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**EFFECTIVE TIME MANAGEMENT
— SELECTED ISSUES**

EFFECTIVE TIME MANAGEMENT — SELECTED ISSUES

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*“So what is time? If no one asks, I know.
If someone asks, I don't know how to explain” (St. Augustine)*



Abstract

Deliberations included in this article contain the basic issues related to the subject of time management. As we know, people who waste their time the most, most complain about the lack of the time. We should treat our time, time of our co-workers, and friends as a valuable, but limited wealth. Principles of effective time management can be applied in any scientific and research institutions, companies or corporations. The benefits of a good and effective time management will be felt not only by ourselves but also by our friends and family. Detailed formulation of objectives, identification and elimination of time wasters and postponing work on later (Procrastination), using methods of time management and systematic control will allow for efficient use of time. A good plan is the basis for optimal and meaningful use of time.

Keywords: time, procrastination, Parkinson's Law, time management, self-organization

Introduction

With the fast-paced lifestyle of today, hardly ever do we have enough time to do all we have to do. Work, home, cooking, cleaning, the gym, training courses, etc... The number of roles we have to fulfil daily makes us juggle dozens of tasks each day.

By following a set of simple rules facilitating our work it is possible to change our perspective on the routine procedures and to think outside of the box. Good time management can be regarded as a resource of key significance for effective functioning of a research organization.

This paper outlines a wide range of issues related to time management. Firstly, the essentials of time management are discussed, including the problem of procrastination and the application of Parkinson's law to time management. Subsequently, the paper focuses on project time management. Finally, some work facilitating principles are presented.

The concept of time management can be applied both to the functioning of an organization, including a research institute, and to our everyday life.

The essentials of time management

Time — how to define it? It is fair to say that there is no single, universally accepted definition of time. When reflecting on the nature of time and on how the passage of time affects everyone and everything we are bound to see the complexity of the concept of time. The ancient Greek philosophers seldom refer to the nature of time in their writings. For Plato, convinced of the purposefulness of reality, time had a function as a moving reflection of eternity. Several pages of Aristotle's *Physics* are dedicated to time: "...time is the quantity of motion relative to before and after" (...) Thus time is not perceived as motion but as the quantitative aspect of motion.

"So what is time? If no one asks, I know. If someone asks, I don't know how to explain. But I am adamant that if things were not passing away there would be no past; if things were not happening, there would be no future, and if things did not exist, there would be no presence." According to St. Augustine it is not time that flows but it is things that flow in time. Time never stands still. The present moment flows from the future to the past so rapidly that it can have no substantial existence whatsoever.

Newton regarded time as an absolute, steady, autonomous dimension, as a reality in its own right.¹

Kant, concerned with the problem of the constitution of the object of perception, observed that the mind in the act of perception saw the object perceived as distinct from the perceiver. Kant's analysis revealed the participation of the so-called space-and-time forms and notions in the creation of the object of perception. On the other hand, Kant showed the subjective character of these forms and notions. Thus the very manner in which objects of perceptions are formed served Kant to prove that perceived objects were merely mental constructs that did not truly exist.²

Einstein extended the notion of time to embrace a wider variety of realities in the ways that associate the nature of time with *thumos*.^{3,4}

B. Skowron-Mielnik believes that "time of work is an important public, economic and legal category".⁵ T. Mendel holds that "time is a manager's most valuable resource defining the boundaries of the possible". In business terms, time of work is indicative of work efficiency and organization skills besides being used to gauge payment and production capital.⁶

Planning is about manipulating time by moulding it according to our likes and wants. The calendar imposes some sort of order on reality structuring time into months, weeks, days, seasons of the year, anniversaries and holidays. Planning gives us a sense of control over our life. Although there are only twenty-four hours in a day, each hour may be used differently. Time is an individual matter which might or might not depend on us, but is also connected in a specific way with a given place or a situation in which we might have found ourselves.⁷ Time management gives sequence and logic to future events, whose source lies in skilful and rational using of the present moment.

In his book *Time Management*, Brian Tracy, a motivational speaker and author interested in human resources and time management in an organization, makes it clear

¹ P. Nierodka, *Recens-Arche filozofii Józefa Bańki*, Śląska Wyższa Szkoła Zarządzania im. Generała Jerzego Ziętka w Katowicach, p. 91.

² K. Ajdukiewicz, *Zagadnienia i kierunki filozofii*, Czytelnik, Warszawa 1983, p. 61.

³ *Thymos* — the notion commonly associated with soft skills, feelings and a focus on emotional growth as opposed to the objective, the rational, calculating and estimating, and the cognitive sphere; contrasted with *phronesis*. Here used in the sense of time "almost" intimately related to man.

⁴ K. Ajdukiewicz, *Zagadnienia...*, op. cit., p. 61.

⁵ B. Skowron-Mielnik, *Zarządzanie czasem pracy w przedsiębiorstwie*, Wydawnictwo Akademii Ekonomicznej w Poznaniu, Poznań 2003, p. 5.

⁶ M. Roguszcak, *Zarządzanie czasem pracy menedżera*, Dom Wydawniczy ELIPSA, Warszawa 2010, p. 22.

⁷ H. Fołtyn, *Czas w życiu i pracy*, Wydawnictwo Key Text, Warszawa 2012, p. 39.

that one of the most valuable mental habits to cultivate is the sense of the urgency of things, the inner impulse that makes us deal with problems without procrastination. As James Allen said: "First of all you must focus on one thing: set a rational and useful goal and devote yourself wholeheartedly to its achievement." Self-discipline and determination heighten self-esteem. The focus on well-defined goals and the ability to plan actions in time are the key to success.⁸ According to Brian Tracy — 1 minute of planning things saves ten minutes of doing things.

Lothar J. Seiwert in his *Mehr Zeit für das Wesentliche* says:⁹

"Time management is about the consistent and goal-oriented application in practice of proven work techniques in such a way that managing oneself and one's environment becomes effortless while the time at one's disposal is used up in the most meaningful way possible."

By gradually implementing various work techniques we are going to increase our efficiency and work better and with better results. L.J. Seiwert lists ten benefits derived from planning and using up our time well:¹⁰

- delivering tasks at a smaller amount of energy invested,
- better organization of one's work,
- better work results,
- less chaos and stress,
- more satisfaction from work,
- higher motivation,
- time to engage in tasks of 'higher order',
- less pressure at work and better focus on efficiency,
- fewer mistakes,
- quicker attainment of work and personal goals.

The time management matrix below (Pict. 1) classifies our activities into four categories. Urgent activities cannot wait and have to be dealt with at once, e.g. answering the phone which is ringing. Urgent activities put pressure on us to take immediate action. The category of importance is connected with results. If an activity is important for us, completing it contributes to increased self-esteem and becomes a priority.

⁸ A. Olejniczak, *Event marketing jako jedna z form innowacji marketingowych w instytucjach naukowych i badawczych*, Marketing i Rynek nr 10/2013, Polskie Wydawnictwo Ekonomiczne, Warszawa 2013, p. 14 after B. Tracy, *Zarządzanie czasem*, Muza, Warszawa 2009, pp. 136–149.

⁹ L.J. Seiwert, *Zarządzanie czasem. Bądź Panem własnego czasu*, Wydawnictwo Placet, Warszawa 1998, p. 14.

¹⁰ Ibidem, p. 17.

Picture 1. Time management matrix

	URGENT	NON-URGENT
IMPORTANT	<p>I ACTIVITY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● crisis situations ● urgent tasks ● tasks with a deadline 	<p>II ACTIVITY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● prevention, everyday activities ● building authentic relations with other people ● looking for new possibilities ● planning ● recreation and relaxation
UNIMPORTANT	<p>III ACTIVITY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● some phone calls ● some correspondence or reports ● some meetings ● very urgent tasks 	<p>IV ACTIVITY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● daily routines, ● some correspondence ● time thieves ● pleasures ● useless Internet surfing

Source: S. R. Covey, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, Dom Wydawniczy Rebis, 2006, p. 152.

We react to urgent matters. More initiative and involvement is required to deal with matters that are important but not urgent. The time management matrix is composed of four quarters.

Quarter I — these activities concern matters that are both important and urgent, the consequences of which are of vital significance and which must be dealt with at once. Some people tend to spend a lot of time dealing with matters that are urgent but unimportant (Quarter III). They believe they are in Quarter I. They react to urgent matters which they also deem important. Quite often, the urgency of these matters is based on other people's priorities and expectations. In general, the lives of the people who spend practically all their time in Quarters III and IV are irresponsible. Such behaviour may even lead to being fired from work. The heart of effective self-management is at Quarter II. Here belong matters that are not urgent but important. These include building meaningful relationships, long-term planning, physical activity, preventing undesirable situations — things we know we should be doing but hardly ever find time to do.

To summarize, as Peter Drucker said, effective people don't look for problems. Instead, they look for new possibilities and anticipate future.¹¹

S.R. Covey in *The 7 Habits...* draws on the idea presented in *The Common Denominator of Success* by E.M. Gray. The author dedicated himself to finding the common denominator of success, a feature that would be shared by all successful people. Gray discovered that it is not hard work, right conditions or luck, although these factors obviously do matter. The factor that seems to be more important than others is doing things in the right sequence. Gray also noticed that "successful people are in the habit of doing things that unsuccessful people don't like doing. This does not mean that successful people like doing things other people don't but their likes and dislikes are subjugated by the power of the goal they set for themselves".¹² This requires the sense of mission, the ability to set goals, the sense of direction and values, the inner "yes!" which lets us say 'no' to anything that stands in the way of achieving the goal.

A great idea for using the time management matrix is to draw four squares on a large sheet of paper or a board and to write down all the tasks we have to do this week on stick-on notes. Then we decide which task is urgent and which is less so. An uncompromising attitude to setting our priorities gives the word *important* more meaning.¹³ You have to decide on the priorities for your organization, your team and you yourself. Generally, an organization has a mission defined in terms of specific goals it wants to achieve. It is these goals that dictate the priorities for your organisation and your team.¹⁴

An important problem occurring with respect to time management is the tendency to extend the working day beyond the regular eight hours. Obviously, there is no cause for worry if that happens on rare occasions only. But we must be aware of the fact that long working hours affect our mood and health. Usually, a person who has insufficient amount of work (below five hours daily) feels dissatisfied and frustrated. But excessive work (more than 8–9 hours daily), especially of the type that requires intense mental concentration, causes chronic tiredness manifesting in increasing dissatisfaction and professional burnout, and may consequently result in a range of physiological disturbances leading from ulcers to nervous breakdown to a stroke and, finally, permanent work disability.

¹¹ S.R. Covey, *7 nawyków skutecznego działania (The 7 habits of highly effective people)*, Dom Wydawniczy Rebis, 2006, pp. 152–155.

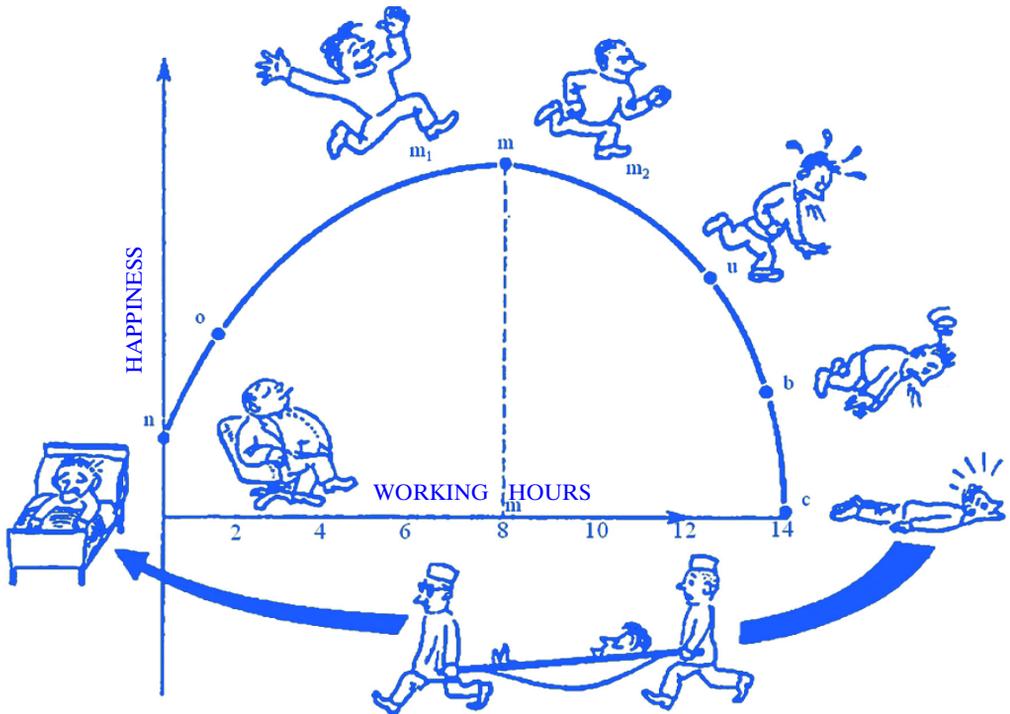
¹² Ibidem, p. 150.

¹³ M. Clayton, *Zarządzanie czasem. Jak efektywnie planować i realizować zadania*, Samo sedno, Warszawa 2011, p. 100.

¹⁴ D.A. Tyler, *Zarządzanie czasem*, Wydawnictwo PETIT, Warszawa, 2004, p. 17.

British physiologist Sheldon showed the relation between long working hours, wellbeing and health of employees in the form of the “happiness curve” presented in Pict. 2.

Picture 2. Happiness Curve according to Sheldon



Source: Gelinier O., *Le Travail Personnel du Dirigeante et de l'Equipe de Direction, Hommes et Techniques* 1961, [in:] Kieżun W., *Sprawne zarządzanie organizacją*, Wyd. SGH, Warszawa 1997, p. 192.

The points marked on Sheldon's curve signify as follows:¹⁵

- m — the maximum point at which a person feels satisfaction from work (corresponding to 5–8 hours of work),
- o — decreasing the number of working hours leads to decreasing satisfaction levels and results in psychosomatic (physiological) disturbances (the O point — the obesity zone),
- n — no efficiency point,

¹⁵ W. Kieżun, *Sprawne zarządzanie organizacją*, Wyd. SGH, Warszawa 1997, p. 192.

u — extending working hours beyond the maximum point leads to overwork and causes health problems, e.g. ulcers,

b — nervous breakdown,

c — total work incapacity due to a stroke (when working from 10 to 16 hours daily).

However, the latest research conducted by American doctors has neither proved or refuted Sheldon's results. The research outcomes boiled down to the observation that "the more successful a manager is, the less likely s/he is to develop a heart or coronary disease".¹⁶ At the same time the research revealed that our health is more importantly affected by our emotional and physical constitution, eating habits, amount of physical activity, propensity to drink alcohol or smoke cigarettes, unbalanced lifestyle, and insufficient amount of sleep rather than by long working hours.

Time as an economic category poses considerable challenges. Each scientific and research institution will strongly benefit from effective time management. Let's use this simplest but most important of our resources — our time — wisely.

Procrastination — how to overcome it?

Procrastination (from *Latin procrastinatio* — delaying) is about almost pathological delaying of tasks which should be dealt with now while engaging in more pleasurable or less troublesome activities. If we know exactly what we want and have to do but instead of doing this we waste time surfing the Internet, reading a newspaper, playing games, or engaging in other useless occupations — we are procrastinators. Obviously, there is nothing wrong with a short break from work from time to time, but if we continue to procrastinate we get locked in a vicious cycle and a sense of frustration. Procrastination is a sort of battle against time. The tendency to delay things is reinforced by the illusion that tomorrow will be better. Initially, delaying things might improve your mood. But the realization that a task needs to be done causes stress, worry and anxiety about whether we will be able to do things on time and with due care.

How to get rid of the habit of delaying things?

1. Divide a large project into smaller, more manageable elements.
2. Start anywhere. The very fact of starting work helps to ease the pressure felt before we got started on the project.

¹⁶ H. Bieniok, *Zarządzanie czasem, Skrypty uczelniane*, Zeszyt III, Wydawnictwo Uczelniane Akademii Ekonomicznej w Katowicach, Katowice 1999, p. 72.

3. Use the Swiss Cheese method recommended by Alan Lakein in his "How to Get Control of Your Time and Your Life". Get started by perforating your project. Do first the least time-consuming tasks. If a task turns out difficult to do, move on to the next one.
4. Do the most difficult part of the project first.
5. Try to put in thirty minutes of quality work every day. In the beginning, don't force yourself to achieve more.
6. Work at your own pace. Don't forget to plan time for charging the batteries and catching up with the backlog of work.
7. Get rid of any disturbances. If you are distracted by the humming of your computer, get yourself the headphones and listen to calming music.
8. Keep on telling yourself that your goal is to excel. Repeat the words "I want" and "I wish" instead of "I have to" or "I should".
9. Celebrate small successes and victories.¹⁷

Parkinson's Law in time management

You've got a task to do. The deadline is in three months' time. How many people, who have time and a job with a distant deadline, would do the job without any delay? How many of them would wait until the very last moment?

This problem attracted the attention of Cyril Northcote Parkinson (1909–1993), who was a British writer and historian as well as serving as advisor to the governments of Great Britain. Over the course of many years of work he gained a thorough understanding of the functioning and bureaucratic relations in public administration.

"Work expands so as to fill the time available for its completion."

This adage first appeared in 1958 in *Parkinson's Law or the Pursuit of Progress*.¹⁸ Although it originally described relations in public administration, it is fair to say that Parkinson's law holds true for each of us, both in our professional and private lives.

The more time we have to do a job, the more time the job takes. This fact is expressed in the common saying: "The busiest man is the one with plenty of time." In his *Parkinson's Law...* C.N. Parkinson gives the example of an elderly lady who has nothing to do so she can spare the whole day to write and sent a postcard to her nephew

¹⁷ P. Dodd, D. Sundheim, *Zarządzaj swoim czasem. 28 sprawdzonych technik*, MT Biznes Sp. z o.o., Warszawa 2009, pp. 79–82.

¹⁸ *Parkinson's Law Or the Pursuit of Progress*, Wydawnictwo John Murray, 1958, Polish edition translated by Juliusz Kydryński, *Prawo Parkinsona albo w pogoni za postępem*, wyd. III, Wydawnictwo „Książka i Wiedza”, Warszawa 1971.

living in Bagnor Regis. It takes her an hour to find the postcard, another one to find her glasses, thirty minutes to find the nephew's address, an hour and a quarter to phrase the message, and then she spends twenty minutes on contemplating whether or not to take an umbrella when she goes to the post office, which is just around the corner.

What takes a busy man several minutes may pose a big challenge for another person, transforming the whole day into a stretch of worry, hassle and stress.

Having recognized the fact that the more time we can devote to work, and office work in particular, the more engaging this work gets, we must notice that the amount of work really done has virtually nothing to do with the number of people employed to do it. The task which needs to be done becomes more meaningful and complex in proportion to time allowed for its completion.

Set closer deadlines to complete specific tasks. According to Parkinson's Law, the less time you have to do a job, the sooner the job is done. Instead of three months' time, let's set the deadline for writing a paper in a week's time. Thanks to this manoeuvre we are going to achieve the same but in shorter time.

Project time management

Project management is about using knowledge, skills, tools and techniques to perform project activities in order to meet the project requirements. So what is a project? Project is a temporary activity undertaken to provide a unique service or product or to achieve a unique result. Project management involves the processes of project initiation, planning, execution, monitoring, quality control and completion. Project management involves the following stages:

1. Defining project requirements;
2. Setting clear and attainable goals;
3. Striking the right balance between conflicting requirements concerning the quality, scope, schedule and costs of a project;
4. Adjusting project requirements, plans and approaches to differing interests and expectations of stakeholders.

Project managers need to consider the so-called triple constraint by the scope, time and cost of the project in managing often conflicting project requirements.¹⁹ Any business activity requires the ability to overcome negative attitudes.²⁰

¹⁹ *Kompendium wiedzy o zarządzaniu projektami (A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge)*, Management Training & Development Center, Warszawa 2006, p. 8.

²⁰ W. Świczak, *Inbound marketing jako forma marketingu internetowego*, Marketing instytucji naukowych i badawczych 2, Prace Instytutu Lotnictwa nr 222, Wydawnictwa Naukowe Instytutu Lotnictwa, Warszawa 2012, p. 195.

Project Time Management involves processes needed to timely complete a project including:²¹

1. Activity Definition — defining and describing project activities.
2. Activity Sequencing — determining and describing logical relations between project activities.
3. Activity Resource Estimating — determining what resources (human resources, equipment, materials), and in what quantities will be required to execute project activities.
4. Activity Duration Estimating — this process uses information on the scope of work within particular activities, types of resources required and estimated quantities of resources.
5. Schedule Development — determining start and finish dates of project activities.
6. Schedule Control.

Project processes impact one another as well as the processes in other knowledge areas. A project process might require the employment of one person or a team — depending on project requirements.

Effective time management

Effective time management is the key to improve the quality of life. Neither time nor lost opportunities can be regained. But we can make a good use of present and future time. This can be achieved by skilful self-management in time, or in other words by creating the possibility to fulfil one's responsibilities better and quicker. Actually, time management isn't the question of choice. All of us manage time, but only sensible people wish to master this skill and use it effectively. Effective time management depends on two factors: planning work and focusing on details.²² If we look closely into what we spend our time on, then decide on our priorities and plan the work to do step by step, we are bound to increase our efficiency. Good work organization is of utmost importance as it creates conditions conducive to effective time management. To use time more effectively and more creatively it is necessary to gradually change our habits and set priorities on your activities.

²¹ Ibidem, p. 131.

²² M. Roguszczyk, *Zarządzanie czasem pracy menedżera*, op.cit. p. 108.

Self-organization as a method of effective time management

Effective time management requires planning and organizing one's activities so that they lead to the achievement of one's goals in the shortest possible time. Brian Tracy believes that fewer than 3 per cent of people actually set and write down the goals they want to achieve. It is these people who are the most successful in various fields. Fewer than 1 per cent systematically review and rewrite their goals.²³

It can be argued that the difference between average and highly effective people comes down to the ability to organize their work well by the latter. A distinctive quality of highly effective and financially successful people is perfect personal and professional organization.

Peter Drucker expressed the opinion that **taking action without planning is the cause of every failure**. Life biggest achievements — such as starting up own business or completing a profitable project or even going on holiday turn out to be the result of careful planning. If we try to predict the consequences of our actions, we act more effectively. Thinking out and planning your actions are very useful exercises in cultivating self-discipline.

How to organize yourself better? The following tips are bound to make your work easier and less stressful.

The four rules of good self-organization²⁴:

1. Develop the habit of keeping things in order.

Without order there is no personal efficiency. You can significantly improve your efficiency by simply cleaning and organizing your workplace. Order has a calming effect and helps to control your life and environment. Any time you manage to sort out an issue, whether it's in your work or private life, you are bound to feel pleasure and satisfaction. A clean office and a neat desk make you work better. You feel satisfied after you have made order in your bag, briefcase or house. You feel energized and motivated to work.

2. Try to look at yourself objectively, through the eyes of others.

Brian Tracy suggests doing a short exercise: get away from your desk for a moment and ask yourself the question: "What kind of person works here? Does the content of one's

²³ B. Tracy, *Zarządzanie czasem*, MUZA SA, Warszawa 2009, p. 29.

²⁴ *Ibidem*, pp. 49–52.

bag say anything about its owner?" Look at your car. Look around your house, your backyard, look into your wardrobe and ask yourself the question, "What kind of person lives here? Would you commission this person a job to do?"

In a series of interviews with high executives fifty out of fifty-two respondents said they wouldn't promote a person whose desk or workplace was in permanent disorder. Even though such a person may work work efficiently and well, s/he is still perceived as disorganized and as someone who cannot be trusted with responsible tasks. Don't let other people think of you this way.

3. Don't use excuses.

Many people who work in mess use excuses such as "I know where things are". But research into work efficiency has proved such claims false. People who say they know where a given document is actually use up a lot of energy on remembering various details instead of investing it in the work they have to do. When we work in a place which is neat, well-organized and clean our efficiency naturally improves.²⁵

4. Work at a neat desk.

Your desk is a reflection of the state of your mind. If you are disorganized and distracted, your environment will reflect it. Many time management experts believe that every sheet of paper on your desk is a decision that needs to be taken. When you have learned to work at an empty desk, your efficiency will increase. Having more space you are going to feel less anxiety because you don't have to keep your eyes on all this stuff that reminds you of the things that must be dealt with. More space helps you to concentrate better. So it is important to learn to make quick decisions regarding every new sheet of paper on your desk. Bear in mind those simple rules: — your correspondence in-tray is a transition station. It is not intended for long-term storage of documents. — trays on the desk should be used only for incoming correspondence and company headed paper. Documents that require taking action should be placed in separate files for tasks to do.

- Other trays should be kept on the nearby shelves or in a file cabinet, not on the desk.
- A stapler, adhesive tape and a business card holder can be kept on your desk. Stationery materials (including stamps) should be kept in a file cabinet or a drawer. Do not crowd your desk with personal belongings; a couple of personal items should suffice.

²⁵ Ibidem, pp. 51–52.

- You need a desk at home too. A kitchen or dining room table is not a desk. If there are piles of papers on your kitchen or dining room table it is time you launched a decluttering and reorganizing operation. If in your home there is no room for a standard desk consider buying a retractable desk.²⁶

PC

Is your computer desktop the extension of your desk? Is it scattered with documents as if the icon bomb has exploded in its centre? How much time do you waste trying to find a file you need? The following tips should help you save valuable time:

- treat electronic documents as paper documents. If there is something you don't need, throw it away. If you think you might use it in the future, save it.
- make it your habit to put each address in the right database. You can make a database in Excel to save e-mail addresses, phone numbers or other important, not only business related, contact data. This will save you many hours of precious time.
- use a calendar. If you use the notification function, you won't forget about a friend's birthday, a deadline or an important call to make.
- learn to use macros. This tool allows you to save the sequences of keystrokes and related instructions used regularly when working with a given application. This will speed up your work because instead of performing each command separately you are going to save the whole sequence and "recreate" it by several keystrokes or mouse actions.
- invest money in a faster computer. Huge RAM, powerful processor and the latest disc will help you save time.
- your Internet connection speed also makes a difference. There are better ways to use your time than to stare at the progress bar.
- connect the second monitor to your computer. If you use your computer intensively working simultaneously with several applications, the second monitor will make a lot of sense. It might increase your efficiency even by up to 30 per cent.
- get familiar with search techniques. If you learn to use search engines, it will take less time to find the information you need.²⁷

²⁶ P. Dodd, D. Sundheim, *Zarządzaj swoim czasem...*, op.cit., pp. 75–76.

²⁷ M. Heppell, *Jak zaoszczędzić godzinę dziennie. Sprawne zarządzanie czasem*, Wydawnictwo HELION, Gliwice 2013, pp. 119–121.

Phone

Calling people on the phone is a quick way to communicate, plus it ensures privacy. When using the phone it is good to remember a handful of time-saving tips.

1. Save phone numbers.

If a person calls you on your mobile and you might want to contact this person again in the future, save the number. This helps save precious minutes which otherwise would be lost looking for a number.

2. Don't beat around the bush.

After the conversation opening "How are you?" you should proceed to explain why you are calling. Finish the call with "I'm glad we have discussed it. Thank you", and say good-bye.

3. Stand up.

Stand up when you make a phone call. As a result your phone calls will be shorter and more energetic.

4. Always leave a message.

When you hear the voice mail signal, leave the message. Repeated attempts to get through to someone are a waste of time. When you call:

- Introduce yourself.
- Leave a brief and clear message explaining why you have called.
- In case you are able to answer the phone at a particular time, say when.
- Introduce yourself again. Give your phone number slowly, repeat it and say "thank you".²⁸

E-mail

Although e-mail seems to be the most effective and most productive tool which we can use to save work time, in practice writing and reading e-mails eats up a lot of time.

- Distractors

Switch off pop-up window informing you of a new message. Don't interrupt whatever you are doing at the moment. Check your mail three to four times a day.

²⁸ Ibidem, pp. 121–123.

- Mailbox capacity and spam

Invest in a good antispam filter. Give up subscribing newsletters except for those really important. Make a special file for all mails you don't know what to do with to deal with them later.

- Substitute of oral communication

E-mail does not substitute oral communication. It was meant to substitute writing letters. Today, people are addicted to sending e-mails instead of simply making a call. Use e-mail in emergencies but not as a substitute of a conversation.²⁹

How to deal with time thieves?

When we are interrupted at work, it is usually by someone we work with, our boss or a colleague. We can be interrupted by a phone, e-mail or a person.

"If someone interrupts you at work, stand up. In this situation the interrupter is less likely to sit down, make him/herself comfortable and embark on a lengthy conversation. Your standing position signals that you are ready to move on and is a clear indication that your time is not unlimited."³⁰

"One of the most troublesome work distractors is participation in meetings that we don't need to participate in. Start refusing to take part in meetings you don't have to participate in."³¹

"If you are working on something important, even a single brief break caused by someone's interruption may break your work rhythm".³²

If we don't try to limit the unplanned breaks from work, we risk being less efficient, more stressed and having to face the same problems again and again.³³

Self-confidence and positive attitude are mental habits that can be trained.

"Pinpoint a problem or a challenge you are currently facing. Consider it as something good that may bring you benefit and let you learn a valuable lesson. Imagine the worst case scenario, make a decision to accept it if it happened and then do your best to prevent it from happening".³⁴

²⁹ Ibidem, 116–119.

³⁰ M. Clayton, *Zarządzanie czasem. Jak efektywnie planować...*, op.cit, p. 101.

³¹ Ibidem, p. 102.

³² J. Davidson, *Zarządzanie czasem. Praktyczny poradnik dla tych, którzy nie lubią tracić czasu*, Wydawnictwo K.E. Liber, Warszawa 2007, p. 93.

³³ Ibidem, p. 93.

³⁴ B. Tracy, Ch. Tracy Stein, *Pocahuj tę żabę!*, MT BIZNES Sp. z o.o., Poznań 2012, p. 95.

Summary

*"There is no value equal to the value of time.
We have enough time, provided we use it properly."
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe*

Time management involves a wide spectrum of issues. This paper has focused on its most important aspects and those which are of special interest for the author. The principles of effective time management are applicable to all scientific and research organizations. Good time management brings benefits for you as well as for your family and your friends. "Human time is a limited and valuable resource and it is of vital importance to use it in a way that gives pleasure and satisfaction".³⁵

It is a well-known truism that people who complain about lack of time the most are also the same people who waste the most time. We should treat our time as well as that of our colleagues and friends as a valuable but limited resource. Successful people have one characteristic in common — the ability to manage their time wisely. They are capable of striking a happy balance between the competing demands put on their time by work, family, friends and personal interests. You yourself are responsible for learning self-management and time management in particular. These skills will enable you to do more work using less energy, concentrate on matters that are urgent and important rather than just urgent, avoid stressful situations, feel more satisfaction, aid your personal growth and be better equipped to achieve success and win more time for yourself and your family.

By defining your goals, identifying and eliminating time wasters, overcoming procrastination tendencies, using time management techniques and systematic control you will be able to make a better use of your time. Good planning is the basis for rational time management.

Use your time in the best possible way. Each person has the capacity to mould their own future. It's up to you what your life is going to look like. Time travels are possible in science fiction movies only. In the film series *Back to the future* by Robert Zemeckis it was possible to travel to 1950s, make a brief visit to the future or go to the Wild West. Where would you like to travel if you could use the DeLorean time machine? To the past or to the future? As Janusz Leon Wiśniewski writes in his *188 dni i nocy* co-authored by Małgorzata Domagalik: "I dream of putting time back. I would like to

³⁵ K. Wrona, *Grywalizacja i gry oraz ich potencjał do wykorzystania w strategiach marketingowych*, Marketing instytucji naukowych i badawczych 4, Prace Instytutu Lotnictwa nr 225, Wydawnictwa Naukowe Instytutu Lotnictwa, Warszawa 2012, p. 241, after P. Tkaczyk, *Grywalizacja. Jak zastosować mechanizmy gier w działaniach marketingowych*, Helion 2012.

find myself again at the certain crossroads of my life, and again read the road signs carefully and go in a different direction.” Each of us has dreamt of going back in time and making some changes, making a different decision ... One thing is certain — we can still work on our future. Thanks to effective time management we can live a fuller life in all its aspects.

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