

# Managing Time Effectively

(Where does the time go?)

 <p><b>Purpose</b></p>	<p>To assess how much time the team actually spends on their primary duties and achieving their key results. Also to identify opportunities for improvement.</p> <p>Knowledge of the teams KPIs, goals and objectives would be beneficial, so some pre-work to establish levels of knowledge in these areas would be advantageous</p>
 <p><b>Application</b></p>	<p>Whenever any new initiative is suggested, almost the first reaction will be, 'We haven't got enough time!' So use this session to raise the team's awareness of how effectively they use their time right now.</p> <p>It can be used with teams at all levels in an organisation, and this session logically links to the Key Results Areas and goals and objectives a team has to achieve as part of the organisation's strategy.</p>
 <p><b>What happens?</b></p>	<p>The team members record their work activities on a time log for up to 5 working days prior to the session.</p> <p>The session opens with the participants analysing how they currently use their time, based on their time logs. They are aided by a questionnaire, which also prompts them to consider how they could be using their time more effectively.</p> <p>After initially working in pairs, the focus changes to the team as a whole. A team exercise is used to raise the overall awareness of where their time is going.</p>
 <p><b>Resources</b></p>	<p><b>Overall time required: 1 hour 15 minutes.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 minutes for the introduction</li> <li>• 20 minutes for self-analysis, using the questionnaire</li> <li>• 15 minutes for pairs discussions</li> <li>• 30 minutes for team discussions and review</li> </ul> <p><b>Materials and resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copies of the time and interruption logs – <i>The Time of Your Life; Daily Time Log; Daily Interruption Log</i></li> <li>• Copies of the self-analysis questionnaire – <i>Where Does Your Time Go?</i></li> <li>• Flipchart Stand with Blank Pads</li> <li>• Marker Pens</li> <li>• Blue-Tack, etc.</li> <li>• Paper, Pens or Pencils for Participants</li> <li>• Calculators</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copies of the Slide provided at the end of this module - <i>The Pareto Principle</i></li> <li>• Three Pre-prepared Flipcharts headed – <i>Pleasant Surprises; Unpleasant Surprises; Top Time Wasters</i></li> </ul>
 <p><b>How do I do it?</b></p>	<p><b>PRE-SESSION WORK</b></p> <p>For the session to be effective, every participant should complete a time log for a period of 5 working days, which they then bring to the session.</p> <p>The logs are easy to use, and full instructions for completing them are given at the top of each handout page.</p> <p>If your team members use a time planning system, for example Filofax, you may wish to photo-reduce the log sheets so that they can easily fit in the time planner wallet.</p> <p><b>OPENING THE SESSION</b></p> <p>The effective use of time is perhaps the most crucial aspect which the team will have to consider. No matter how good their analysis of a situation, and how thorough their plans, if team members fritter away their time ineffectively, the team will fail to produce the required results.</p> <p>A later session will take the team through five steps to improve time management but, before they can improve, they must have a clear idea of their starting point.</p> <p>After this session they will know, both individually and as a team, how they are using their time, and where there are opportunities for improvement.</p> <p>Start the session with the following thought provoking scenario:</p> <p><i>'We are all familiar with bank accounts, and all the things that go with them.'</i> (Perhaps show some banking items, for example statements, cheque book, paying-in slips.)</p> <p><i>'Imagine you had a special account from which you could only make withdrawals - there is no way you can increase the amount on deposit. Even worse, you never get a statement! So you've no idea how much you started with, or when it will run out.'</i></p> <p>Ask the team:</p> <p>'How will you manage this account?' You will get a lot of humorous remarks, but amongst them will be comments like 'Carefully.' 'Use it sparingly.' 'Make every penny count.'" Record the key words on a flipchart.</p>

What's the relevance to time management? Well, our lives are like that special account. As individuals, we have no idea how much time we each start with, and we can only draw on the resource. Worse still, we have no idea when the 'funds' will run out.

### **OUTLINE THE SESSION**

So, if time is the most precious resource we all have, how are we actually using it right now? Are people really managing their time as carefully as the 'special' bank account they have just been considering?

Briefly explain how the session will run.

- Initially, you will give everyone a copy of a questionnaire, which everyone should work individually, referring to their time logs to do so.
- Once people have completed their analysis, they should find a Partner in the team, and discuss their conclusions with them. People can reveal as much or as little as they like.
- Finally, the team as a whole will consider how effectively their time is being used, and what opportunities for improvement exist.

### **THE SELF-ANALYSIS QUESTIONNAIRE**

Distribute the questionnaires, and check that everyone understands what they have to do.

Team members should initially work through the questionnaire, analysing their own time usage as suggested. They may need to use a calculator with some of the figures.

Once individuals have finished their own analysis, they should consider the results. Which aspects are as expected, or even better than expected? Equally, which aspects came as something of a shock? How is time being wasted, and how could it be reduced?

Once people have completed this personal review, they should find another team member who has also finished, and discuss their findings with them.

It's not really necessary to put a time limit on this part of the session. Inevitably some people will finish their self-analysis earlier than others. Once the first two people finish, they can pair-up and start their discussion, and so on.

Once everyone has started their paired-peer discussions, you may wish to announce a refreshment break in, say, 15 minutes. This will give the late-starters enough time to complete their discussions. It will

also give the early-starters, who may have nearly completed their review, the opportunity to go for an early break.

### **TEAM EXERCISE**

Once everyone has completed the discussions with their partner, move on to a team review of the findings.

Stand the three flipcharts which you have prepared back-to-back in the room, and ask the participants to arrange themselves into three teams, one per flipchart. Explain that they will be moving round, so they will all work at each flipchart.

The three tasks are:

- 'Pleasant Surprises' - list anything which came as a pleasant surprise, having analysed the time logs.
- 'Unpleasant Surprises' - what, if anything, came as a bit of a shock from the time logs?
- 'Top Time Wasters' - team members should list the top time wasters they identified from the time logs.

Ask team members to write their initials by their comments. Once you have checked that everyone understands what they are doing, give everyone a marker pen and start the exercise.

Once you can see the initial burst of ideas slowing down, ask the team to move round to the next flipchart, and to add any ideas to those already listed. Again judge the right moment to move the teams onto the final task.

### **TEAM REVIEW**

Once ideas have dried up, gather everyone around the 'Unpleasant Surprises' list and ask the 'owner' of each comment to briefly explain what they wrote. Ask other team members to add their own comments.

Now move to the 'Pleasant Surprises' list and go through the same exercise.

As the team works through the ideas, look for opportunities to bring in some of the key issues in the questionnaire, especially the allocation of time to the key results areas.

Finally, move on to consider the list of Top Time Wasters. Ask each person briefly to comment on the item they have written. Once the whole list has been explained, ask the team to suggest remedies for each time waster.

	<p>You can either ask them to write the remedies alongside the original comment, or on an adjoining flipchart sheet, or on 'Post it' notes.</p> <p>People will often find it easier to suggest solutions for other people's problems than they can for their own.</p> <p><b>CLOSE THE SESSION</b></p> <p>The important lesson to come out of this session is the need for constant awareness. How effectively are they, as individuals and as a team, in applying their time to achieve results in their key areas?</p> <p>Emphasise the need for everyone to apply their efforts to the results which will have the greatest impact on improving business performance.</p>
 <p><b>Note</b></p>	<p>For this session to be really effective, the participants need to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Understand the concept of Key Results Areas, and to have identified what they are for their own job,</li> </ol> <p>and</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>b. Complete the time and interruption log for 3 – 5 days prior to the session.</li> </ol> <p>Some people may need help to analyse their time logs, so as this activity gets under way you may wish to circulate and see if anyone needs assistance.</p> <p>A further bonus which can come from this session is an awareness of inefficient team practices or procedures. The team may be doing lots of small things which, when added together, may waste a considerable amount of time.</p> <p>This session inevitably starts people thinking about how they are using their whole life. Questions about career planning and development often arise, as do thoughts about time away from work.</p> <p>The extent to which you respond to these wider issues will depend on many factors, but you should be prepared for them to be raised, if not publicly then in private conversations.</p>
 <p><b>When?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As part of any action plan relating to poor time management and inability to hit targets</li> <li>• To maintain team focus in relation to attaining set results</li> </ul>



# **THE TIME OF YOUR LIFE**

## **WHY SHOULD I USE A TIME MANAGEMENT LOG?**

We will soon be holding a team meeting, with the focus on how we use and manage our time. Early in the session, we will be asking you to consider how you actually spend your time now.

To make the most of this discussion, we would like you to record on the attached time log all your activities at work during several typical working days. Please record a minimum of three days, and ideally five.

The log will help you to compare how you really spend your time, as opposed to how you think you spend your time.

It will be for your eyes only, so please be totally honest with yourself. For example, if you spend a few minutes gazing out of the window, are you really thinking deeply about the problem to hand, or are you perhaps planning the weekend or a holiday. Everybody day-dreams!

During the workshop we will ask you to discuss the results of the time-log with your colleagues, but what you disclose will be up to you.

## **HOW TO USE THE TIME LOG**

Detailed advice on completing the logs is given at the top of the forms.

Do your best to account for all your time, and include every incident, however trivial.

Don't just log what you did, but also why you did it. This will make subsequent analysis easier.

Please record interruptions on the separate log, so that you can analyse them objectively.

Good luck with your time logs. Please bring them with you to the Workshop.



## Time Management Log

On the chart below, enter your main daily activities at work. Try to do this at the end of every half-hour period. If it helps, use a Time Organiser (Microsoft Outlook Calendar) or a Diary to review what you were involved in. It's a good idea to photocopy the chart as an A3 sheet, to give you more room to insert data, and perhaps pin up onto the wall to keep you focused on the task.

Remember to also enter any work-related activities that you may complete in the evenings or at weekends.

Your activities will obviously depend upon the nature of the job that you do but, as you are likely to be in a managerial or supervisory role, you will probably find that it includes some of the following (use the appropriate code for brevity):

	<u>CODE</u>
Meetings	M
Paperwork / mail	P
Dealing with staff rosters	SR
Producing reports	PR
Staff Issues	SI
Other administrative tasks	O
Driving (if not a driver)	D
Telephone calls	TC
Computer Work	CW
Dealing with customers/visitors	CV
Office 'Socialising'	OS
Training/Coaching sessions	TS
Personal/Family Matters	PFM
Non Job Related (other people's work)	NJR

If you spend 10 minutes on a phone call, record as TC10.

It is **VITAL** that you complete the chart as fully as possible, as you will be referring to it throughout the workshop.



## Time Management Log

	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT	SUN
08:00							
08.30							
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**CODE:**

Meetings	M	Telephone calls	TC
Paperwork / mail	P	Computer Work	CW
Dealing with staff rosters	SR	Dealing with customers /visitors	CV
Producing reports	PR	Office 'Socialising'	OS
Staff issues	SI	Training/Coaching sessions	TS
Other admin. tasks	O	Personal/Family matters	PFM

Driving (if not a Driver)

D Non Job Related (other people's NJR work)







# Where does your time go?

Please refer to the time log you kept recently, as you consider the following questions.

Nobody else will see your responses, unless you volunteer to do so - so please be totally honest.

The whole purpose of time management is to achieve better results in the key areas of your job. So, before starting on your time analysis, please write down, in order of priority, your top five Key Results Areas (KRAs) (KPIs, Goals, Objectives).

1. My Key Results Areas are:

KRA 1

KRA 2

KRA 3

KRA 4

KRA 5

2. From your time analysis, what approximate proportion of your time did you spend on each KRA?

%

KRA 1

KRA 2

KRA 3

KRA 4

KRA 5

Do you feel happy with the result? If not, what can you do about it?

3. What proportion of time did you spend sorting out problems which should never have occurred?

How many of these problems could be prevented?

4. What proportion of time did you spend checking or inspecting work performed by other people, to ensure that it meets the required standard?  
Do you have to do this? Could it be handled some other way?
  
5. No doubt some things took longer than expected – why was that?
  
6. Can you see any things that really somebody else should have done for you? How can you manage things more effectively?
  
7. Look at the unwanted interruptions you recorded, and list the top five. What can you do to reduce them?

Action to reduce

Interruption 1

Interruption 2

Interruption 3

Interruption 4

Interruption 5

8. Looking back on the period under review, were there major tasks left unfinished at the end? What was the impact?
  
9. Reviewing the period, were you given any additional or unexpected tasks? If so, what impact did that have on your planning?
  
10. With the benefit of the time log, how does your actual usage of time compare with how you think you use your time?

What changes do you think you could make?

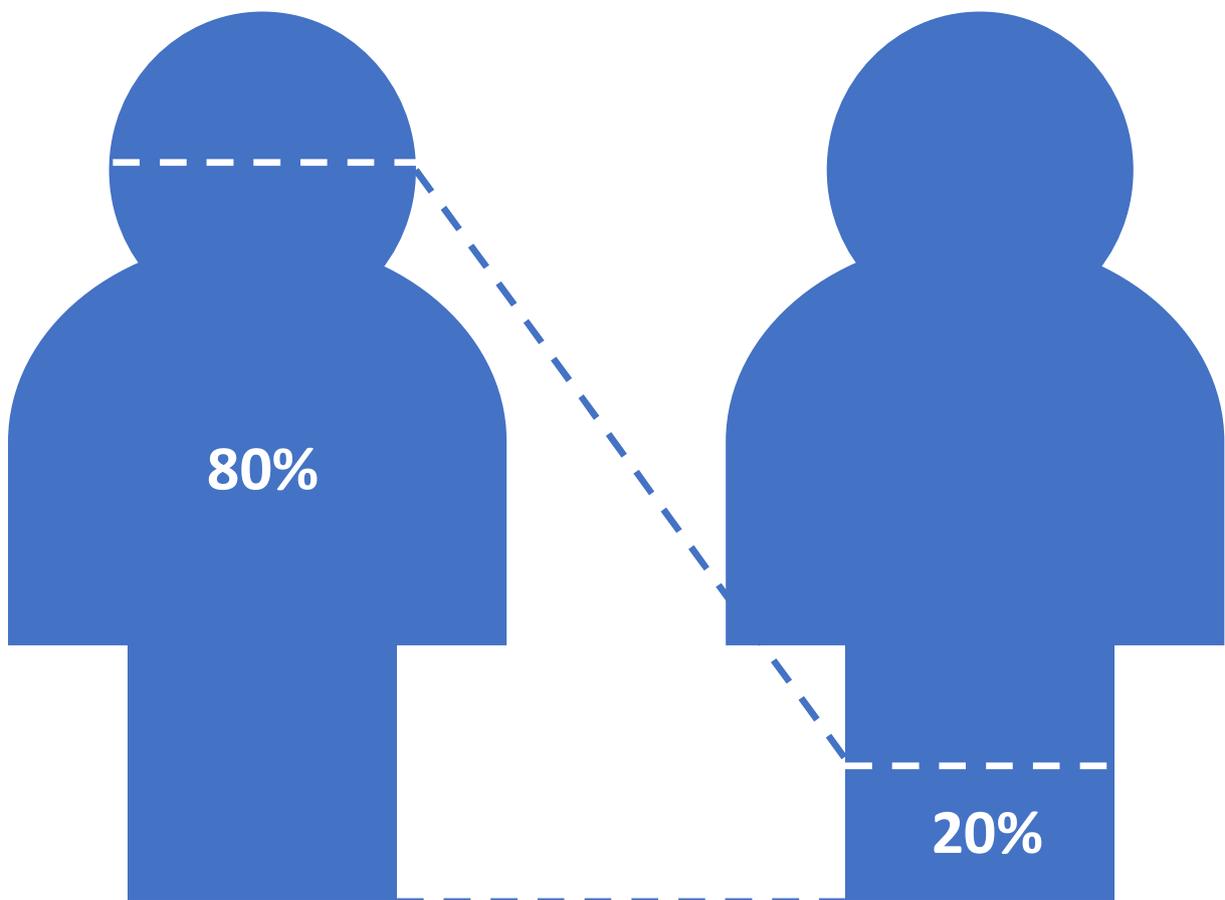


# The Pareto Principle

Also known as the 80 - 20 principle

You achieve 80% of your results . . .

. . . from 20% of your efforts



You spend 80% of your time . . .

. . . on 20% of your tasks

