management to the work of Frederick W. Taylor, a mechanical engineer who, in his 1911 book, *The Principles of Scientific Management*, showed that training by management will help a worker to become more efficient—previously the worker was expected to train himself. He also noted that a worker should have written instructions as to what they have to do, and how much time it should take to do it. If they do it in a faster time, they should get a bonus, which would be an incentive to increase their productivity.

Work-life balance

The ability to strike a balance between your work commitments and what you want to accomplish during your leisure time and with your personal relationships.

Workaholism

Someone who is constantly working, or working excessively long hours, whether that's 14-16 hour workdays, and working on the weekends, often failing to take their vacation time or, if he or she does go on vacation, continuing to work.

