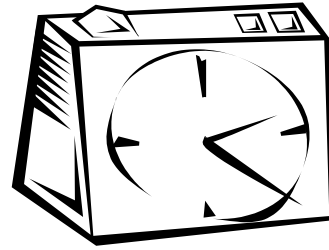


TIME MANAGEMENT FOR TOASTMASTERS

How often do you say or think, "There are never enough hours in the day" or "I wish the week could have eight days." All of us at sometime find we wish for more time.



As Toastmasters, we all need to employ some form of time management if we are to get the most we can from our organisation. Time needs to be found to prepare assignments, take leadership opportunities and attend meetings. Time that often is hard to find along with the pressures of a family, a career and interests.

Well there is a way to achieve more time; effective time management will give you the extra hours you need or that eighth day in the week. For many years I have used my own form of time management and been able to achieve more and enjoy more as a result.

My form of time management is simple and straightforward. **MAKE A LIST!** Yes that's all there is to it. At the start of the day, write down everything that you wish to accomplish in that day. Don't put the list in any particular order; just write down what you need to do as you think of it. If one task seems large or daunting, break it into smaller components and list separately. For example if you need to invite people to a function, list it as design invitations, prepare guest list, envelope or email invitations, mail or send invitations. You will then have the satisfaction of completing four tasks instead of just one. Then start to work your way through the list, crossing off the tasks as they are completed. You have no idea what a sense of achievement it gives you to see the items you have crossed off.

When tackling the items on your list, start with an easy to achieve task, then alternate easy, hard throughout the day. Give yourself a reward half way though, e.g. sit down with a cup of coffee for 15 minutes or read a book. This will then give you the break you need to tackle the remainder of your list.

One other method for time management I have found to be very necessary is to keep an up-to date diary. Always, but always diarize any invitation you accept. Always record who invited you, their phone number, the venue and time of the event. You have it all there in front of you and don't need to waste time looking for letters of invitation. This way you can look at your diary at the beginning of the week, look for any spare times and use those times to effectively list and complete tasks that need doing.

Of course there are many other ways to manage your time more effectively. Many books have been written on the subject. Learn to delegate, set achievable goals, set priorities, don't procrastinate, and get things done in spare moments such as when traveling, waiting in queues or waiting for a person on the end of the telephone. Of these, probably learning to delegate and delegate well will be of most benefit to us all.

Delegation isn't easy, but for our sanity it is necessary. Trust those to whom you delegate, give guidance and counsel, not restrictions and rules. If you trust a person enough to delegate to them, let them do the task their own way. It may not be your way, but believe it or not, it could be better. Trust goes a long way in delegation.

Benjamin Franklin asked and answered the question, "Dost thou value life?", and said, "Then do not squander time, for that is the stuff life is made of." Manage your time and you will start having the "time of your life".

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