

Managing Time and Priority



...a better way to manage

the
happy
manager

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HOW TO BE A BETTER MANAGER

Managing Time and Priority

What's in this guide:

Page

3	<u>About the “How to be a Better Manager...” Series</u>
4	<u>Why does time management matter?</u>
5	<u>How do you manage time and priority?</u>
7	<u>Define what you mean by time</u>
8	<u>Determine what you do</u>
10	<u>Decide what to do</u>
12	<u>Get things done</u>
18	<u>The paradox of time</u>
19	<u>Tool 1: Commitments summary</u>
20	<u>Tool 2: Time log</u>
23	<u>Tool 3: Time analysis</u>
25	<u>Tool 4: Time planning with task filters</u>
26	<u>Tool 5: Task priorities</u>

How to be a Better Manager...

Managing Time and Priority is one of a series of practical, thought-provoking guides, designed to help you deal with a wide range of management ideas, activities and situations. Whether you are a new manager, or one who wants to hone or develop existing skills, we're sure you'll find something valuable in any of these guides.

This series of e-guides is published by Apex Leadership Ltd. The guides have been developed by a team of professional managers, consultants and educators. The full range of titles is available from [Apex Leadership Ltd](#), or from [the Happy Manager.com](#). Use these guides to benefit from our wealth of management expertise. Let us help you find: **a better way to manage...**"

Phil Higson & Anthony Sturgess
Directors, Apex Leadership Ltd

Using the guides

Each guide contains information, insight and inspiration on essential management topics. The best way to use the guides is to read through each section in turn, ensuring you pause for reflection wherever you see the "Consider..." points. Be sure to answer any questions posed, wherever they appear - they are there for a reason!

Consider ...

Tools ...

After you've worked through the guide, work through the tools. These have been designed to help you use and develop the advice given in the guide.

- Click on the tool buttons where they appear for an in-text hyperlink to the actual tool.
- At the end of each tool you can simply click on the "return" link to get back to your place in the guide.

[Return to contents page](#)

Why Does Time Management Matter?

Because...

"Time is the scarcest resource; and unless it is managed, nothing else can be managed."

Peter F. Drucker

Managing Time and Priority

Most managers struggle with the range of demands on their time. Time is something we all feel we don't have enough of but are we actually fooling ourselves? Are we really lacking the time to do what we want?

Some argue that time is the only currency we have, so spend it well! Others suggest that it's not lack of time we suffer from but the way we treat or think about it.

The paradox of time is that for many of us, it's the least considered and worst managed resource we have. And yet it's really the most valuable.

This guide will help you to:

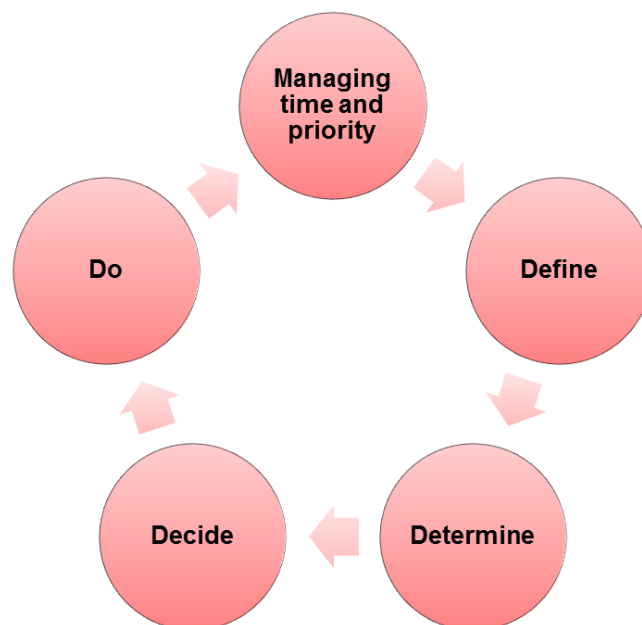
- Assess your time priorities and manage your actions.
- Develop coping strategies to avoid the limitations of "busyness".
- Manage the impact of other people's demands on your time.
- Develop approaches to "getting things done".
- Apply practical tools to managing priorities and time, to get the *right* things done.
- Help others to manage their time.

[Return to contents page](#)

How do you manage time and priority?

This guide is built around a simple model to help you manage your time and priority. Follow these four steps and put a structure to your time management activity:

1. **Define** – what you mean by time, how time management theory has evolved, and how you view time.
2. **Determine** – how you currently use your time, is it well spent or full of busyness?
3. **Decide** – what your priorities are, which you're going to focus on, and which time-wasters you will avoid or try to control.
4. **Do** – take action to manage your time and priorities.



Development of Time Management

Approaches to time management have evolved over the years. The earliest emphasis was on making note of things to do, and activities or events to attend. This focus on to-do lists and diaries was then augmented by attention to goals, and the prioritisation of activities to meet them.

The modern approach to managing time and priorities is the subject of this guide. It advocates an emphasis on evaluating the quality of time and the need to manage ourselves, rather than time per se. This approach is useful because it identifies some practical methods to help us manage the way we spend our time rather than time itself. Secondly it introduces the crucial concepts of identifying priorities in order to achieve results. Managing time is really about managing yourself to achieve prioritised goals.

[Return to contents page](#)

PREVIEW ONLY
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[Return to contents page](#)

Time and what you are good at

Use the time-log sheets in tool 2, to keep a detailed log of how you use your time over a period of one typical week. This will help you to assess your present use of time in order to plan improvements.

Tool 2

Treat this type of activity as an annual or quarterly exercise, rather than something you'd do on a more frequent basis. It is always good to periodically review your time and check that you are spending it on the things you value. We all have the tendency to allow things and habits to creep in which can cause us to feel stressed about time. Not just because we have too much to do, but because we feel we don't have enough time to do the things we want to do.

Next combine the two preceding activities by putting all the things you have to do, and all the time you spend doing things, into categories. Only then can you ask: are these contributing to results that matter to me?

As you're doing this activity, take note of anything you do that you're particularly good at. Anything that seems to come easily to you, when time seems to fly as you do it. Especially list anything you do that gets feedback indicating it's one of your strengths. Then think about how much time you actually give to doing things that are your strengths.

It's not time we need to manage

How do you *use* time? That's what you really need to manage. Start by thinking about these points:



[Return to contents page](#)

PREVIEW ONLY
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[Return to contents page](#)

The paradox of time

Time is the least considered, worst managed, and yet most valuable resource we have. Why? Because:

1. **You can't buy it.** Time is distributed equally to all. Each of us gets 24 hours a day.
2. **You can't stop it.** Time marches on. You can't hold time up, to take a bit longer.
3. **You can't save it.** Time can't be saved to be used up at another time, when you might feel you need it more.

But you can live it. As Eleanor Roosevelt is reputed to have once said:

Consider...

"Yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery, and today is a gift; that's why they call it the present."

Take the Time: An Old Irish Text.....

However you decide to manage your time and priorities, take the time to think about time, from a range of perspectives:

"Take the time to work, for it is the price of success.

Take the time to think, it is the source of strength.

Take the time to play, it is the secret of youth.

Take the time to read, it is the seed of wisdom.

Take the time to be friendly, for it brings happiness.

Take the time to dream, for it will carry you to the stars.

Take the time to love, it is the joy of life.

Take the time to be content, it is the music of the soul."

[Return to contents page](#)

PREVIEW ONLY
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Updates

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Join the conversation: bookmark the Happy Manager blog. (www.the-happy-manager/blog) Leave any comments, suggestions or examples of your own experiences for the benefit of other readers.

Titles available:

How to be a Happy Manager
Have a Good Workday
How to Build a Happy Workplace
Workstyle, Lifestyle

Build a Better Team
Team Building Exercises
Team Health Check
The Problems with Teams
Why is Teamwork Important?

Leadership Essentials
Defining Leadership
Leading with Style and Focus
Leading Insights

Transformational Change
Sustaining Change
Making Change Personal

It's All About Performance
15 Performance Management Tips
Managing Performance and Potential
Performance Management Skills
Performance Management Toolkit
Conducting a Performance Review
Manage Your Own Performance
Motivating Performance

Managing for Strength to Strength
Managers Make the Difference
Re-defining Middle Management
Do More with Less
Managing Time and Priority
Extreme Thinking: Unlocking Creativity
SMART Goals, SHARP Goals
Making Better Decisions
What's the Problem?

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[Return to contents page](#)