

Efficiency and Productivity Exercises

Summary

The management of time, tasks, and resources are intertwined. Each one directly impacts the other two. When you manage your time then you also manage the tasks that you are performing as well as the resources required to complete those tasks. Now, while you don't have total control over your schedule –you do have some control over the way you address work tasks. That is because you do have control over yourself and how you approach all the things you do.

Workplace Readiness Skill

Efficiency and Productivity

Secondary Workplace Readiness Skills

Initiative and Self-Direction

Career and Life Management

Professionalism

Vocabulary

- prioritize
- procrastinate
- resource
- sustainable
- task
- time management
- task management
- resource management
- productivity
- human resources (personnel)
- human resources department
- capital resources management
- natural resources
- efficiency

Overview

Let's take a look at a description of each of these three types of management:

1. **Time management** is the process of planning and exercising control over the amount of time spent on specific activities, in order to increase effectiveness, efficiency, or productivity.
2. **Task management** is the process of managing a task from beginning to end. Effective task management involves paying attention to all aspects of a task, such as its priority and its time, personnel and resource requirements.
3. **Resource management** refers to the process of using resources (tangible resources like materials and equipment, financial resources, and personnel) in the most efficient way possible.

Time Management: There are several models for time management. One of the most commonly used is the *Eisenhower Decision Matrix*. This model grew out of a quote attributed to Dwight D. Eisenhower (34th President of the United States): "*I have two kinds of problems, the urgent and the important. The urgent are not important, and the important are never urgent.*" From this statement researchers in the time management field developed a decision matrix. Although there are some variations in how the Eisenhower Decision Matrix is presented, this is a common one:

	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important	Medical Emergencies Deadlines Problems 1	Planning Recreation Some Projects 2
Not Important	Interruptions Random calls/texts Some messages 3	TV Time wasters Social Media 4

Tasks in –

1. *Important/Urgent*: done immediately and personally
2. *Important/Not Urgent*: assigned an end date and done personally
3. *Unimportant/Urgent*: delegated or postponed
4. *Unimportant/Not Urgent*: dropped or done later

A brief description of the *Eisenhower Decision Matrix* can be found in the video described below or you may choose to view one or more of the videos listed in the Resources.

How to Prioritize Tasks Effectively: GET THINGS DONE

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=czh4rmk75jc> (Published on March 26, 2017)

Learn how to manage your tasks effectively so you know how to be productive with your time.

To implement the *Eisenhower Decision Matrix* you make a list of all the things you do and then assign each one to a quadrant in the matrix. It takes practice, but the process itself will help you manage your time and get things done.

Task Management: Task management can help individuals as well as groups of people accomplish goals. For an overview of Task Management, take a look at this video:

Task Management Training - Getting Organized for Success

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wuHDi43AvuY>

Tips to help you manage your tasks more effectively.

Resource Management: It's easy to find a variety of models describing the best approach for managing resources. Take a look at this video for an overview of one that focuses on the individual who is performing a task:

Managing Resources is the Key to Output

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c9wOnvjOMSG>

A resource management model focusing on definition, availability, and control of necessary resources.

It is also important to think about managing natural resources and to understand the concept of "sustainability." This video will give you a good overview:

What Is Sustainability?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rmQby7adocM>

Sustainability has to do with preserving resources and energy over the long term rather than exhausting them quickly to meet short-term needs or goals.

Context Questions

- Do you make lists of things to do?
- Do you feel in control of your time?
- Do you procrastinate?
- Do you find it difficult to say no?
- Do you keep a calendar?
- Do you prioritize your activities?
- Do you set goals?
- What is the difference between short-term goals and long-term goals?

Guidelines

Efficiency and productivity values are not just for the workplace. You can use them in your everyday life! The next time you're asked to complete a task – think about the things you've learned about managing your time and resources in order to complete that task. Practice some of the time management skills by completing the *Time Management Worksheet: Part 1 and Part 2* exercise and the *Returning a Jacket* exercise.

Resources:

1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZWs72vQjMh8>
How to do Time Management in 7 Minutes
2. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K_THDJrGN0U
How to say “No”
3. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xItNGPRBQKg>
Introduction to Time Management, Step-by-Step Training
4. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0M5NoYUOw4Y&feature=youtu.be>
Time management video, SD Health Education UCLA
5. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b3fVtWfhitc>
20 Quick Tips for Better Time Management
6. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7pPa0mRCky4>
Why natural resource use matters?
7. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZERrpFwETgs>
Managing natural resources: making more with less
10. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L83A1oRONro>
6 Powerful Task Management Tips For Time-Efficient Project Managers
11. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tT89OZ7TNwc>
The Eisenhower matrix: How to manage your tasks
12. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hrYXIWxR1no>
4 quadrant time management
13. <http://blog.freedompersonaldevelopment.com/the-top-10-tips-to-creating-powerful-positive-self-talk/>
The Top 10 Tips to Creating Powerful Positive Self-Talk
14. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UW7Th9SdfjU>
Resource Planning
15. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YmYqIZLE9h0>
Resource Management and Capacity Planning for Project-Based Organizations

PRIORITIZING TASKS: Returning a Jacket

Goal-setting and prioritizing are skills that take practice. Goals vary from very small goals like what to do first when you get up in the morning ... to how to manage your money to pay your bills! This exercise provides practice in writing down a goal and prioritizing the steps to reach it. It's a simple task but gives you a chance to see how you can apply goal setting and prioritizing even to everyday tasks.

Situation:

Patricia ordered a jacket from a catalog but when it arrived and she tried it on, it was too large. She decided to return it.

Goal:

What is Patricia's goal? _____

Prioritize the tasks:

To accomplish her goal, Patricia must complete the tasks listed below. Put them in order.

Seal & wrap the box

Put the return slip in the box

Take the box to the post office

Put the shoes in the box

Complete the address label

Fill out the return slip

Put the "customer receipt" in a safe place at home

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

TIME MANAGEMENT WORKSHEET

PART 1: COMPLETING A TIME MANAGEMENT WORKSHEET

Complete the *Time Management Worksheet*. Include everything you do each day such as: attending class, work schedule, sleeping, club/student activities, meetings, study time, personal time, and fun time. Please be as specific as possible. Remember to include everything that occurs on a regular basis. The block for each day is divided so that you can specify activities in half hour increments.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
6:00 a.m.							
7:00 a.m.							
8:00 a.m.							
9:00 a.m.							
10:00 a.m.							
11:00 a.m.							
12:00 p.m.							
1:00 p.m.							
2:00 p.m.							
3:00 p.m.							
4:00 p.m.							

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
5:00 p.m.							
6:00 p.m.							
7:00 p.m.							
8:00 p.m.							
9:00 p.m.							
10:00 p.m.							
11:00 p.m.							
12:00 a.m.							
1:00 a.m.							
2:00 a.m.							
3:00 a.m.							
4:00 a.m.							
5:00 a.m.							

TIME MANAGEMENT WORKSHEET

PART 2: ASSIGNING IMPORTANCE/URGENCY to TASKS

1. Review the Eisenhower Decision Matrix

	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important	Medical Emergencies Deadlines Problems <p style="text-align: right;">1</p>	Planning Recreation Some Projects <p style="text-align: right;">2</p>
Not Important	Interruptions Random calls/texts Some messages <p style="text-align: right;">3</p>	TV Time wasters Social Media <p style="text-align: right;">4</p>

Tasks in –

1. *Important/Urgent*: done immediately and personally
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2. For each of the items that you listed on your *Time Management Worksheet*, decide which quadrant it falls into. Write the number of the quadrant beside the item. Use colored pencils (you'll need 4 colors) so that you can see at a glance where the tasks fall.

3. Review your worksheet. Do you think some of the items are in the wrong quadrant? That's fine – just reassign them.

4. Now look at your list again. Will having this worksheet with the Importance/Urgency of each task noted help you manage your time better?