

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Time management helps leaders make the most of the time available to them. You can budget your time and accomplish projects and tasks efficiently by identifying long- and short-term goals, making a daily to-do list, prioritizing the list, making a schedule and delegating when possible, leaving time for unexpected tasks, and managing interruptions.

OBJECTIVES

- Evaluate your ability to manage time.
- Identify and apply successful time-management practices.

TIME MANAGEMENT

Good time-management skills are invaluable to leaders. Meetings, paperwork, crises—they all consume our time and leave little available for what leaders are expected to do: provide leadership now and plan for and lead into the future.

HOW WELL DO YOU MANAGE TIME?

To evaluate your ability to manage time, determine how often you can honestly make the following statements. After you've completed this entire project, repeat the exercise to measure your progress.

	Always	Sometimes	Never
I make a list of things to do each day.	3	2	1
I set deadlines for myself.	3	2	1
I prioritize the things I need to do.	3	2	1
I delegate tasks when possible.	3	2	1
I schedule time for creative projects and important tasks.	3	2	1
I break large projects into smaller, more manageable tasks.	3	2	1
I do creative work at the time of day when I have the most energy.	3	2	1
I allow time each day to manage unexpected problems or tasks.	3	2	1
I handle every piece of paper on my desk only once.	3	2	1
I complete unpleasant tasks first.	3	2	1

Scoring: Add the circled numbers. If you scored 27-30 points, congratulations! You have excellent time-management skills. If you scored 20-26 points, your skills are good, but may need some attention. If you scored 19 or fewer points, it's time to make some improvements.

HOW TO MANAGE TIME

To meet the challenge of time management, you must be able to do the following:

- Understand what you can realistically achieve with your time
- Make the best use of the time available
- Plan enough time for things you absolutely must do
- Allow some time to handle the unexpected
- Minimize stress by avoiding over-commitment to yourself and to others

Some people believe that by working faster and longer, they get more done. Often, working faster produces more problems because people make more mistakes. Working for a longer period of time is tiring, diminishes judgment, and creates more problems.

Procrastination has a major effect on your efforts to manage time. When you wait until the last minute to tackle a big project or handle a pile of paperwork, you put additional stress on yourself and risk making mistakes or doing a poor job.

The following practices can help you budget your time and accomplish projects and tasks efficiently:

- ▶ **Identify long- and short-term goals.** Long-term goals are those you want to accomplish months or years from now. Short-term goals are those you want to accomplish within days or weeks.
- ▶ **Make a daily to-do list.** Base the list on your long- and short-term goals, specifying tasks that will help you accomplish them.
- ▶ **Prioritize the list.** Identify items that are 1) urgent and important, 2) important but not urgent, and 3) nice to do when you have the time.
- ▶ **Make a schedule.** Block out time for the urgent and important items and for those that take a lot of time to complete. In the remaining time, schedule other items. Break down large tasks into smaller, more manageable ones. Plan to do more difficult items when you are at your best. Some people work best in the morning, while others do better in the afternoon or evening.
- ▶ **Delegate whenever possible.** Do not spend valuable time doing something that someone else is capable of doing.
- ▶ **Leave time for emergencies.** No matter how carefully you plan, something unexpected inevitably occurs that needs your immediate attention. Build time into your daily schedule to handle these emergencies.
- ▶ **Manage interruptions.** Interruptions consume valuable time. When you are working on an important task, isolate yourself from others if you can.

When you wait until the last minute to tackle a big project, you put additional stress on yourself and risk making mistakes or doing a poor job.

Should you find spare time, such as the 10 minutes before lunch or a meeting, use it to accomplish tasks on the “important-but-not-urgent” list or the “nice-to-do-when-you-have-time” list. Be sure to schedule time for yourself, too. Periodic breaks help keep you alert and focused.

Keep your schedule realistic. If it causes you stress, or if you continually cannot accomplish the tasks on your daily to-do lists, rethink and adjust your schedule.

YOUR ASSIGNMENT

Apply the time-management practices by performing the role of timer and any one of the remaining four roles (each at a different meeting).

- ▶ Timer (mandatory)
- ▶ Toastmaster
- ▶ Speaker
- ▶ Grammarian
- ▶ Topicsmaster

Learn about these roles at www.toastmasters.org/meetingroles.

EVALUATION GUIDE FOR **TIME MANAGEMENT**

Note to the Evaluator: Please read the project carefully before the meeting. Offer comments and specific recommendations about the performance of the role, focusing on the information provided in this project. If any aspect of the role was performed outside of the meeting, conduct an interview to help you in your evaluation.

Timer

Evaluator _____ Date _____

	Outstanding	Average	Needs Work
The timer understood how to operate the timing and signal devices smoothly and accurately.	3	2	1
The timer explained the timing rules and how timing signals would be given.	3	2	1
The timer was organized.	3	2	1
The timer recognized when meeting segments were not meeting the established time requirement.	3	2	1

What steps did the timer take to keep the meeting on schedule? How did the timer demonstrate his preparedness for the role?

Toastmaster

Evaluator _____ Date _____

	Outstanding	Average	Needs Work
The Toastmaster was prepared and adhered to the times in the meeting agenda.	3	2	1
The Toastmaster ensured that the meeting began and ended on time.	3	2	1
The Toastmaster avoided awkward interruptions or gaps in meeting flow by using fluid transitions between meeting segments.	3	2	1
The Toastmaster's introductions for speakers were tightly organized and brief.	3	2	1

How did the Toastmaster control interruptions in the meeting schedule? What evidence did you see that the Toastmaster had begun preparing for this role several days before the meeting?

Speaker

Evaluator _____ Date _____

	Outstanding	Average	Needs Work
The speaker met the time requirement for the manual project.	3	2	1
The speech was organized so that the speaker presented the necessary information in the available time.	3	2	1
The speaker displayed detailed knowledge of the speech topic, indicating that the topic was well-researched.	3	2	1

How did the speaker make adjustments to keep his or her speech within time limits? Did the speaker try to cover too much information in his speech? Suggest improvements.

Grammarian

Evaluator _____ Date _____

	Outstanding	Average	Needs Work
The word of the day was well-researched and easily incorporated into everyday conversation.	3	2	1
The grammarian prioritized his or her comments to the best benefit of meeting participants within the allotted time.	3	2	1
The visual aid for the word of the day was prepared in advance and placed for maximum effect at the meeting.	3	2	1

Was the grammarian able to adhere to the time limit? If not, how could he or she improve?

Topicsmaster

Evaluator _____ Date _____

	Outstanding	Average	Needs Work
Topics were well-researched and reflected the meeting’s theme.	3	2	1
The Topicsmaster’s comments were short, giving respondents more opportunity to speak.	3	2	1
The Table Topics segment ended on time.	3	2	1

*What evidence did you see that the Topicsmaster had begun preparing for this role several days before the meeting?
Offer methods for managing and simplifying this preparation.*