

MTD Quick Tips

How To Manage Your Time More Effectively

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How To Manage Your Time More Effectively

I suppose if you are shipwrecked you never have to worry about managing your time!

A bit like Tom Hanks in CASTAWAY - it's a case of filling your time rather than having time dictate to us what to do and when!

And talking of being shipwrecked, that reminds me of a little story I have just got to tell you before we start this session!

A guy gets shipwrecked. When he wakes up, he's on a beach.

The sand is dark red. He can't believe it.

The sky is dark red. He walks around a bit and sees there is dark red grass, dark red birds and dark red fruit on the dark red trees.

He's shocked when he finds that his skin is starting to turn dark red too.

"Oh no!!" he says. "I think I've been marooned!!"

Okay okay - I know it's terrible!!!!

Let's get into this session before I get into more trouble!

Managing the time over which you have discretion is the critical aspect of personal planning and organisation. The tasks that you complete in this time can be thought of in two ways:

Urgency:
The task has the appearance of needing immediate attention

Importance:
The task contributes to the effective performance of your job

Here are the issues:

- We know we need to spend time on the urgent, important tasks (problems)
- We know we shouldn't waste time on the non-urgent, unimportant tasks (pleasant)

The question is how much of our time is spent reacting to urgent, unimportant tasks and how much should be spent on the pro-active, important tasks?

So, What Are The Important Tasks?

Important tasks are those that help you to achieve your Key Result Areas - those areas of the job against which your performance is measured, and which contribute to the overall effectiveness of your company.

Here is a quick ready reckoner of what you should do and should not do as far as managing your time is concerned:

WHEN A TASK IS IMPORTANT AND URGENT YOU SHOULD…..

DO IT NOW!

- emergencies, complaints and crisis issues
- demands from superiors or customers
- planned tasks or project work now due
- meetings and appointments
- reports and other submissions
- staff issues or needs
- problem resolution, fire-fighting, fixes

Subject to confirming the importance and the urgency of these tasks, do these tasks now. Prioritise according to their relative urgency.

WHEN A TASK IS IMPORTANT BUT NOT URGENT YOU SHOULD…

PLAN TO DO IT!

- planning, preparation, scheduling
- research, investigation, designing, testing
- networking relationship building
- thinking, creating, modelling, designing
- systems and process development
- anticipation and prevention
- developing change, direction, strategy

Critical to success: planning, strategic thinking, deciding direction and aims, etc. Plan time-slots and personal space for these tasks.

WHEN A TASK IS NOT IMPORTANT BUT URGENT YOU SHOULD…

REJECT AND EXPLAIN!

- trivial requests from others
- apparent emergencies
- ad-hoc interruptions and distractions
- misunderstandings appearing as complaints
- pointless routines or activities
- accumulated unresolved trivia
- boss's whims or tantrums

Scrutinise and probe demands. Help originators to re-assess. Wherever possible reject and avoid these tasks sensitively and immediately.

WHEN THE TASK IS NOT IMPORTANT AND NOT URGENT YOU SHOULD…

RESIST AND CEASE!

- 'comfort' activities, computer games, net surfing, excessive cigarette breaks
- chat, gossip, social communications
- daydreaming, doodling, over-long breaks
- reading nonsense or irrelevant material
- unnecessary adjusting equipment etc.
- embellishment and over-production

Habitual 'comforters' not true tasks. Non-productive, de-motivational. Minimise or cease altogether. Plan to avoid them.

I hope the above quick tips help you to manage your time more effectively!

Good luck and god bless.

To your success,

Sean

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About Sean McPheat



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Founder and MD of international management development firm MTD Training, Sean McPheat is widely regarded as a leading authority on modern day management and leadership.

Sean is a bestselling author, and has been recognised for his own business building skills through the **British Business Awards** and has been featured in the **Who's Who Of Britain's Business Elite**.

He has been a regular judge for the UK's Young Enterprise Programme but was not as horrible as Simon Cowell (well almost!)



Sean has been featured on **CNN International, the BBC, SKY, ITV, The Guardian, Forbes, Arena Magazine, Marketing Weekly, Business Zone, Winning Edge** and radio stations such as BBC WM and LBC (London's Big Conversation).

Sean has over **250 media credits** to his name and his weekly email tips go out to over **60,000 people** interested in management and development strategies.

Sean is also a **much sought after media figure and motivational speaker** on all topics related to management, HR, business improvement and entrepreneurialism.