

## **The ABCs of Effective Time Management** **©copyright by Robert (Bob) W. Lucas**

Many of us today have more “things” to do than time to do them. There never seems to be a shortage of new tasks or projects – either personal or professional. The challenge is finding the time to accomplish everything that is facing you. The following may help.

**A**ccept that you cannot do it all by yourself and ask for help from others.

**B**uy a time planning system (e.g. Calendar, Personal Digital Assistant (PDA), time management software) and use it regularly to avoid overbooking of events, meetings and tasks.

**C**reate a network of business professionals who can assist with various tasks and projects when you need them.

**D**ivide major projects into small manageable tasks and delegate any that you can.

**E**valuate each daily task and assign a priority (e.g. A- Must do, B-Should do or C-Do if time allows).

**F**ocus attention on one task at a time.

**G**ather all materials needed for a task before beginning.

**H**ave written goals for each day, week and month and stick to them.

**I**nvoke others to share ideas on how to improve your efficiency.

**J**oin professional organizations that provide networking and resources.

**K**eep distractions down by working on important tasks early in the day before others start work or customers begin to contact you.

**L**earn new time management strategies by attending seminars, reading books and listening to audio tape on the subject.

**M**ake sure that you understand requests, instructions or projects BEFORE beginning work on them.

**N**egotiate with your boss and others when projects are added to your schedule and you know that you are already overcommitted.

**O**rganize your workspace so that commonly used materials and items are within arms reach.

**P**repare for morning meetings planned for the next day, at the end of the current one. This prevents last minute rushing before the meeting and possibly coming unprepared.

**Q**ualify phone callers at the beginning of a conversation to ensure that you are the right person for them to speak with.

**R**ecognize that some things are not worth your time doing.

**S**ay NO to frivolous projects that do not add value to you, your life or the organization.

**T**ake time for a mental break throughout the day in order to stay alert and performing at maximum potential.

**U**se meeting time wisely by having a written agenda when you are in charge or a list of key points you need to address if you are not in charge.

**V**erify facts before creating documents. This saves time correcting later.

**Write** an outline of key thoughts to use as a guide before writing a letter or article or placing an important call in which several points will be addressed.

**Xert** willpower when you find yourself distracted while working on a project that takes a period of time.

**Yesterday** is gone; don't waste time thinking about what you should have gotten done. Instead look for ways to accomplish what remains.

**Zero** in on a maximum of two or three key points when making a presentation.

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**Bob Lucas** B.S., M.A., M.A, CPLP is an internationally-known author and learning and performance professional. He has written and contributed to thirty-one books and compilations. He regularly conducts creative training, train-the-trainer, customer service, interpersonal communication and management and supervisory skills workshops. Bob can be reached at [blucas@robertwlucas.com](mailto:blucas@robertwlucas.com) or through his website [www.robertwlucas.com](http://www.robertwlucas.com). Follow his blog at [www.robertwlucas.com/wordpress](http://www.robertwlucas.com/wordpress) and like him at [www.facebook.com/robertwlucasenterprises](http://www.facebook.com/robertwlucasenterprises)