

Research Methodology

Arpita Maitra

TCG CREST
[arpita76b@gmail.com]

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“Time wasted is existence, used is life.”

What is Time Management

- Time management concerns efficient allocation and utilization of time and thereby managing time on an hour to hour and day to day basis
- Time management is about managing time in a finer grain compared to project management
- If one follows an effective time management regimen, management of the PhD project becomes much easier

10 Principles of Time Management

- 1 Identifying long-term goals
- 2 Make medium-term plans
- 3 Developing a personal sense of time
- 4 Distinguishing between urgent and important
- 5 Planning the day; Make the best use of your best time
- 6 Keeping a to-do list
- 7 Apportioning time for meetings and seminars
- 8 Avoiding the time-wasters
- 9 Making use of committed time
- 10 Leveraging cooperation and delegation

Time Awareness

- Being time aware is the continuous realization that time goes on and the lost time cannot not be recovered
- Though it borders philosophy, time awareness is an effective method and motivational factor in preventing wastage of time
 - Time is a non-replenishable commodity
 - Time awareness is a sure cure for lethargy, procrastination and blues

“Everyone knows that time is limited, but only a few are aware of that fact”

Hazrat Uwais, a Sahabi (a term designating Companion of Prophet Hazarat Muhammad)

Being a Time-Aware

- There are a few simple exercises to be time aware:
 - Noting time frequently
 - Keeping a time log

Noting Time Frequently

- Makes one more aware of the passing time
- Use your watch or mobile to aware you about every hour by setting an alarm
- After a few days, you would be able to count 1 hour in your mind more accurately
- Then set it for every half an hour and
- Finally do it for every 15 minutes

Keeping a Time Log

- Keeping a time log for a few weeks helps to create
 - A personal awareness of time
 - The log entry should be created for every hour of awake time and describe the type of work done for the past hour (15 minutes granularity is adequate)
 - Apart from time awareness, this auditing would also reveal the time we spend in actual productive work
 - There is often a gap between what we think we would do and what we are actually doing

- Being time aware helps to discard useless activities
- The goal should help you decide what is useful what is not
- For successful utilization of time you need to distinguish between **Urgent and Important**

Urgent Vs. Important

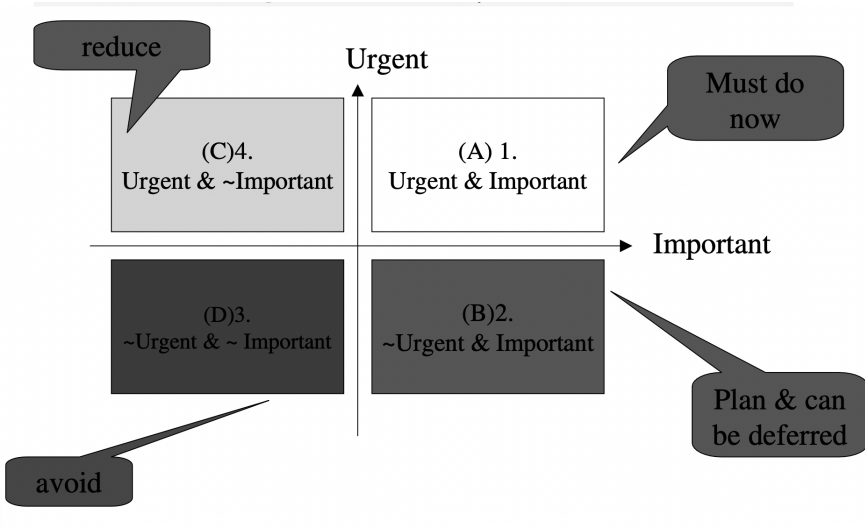


Figure:

Urgent Vs. Important Contd.

- Tasks, however small, should be classified as to whether these are important or not and also whether these are urgent or not urgent
- Mapping a task in the urgent-important plane helps to prioritize
- Tasks which are both urgent and important would have the highest priority

Urgent Vs. Important Contd.

- Tasks which are not urgent but important would have to be performed eventually
- These can be deferred only if demanded by the quadrant-1 tasks. These would have to be rescheduled then
- Quadrant-2 tasks cannot be postponed beyond a certain time, as these would become urgent
- Tasks which are neither urgent nor important should be avoided without any mercy

Urgent Vs. Important

- Most troublesome tasks are quadrant-4 tasks, which are urgent but not important
- Examples are;
 - renewal of a magazine subscription which has a deadline for a small discount
 - end of “SALE” in the supermarket
- Many quadrant-4 tasks, originates from other persons
- Not much effort should be allocated to these tasks
- Try using the following poster

“Your lack of planning does not constitute an emergency for me”

- POSEC is an acronym for Prioritize by Organizing, Streamlining, Economizing and Contributing
 - 1 Prioritize - Define your time and life by goals
 - 2 Organizing - Things you have to accomplish regularly to be successful (Family and Finances)
 - 3 Streamlining - Things you may not like to do, but must do (Keeping Note in Class, finishing a paper)
 - 4 Economizing - Things you should do or may even like to do, but they're not pressingly urgent. (Pastimes and Socializing)
 - 5 Contributing - By paying attention to the few remaining things that make a difference. (Social Obligations)

Planning a Day

- Planning for a day requires a “to-do list”. This list should be updated everyday, preferable at the end of working day
- In a day planner, tick the items to be done on the next day (a subset of to-do) against time of the day
- The day planner is very similar to the to-do list, unlike the to-do list which is entered rather randomly, the day planner is entered sequentially

Planning a Day Contd.

- Apart from professional items, also enter time slots for thinking (appointment with self), social, entertainment, prayer (if applicable), lunch, date (if applicable) etc.
- After each hour, tick-off the items completed in the to-do registre
- Keep at least one difficult (but important) task early in the morning
- Schedule pleasant tasks at the end of day
- Quantify the tasks if possible
- For example, browse 17 papers :-))

Planning a Day Contd.

- Planning also helps to allocate tasks to suit your bio-rhythm
- Planning must be executed with best effort
- To eliminate type-C and Type-D tasks, some tact may be required
- One has to learn to say no, otherwise priorities of others may take up lot of productive time
- The practice of time management should enable the aspirant to enrich professionally so as to contribute more to society and to others, in a planned manner but not by terms dictated by others

Maintaining Regular Hours

- Some researchers favour Keeping 'regular hours' rather than work flexitime
- Keeping a fixed routine helps in many respects
- More free time to enjoy
- Attending to family and kids
- Regular hours need not mean (10am to 5pm)×5 . It can be odd hours too! (from 11 pm?? :-)))
- Unless there are some non-avoidable reasons, the routine should not be broken
- Adhering to a daily plan and a to-do list saves a lot of time

Best Use of the Biorhythm

- Efficiency of carrying out different tasks varies with the time of the day
- More generic patterns are as follows
 - ① Manual dexterity – the speed and co-ordination with which one performs complicated tasks with the hands – peaks during the afternoon
 - ② Most of us seem to reach our peak of alertness around noon
 - ③ Short-term memory is best in the morning – in fact, about 15% more efficient than at any other time of a day
 - ④ We tend to do best on cognitive tasks – things that require the juggling of words and figures in one's head – during the morning
- Biorhythm of individual varies from person to person
- It would be a good idea to know ones own biorhythm
- From the general trend and individual types, it is possible to prepare a very effective daily schedule

The Pareto Principle

- It is a common experience that 80% of tasks can be completed in 20% of the disposable time
- This is called Pareto or “80-20” Principle
- When the principle is accepted, one should seek to identify these 80% tasks which apparently are easier tasks
- The rest 20% must then be relatively difficult

The Pareto Principle Contd.

- Depending on the personal working styles (and also biorhythm) the tasks can be scheduled
- Many of us would attempt the easier 80% first and not do the real tough ones at all
- To prevent this undesirable situation, some tough tasks must be scheduled when the productivity and intellect are at the peak level

Review Your Daily Achievements

- It is worthwhile to review the performance of daily schedules, at least weekly
- Try the following questions for self assesement
 - 1 Are you trying to accomplish too much in a day?
 - 2 Did some tasks not get done because you were not ready at that time to do them?
 - 3 Was the item or task clearly formulated?
 - 4 Did you find it difficult to make decisions?
 - 5 Did you have all the available information?
 - 6 Had you neglected to plan sufficiently for the day because you were feeling under pressure?
 - 7 Did you abandon a task because it was too difficult or too boring?
 - 8 Did you follow best use of the best time?

Managing Time at The Computer and on The Internet

- Time flies when you are at the computer and on the 'net'
- Of course you need the computer and the internet for
 - Literature search
 - Drafting paper
 - Running program etc.
- You must not spend unnecessary time at the PC
- Spending too much time looking at the monitor and sitting in the same position are harmful for your health too

Classic Time Wasters

- Net Surfing without an agenda
 - decide in advance what precisely you are going to use the web for, and stick to it
 - You may allow yourself a specific small amount of surfing as a treat or a break from work
- Web Chatting
- Spending too much time in Social Networking sites
- Downloading some software which you might not use at all
- Downloading as you wish to download
- Playing on-line games
- Meticulously creating a 'PowerPoint' animation which is not needed

Things to Keep in Mind

- The only time you should multi-task is while you are waiting for an experiment such as an incubation step. People are much more productive when concentrating on one task at a time
- Make time for a break. Research has shown that you are less productive when you work long hours. The increase in stress and exhaustion not only slows you down; it leads to errors, accidents, and ill-health. Any of these factors could cost you extra time and decrease your productivity in the long run

Things to Keep in Mind Contd.

- Avoid aggravation during group meetings and maintain a positive environment at work. This can certainly improve productivity
- Make time for meals. Deficiency of essential nutrients can have a deleterious effect on memory and cognitive ability

Summarizing Tips to Effectively Utilize Time

- Plan your day according to your most productive times. If you are a morning person, schedule tasks that require more concentration early in the day. Create a to-do list in accordance with your plan
- Assign a fixed time during the day to deal with interruptions such as emails, phone calls, instant messages, and social media rather than allowing them to interrupt you throughout the day. You could waste up to half an hour of your time regaining your focus after you have been disturbed

Summarizing Tips to Effectively Utilize Time Contd.

- Always keep something to read with you. A reading task can be done while waiting on a bus or in a queue
- Needlessly postponing unpleasant tasks just delays completing them
- May use a project management software to help you organize and keep control of all your tasks
- Lack of self-discipline is a serious impediment. Stick to the plan
- Schedule an extra 50% of the time as a buffer when you schedule time for a task

- Slides are taken from Research Methodology, Prof. T. K. Ghosal, Jadavpur University, 2013

Thank You