

POWER 2 TRANSFORM

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Specializing in Leadership and Team Development

Highly Effective Time Management

By changing how you think about your tasks, you can create a better return on investment for your time.

Do you have more 'to-dos' than time in your day? Is lack of time preventing you from reaching more of your goals? If you had more time, what would it mean to your business, your finances, your family – your life? No one is given more than 24 hours a day. How then do some people accomplish so much while others drown in incomplete 'to-do' lists, missed deadlines and unmet objectives?

Effective time management is the process of ensuring that all of your time is spent on activities that move you closer to your goals. What you do is far more important than how quickly you do it.

The bottom line, how you spend your time determines your success. The most successful business leaders and entrepreneurs invest their time very carefully.

Those who develop effective habits for time management create a competitive advantage.

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Are You Managing Your Time Effectively?

Structure + Analysis = Hiring Success

Just like anything else, the key to an effective hiring process is to identify the steps that contribute most directly to achieving success, and then implement and practice those steps, continuing to make improvements along the way.

First and foremost is the creation of a **standardized hiring process**. Through the creation of such a process, you can better identify the things that work best for you and your company . . . and the

things that don't work at all. That's not to say that some steps in the process should be eliminated altogether, just that some should be weighted more than others, in accordance with what's most effective. Below are the basic steps that any hiring process should include:

- Criteria-based screening of candidates
- A standard background check
- Assessments and/or tests
- Structured interviews, both over the phone and in person

Remember, these are just the basics. Depending upon the position being filled, you can add steps or elaborate and build upon existing ones.

The other half of the equation . . .

A **thorough analysis of the open position** will further help you to fill it with the best candidate possible. Unfortunately, many companies overlook this aspect of the hiring process, instead focusing their attention on the candidates that they're screening and interviewing. Those candidates represent only one-half of the equation.

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The secret is understanding where time is best invested and developing systems, processes, behaviors and habits for effective use of time and priority management.

Change Your Attitude

To change results it is necessary to change behavior. Significant behavior change requires a change in perspective or attitude; in other words, how you think. Effective time habits require effective time attitudes. Think about your time as a limited resource to be *invested* rather than spent.

Know What You Want

Make a list of your top priorities, both personal and professional. This process helps clarify where to focus your energy and speeds decision-making when events arise that are not top priorities. Daily, weekly, monthly and annual prioritization is a powerful time management habit.

Establish Your Personal 80/20 Rule

Typically, 80 percent of success comes from 20 percent of your effort. Determine what your most profitable 20 percent is and spend the majority of your time in those activities.



Eliminate Unproductive Activity

One of the most practical exercises for better time use is a personal time study. Track activities in 15-minute increments for 3-5 days. Look for opportunities to eliminate unproductive behaviors that do not pertain to top priorities. Often the greatest gains in productivity are the result of eliminating bad habits and non-value added activity.

Automate

Use technology to your advantage. Automation is a great way to multiply your efforts. Review your time study for opportunities to memorize transactions, create automatic activity series, sort e-mail, auto-complete fields, etc. While it takes time to set up, it is always a wise investment.

Delegate

If the return on your time investment is less than the cost, yet the task is too important to eliminate and cannot be automated, consider delegating it.

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After all, you have to know exactly what you're looking for before you can know that you've found it.

That's why, after you've established a standardized and structured hiring process, the next step is to thoroughly analyze the open position and the job description associated with it. This should be done **before** interviews are scheduled



and conducted. In addition, the position should be analyzed in regards to the three main areas below:

- **Knowledge** – Although this is often considered the most obvious qualifier, it must be examined in an exhaustive fashion, since a miscalculation could be costly if not caught before a bad hire is made.
- **Skills/abilities** – This refers to the application of knowledge needed to perform the tasks required by the position, whatever forms that application might take.
- **Personality/attitude** – This one is often overlooked, since it pertains to the “soft skills” necessary for the job, as opposed to the “hard skills.”

As you can see, achieving hiring success starts before the process itself even begins. Through the combination of a standardized process and an extensive job analysis, you can dramatically increase the chances that the next person you hire... is the best person for the position.

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Delegation

Test how well you delegate authority to your employees by asking yourself these questions:

- **How often** do I say: "I should have taken care of that myself"?
- **What is** the turnover rate among my employees?
- **Are my** employees frequently absent when they're not sick?
- **How many** people that I have directly supervised still work with me?
- **How many** of my employees would follow me if I took a new job at another company?

Source: *Streetwise Managing People*, by Bob Adams et al., Adams Media Corp., Holbrook, MA 02343

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Opportunities abound to use staff, virtual assistants, contract professionals, temporary help, family members, etc. Eliminate dependency on specific individuals by creating checklists and procedures for each delegated task. This helps bridge the gap if you have to do the task again *and* improves training effectiveness with new people.

Simplify

Look for every opportunity to simplify processes, decision-making, communications, proposals, customer tracking, etc.

Leverage

This concept refers to multiplying the return you get from every effort. Perhaps creative work can be re-purposed or meetings can serve multiple functions. Look for every place to consolidate your efforts and get greater return on your time investment.



Vision

Take time to create a clear, succinct vision for both yourself and your organization. Don't stop at the words; create pictures of what it will look like once you accomplish your vision. Imagine what it will feel like once you get there. The more emotionally tied you are to your vision; the easier it is to remember the success habits you are trying to create.

Time Blocking

Complete similar types of work all at the same time. Opportunities for blocking include client visits, telephone work, computer work, writing, e-mail correspondence and completing personal tasks. This strategy maximizes your time investment far better than moving from one unrelated task to another throughout the day.

Analyze

Keep track of what's working really well, personally and for the business. Also, track opportunities for improvement. Review your list regularly and implement new habits, processes and systems at every opportunity.

Successful entrepreneurs create highly effective habits. If time management is actually effective priority management, then creating habits for better self-management is critical to your success. Think about the impact that one or two new time habits and/or attitudes could have on your business over the next year.

Perhaps your best time investment right now is creating your personal action plan for highly effective time habits.

Reprint permission granted by author Allison Darling, *Management Concepts*

Do what you can, with what you have, where you are.

– Theodore Roosevelt



One Minute Ideas

Things to do when you have 5-minutes or less

Often time is lost by waiting for someone, being stuck in traffic, waiting in line, etc. Here are some quick tips of things to do while you are waiting.

1. **Update your daily planner.** Use this time to mark off completed tasks, transfer tasks to a different date, keep it current, etc..
2. **Update your goals.** This is a good time to look over your goals and transfer the completed goals to your goals accomplished list and add or update your current goals.
3. **Make a quick call.** The use of cell phones (although annoying to some) can be used when you are waiting for an appointment to show up, standing in line at a store, stuck in traffic, etc..
4. **Read your mail.** Keep your mail in your briefcase and then when you are in line, stuck in traffic, etc.. take it out to read.

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Healthy Employees = Productive Employees

Companies are constantly searching for new and better ways in which to increase the productivity of their workforce, and thereby, enhance their bottom line. They try new tactics and strategies, all of which are designed to help employees reach their full potential and maximize their contribution to the company.

However, sometimes the best solutions are the ones that are so readily apparent that they go unnoticed. One such solution involves the health and lifestyle choices of the employees in question.

Factors for success . . . or failure



There are many factors that can impact employees' productivity levels. They include diet, sleep (or lack thereof), stress, morale, and exercise (or lack thereof). A recent survey conducted by ComPsych, the world's largest provider of employee assistance programs, sheds some interesting light on these factors and how they can negatively—or positively—affect employees.

ComPsych surveyed more than 1,000 employees across the United States during the timeframe of January 1 through February 15, 2008. The survey involved companies of all sizes and those operating in a variety of different industries. Overall, the survey was quite extensive and unearthed a wealth of data. However, in the interest of brevity, we'll address a few of the more important findings, as they relate to the factors listed above.

- **Diet**—Of employees with balanced diets, 73% reported having high levels of productivity and 50% reported having high levels of energy.
- **Stress**—Approximately 70% of employees with poor diets had high levels of stress. In addition, 76% of employees participating in no physical activity reported a high level of stress.
- **Exercise**—Over 65% of physically active employees reported high productivity levels,

and 67% reported high energy levels, as well.

- **Morale**—Of course, as you might imagine, the three factors listed above can have a profound impact on morale. About 55% of very active employees reported having high morale, and 51% of workers with ideal weight reported the same.



The power of promotion

So . . . what does all of this mean? You might be thinking to yourself, "I already knew this. It doesn't help me any!" Or perhaps you're thinking that you can't force employees to be healthy, so this information constitutes a moot point at best.

But that would be underestimating the power of promotion. There is plenty that a company can do to build and cultivate a corporate culture that promotes a healthy lifestyle. While it's true that you can't force an employee to make healthy choices, you can make it **easier** for them to make those choices. That's why it's imperative for company officials to analyze their culture and ask some tough questions:

- Does our culture promote health and well being?
- Do we make it easy for employees to make healthy choices during the workday . . . or difficult?
- How much more productive could we be through promotion and other health-related programs and initiatives?

The evidence is indisputable. Healthy employees are productive employees, but it even goes beyond that. They're **happy** employees, as well, and that combination is almost impossible to beat—especially by your competition.

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